

Gendered Discourses in Moroccan EFL Textbooks: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract: The general objective of this paper is to examine the problem of gender inequality in Moroccan textbooks of English as a foreign language (MEFL). Nine MEFL textbooks published and sponsored by the Ministry of Education in Morocco have been sampled to serve this purpose. The written discourse of these textbooks has been examined employing Van Dijk (1995, 2001); Wodak (2001); and Fairclough's (1989) theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The results of this inquiry do suggest that much remains to be done regarding the predominance of male-centered patterns characterizing the discursual practices of these textbooks. There is a general tendency to depict women as subservient housewives, subordinate, disempowered, marginalized, silenced, and even excluded from the written text. Their portrayal is still connected with less intelligence, lack of independence, submissiveness, and social inferiority. The sampled textbooks are fraught with myriad instances of power relations of dominance and hegemony, thereby accentuating the gender gap between the two sex groups to men's favor.

Keywords: Gender bias, textbooks, critical discourse analysis, female and male representation, social exclusion

1. Introduction

This study sets out to examine an array of aspects and dimensions pertaining to textbook textual discourses from a critical discourse analysis perspective. This approach, according to Van Dijk (1995, 2001); Wodak (2001), and Fairclough (1989), entails an interdisciplinary approach drawing on a confluence of disciplines, namely social-psychology, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, to name but only a few.

Of special concern to this study is the attempt to disclose and deconstruct the discursive parameters of the written discourse of these textbooks thereby detecting the internal linguistic manifestations which suggest power relations, hegemony, societal disparities and social dominance. Pragmatic and argumentative dimensions of discourse are also operationalized and implemented in the analysis.

Note shall be made at the outset of this study that some of the data under investigation have been explored elsewhere in a different paper (see Benattabou, 2014), and have also been revisited here, along with other more examples, to assess the extent to which the tools of critical discourse analysis can be successfully implemented to unmask the latent ideological attitudes and beliefs which are potentially embedded in the written discourse of MEFL textbooks.

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2. Conceptual and methodological Framework

Van Dijk (1995, 1997, 2001), Wodak (2001), and Fairclough's (1989) theoretical framework of what comes to be dubbed as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA henceforth) has been endorsed as a key research approach in this study to disclose and unveil the subtle nature of gender stereotyping ingrained in the linguistic discourse of these textbooks. CDA has been defined as "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Van Dijk, 2001, p.352).

CDA is concerned essentially not only with what is said, but also what is unsaid and remains hidden in the discursive components of discourse. This finds true expression in Wodak's (2001) argument that CDA is "fundamentally interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language".(2001, p.2).

Fairclough's (2001; 2003) theoretical conception of CDA is geared towards the examination of social inequality and injustice as transmitted to us through the linguistic manifestations embedded in discourse. His approach goes beyond the description and explanation of language to challenge any linguistic form of social dominance. This may surely help us come into grips with "the rules of the game" that people in a position of power may draw on to exert their hegemony through discourse.

Central to the method adopted in this study are the principles of conversational analysis as developed and elaborated on by Schegloff et al. (1977) and Searle (1979), among others. The focus here is on the conventions of turn-taking norms which govern in a subtle way who talks, when and for how long. Speech Act theory seems to be of more significance as it may help account for the analysis of any discourse utterance from the perspective of three major levels set forward in Austin's (1976) taxonomy: the locutionary force (what is said), the illocutionary force (what is done), and the perlocutionary force (the effect).

Traditional discourse analysis pertaining to gender studies (e.g., Fishman, 1983; Lakoff, 1973; Coates, 1986) remains, however, too short analyzing merely the sequential organization of conversational encounters at a superficial level. CDA (Fairclough, 2001, 2003; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 1997, 2001); by contrast, goes beyond the confines of discourse analysis to account for the social inequalities deeply-rooted in the discursive roles assigned to both men and women. CDA provides us with a comprehensive analysis of meaning in texts, without overlooking the power social relationship between participants transmitted through the observable as well as the covert messages underlying the discourse of textbooks.

CDA is reported to be more feasible in trying to pin down and handle any form of power and dominance. Rather than merely describe the overall pattern of discourse, as is the case with traditional DA, CDA sets out to examine the way "discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society" (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 353). Van Dijk (2001) takes this conceptual framework a step further arguing that the objective of CDA is to take an active part in trying "to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality" (Ibid, p.352).

3. Methodology of research

3.1. Data collection procedures

The aim of this study is to investigate the issue of gender imbalances in Moroccan textbooks of English as a foreign language (MEFL). The analysis of sex stereotyping in the textual representation of women and men was undertaken for current-edition MEFL textbooks published and sponsored by the Ministry of Education in Morocco. Nine of these textbooks have been sampled to serve this purpose. Van Dijk (1995, 2001; Wodak (2001); and Fairclough's (1989) theoretical framework of CDA has been used as an instrumental tool for the analysis of their written discourses.

A thorough analysis of all instances of sexism in these textbooks is beyond the scope of this paper. We will be selective and try to scrutinize only some of them (For a thorough analysis of the entire discourses of these textbooks, see Benattabou, 2015).

3.2. The Sampled Textbooks

The analysis of sex stereotyping in the textual representation of women and men was undertaken for nine current-edition MEFL textbooks published and sponsored by the Ministry of Education in Morocco.

The selection of nine MEFL textbooks was made on the basis of the criteria of purposive sampling. This sampling procedure ordains the selection of a sample with pre-established criteria. The first criterion is that the sampled textbooks are all of them Moroccan textbooks of English, and designed after the recommendations of gender bias-free materials put forward in Sabir's (2005) report. They represent almost 100 per cent of the entire range of textbooks currently used for classroom purposes. The teacher guides and the workbooks pertaining to them are excluded from this study. The second criterion is that the textbooks under scrutiny are designed by Moroccan writers and are currently still in use for classroom instructions among secondary school students of English in Morocco.

The nine Sampled Textbooks cover the following levels:

English Textbooks for Level 1:

- (1) Focus (2008). Nadia Edition, Rabat.

English Textbooks for Level 2: Common Core Classes:

- (2) Window on the World (2008). Rabat, Nadia Edition.
- (3) Outlook (2010). Inter Graph, Rabat.
- (4) Visa to the World (2010). Dar Nachr Almaarifa, Rabat.

English Textbooks for First Year Baccalaureate:

- (5) Gateway to English. Book 1 (2010). Nadia Edition, Rabat.
- (6) Ticket to English. Book 1 (2009). Casa Blanca, DIO. El Hadita.

English Textbooks for Second Year Baccalaureate:

- (7) Gateway to English. Book 2 (2010). Rabat, Nadia Edition.
- (8) Ticket to English. Book 2 (2009). Casa Blanca, DIO. El Hadita.
- (9) Insights into English (2008). Rabat, Nadia Edition.

4. The Results:

The results of this study suggest that MEFL textbooks are far from being sex-bias free in the discursive practices deployed in their written contents. Fairclough (2001, 2003); Fairclough and Wodak, (1997) ; and Van Dijk's , (1997, 2001) theoretical framework of CDA has been used as an instrumental tool for the analysis of this study, and has shown that subordinate social groups, women in this context, have been silenced and tamed in such a way that they are displayed as presenting no challenge or resistance. Women have been denied the right to take any active discursal role. They are induced to legitimize men's hegemony through silence, acceptance and compliance with this dominance.

It is my contention, and I do not claim originality for this, that the indoctrination of these stereotypes along with the unequal power relationship in the discourse of both men and women may surely have detrimental effects, for both male and female language learners alike, not only in the short term but even in the long term.

The traditional and stereotypical sex-roles related to women do continue to figure conspicuously and blatantly through many examples in Moroccan EFL textbooks. A thorough analysis of all instances of sexism in these textbooks is beyond the scope of this analysis. We will be selective and try to scrutinize only some of them.

4.1. Women's subordination and servitude through discourse.

Relations of power and dominance have been observed to be one of the recurrent themes deeply seated in the textual discourse of MEFL textbooks. More worrisome, perhaps, is the list of role models a woman is socially compelled to play, as dictated by a male doctor addressing the wife of a male patient. For a "good wife" to help her husband restore his health, according to the doctor, she has to be thoroughly at his service and should stick to the following, I would call, "housewife model prescription":

(1) "...each morning, fix him a healthy breakfast. Be pleasant, and make sure he is in a good mood. For lunch make him a nutritious meal. For dinner prepare an especially nice meal for him. Don't burden him with chores, as he probably had a hard day. Don't discuss your problems with him, it will only make his stress worse; and most important of all, express how much you love him every now and then" (Gateway 2 : 86).

As one may observe from this extract, the distribution of turn-taking among these two participants is not on equal footing. There is a one-dimensional flow of speech from the part of the 'preacher', the male doctor. The principles of conversational analysis as designed and illustrated by Schegloff et al. (1977) have been utterly distorted as there is no equilibrium in the distribution of turns. The conventions of turn-taking which govern and determine the distribution and flow of turns between two or more participants in any conversational interaction have not been kept on egalitarian grounds and to a strict minimum of fairness.

The use of the imperative form becomes blatant when being more exploited in an exaggerated and a successive way. Such discursive practices do utterly infringe Lakoff's (1973) rules of politeness: "don't impose", "give options" and "make the listener feel good". The issued order is rendered more offensive, and may be akin to the military discourse in the form of a harangue between a superior and a subordinate:

'Fix, be pleasant, make sure, make him, prepare, and express how much you love him'.

Similarly, the list of threats and warnings the wife has been induced to comply with for the sake of her husband's safety may illustrate the socio-political hierarchies shaping the discourse between the dominant groups and the subordinate ones:

'Don't burden him; don't discuss your problems with him.'

Here we are legitimately led to raise the following question: If the housewife is not expected to share her worries with her husband, then one may wonder with whom she is expected to talk. The masculine pronoun (he, him, and his) is referred to 9 times while the feminine target word is invisible and nonexistent.

The list of tasks the wife is culturally expected to undertake is numerous and calls to my mind an example elicited from a Moroccan TV advertising caption. The setting is the kitchen, the main character is the famous actress 'Mouna Fettou', and the commercial product is a kitchen utensil. What is very intriguing in this example is the name of the commercial product 'the kitchen utensil in this case', referred to as "Lalla Fait Tout" (literally means, a woman who can do it all), which carries a feminine overtone and conveys the exceptional ability of a woman to do all sorts of jobs. This certainly echoes the strong stereotypical image which associates women with the household.

This vision which constrains the profile of women to all domestic activities has been alluded to in Sadiqi's (2008a) argument that in the Moroccan context "the harder a woman works the better she is socially judged. This stereotype is epitomized in the two concepts of *sbbara* "enduring" and *_adga* "hard-working", both being two highly valued attributes according to which women are primarily judged inside and outside their families" (p. 13).

Of further significance to the example cited above is that the use of the imperative form as directives and commands presupposes that the addressee is in a subordinate social position while the agent belongs to a dominant and powerful group. The force of the imperative (warning, threat and order) is to exercise in a patronizing way certain influence on the interlocutor/ addressee (the woman).

As readers, we have been induced to sympathize with the woman who has been muted, as she is not given any floor to take her discursive turn. She is not allowed to take any discursive space of her own to demonstrate, as a backchannel, her understanding of the doctor. This could have been achieved discursively either through the paraphrasing or the reformulation of the doctor's speech, or through her collaborative completion of his utterance. But neither seems to be the case in this context.

In another instance, a picture supplementing a dialogue in *Outlook* displays a male doctor examining a male patient, while a female nurse is standing nearby assisting and observing:

(2) "Dr.Smith: What's the matter Steve?

Steve: As you see doctor, I have a stuffy nose and fever.

Dr. Smith: Don't worry! It's just a bad cold.

Steve: Can I go to work?...I'm so busy these days.

Dr. Smith: Not yet, Steve. You'd better stay off your feet for a day or so. Steve: Ugh! Well...

Dr. Smith: Don't forget to take this medicine three times a day after eating (...)" (*Outlook*, p. 68).

Although there is an equal distribution of turn taking between the male doctor and his patient throughout the whole dialogue, the female assistant has been silenced/muted having no role to play but only to observe what is going on.

This pattern of result echoes Jones et al.'s (1997) study that male characters have been reported to dominate most conversational topics. 'John', as a male speaker in this study, is often initiating dialogues. 'Sally', a female character; on the other hand, is usually depicted as complying with John's statements using merely shorter responses. More intriguing, perhaps, in the same study is that John's utterances are judged as being longer than Sally's.

An essential contention in most critical discourse studies is that of power, dominance, and control. With respect to the previous example, multiple resources have been blatantly exploited by the doctor (who embodies the dominant group) to exert his influence over the woman (who stands for dominated and under-privileged groups). The persuasive impact of the male speaker emanates from his 'privileged access' to a host of assets, namely his knowledge of medicine, and his social and professional authority as a doctor.

This amounts to saying that conversational participants who belong to more dominant and more powerful social groups or institutions tend to have the prerogative right to more specific patterns of discourse, and have more chances to wield certain control on the minds and actions of dominated or subordinate groups.

It is not unwise to contend in this connection that research findings corroborating the view that male speakers tend to control and dominate most topics and most floors in conversational encounters with their female partners (Fishman, 1983, Lakoff, 1973; Palmer, 1989) have unfortunately been reproduced in the sequential organization of most dialogues in these EFL textbooks. It is not unlikely that male foreign language learners, to the exclusion of females, may also have more chances to enhance their communicative skills, mainly through their knowledge of when and how to issue an array of speech acts or speech genres.

Going back to the first example outlined above, the woman is, through many instances, reported to be under the obligation to supervise all work and to undertake all duties: a mother, a professional cook, a good-looking housewife, a nurse, a psychologist, a nutritionist, to name but only a few (Gateway 2 : 86).

It is actually unjust that too many responsibilities have been implicitly placed upon the shoulder of women. It is also unfair that the female figure is incited to endorse the proverbial saying 'Jack of all trades, master of none'. Rather than concentrating on one single profession, the woman is socially expected to become an expert at multiple occupations, thereby precluding her aspirations and weakening her chances to bring her potential into fullness.

This is another implicit memorandum transmitted through the discourse of the textbooks which may disempower the female character. Doing too many jobs at the same time will surely lead to a person being unable to master none of them.

Additionally, Moroccan EFL textbooks tend to perpetuate and strengthen the stereotypical expectations of the Moroccan community regarding a woman's social role. She is culturally expected to sacrifice everything for the sake of the family's happiness. To show his gratitude towards his mother's colossal duties, Sam, a sixteen years old boy, comments that:

(3) "There is simply no way we can ever really thank our mother for all she has done for us. She is the one who will be awake all night when we are sick and be ready to bear the pain that we may be experiencing. She is the one to wake up early in the morning and cook all sorts of things so that we will be strong and healthy. Mothers are the ones who would forever complain that we are not eating enough and not eating right. Mothers, in fact, worry more about our examinations than we do. Mother's day is the right time to apologize for all the trouble that we give them"(Ticket 1: 99).

Although the boy (the reporter and the agent of the speech here is a male interlocutor) has expressed his gratitude towards his mom, the message of the discourse is but only reflective of the socio-cultural expectations of society. There is actually too much pressure being placed upon women's shoulder. The unsaid memorandum is that women are doomed to display a complete sense of self-denial. This mother is but only a prototype of other mothers being subject to the same prejudice. Such stereotypical roles must surely leave an indelible scar in female students' minds, particularly those who may unconsciously identify themselves with such role models (Porecca, 1984; Sunderland, 1994, 2000).

The danger that may perhaps accrue from this is that female language learners may be indoctrinated to believe that their duty in life is but only to serve man. The following dialogue seems to illustrate this ideological way of thinking:

(4) "Carol: there isn't any chocolate and we haven't got any cherries, either.

Mother: tell Tony to get the missing ingredients from the shop.

Carol: he can't. He's doing his homework. Don't worry him. I'll go and get them for you right away." (Outlook: 58).

Although this extract displays a conversation between two female interlocutors, the usual predictable pattern reinforced here is that women have no other preoccupation but only to satisfy the needs and the cultural expectations of dominant social groups (the boy in this context). The woman and her daughter have been linguistically qualified as subservient housewives or mothers.

Likewise, males, according to this example, are given the prerogative right, and the privileged access to more information doing one's homework "He's doing his homework. Don't worry him", which may eventually be conducive to more educational prospects for them.

Women have also been depicted discursively as worrying too much about family problems, namely children's scholastic attainments:

(5) "My mother brought up that little matter of our school results again" (Gateway 2, p. 140).

The ideological message expressed through this statement is women's further preoccupation with the educational prospects of their offspring. The woman is induced to endure the burden of another role too arduous to contrive essentially linked with the education as well as the well-being of very young children. One may argue in this connection that female characters have a very low profile in the discourse of these textbooks, except as mothers, housewives, and tutors.

Female language learners may undoubtedly be at a loss, and in a psychological dilemma split apart between their socially and culturally imposed duty as responsible for the household, and their motivation to excel in their studies. They are portrayed as passive targets succumbing to the whims of dominant social groups or institutions deciding for them "what (not) to believe or what to do" (Van Dijk, 2001, p.356).

What follows from this is that female language learners may get the false message that their exclusive role in society is but only to be at the disposal of their male partners. They are denied the right to any form of educational or social enrichment.

4.2. Women as objects of ridicule

Another blatant form of discourse to de-humanize and denigrate women is to render them as targets for sarcasm and ridicule. Hartman and Judd (1978) argue that the contents of textbooks are

sometimes highly sexist as they depict women as being subject to ridicule and “the butts of jokes”. In Gateway 1, for instance, students are instructed to read some jokes:

(6) A couple decided to go to the cinema.

“Two tickets, please.”

“Is that for ‘Romeo and Juliet’?”

“No, it’s for my wife and myself” (Gateway 2, p.76).

Although the intent of this joke is to stress the communication breakdown resulting from the ambiguity in the message between the two interlocutors, it is worth noting that it is only the husband who is requesting and responding. The lady in company of her husband has been discursively put in the margin, excluded and has no say in the conversation. She has been once again, as is the case with so many examples, ‘remote controlled’, muted and given no chance to share her opinion with the two men.

Another good illustration of the power relations between women and men is through the following dialogue between a wife and her husband. The woman seems confused looking for a book she has recently bought for her own personal readings:

(7) “Madam Dupont called her husband:

Darling, the other day I bought a book, but now I can’t find it.

Can you remember what it was called?

How to live to be 100?

I threw it away.

What? Why did you throw it away?

Your mother started reading it” (Gateway 2, p.76).

The analysis of this dialogue seems to point towards two major stereotypes discriminating against women. The first is that the implicit message of the conversation tends to reinforce the stereotypical vision that women are far more likely to be obsessed with their age, as the old saying reads: “A man is as old as he feels, and the woman as old as she looks”. This sends the ideological misconception that women (both the wife and her mother) are psychologically obsessed with the way they look.

The same ideology has been reiterated several times throughout the contents of the sampled textbooks either with women’s excessive care with shopping, fashion, beauty, or their concern with their physical attractiveness (Benattabou, 2015)

The second sexist ideology transmitted through the conversation is the power relation between women and men. The man seems to be more dominant and aggressive through the use of the more deliberate and offensive answer “I threw it”. Similarly, another implicit ideology is to stress man’s manipulation of discourse deciding what a woman should and should not read.

Another example reinforcing the same stereotypical depiction of women being anxious about their age is through a comic strip with a caption in Ticket 1:

(8) “Small daughter: where are you going grandma?

Grandma: Down the street for a visit, Ruthie! I haven’t seen her for a while, so I’m going to see how old Miss Lucie is.

Small daughter: Oh, How old do you think she is?"(Ticket 1, p.93).

More offensive, perhaps, is that this conversation between a small girl and an old lady has been included in this section in Ticket 1 to create humor and fun in class. Although humor has been viewed as a pedagogical tool to make the classroom less tensed, the writers of this textbook seem to overlook the stereotypical hidden intent of the passage perpetuating women's obsession with the problem of aging. Men, however, seem to be exempt from all these pressures as they have never been shown in the same contexts worrying about their age. The contents of the sampled textbooks are replete with women discussing their overweight, consulting doctors and displaying their worries to nutritionists.

Central to our discussion here is the following extract depicting women in a caricaturist way behaving like very small children. The setting once again is a male doctor's office where an old lady is complaining about her obesity to the doctor.

(9) "Doctor: Now, let's see? How do you feel, Mrs. Plump?

Mrs. Plump: Well, I always feel weak and tired when I get up in the morning. I look at myself in the mirror and I say: "...Yes, I'm putting on **weight and I can't get into my clothes.**" Must I go on a diet? Must I see a nutritionist?

Doctor: No, you don't have to see a nutritionist, either. But you must change your eating habits.

Mrs. Plump: What do you mean? Must I give up chips, cakes and the like?

Doctor: Well, you mustn't eat fast food every day. You must eat three balanced meals.

You must cut down sweets and fatty food.

Mrs. Plump: Is that all?

Doctor: Of course not... You must exercise regularly.

Mrs. Plump: Thanks a lot Doctor" (Outlook, p.70).

Although there is an equal distribution in turn taking between the male doctor and his female patient, one would in no way miss a clear imbalance in power and dominance between the doctor's patronizing discourse and the female patient's more cooperative and less forceful remarks.

The doctor seems to be in a position of authority being in the know of the field of health care problems. It is the doctor who initiates the dialogue making his diagnosis of the lady through a number of questions. The lady's answers seem to be quite clear as she is in despair expressing her inability to go on a strict diet, and her obsession with her body weight:

"I look at myself in the mirror and I say:....yes, I'm putting on weight and I cannot get into my clothe. Must I go on a diet? Must I see a nutritionist?"

Another stereotypical pattern of this discourse emerges through what comes to be known in the literature as 'the infantilization of women' (Jhally, 2009; Kilbourne, 2000). This is another recurrent theme deployed to perpetuate women's submissiveness and social vulnerability in a child-like manner. The allusion to the lady's greediness for fast food, and her addiction to children's eating habits displaying a preference for chips and sweets may carry an overtone of mockery, and is therefore highly suggestive of this infantilized tendency:

"Must I give up chips, cakes and the like?

"You must cut down on sweets and fatty food."

What is more ironical in the dialogue is the name of the lady “Mrs. Plump” which bears a negative overtone. The name has been certainly chosen to heighten the lady’s overweight. Her name is a token of her being too fat.

She seems being infantilized and trivialized “must I give up chips”. The doctor; however, takes a dominant stance using a patronizing language: “You must not eat.....you mustyou must cut down sweets” (Outlook, p.70).

The over use of the negative form of “have to” and “must” is indicative of the power relation between the doctor and his patient. This biased pattern in discourse may give the impression that he is addressing his message to a little child. The old lady is displayed discursively as being immature and in the most dehumanized way one could imagine. She seems to succumb to the doctor’s orders and finally confirms: “Is that all?”

Her shorter responses like ‘Is that all?’, and ‘Thanks a lot Doctor’ are once more underpinning the stereotypical and demeaning image of women as submissive, socially and psychologically vulnerable, and in most cases as child-like.

Despite the fact that obesity is a worldwide problem across the two sex groups, MEFL textbooks seem to connect it merely with female characters, and males seem to be exempt from all such worries. The danger of this stereotypical way of thinking which focuses more and more on women’s bodies more often than their intellect may force women, in specific and female language learners as consumers of these textbooks, to look for ways to enhance their physical attractiveness and their sex appeal. Some of them may dare undergo plastic surgeries as is insinuated to in the following extract: (10) “Barbara: to be honest, aesthetic plastic surgery is quite dangerous” (Gateway 2 p.66).

4.3. Women and less rewarding social roles.

In addition to their being utterly at the disposal of men, women are stereotypically portrayed being restrained to low-status and less financially rewarding occupations. Their character collocates more often with poverty and low-paid jobs. The discursal message here is to domesticate and tame women. They are made to feel being truly subordinate to man.

(11) “Mary has got a small shop in the market where she **sells second-hand clothes and** machines” (Gateway2, p. 25)

(12) “The monk tipped the waitress” (Gateway2, p. 69)

(13) “Laila has just started a small business. Every morning, she has to bake bread and take it to the nearest market” (Gateway 2, p.155).

As may be elicited from these excerpts, a woman is described only as a seller of second-hand clothes, as a waitress or as an owner of less prestigious and menial occupational roles. It is felt as though the reader is pushed towards sympathizing with these women who are showcased as being economically disadvantaged and victims of social injustice.

This social misrepresentation is more fuelled particularly through comparison and contrast. Men in this connection are more associated with high-status and more lucrative employments. There is allusion to their being more financially empowered and at ease:

(14) “I was astonished when the man at the next table gave the waiter a ten-dollar note as a tip”(Gateway 2, p.25).

They are once again displayed to the reader as private owners of “well renowned restaurants” and as showing strong enthusiasm to enhance their social status through investment of “a considerable amount of money”:

(15) “Mustapha, who owns a well renowned restaurant in Washington D.C, expresses his willingness to invest a considerable amount of money in the country” (Gateway2, p.110).

The adjectival clause qualifying the female character, “where she sells second-hand clothes and machines”, in the example above suggests that more demeaning and undignified social roles are inherently linked with women; whereas, those collocating with the category of prestige and reputation “who owns a well renowned restaurant in Washington D.C” are more likely to be employed to portray males.

In a like manner, almost the same stereotypical patterns prevail in the following descriptions of male-female social roles:

(16) “Silvio’s father is a photographer but his mother is a taxi driver.

Mary’s father is a pilot but his mother is a secretary.

Omar’s father is a teacher but his mother is a nurse” (Visa: 28).

While the gender barrier has been broken at least in part with respect to Silvia’s mother entering a new job that of a ‘taxi-driver’, traditionally reserved for men, the other mothers do still maintain the stereotypical vision of low-paid working women including secretaries and nurses. Men, by contrast are seen enjoying other occupations like a ‘photographer’, a ‘teacher’ and even more a ‘pilot’, the exclusive privilege of men.

The discursive patterns of these instances hinge on opposition and contrast. This is perhaps a more powerful and persuasive technique to push foreign language learners, and the readers of these textbooks at large, to see the world around them in terms of binaries. The prevalent and dominant portrayal of women here reproduces and sustains the status quo, as it may disempower the potential of female language learners delimiting their aspirations to domestic chores and to low-profit social careers.

What is intriguing about opposition here is the frequent usage of the conjunction “but” which comes to strengthen the contrast between men and women as belonging to two separate and dichotomous worlds, those in power and those under control.

Another interesting feature emanates from the stylistic variation characterizing the internal structure of these three compound sentences. All of them share one common feature that the main clauses qualifying men come first, while those qualifying female characters are relegated to a secondary position.

4.4. The discursive exclusion of women

Another aspect of social inequality and misrepresentation is the linguistic invisibility of women in discourse. Critical discourse analysis seems once again to be more viable in trying to disclose the hidden messages which underlie the discursive dimensions of the following first two statements, and the last two proverbial expressions.

- (17) “If only man didn’t use atomic bombs in war... Ticket 2, p.134).
- (18) “Brain drain is the mobility of highly skilled manpower” (Insights, p.81).
- (19) “An orphan is a child whose parents are dead” (Gateway1, p. 92).
- (20) “A good citizen has a sense of responsibility to his own country” (Gateway 2, p.101)
- (21) “Travelling is almost like talking with men of other cultures”. (Ticket1, p.138).
- (22) “He who has health has hope; he who has hope has everything” (Insights, p.20; Ticket 1, p.37).
- (23) “Health is a crown on man’s head which no one can see it but the sick man” (Gateway2, p.118).

As is the case with the proverbial expressions and the wordings of some legal texts reviewed and diagnosed elsewhere (Benattabou, 2015), the use of the generic ‘he’ and ‘man’ throughout all these seven examples leaves no room or space for women. The identity of the female has been utterly blurred if not concealed, and the male character overrides the semantic dimension of these sentences as he is deemed the only standard or reference. Women; on the other hand, have been marginalized and excluded altogether, and the reader has the impression that this is a man’s prerogative world par excellence.

It is very regrettable that such unbalanced power relations have often times gone unnoticed, and remain “frequently obfuscated and hidden” (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p. 20) in people’s everyday life conversations and talks.

On a somewhat similar note, the female character is not defined as an autonomous person in her own right, but only as an adjunct and being financially dependent on man’s wealth or status:

- (24) “Mary decided to buy a new watch with the money her father gave her for her birthday” (Gateway2, p. 30).
- (25) “That’s the girl whose father is the mayor of the city” (Gateway 2, p.115).

The prepositional phrase in the first sentence and the adjectival clause in the second one tend to reinforce the idea of dependence. The two structures are meant to define the female character and add new supplementary meaning to her. Both feminine target words are defined in the light of the masculine words.

If ‘Mary’ decided to buy a new watch, it is mainly because of her father’s financial support: “Mary decided to buy a new watch with the money her father gave her for her birthday”. Likewise, the ‘girl’ in the second instance: “That’s the girl whose father is the mayor of the city” is known to us only because her father is the ‘mayor of the city’.

The ideological interest here emanates from the fact that the type of relative clauses and prepositional phrases attributed to portray female characters might also serve as linguistic evidence of the ideological convictions of MEFL textbook writers.

More conspicuous evidence for the exclusion of women from taking a leading role in social life, the following task included in Insights (p133) seems to be more revealing of the type of sex discrimination MEFL textbooks seem to perpetuate.

The title of the task reads as follows: “If you were a Minister of Education, what would you do?”. The instructions which accompany the extracts of five candidates for the job of the minister’s advisor state that:

(26) “As a minister of education, you cannot do your job alone. You must choose a team of advisors who will help you make important, and very difficult, decisions. Below are profiles of five people. Read them and pick up your top three advisors. Be wise in choosing them. You cannot take back a nomination”.

According to the above-mentioned instructions, students are incited to make a meticulous choice of only three candidates out of five. They were also warned that their decision must be wise enough and definitive.

Given the subtle and multiple duties a minister of education is unavoidably expected to undertake, there is a need for the selection of three top advisers to the minister who can help in this multifaceted enterprise. In what follows, brief reports about the profile of each of the five candidates applying for this position have been made and presented to the Minister of Education as follows:

(27) 1. “Mr. Abderrahim Halbi is a member of your political party. He is the editor-in-chief of the party’s newspaper. He has been doing an excellent job. He thinks only one foreign language should be taught in schools. If you don’t select him, he may leave the party”.

2. “Dr. Mustapha Herba is an experienced educator who supports smaller schools and smaller classes. He believes that speaking foreign languages is a key to tolerance. He is in favor of a scholarship for every university student”.

3. “Mr. Abdelaziz Ani is a little-known but respected economist. He’s been teaching economics for more than 30 years. He’s an influential member of your party. He is very careful about money. He is in favor of larger classes (60+)”.

4. “Mrs. Ani Najat is a high-ranking executive of a bank. She graduated from a private university at the age of 21. Her motto is ‘Education, Education, Education’.”

5. “Mr. Jaouad Allaoui is very good at writing speeches. He is tactful, friendly and nice. He’s been faithful to the party over the last 20 years” (Insights, p.133).

A critical discourse analysis of the profiles of the five applicants for candidacy as top advisers to the minister displays clearly the type of stereotypical discourse MEFL textbooks espouse favoring men.

To begin with, the distribution of the two sex groups reveals that the ratio of male to female characters is far more superior granting men more chances for success averaging 4: 1. By the same token, there are four male candidates but only one female. The male quota is unfairly very high.

Additionally, according to the bio-data of the four male candidates, there are more chances that three among males will be assigned this privilege. This is largely attributed to two major factors, namely their expertise in education and their political affiliation as members sharing strong ties when the minister’s political party.

Although Mr.Abderrahim Halbia and Mr.Jamal Allaani have no background in the field of education, they are both of them active members of the minister’s party. The former is “the editor-in-chief of the party’s newspaper”, and the latter has “been faithful to the party over the last 20 years”.

Dr.Mustapha has the advantage of being closely connected with education. He is “an experienced educator who supports smaller schools and small classes”, and he is more familiar with students’ problems and needs of scholarships and grants.

Perhaps more privileged of all candidates is Mr. Abdelaziz Ani who has the expertise in education and strong links with the minister's party. He has been presented as having "been teaching economics for more than 30 years". What is more is that "he is an influential member" of the party. His likelihood to be granted the task of the minister's advisor is very high as he seems to share with the present minister not only his concerns with education but also in politics as well.

More surprising perhaps, the least privileged candidate who seems to have less assets and no chances at all for this position is the female applicant Mrs. Ani Najat. A closer scrutiny of her profile reveals that she is neither a member of the minister's party, nor a specialist in the field of education. Through her profile, we understand that she is merely "a highly-ranked executive in a bank" (Insights, p. 133).

In-group membership seems to be lacking in the profile of Mrs. Ani Najat, the fact which may forcibly place her in a less privileged position for the expected duty in the foreseeable future. The only asset she seems to have is her motto "Education, Education, Education" which sounds repetitive, tautological and therefore less forceful.

Another form of bias referred to in the literature of women studies is women's "objectification". The stereotypical structure pertaining to the sentences of the textbooks under study seems to place men in subject positions as doers of the action (agents), while women are relegated to a secondary position being objects and as receivers of actions. A good illustration is the history behind the portrait of 'Mona Lisa' as a piece of art in (Visa, p.84).

The artist (subject) is male and the picture (object) is that of a female. Leonardo Davinci has been depicted as "a painter, but he was involved in many scientific activities such as anatomy, astronomy, botany, geology, geometry, and optics". He was also the designer of many machines and inventions. This is the reason why he is still called "a universal genius".

Being an "excellent observer", his portrait of Mona Lisa is one of the most famous pictures in the world.

(28) "The woman was probably the young wife of Francisco Del Giocondo, a rich Florentine merchant. Mona Liza is a shortened form of Madona Lisa (My lady, Lisa). The woman is also called La Giocoranda, which is the feminine form of her husband's last name".

'Mona Lisa' is not known as an independent person in her own, but called only after her husband's name (Visa, p. 84). The use of the possessive pronoun "my lady", along with the diminutive form of 'Madona' changing into 'Mona', seems to heighten the biased practice of women's objectification. While there is a detailed description about her previous husband (Francisco Del Giocondo) and the creator of this piece of art (Leonardo Davinci), we do have, however, no information at all about her. The woman has been referred to as a private property, firstly as a wife of her husband, and secondly as a commodity in the hands of her artist.

These syntactic structures should in no way be looked at as being innocuous. Rather, they carry culturally and socially loaded attitudes and beliefs which serve to discriminate against women, and perpetuate the patriarchal ideologies of the past. They are suggestive of the interests of those in a position of power who are struggling to marginalize and exclude subordinate social groups from joining them (Van Dijk, 1995, 2001; Fairclough, 1989, 1995).

4.5. Feminization of the most Vulnerable Groups of Society

As discussed earlier, female nouns and pronouns are observed to collocate more often with the most vulnerable groups of the population; they are more connected with such issues as poverty, illiteracy and the disadvantaged groups. Even worse, they are often described as mere victims of society:

- (29) "It (Morocco) is actively promoting a change in conditions of life of all Moroccans especially groups like women, children, the poor, and the handicapped." (Ticket 1, p.32).
- (30) "Laura will volunteer with our association to sensitize women to the importance of contraceptives in family planning." (Gateway1, p.117).
- (31) "A lot of women around the world are victims of..." (Gateway1, p.150).
- (32) "More micro-credits will be granted to unskilled women by Zakoura Foundation" (Ticket 2, p.74).
- (33) "More opportunities should be offered to women"; "Housewives must be given a helping hand by husbands" (Ticket 2, p.74).

There is indeed strong evidence to argue that the sampled textbooks are more inclined to cluster women in specific with the most dominated, the less privileged, and the most 'victimized' groups of the Moroccan society.

However, the dominant picture portraying male characters in these textbooks seems to project a more enhanced and positive view about them. There is a general tendency to associate them with the elite and the most intelligent classes of society:

- (34) "Samir is clever enough to understand perfectly." (Ticket 1, p.61).
- (35) "Adam has obtained a diploma. We should congratulate him" (Ticket 1, p.46).

As may be observed from above, the type of subject complements deployed to frame male characters are more suggestive of excellence and professionalism: "Samir is clever enough"; "Adam has obtained a diploma"; "We should congratulate him".

Surprisingly enough; however, women are still connected with lack of experience in life and with failure to accomplish their tasks. They are more often portrayed as less intelligent, "lazy", lagging in school results, and in distressful situations in need of man's support, either educational or vocational:

- (36) "I was ... to know that Jane, the laziest student in class passed her exam" (Gateway1, p.54).
- (37) "She got a terrible mark at school; her parents must be very angry" (Ticket 1, p.47).
- (38) "Hind was in the depth of despair when she got that terrible grade" (Ticket 2, p. 23).
- (39) "Julia applied for a job twice this year, but she was **turned down.**" (Gateway 2, p.140).
- (40) "She is really ... a girl. She has no experience in life" (Gateway 2, p. 145).

Particularly worthy of discussion here is the recurrent exploitation of an array of negative overtones which have been used to function as adjectives, subject complements, prepositional phrases, or adjectival clauses describing women. Hind was depicted as being "...in the depth of

despair”, and having a “terrible grade”; Julia as being “turned down”, and lacking “experience in life”. The adjacent relative clause and the use of the superlative form “the laziest student in class” have been deployed to portray the intellectual qualifications of Jane. Rather than focusing on the positive credentials of these female characters, Moroccan textbooks continue to paint them, consciously or not, as being helpless, less intelligent, and in distressful situations deserving pity.

Another form of discrimination against women is illustrated through the following extract from Gateway 2 depicting them being less privileged and in dire need of assistance. While explaining three types of ‘education’, namely ‘formal education’ (FE), ‘informal education’(IE), and ‘non-formal education’(NIE), the textual discourse of the following extracts exhibits men enjoying access to (FE), while women are either subject to illiteracy programs (IE), or learning through life experience (NIE):

(41) 1. José: “Hi, I’m José from Peru. I study in a high school. I want to be a successful business man”.

2. Fatma: “Hi, I’m Fatma from Mali. I’m 30. I’ve got three children. These days I feel happy because I attend a special educational programme that aims at empowering women in our village. I’m impatient to learn how to use a computer”.

3. Bandhura: “Hi, I’m Bandhura from India. I’ve never been to school. But all my neighbors call me ‘the wise lady’. In fact, my modest knowledge and experience in life have been enriched by my religion, some TV programmes, and of course by my parents” (Gateway 2, p.11).

Through these extracts, one may observe that, unlike the young man, the two women seem to be older, 30 and 50 years old, respectively. The first one has three children and is subject to a program fighting illiteracy; the second one is presented as being illiterate and perhaps older enough to learn.

The male’s discourse is imbued with a serious sense of purpose as it seems to exude strong determination to succeed in life, and strong confidence in one’s competence. His privileged access to ‘Formal Education’ is perhaps behind his motivation and his enthusiasm to “become a successful businessman”.

Women’s discourse seems to be devoid of any lucrative objectives. Both women are subject to programs geared to assist and empower their personal lives. Even the use of the verb to empower in the second extract may imply that the women in the village are powerless. All what ‘Fatma’ intends to achieve as a goal is but only the skill of “how to use a computer”. Similarly, ‘Bandhura’ admits that she has only “a modest knowledge”, and the use of the passive voice seems to heighten her objectification being subject to others’ help. She does not express any willingness from her own part to succeed and progress in life.

The power relations in modality between women and men are highly stereotypical favoring men to the detriment of women. While men’s sense of their personal identity is much stronger, that of women seems to be utterly dismissed as it is heavily dependent on the help and support of others through the use of the passive voice.

Adopting a critical approach, we are made to feel that women have been clustered with the underprivileged groups of our society, a form referred to as ‘ghettoization’ and social exclusion. Female characters in these instances are further discredited as they are grouped under the same semantic field with ‘children, the poor, and the handicapped’. One of the notable things about women here is that they are showcased as outcasts, victims in agony, deserving more care and sympathy, and collocating most of the times with ‘the most vulnerable groups of society’.

Such stereotypical discursive practices, according to Fairclough and Wodak (1997) “may have ideological effects (...) as they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people” (1997:258).

5. Conclusion:

The results which crop up from this investigation seem to indicate that MEFL textbooks are replete with myriad instances of sex inequalities, as well as an array of social misrepresentations. This study lends also more credence to CDA as a more powerful analytical approach which dives deeper to provide us with an in-depth analysis of the discursive patterns prevailing in the written discourse of these textbooks. CDA turns out to be of far-reaching implications as it enhances our understanding of the subtle ideological issues inherently entrenched in language. This has been achieved through its analytical attempts to read between the lines, and to root out any ideological misconceptions that could have surely remained concealed at a subliminal level in the different patterns of discourse.

The non-implementation of any sex-bias free programme in language teaching materials is attributed largely to textbook designers' unawareness or unwillingness to abide by the general guidelines of sex equity, or mainly because these recommendations have not yet reached their intended objectives.

Textbook designers and publishers alike should work collaboratively to help combat all such forms of stereotyped gender roles. Sex stereotyping may continue to be a hindrance, and a stumbling block for the development and enhancement of learners' ambitions and vocational aspirations. Any successful implementation of sex-bias free teaching materials would undoubtedly heighten students' sense of self-worth. This may ensure not only boys but also girls' decision to pursue their schooling and that their aspirations for the future are not impeded by gender inequalities.

This may undoubtedly be a propitious stepping stone towards the establishment of a new Moroccan society where such human rights values as equality of opportunity, sustainable development and gender equity and parity are given a top priority than heretofore. This is surely the first path conducive to a well-founded society that will pave the way for a more egalitarian state for the generations to come.

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