

An Analysis on Gender-based Language and Illustrations in Malaysian Secondary Schools' English Language and Literature Textbooks

Ng Yu Jin

Lecturer

College of Foundation and General Studies
Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Putrajaya Campus
Jalan IKRAM-UNITEN, 43000 Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia.

Yee Chiew Ling @ Vivian

Lecturer

College of Foundation and General Studies
Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Putrajaya Campus
Jalan IKRAM-UNITEN, 43000 Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia.

Chong Seng Tong

Lecturer

College of Foundation and General Studies
Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Putrajaya Campus
Jalan IKRAM-UNITEN, 43000 Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia.

Lee Yi Ling

Assistant Lecturer

College of Foundation and General Studies
Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Putrajaya Campus
Jalan IKRAM-UNITEN, 43000 Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia.

Mohd Ariff Ahmad Tarmizi

Principal Lecturer

College of Foundation and General Studies
Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Putrajaya Campus
Jalan IKRAM-UNITEN, 43000 Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia.

Abstract

This paper examines the uses of gender biased language and illustrations in Malaysia secondary school English Language Teaching textbooks and Literature readings. A corpus of five English Language Teaching textbooks and two literature readings were studied for the depictions of gender discrimination through pictures, vocabularies and social norms. Male figures appeared more frequently in the corpus than female figures at the percentage of 63% and 37% respectively. More than 50% of the analyzed gender specific common nouns and pronouns were male dominance. Differentiation of social class was strongly denoted by the employment of term of address in depicting a higher class for male characters. Male identities were more prevalent than female identities at 72%. Gender stereotyping occurred in occupations, moral values, activities, conversation, and societal contribution. The study suggested that gender inequality represented in the teaching materials should be revisited to avoid cultivating misconception among the young generation.

Keywords: Gender inequality; Wordlist; Vocabulary; Picture; Gender stereotyping

1. Introduction

Despite gaining periodical status and respect in the society, women are stereotypically regarded as the individuals inferior to men. They are often labelled as the weaker species that are undisputed in providing maternal touch to the society but not as the symbolic figures of leadership in this patriarchal society. Apart from that, they are stereotyped by baseless conventional yet outdated perceptions by the public.

Males are always regarded as powerful individuals and females as powerless which do not reflect the changing social statuses of females in the society today (Bahiyah et al., 2008). A stereotype is a simplified pattern with limited characteristics for the convenience of simple explanation and reference (Dat, 2006). It is often related to people's beliefs and perceptions towards a subject matter but not necessarily accepted based on real facts. Dat (2006) argued how baseless and absurd stereotyping can be whereby humans are easily influenced to believe the norms in the society and their random observations. Ghorbani (2009) in his findings, reported that females always occupy lower social roles such as student, secretary, nurse, teacher as compared with males. Ndura (2004) stated that the perception on gender bias will give impact on students' academic and professional choices. This is because students are taught that males always seem to be professional in sophisticated tools and technology, excellent in building and fixing things which need to be repaired. On the contrary, females are always such as cooking, knitting and tending babies which are perceived as smooth rather than the energetic ones. Even though their range of job has increased in the past two decades, the males are still seen to be in the higher position of professions between these two genders. In addition, males still monopoly the upper status either in the occupation fields or in contributing to the society. Conversely, women are perceived as helpless and dependent on the men in accomplishing every task. This situation creates a perception that females are unskilled and inferior (Diekman & Murnan, 2004), hence leads to the underestimation of value of females.

Marshall (2004) reported that independent characters with influential and dynamic roles are portrayed by the males, whereas the females are exposed as unreceptive and dependent. They always rely on men to attain every day activities. Meanwhile, Yourstone, Lindholm, Gran and Svenson (2004) suggested that, "there is a general assumption in most culture that males are more aggressive than the females whereas women often are characterized by passive and communal traits". This phenomenon has changed for almost twenty years where females can now be in the same height as the males in contributory roles in order to develop successful community. Hence, the stereotypical view on the isolation between these genders should be reconsidered that there is no disparity between these two genders. Therefore, women are always connected to the emotional personality where every expression of the emotion such as, depressing, pleased and irritated are being expressed by most of the females rather than the males.

1.1 Sexist Language and Gender Segregation in English Language Teaching (ELT) Materials

"Sexist language is one example of the way a culture or society conveys its values from one group to another and from one generation to the next" (Holmes, 2001). Language that privileges men and devalues women is considered sexist language (Treichler and Frank, 1989). According to Bahiyah et al. (2008), the dignity of women or girls can be lowered with the presence of sexist language and gender stereotyping. Books are learners' best friends to inculcate the beliefs, including legitimizing gender equality. Learners have always had this notion that materials that have been printed are facts to be abided by. Students' understanding of the false stereotypes in the books is what they are going to grow up with if the textbooks are portraying the segregation of gender and their roles in the society. Social psychology advocates that learners' imaginations are limited by the models they are represented with through texts (Tao, 2008). Textbooks develop and reinforce social norms such as sex segregations, stereotypes, and even discriminations which exaggerate the negative aspects of sex roles (Bahiyah et al, 2008). Maria Chin Abdullah, a Malaysian women's right activist commented that school textbooks were good examples of unintentionally practised sexism. Textbooks are believed to have aggravated the gender bias situation as gender equality qualities are often overlooked. They are important to promote gender inequities that exist in education yet standardization of gender equality is not carried out (Plumm, 2008).

Numerous researches have been done both locally and internationally about sexism in the ESL as well as EFL textbooks that have brought about counter-productive effects on learners about sexism and gender bias. Ghorbani (2009), Tao (2008), Bahiyah et. al. (2008), Mukundan and Nimehchisalem (2008), Dat (2006), Chandran and Mardziah (2003), Teh (2003), Ansary and Babaii (2003) et. al. have reported that many EFL/ESL textbooks still contain stereotypical images and information. The aim of this study was to provide awareness of linguistic sexism as well as discrimination of gender role stereotypes in the selected English Language textbooks and literature readings of Malaysia secondary schools. It is important for the material writers to ensure that both males and females share the equal roles distribution harmoniously and at a more adequate level in the materials. No gender should be segregated from a certain role as these days as it is liberated for people to choose their roles in the society as well as in the family.

2. Methodology

2.1 The corpus

The findings of this study were confined to five (5) randomly selected Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School (KBSM) textbooks, namely from Form 1 to Form 5 of the southern zones of Malaysia and two (2) KBSM English literature books, Form 1 and Form 4 which were analyzed in this study. Word strengths for the textbooks and literature books were 299, 654 and 25, 913 tokens respectively. No generalization should be made on other textbooks or course books both locally and internationally. In addition, there was no sense of bias induced as to why the southern zones of Malaysian textbooks and literature readings were selected. The names of the books used will be appended in the Reference Section.

2.2 The Research Design

The conceptual framework was adapted from Muhammed Shahriar and Chandran (2004) and Bahiyah et al. (2008). However, some procedures may differ as some adaptations were implemented. Analyses were carried out at two stages.

2.2.1 Stage I: Analysis on illustration and texts

All pictures in the books were analyzed based on stereotypical gender roles. Texts on the pages of the books were analyzed based on social themes or life-styles.

2.2.2 Stage II: Analysis on gender-biased and stereotypical word distribution using WordSmith 4.0

The respective books were scanned and digitized into TIF (.tif) Image Format. The files were converted into text file format (.txt) using Abby Fine Reader Software. The text files were then analyzed using WordSmith 4.0. Based on the generated wordlists, gender-biased words and stereotypical words were identified. Further analysis was performed on the identified words by evaluating the concordance to discriminate the gender-biased words and stereotypes.

3. Results and Discussion

There are three (3) aspects that the researchers scrutinized in this paper. The results and discussion revolve around the following aspects:

- i. Picture illustrations of gender-specific human figures;
- ii. Gender-specific vocabularies in context (common nouns, pronouns, term of address and names of characters); and
- iii. Gender stereotypes manifested.

3.1 Picture illustrations of gender-specific figures

Table 1 indicates the gender-specific illustrations in the KBSM textbooks and the gender representation characters in Form 1 and Form 4 literature respectively. The analyzed books consisted of 63% male figures which was more than female figures (37%).

According to a report from the United Nation data, 2008 (UNdata), the gender ratio in Malaysia was 1.03 males over females. Despite that, the ratio of the male to female in these textbooks was rather inaccurately represented. The overall male to female ratio in the textbooks is 1.7 where the number of male counterparts almost doubles the females. When males are the focus in the majority of the pages in the textbooks, students are led to believe that males are the norm, the standard in the society (Bahiyah et al, 2008). It is apparent that male characters continue to rule the local reading materials in terms of their representation of characters which supports Dat (2006) saying that, there are more male character illustrations than female ones in illustrations in textbooks.

3.2 Gender-specific vocabularies in context (common nouns, pronouns, term of address and names of characters)

In this section, the researchers highlighted the total number of gender-specific nouns, pronouns, term of address in Malaysia and names of the characters in the textbooks and the literature materials. The significance of the findings indicates the popularity of a certain gender, which in turn contributes to language sexism. "Because curriculum materials that are biased in language, content or illustrations reinforce the stereotyped idea that some fields are gender-specific, EFL researchers and teachers need to learn to observe the usually subtle but powerful "cumulative impact of EFL materials on learners' understanding of sex roles" (Tao, 2008).

The more frequent usage of a specific gender in the texts will portray dominance or favouritism towards the particular gender, especially the males.

3.2.1 Common nouns

Words like “man”, “woman”, “wife”, “husband”, “daughter”, “son”, “nephew”, “niece” and many other types of gender-specific common nouns were taken into account in this analysis using the WordSmith 4.0 Tool. The overall results of gender-specific common nouns distributions in the textbooks, and literature readings are tabulated in Tables 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Table 5 shows the overall gender-specific common nouns in the analyzed corpus.

There were more male common nouns as compared to female common nouns found in the textbooks and literature readings which make readers infer that males are still the main characters in the books, and main contributors in the society. This blatantly contradicts with the changing and progressing society in Malaysia whereby more females are beginning to play roles everywhere in the community.

3.2.2 Pronouns

Table 6 presents the gender-specific pronouns used in the KBSM textbooks. Table 7 and Table 8 show the pronouns used for the male and female characters in Form 1 and Form 4 literature readings. The overall result is tabulated in Table 9 and it reveals that the occurrence of male pronouns is double the occurrence of female pronouns. All the KBSM textbooks authors are females except a male author in the Form 1 textbook. Despite that, the authors are more prone to using male dominated common nouns. Form 1 and Form 4 literature readings were found to follow this trend.

3.2.3 Terms of address

Terms of address are used in Malaysia to greet and show respect to individuals. In addition, the terms of address do play a part in dictating someone’s social status in this nation. For instance, when you greet someone “*Dato*” or “*Datin*”, it reflects their social class in the community, which is of higher class as compared to the greetings of “Mr.” or “Ms”. Tables 10, 11 and 12 show the result of the term of address used in the studied materials. From Table 13, it is apparent that bigger number of higher class addressees of males were found in the corpus, this is surely an indication of gender segregation as more importance and respect is given to male counter-parts.

3.2.4 Names of characters

Table 14, Table 15 and Table 16 show the names of gender-specific characters in the materials. It can be seen from Table 17 that masculine names appeared in the corpus more than feminine names at 72%. The number of male names exceeded the number of female names by 44%.

It was found that some female characters which play major roles in the story have no significant name. According to Teh (2003), in “The Drover’s Wife” (Form 4), the mother who plays a crucial role in the story is not given a name while the son and the family dog have their own significant names. Another example of nameless character is in the Form 1 literature reading from the short story “The Pencil”. The grandmother of the major character has not been given a name to indicate her emergence. In addition, the grandmother is the only female character in the story as the other characters are dominated by males. Teh (2003) also stated that “Of Bunga Telur and Bally Shoes” in Form 1 literature reading, the protagonist and his male cousin are named but the protagonist’s bride-to-be and his sisters are unnamed. In another short story for Form 1, “How Dalat Got Its Name” female characters are non-existent, whilst male characters dominate the story indicating patriarchal dominance (Teh, 2003).

Referring to the obtained results, it is obvious that patriarchal influence is widely spread in the analyzed materials as the findings perpetuate the masculine dominance. Surprisingly, the society is trying to maintain the balance of power by empowering women with equal opportunities, and at the same time various factors are suppressing these opportunities by legitimizing a gender-biased ideology (Chandran & Mardziah, 2003). The irony is that most of the authors of the textbooks and literature materials are females and yet they can be regarded as fans of patriarchal dominance. Nowadays, the concept of patriarchal is slowly fading away as more females are gradually becoming proven leaders and decision makers. Through these depictions, the view of the second-place status of females is still deeply rooted in Malaysians (Bahiyah et. al., 2008).

Hence, material developers should take into considerations these small details of illustrations, common nouns, pronouns, terms of address and names of characters of certain gender can actually depict gender inequality that might influence learners' perceptions. "It is these gender-biased materials that continue to exacerbate the positioning of women as second-class citizens in society" (Teh, 2003).

3.3 Gender stereotypes manifested

The discussion of manifestation of the gender stereotypes are divided into the following characteristics:

- i. Stereotypical occupations;
- ii. Characters or moral values of males and females;
- iii. Gender involvement in activities – indoors/outdoors;
- iv. Gender taking lead, start a topic or give productive opinions in a conversation; and
- v. Portrayal of gender contribution to the past and future.

3.3.1 Stereotypical occupations

This notion suggests that certain jobs are suitable for certain gender. Nonetheless, all these fixtures are actually influenced and determined by the male-dominance suppression in the society. It has become a convention that females ought to accept the pre-determined jobs by the "macho" society.

Growing up with the ideology that society has certain expectations of women and that they are supposed to enter those professions which society has reserved for them, some women take it for granted that this is the way of the world. They do not even question the fact they are being marginalised or oppressed because they accept their role in society (Muhammed & Chandran, 2004).

Women are usually depicted as maids, housewives, teachers and nurses while men are depicted as engineers, doctors, pilots, politicians and other professionals (Muhammed & Chandran, 2004). The results of the stereotypical occupations advocate this statement by Muhammed Shahriar and Chandran (2004). Table 18 presents the tabulations of the gender-specific occupations. It shows that males are holding various posts or more occupational roles in the society, outnumbering the females by 12%. Males' occupational roles cover a wide range from higher ranking jobs to the lower ranking jobs. Jobs like doctors, sergeants, ministers, politicians, businessmen, managers or directors, lawyers and engineers are dominated by males as males seem to possess the professionalism charisma. On the other hand, females are more engaged in occupations like teachers, singers, writers, nurses and reporters or journalists. These jobs are regarded as inferior to the jobs held by the 'male professionals' and females' coverage of occupational roles is restricted. This conception of "limited working opportunities" for females may demoralize the potential female workers, and deter them from climbing up the job hierarchy. In short, males are considered superiors as they are able to have more choices in selecting their desired jobs in the society and females are regarded as subordinates, with minute range of job opportunities.

Most of the stories in the literature readings seem to hold tight to the stereotypical view of occupation, where the doctor must be a man. This is proven when a character of doctor in the story of "The Sound Machine" from Form 4 literature reading is a man, namely Dr. Scott. Another stereotypical occupation for the male is to work as white collar workers. From Form 4 literature reading, the main character in "The Lotus Eater" worked as a bank manager before he moved to the island of Capri. This is supported with another story in the same reading, "The Necklace", where the only male character is working as a clerk in Ministry of Public Instruction. Even though in the falling action of the story takes place, the male character chose to work in the office in order to pay their debts. This is true that males were given greater prospects in activities that involve thinking skills rather than females (Chandran & Maziah, 2003).

3.3.2 Characters or moral values of males and females

In the texts, males seem to possess strong characters and values like courageous and intelligent. However, all of the convicts or criminals in the materials are also males and they are portrayed as lazy and untidy. Females, on the contrary, are depicted more positively as they are kind, friendly, cheerful and nice except that they are easily nervous or agitated. At the same time, they also appear to be vain as they care a lot about how they look. Adjectives like pretty, beautiful, attractive and charming are always associated with females.

It implies that women ought to look presentable in order to function well in the society as it has become the norm that only beautiful females can get things done. This means that women are often regarded as decorative items which imply that society places more emphasis on the appearance of women than the appearance of men which have sexual implications (Muhammed Shahriar & Chandran, 2004). “In 1990, one airline fired a woman from her job as ticketing agent for not wearing make-up” (Ramlee & Normala, 2007).

Apart from that, the illustrations indirectly portray that males are always the bad people or criminals whereas females possess almost all the angelic characters. Learners should be exposed to the real world that sometimes females do have some flaws too, rather than being sweet and beautiful all the time. Other than that, it is not necessary that females can never commit crimes and males can never be good Samaritans at all. In short, the local texts lack realism and current social values. Even if the negative images of male do not appear as often, it can actually bring about effectual gender bias impact to learners as teachers may reiterate the dialogues or even carry out behavioral activities (Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, 2008).

Table 19 shows the adjectives found in the texts associated or attributed to the exact gender. From the findings, breaking the stereotypes, the writers describe males as shyer individuals as compared to females as the adjective “shy” was used more on males. The rest of the adjectives used are the typical stereotypes describing women. Females have been generally represented as positive, dependent, domestic and frequently brainless and silly while males are often portrayed as active, independent, brave and clever (Muhammed Shahriar and Chandran, 2004).

The findings on characteristics/values segregation show that females are portrayed as conservative while males are defiant. This is shown in the story “Of Bunga Telur and Bally Shoes” from Form 1 Literature textbooks. The female character, Jamal’s sister really holds closely to customs and traditions where there should be bunga telur in a wedding. On the other hand, the male character in the short story, Jamal portrayed as defiant character who wants to break away from traditional practices of the people. Jamal hopes that the bunga telur can be changed to sweets so as to manage his budget without a consideration of the tradition. In the story of “Looking for a Rain God” from Form 4 Literature reading, the male characters did the ritual murder without feeling guilty. They killed the girls as they believe that sacrifices will make the rain to fall. On the other hand, the female characters feel guilty and speak the truth to the police about what actually had happened.

3.3.3 Gender involvement in activities – indoors/outdoors

Ansary & Babaii (2003) stated that “women often appeared less visible than men and male firstness was prevalent, females were more visible indoor passive activities and were placed in traditional stereotypical roles”. The quotation is supported by many previous studies, in their findings regarding foreign EFL/ESL textbooks in their countries. Surprisingly, Malaysian authors or writers of textbooks have disregarded or overlooked this matter as new local textbooks were published around this time. As expected, females are seen more conservative and passive as well as they are regarded as introverts in the textbooks as their world only revolves around their houses or schools, doing house hold chores at home or helping their friends and teachers at schools. From the Form 4 literature textbook, in the story of “The Lotus Eater”, the only female character, Assunta, does the cleaning and cooking activities. Besides that, females are always seemed to play with dolls which do not require too much of energy. It is also a soft toy which seen to be played by the girl instead of boys.

This can be seen in the story of “Looking for the Rain God” where the little girl playing with dolls that they make themselves. Whereas in the story of “The Sound Machine”, the female character’s only activity is picking the flowers throughout the story.

In comparison to the females, males are manifested as active and athletic individuals that practise healthy life-styles and they possess the power and energy to take part in abundant outdoor activities. They go out and involve in challenging activities. In the short story “The Necklace”, the male character, Monsieur Loisel yearns to buy a pistol to go for a shooting with his friends during the weekend. Males also always seemed to engage in an important ceremony. For example, in the poem “There’s been a Death in the Opposite House”, most of the people who are busy in conducting the funeral procession are males. The man of the appalling trade which is referred as the undertaker who make coffin for the corpse is a male. In addition, the minister who is a person officially in charge of the whole proceeding also is a man.

3.3.4 Gender taking lead, starting a topic or giving productive opinions in a conversation

Males are portrayed as the key individuals to start a topic or conversation and give constructive advice. They are seen to be the natural-born leaders and problem solvers whereas females tend to ask for guidance and act as secondary contributors. This belief is no longer valid as women are as out-spoken as their male counter-parts, if not more. Women are able to contribute marvelous ideas to the development of the community, society and country.

In the story of “Looking for a Rain God” in Form 4 literature reading, the male characters are having the authority to make decision. The females are always perceived to agree with what have been decided by the males. The main character, Mokgobja influenced his son, Ramadi, to have the ritual murder by sacrificing the children. Without asking for opinion or permission from the mother of the children, they carried out the ritual action. The females have to agree on what the males have decided before.

3.3.5 Portrayal of gender contribution to the past and future

Males are frequently illustrated as the natural born leaders. Pictures of past male heroes like Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi are seen regularly in the textbooks. Besides dominating the unsung heroes of the past, males are depicted to have the power over the future as they are shown to be the key contributors to the development of the nation. Not only hardly any illustrations of female heroes appeared in the textbooks, females seem to be the subordinate key contributors to the future. Men should work with women hand-in-hand to ensure the stability of an organization as well as a country. The manifestations of the erroneous illustrations regarding the future of the nation should be removed and more female heroine of the past should be remembered and credited in the texts.

As widely known, males always contribute to the future as they seem to be more creative and have more contribution to the society than females. As in the story “The Sound Machine” in Form 4 Literature reading, the invention towards the future is made by the main character which is a male. The portrayal of this character clearly shows that men always have the idea on how to create new things as an aid to the others.

4. Conclusion

It is obvious that the local textbooks and literary materials are more prone to favouring one particular gender, i.e. male showing that they support the patriarchal regime. The notion of gender inequality in Malaysia is indeed blatant that has been in our syllabus due to the frequent exposure to the ever-present stereotypes in the textbooks. Stereotypical roles in the textbooks or teaching materials have reinforced the outdated bias existing in society towards women (Ansary & Babaii, 2003). Like KBSM textbooks, the literary materials demonstrate that the male characters dominate most of the stories and exposed as strong, powerful, crook and creative characters compared to female characters. On the other hand, females are depicted as independent, soft, conventional and passive characters. “If the literary texts that are fed to the students consists of stories that are dominated by strong male characters while the women characters are passive and subservient, the study of human relationships will be flawed as there is a deep implication that women are accepted by the society to be passive and dominated by men while the few women characters in the stories who are active are considered as social renegades” (Teh, 2003). There is inequality between these two genders which actually in this century, females are becoming more reliant and more vigorous nowadays. In conclusion, local textbooks and literature readings still possess the general and infamous gender-biased characteristics. Hence, modifications and editing should be done to local secondary teaching materials in order to ensure a gender bias free society can be cultivated.

References

- A World of Information, Country Profile: Malaysia. UNdata, 2007. Retrieved October 7, 2009, from <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Malaysia>
- Ansary H. & Babaii, E. (2003). Subliminal Sexism in Current ESL/EFL Textbooks. *Asian-EFL Journal* 5/1. Retrieved August 3, 2009, from <http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/march03.sub1.php>
- Bahiyah, D.H.A.H., Mohd. Subakir, M.Y., Kesumawati, A.B., Yuen, C.K. & Azhar, J. (2008). Linguistic Sexism and Gender Role Stereotyping in Malaysian English Language Textbooks. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, Vol 8(2).pp.45-62.
- Chandran, S.K. & Mardziah, H.A. (2003). Gender Bias in Malaysian English Language Textbooks. In *Readings on ELT Materials* ed. Mukundan, J. Pp. 91-101. Serdang: Universiti Putra Malaysia Press.
- Choi, T.Wo. Boy, It's A Tough World for Girls. *Star Education*, September 27, 2009, pp.10-11
- Dat, B. (2006). Breaking the Stereotypes in Coursebooks. In *Readings on ELT Materials II* ed. Mukundan, J. pp. 70-83. Selangor: Pearson Malaysia Sdn. Bhd.
- Diekman, A.B. & Murnen, S.K. (2004). Learning to be Little Women and Little Men: The Equitable Gender Equality of Nonsexist Children's Literature. Retrieved August 29, 2009, from www.springerlink.com/index/QMX32610L2307347.pdf
- Ghorbani, L. (2009). An Investigation of the Manifestation of Sexism in EFL/ESL Textbooks. *Educational Resources Information Centre*. Retrieved August 15, 2009, from
- Holmes, J. (2001). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistic* (2nd ed.). London: Longman Pearson Education.
- Khairi, I.A., Wee, D. & Teo, H.B. (2002). *KBSM: English Form 1*. Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Alhas (M) Sdn. Bhd.
- Lee, A., Arokiasamy, J., Ganeshan, K. & Veerasamy, J. (2004). *KBSM: English Form 3*. Johor: PGI Cipta Sdn. Bhd.
- Muhammed Shahriar, H. & Chandran, S.K. (2004). Discourse of Gender: Conflicting Ideologies VS. Social Policies. *BRAC University Journal*, Vol. 1(2).pp. 21-32.
- Mukundan, J. & Nimehchisalem, V. (2008). Gender Representation in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Textbooks. In *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching*, Vol. 4(2).pp. 155-173.
- Ndura, E. (2004). ESL and Cultural Bias: An Analysis of Elementary Through High School Textbooks in the Western United States of America. Retrieved August, 27, 2009 from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=EJ728351>
- Parasuraman, R., Chung, C.M.C. & Papatlal, S. (2003). *KBSM: English Form 5*. Selangor: Sutrapadu (M) Sdn. Bhd.
- Plumm, K. M. (2008). Technology in the classroom: Burning the bridges to the gaps in gender-biased education? *Computers & Education*, vol. 50(3). pp. 1052-1068. Retrieved September 29, 2009 from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2006.10.005>
- Ramlee, M. & Normala, S. (2007). Gender Communication in a Workplace: A Case Study in a Local Construction Industry. In *ELT Matters 4* ed. Mukundan, J. and Menon, S. pp. 406-413. Serdang: Universiti Putra Malaysia Press.
- Rohihi, S., Kurup, U. & Shalani, L. (2003). *KBSM: English Form 2*. Selangor: Penerbit Mega Setia Emas Sdn. Bhd.
- Selected Poems and Short Stories: Form 1* (2000). Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Selected Poems and Short Stories: Form 4* (2000). Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Tan, P.L. & Ng, A.K.L. (2002). *KBSM: English Form 4*. Selangor: Mutiara Cemerlang Sdn. Bhd.
- Tao, B. (2008). Identifying and Combating Sexism in EFL Textbooks – with a case study into China. *Educational Resources Information Centre*. Retrieved September 28, 2009, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/3e/4c/94.pdf
- Teh, C.S. (2003). Gender-The Missing Factor in the Selection of Materials. In *Readings on ELT Materials* ed. Mukundan, J. pp. 84-90. Serdang: Universiti Putra Malaysia Press.
- Treichler, P. & Frank, F. (1989). Introduction: Scholarship, feminism, and language change. In F. Frank & P. Treichler (Eds.), *Language, gender and professional writing; Theoretical approaches and guidelines for nonsexist usage* (pp. 1-32). NY: MLA.

Table 1: Percentage of gender-specific illustrations in Malaysian Secondary ELT textbooks and Literature in English Form 1 and Form 4

	F 1 ^a	F2 ^a	F3 ^a	F4 ^a	F5 ^a	LEF1 ^b	LEF4 ^b	Total	%
Male	318	307	499	219	381	13	7	1744	63
Female	190	216	244	158	207	10	1	1026	37

^aF1 – F5 (Form 1 – Form 5)^bLEF1, LEF4 (Literature in English Form 1 and Form 4)**Table 2: Gender-specific common nouns in KBSM textbooks**

Male	<i>f</i>	Female	<i>f</i>
brother	53	mother	149
men	48	girl	51
grandfather	31	wife	41
dad	28	sister	39
chairman	24	women	33
husband	23	grandmother	31
brothers	18	woman	26
father's	18	girls	25
hero	17	mother's	22
fishermen	13	grandma	20
man's	11	ladies	20
fathers	10	lady	17
gentlemen	10	sisters	16
fisherman	6	mothers	6
boy's	5	sister's	5
grandfather's	5	aunts	4
sons	5	housewife	4
brother's	4	grandma's	3
schoolboy	4	grandmothers	3
grandson	3	grandmother's	3
headman	3	wife's	3
men's	3	aunt's	1
uncles	3	girlfriend	1
uncle's	2	girlfriends	1
gentleman	1	granddaughters	1
grandpa	1	granny	1
guy	2	mum	37
man	152	daughter	18
boy	76	auntie	10
boys	70	girl's	6
uncle	62	princess	6
son	45	females	4
prince	6	mom	4
male	5	mum's	3
abah	3	queen	3
abang	2	aunty	2
king's	2	stepsister	2
papa	1	womens	2
		wives	2
		housewives	1
		schoolgirl	1
Total	775	Total	627

Table 3: Gender-specific common nouns in Form 1 Literature reading

Male	<i>f</i>	Female	<i>f</i>
Father	20	Mother	15
Brother	19	Wife	5
Men	13	Ladies	4
Brother's	6	Womenfolk	4
Son	12	Sisters	1
Brothers	16	Grandmother	11
Father's	6		
Uncle	1		
Sons	4		
Captain	2		
Chiefs	2		
Man's	8		
Workmen	2		
Boy	4		
Man	15		
Total	130	Total	40

Table 4: Gender-specific common nouns in Form 4 Literature reading

Male	<i>f</i>	Female	<i>f</i>
Men	6	Women	11
Man	20	Mother	9
Boy	4	Girls	5
Brother	4	Girl	1
Boys	2	Wife	13
Boy's	1	Woman	7
Bushman	1	Bushwoman	2
Husband	14	Ladies	2
Guy	7	Wives	1
Cabmen	1	Woman's	1
Father	2	Nyonya	2
Footmen	1	Women's	1
Gentlemen	1	Grandmother	1
Doctor	40		
Man's	2		
Kings	1		
Master	1		
Son	1		
Baba	2		
Total	111	Total	56

Table 5: Total gender-specific common nouns in the entire analyzed corpus

	KBSM Textbooks	Literature in English Form 1	Literature in English Form 4	Total	%
Male Common Nouns	775	130	111	1016	58
Female Common Nouns	627	40	56	723	41

Table 6: Gender pronouns in KBSM textbooks

Males	<i>f</i>	Females	<i>f</i>
He	1290	She	802
His	991	Her	786
Him	357	She's	18
Himself	48	Herself	15
He's	20	Hers	9
Total	2706	Total	1630

Table 7: Gender-specific pronouns in Form 1 Literature reading

	Male	Female
He/She	291	15
Him/Her	124	27
His/Hers	212	0
Himself/Herself	3	0
Total	630	42

Table 8: Gender-specific pronouns in Form 4 Literature reading

	Male	Female
He/She	325	137
Him/Her	57	102
His/Hers	123	0
Himself/Herself	13	8
Total	518	247

Table 9: Percentage of gender-specific pronouns in the entire analyzed books

	KBSM Textbooks	Literature in English Form 1	Literature in English Form 4	Total	%
Male Pronouns	2706	630	518	3854	67
Female Pronouns	1630	42	247	1919	33

Table 10: Term of address in KBSM textbooks

Male	<i>f</i>	Female	<i>f</i>
Mr	177	Mrs	85
Sir	36	Miss	46
Encik	35	Puan	40
Datuk	31	Ms	11
Haji	10	Madam	9
Hj	1	Cik	8
		Kak	5
		Hajjah	4
		Makcik	3
		Ibu	1
		Makcik's	1
Total	290	Total	213

Table 11: Term of address in Form 1 Literature reading

Male	<i>f</i>	Female	<i>f</i>
Mr	47	Hajjah	1
Sir	17		
Haji	1		
Total	65	Total	1

Table 12: Term of address in Form 4 Literature reading

Male	<i>f</i>	Female	<i>f</i>
Mr	4	Madame	19
		Mrs	6
Total	4	Total	25

Table 13: Percentage of term of address in the entire analyzed corpus

	KBSM Textbooks	Literature in English Form 1	Literature in English Form 4	Total	%
Male Term of Address	290	65	4	359	60
Female Term of Address	213	1	25	239	40

Table 14: Names of characters in KBSM textbooks

	<i>f</i>
Male Names of Characters	2919
Female Names of Characters	1273

Table 15: Names of characters in Form 1 Literature reading

Male	<i>f</i>	Female	<i>f</i>
Umat	25	Tina	1
Galau	27	Zainab	1
Lutong	10	Nina	1
Galau's	3	Siti	1
Jamal	83		
Zailan	1		
Zahid	85		
Dolah	43		
Jamal	34		
Ali	11		
Majod	11		
Berahir	9		
Zahid's	6		
Dolah's	4		
Jamal's	3		
Dollah	2		
Berahir's	1		
Muhammad	1		
Safian	1		
Salleh	1		
Samad	1		
Dalat	10		
Total	372	Total	4

Table 16: Names of characters in Form 4 Literature reading

Male	<i>f</i>	Female	<i>f</i>
Mokgobja	2	Boseyong	1
Ramadi	2	Neo	1
Ramadi's	1	Tiro	1
Tommy	2	Nesta	1
Wilson's	1	Mathilde	5
Loisel	14	Saunders	6
Klausner	37	Assunta	4
Scott	6	Nina	1
Charlie	1	Forestier	6
Klausner's	1	Forestier's	1
Wilson	19		
Thomas	2		
William	2		
Thomas	2		
Total	92	Total	27

Table 17: Percentage of names of characters in the entire analyzed corpus

	KBSM Textbooks	Literature in English Form 1	Literature in English Form 4	Total	%
Male Term of Address	2919	372	92	3383	72
Female Term of Address	1273	4	27	1304	28

Table 18: Percentage of gender-specific occupations

	<i>f</i>	%
Total Occupations for Males	145	56
Total Occupations for Females	112	44

Table 19: Adjectives found in the texts attributing to specific gender

Adjective Associated with Males		Adjective Associated with Females	
brave	clever	attractive	beautiful
courageous	creative	careless	charming
diligent	dirty	cheerful	friendly
evil	fast	graceful	kind
friendly	lazy	neat	nervous
hardworking	intelligent	nice	pleasant
kind	lovely	pretty	
popular	powerful		
rich	shy		