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A TEACHERS' SURVEY ON PORTRAYAL OF SEXISM IN THE IMAGES OF IRANIAN EFL SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract

The current study was an attempt to investigate the Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' opinion on sexism in the images of the Iranian EFL school textbooks. In order to achieve these objectives, 40 (20 male and 20 female) EFL teachers from junior high and high schools in Tehran participated in this study. The data was obtained using a questionnaire which was previously piloted. Findings indicate that all of the teachers are aware of sexism in the images of the current EFL school textbooks and also believe that the books do not represent both genders equally. The findings also show that the teachers detest sexism in the images and would like to eradicate it from textbooks. In addition, the participants believe that textbooks need to be revised to represent both genders equally. According to the results of the current study, the teachers are aware of what actually happens in the educational contexts and they all believe that this type of sexism in the textbooks can have negative effects on students' behavior toward the other gender in the society. They also highlighted that sexism in the images may impact students future decisions on the study field or their choice of profession. The implications of the study are for the EFL policy makers and textbook writers and EFL teachers.

Keywords

Sexism, Portrayal of Sexism, EFL Textbooks, Images

1. Introduction

As an important aspect of formal schooling, school textbooks comprise an area that have been comprehensively studied (Saario, et al. 1973; Friebus 1985; Touba 1987; Hall 1988; Abraham 1989; Purcell & Stewart 1990; Higgins & Shoar-Ghaffari 1991; Chepyator-Thomson & Ennis 1997; Low & Sherrard 1999; Evans & Davies 2000; Jackson & Warin 2000; Nilan 2000; Gooden & Gooden 2001 as cited in Law & Chan 2004). Regarding the role of textbooks UNESCO (2005) highlights: “At any level, in every subject area, textbooks can be important vehicles for promoting human rights, including the principles and practices of non-violence, gender equity and non-distinguishing characters.” Parallel to the international laws, in the Constitution Law of Iran under Article Twenty One all the citizens of the nation are considered equal regardless of their gender, religion, or race and they are all under the protection of law equally. It is noted that the citizens of the country have the same human, political, economic, social, and cultural rights under the supervision of Islam. Under Article Twenty One, women’s rights is separately mentioned, such as making the opportunity for women to improve their dignity, observing their moral and civil rights, and supporting mothers. However, almost all of the research on gender equality in Iran (Amerian 1987; Feiz Mohammadpour 1999; Kheibari 1999; Shahedi 2001; Ansary & Babaii 2002; Yarmohammadi 2002; Ansary & Babaii 2003; Amalsaleh 2004; Paivandi 2008; Razmjoo 2007; Atashpanjeh & Keshavarz 2009; Ghorbani 2009; Bahman & Rahimi 2010; Alemi & Jafari 2012; Gharbavi & Mousavi 2012a; Gharbavi & Mousavi 2012b; Amini & Birjandi 2012; Kazemi, Asadi Aidinlu, & Hasannejad 2013; Tahriri & Moradpour 2014; Hall 2014; Esmaeili & Amerian 2014; Amerian & Esmaeili 2015; Baghdadi & Rezaei 2015; Janati 2015; Ebadi & Shahbazian 2015; Vahdatinejad & Bahiyah 2017a; Vahdatinejad & Bahiyah 2017b as cited in Vahdatinejad 2017c) indicate inequity, specifically in textbooks.

Meanwhile, with the increasing number of female students at tertiary level, which is the outcome of the secondary and primary levels, do the images of the school textbooks treat them equally? Iranian Ministry of Education has announced that a total of 12,500,000 students (Table 1) were enrolled in the academic year of 2012. As Iranian students study English during Junior high school and high school, the total number of students who are exposed to EFL textbooks is 6,740,000 including 3,490,000 (51.8%) males and 3,250,000 (48.2%).

Table 1: Number of Iranian students by gender in 2012

Stage	Boys	Girls	Total
Junior High	1,710,000 (52%)	1,550,000 (48%)	3,260,000
High	1,780,000 (51%)	1,700,000 (49%)	3,480,000
Total	3,490,000 (52%)	3,250,000 (48%)	6,740,000

Source: Vahdatinejad (2017c)

The table indicates that the number of male students is almost equal to number of female ones but this equal quantity is not portrayed in the textbooks. There numerous studies in Iran (highlighted in Vahdatinejad 2017c) proving the inequality of representation of both genders in the textbooks. EFL school textbooks are the only source of information for a vast majority of the Iranian school students, especially for those who cannot afford to go to private English language institutes or those who do not have access to these kinds of centers at all, because they are living in remote areas or small towns. Besides, textbooks are the only sources for most teachers who never use supplementary materials in their classes because they either do not have time for these kinds of preparations or do not know how to use them. So, EFL school textbooks play a crucial role as the pedagogical material in Iranian schools.

Gender equality is investigated in many developed and developing countries because school textbooks play an important role in defining the role of each gender specifically for pupils. This kind of exposure can shape their thoughts and attitudes toward life and gender roles. Meanwhile one side effect of sexist materials is gender stereotyping and believing in frames which are indoctrinated through textbooks. Having highlighted that the Iranian EFL school textbooks are sexist, no studies have investigated teachers' attitude toward sexism in the images of the textbooks.

1.1 The Importance of Images

In the current study by 'image' the researcher means; any type of pictures or illustrations in the textbooks that indicate human. To highlight the importance of images, we need to focus on the definition of textbooks by UNESCO (2005): "the core learning medium composed of text and/or images designed to bring about a specific set of educational outcomes; traditionally a printed and bound book including illustrations and instructions for facilitating sequences of learning activities." As images are the first things that catch students' eyes when they look at any textbooks, Wilson (2001) highlights that "visuals can be used to help enhance the meaning of the

message trying to be conveyed by the speakers through the use of paralinguistic cues.” Therefore, once students face sexist images in the textbooks, they might take them as social norms which can affect their view toward the other gender.

2. Literature Review

Lee and Collins (2008) research is significant in the field because they analysed the EFL textbooks in Hong Kong twice. Once they found the images sexist. The focus of their picture investigation was on: (1) the number and proportion of men and women in the pictures, and (2) the kind of activity undertaken by the main character in each picture. Later, English language textbooks underwent a sort of gender biased eradication procedure. Then the revised textbooks were scrutinized, and manifested a great improvement toward gender equality.

As it was mentioned above, there has been numerous studies investigating sexism in the images of the EFL textbooks in Iran. (Ansary & Babaii 2003; Paivandi 2008; Ghorbani 2009; Bahman & Rahimi 2010; Gharbavi & Mousavi 2012b; Amini & Birjandi 2012; Kazemi, Asadi Aidinlu, & Hasannejad 2013; Tahriri & Moradpour 2014; Hall 2014; Esmaeili & Amerian 2014; Amerian & Esmaeili 2015; Baghdadi & Rezaei 2015; Jannati 2015; and Ebadi & Shahbazian 2015)

It needs to be noted that not have all the above mentioned studies investigated the school textbooks. Some of them have investigated Right Path I & II which is a supplementary book published by the Ministry of Education (Ansary & Babaii 2003; Ebadi & Shahbazian 2015 and Hall 2014). Some others (namely: Ghorbani 2009 and Amerian & Esmaeili 2015) have studied industrial textbooks (American Headway) or Kazemi, et al. (2013) scrutinized Interchange series. Tahriri and Moradpour (2014) put the images of Top Notch series under magnifying glass. Jannati (2015) examined the images of the Iran Language Institute Pre-Intermediate textbook.

Among all, only a few studies investigated images of the school textbooks. Paivandi (2008) went through all of the images of the school textbooks among which they covered English textbooks as well. Gharbavi and Mousavi (2012b) only studied the high school textbooks (but not the junior high school). Amini and Birjandi (2012) investigated 2 volumes of the high school textbooks namely grades II and III. Esmaeili and Amerian (2014) examined only the images of high school textbooks. Baghdadi and Rezaei (2015) investigated the images of the English and Arabic school textbooks.

Although all of the above mentioned studies have found the images of the textbooks sexist, unfortunately, in the literature, there is no study to investigate the teachers' attitude toward sexism in the images of the Iranian EFL textbooks.

However, there is only one research (Vahdatinejad & Bahiyah Abdul Hamid 2017a) which has studied teachers' attitude toward '*linguistic sexism*' in the Iranian EFL textbooks. They investigated forty (20 male and 20 female) English language teachers' attitude toward linguistic sexism who were teaching in junior high and high schools in Tehran. They used a piloted questionnaire. Their findings indicate that all of the teachers are aware of linguistic sexism existence in the current EFL school textbooks and also believe that the books do not represent both genders equally. The findings also show that the teachers detest linguistic sexism and would like to eradicate sexism from textbooks. In addition, they think textbooks need to be revised to represent both genders equally. According to the results of the study, teachers are aware of what actually happens in the educational contexts. This awareness of reality in the textbooks makes them frame and reframe new attitudes towards teaching. The participant also mentioned the necessity of this type of research and they requested the findings to be publicly announced.

On the other hand, recently, there is study (Agarwal & Shukla 2017) on in-service teachers' attitude towards gender discrimination in India. Agarwal and Shukla (2017) findings indicated the necessity of training for raising teachers' awareness toward sexism there. They investigated the attitude of in-service teachers towards gender issues, namely, gender roles, gender stereotypes and gender discrimination. For the study, they conducted a descriptive survey among 312 teachers (156 male & 156 female) teaching at secondary level in the schools of Delhi. Their findings revealed that none of the teachers has studied about 'gender' as a complete subject, however, majority of them were interested in knowing more about gender issues. Besides, they also found that the teachers discriminated among girls and boys when it came to assigning tasks or activities to them. Majority of teachers (61.86%) want to receive more educational training regarding gender issues. The major reasons cited by them included to know gender equitable practices, to become efficient teacher and to understand needs and interests of girls and boys. Majority of the teachers (60.90%) responded negatively about the need for a mandatory course for teacher certification on gender issues. The major reason cited by them included lack of time and that it could be optional subject for curriculum developers and policy makers.

3. Research Questions

In order to achieve the objective of the study, the researchers have represented the following research questions:

- 1- Have the Iranian EFL teachers noticed sexism in the images of the EFL textbooks?
- 2- Does sexism in the images of the textbooks have any impact on students' social life or their future?
- 3- Do the Iranian EFL teachers feel necessary to conduct research on gender equality?

4. Methodology

The present study investigates EFL teachers' attitude regarding sexism in the images of the EFL school textbooks which are currently being used in Iranian schools. A survey questionnaire was employed for this purpose. A brief explanation on the sample population and the reasons behind their selection is presented afterwards. Instruments and procedures which were made use of in this research and will be discussed as well.

4.1 Participants

The sample population is an Iranian EFL school teachers. This sample consists of 40 school EFL teachers who were teaching at public junior high or high schools in Iran at the time of survey. The sample population consists of 20 male and 20 female teachers for each cycle. 10 people (50%) were teaching at junior high school level and the other half were teaching at high school level. These teachers were selected because their teaching experience exceeded 5 years and were completely familiar the series of school textbooks under study.

4.2 Instruments

This questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed by the researcher, checked by a reviewer and then piloted. The internal consistency reliability estimates of the test were checked by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient and it was found that the scale received the Cronbach's alpha of 0.8579. The objective of the study is to identify teachers' perceptions toward sexism in the images of the EFL school textbooks which is being conducted in Iran for the first time. The survey questionnaire consists of 15 questions. The questionnaire sought quantitative data. There are two sections in the questionnaire: Section A: Personal Details, Section B: Survey on sexism in the images of the EFL school textbooks.

The first part (section A) of the questionnaire aimed to collect individual information like: gender, age; this is to find out whether age is a distinguishing factor for identifying sexism.

In other words, sexism is a new issue which is mostly highlighted by the new generations or even the older teachers, who have been teaching the textbooks at school for a long time, have noticed the problem or not.

Question number 3 in section A asked whether the respondents have a computer at work or not, and if yes, whether it is connected to the Internet or not. In question number 4, participants were asked whether they have a personal computer/laptop at home or not, and if yes, whether they have access to the Internet or not. This is to investigate whether teachers have a computer and the Internet at home and could have been exposed to bias free textbooks and articles.

Question 5 of section A asks the number of years that the participants have taught English at school. It was to distinguish between those who have taught the current books more than the others and those who have taught the previous old type of textbooks. In question number 6 of Section A in the teachers' questionnaire, the participants were asked about the number of hours they teach English at school per week. In question number 7 of Section A the participants were asked about the grades (in junior high school there are 3 grades and in high schools there are 4 grades) that they taught English at school. This is to investigate whether they have been exposed to one book only or to more school English language textbooks and also to classify the teachers whether they teach at junior high school or high school.

In section B there are 15 questions which sought agreement on four-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree', to 'strongly disagree'. In section B, there are fifteen questions which are sub-categorized into 3 different groups. The first five questions (questions 1 – 5) seek the participants' opinion about sexism presence awareness in the images of their EFL schools textbooks. This is to find out whether participants have noticed such a problem or they have just taken it for granted as a social norm. The second group of questions (questions 6 – 11) investigates whether sexism in the images of the textbooks has any effect on their social life or their future. And the third group of questions (12 – 15) highlights the participants' desire to conduct research on gender equality.

5. Results and Discussion

This is the first time in sexism literature that a study investigates EFL teachers' opinion toward sexism in the images EFL textbooks and its effects on their life and their future. For this

reason a group of experienced English language teachers were selected who are teaching at schools in Iran at the time of the study.

5.1 Personal Details

The first part (section A), which has 7 questions, is aimed at collecting individual information like: gender, age (Figure 1); this is to find out whether age is a distinguishing factor for identifying sexism. In other words, sexism is a new issue which is mostly highlighted by the new generations or even the older teachers, who have been teaching the textbooks at school for a long time, have noticed the problem or not.

As Figure 1 indicates majority of the teachers (82.5%) are more than 25 years old which was a good opportunity for the researcher to find out whether age is a factor in identifying sexism in textbooks or not. On the other hand, the findings can show whether the two teaching generations share the same opinion toward sexism in the Iranian EFL school textbooks or not.

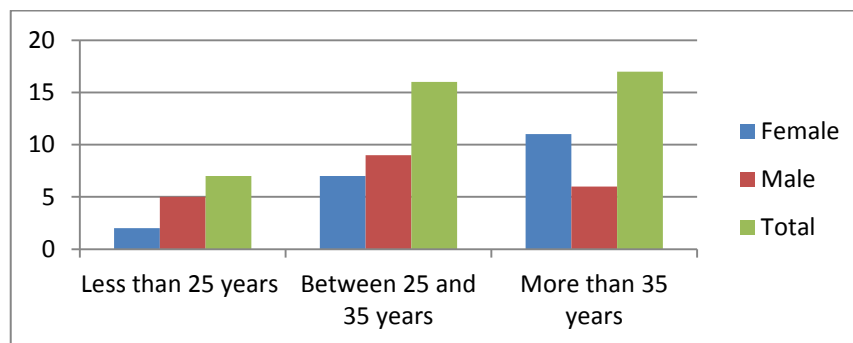


Figure 1: *Respondents' Age*

In the 3rd question of section A, teachers were also asked whether they have a computer at work and whether it was connected to the Internet or not. Regretfully, almost none of the teachers had a computer at work or have access to the Internet. They replied no to both part of the question 3 as it is indicated in Figure 2. This may be due to several cultural or financial reasons that is out of the objectives of the current study.

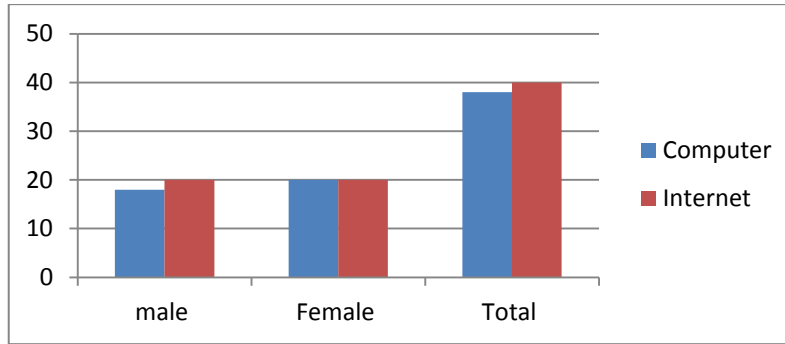


Figure 2: *Having a computer and access to the internet at work*

In the fourth question, participants were also asked whether they have a personal computer/laptop at home or not and if yes, whether they have access to the Internet or not (Figure 3). As it was expected by the researcher, they all own a personal computer and have high-speed access to the Internet at home. The only 10% (2 of the male participants) who do not own a personal computer use their children computers at home. Therefore, as highlighted by Figure 3 as compared to Figure 2, all the participants had access to a computer and the Internet at home and could have been exposed to bias free textbooks and articles. This would enable them to have a rough idea of how a non-sexist textbook would look like and what criteria it could have.

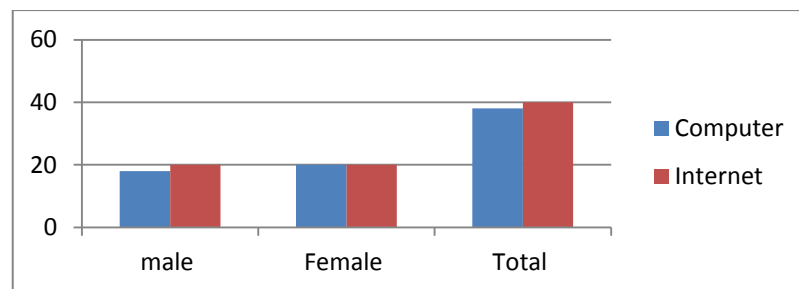


Figure 3: *Having a computer and access to the internet at home*

Question 5 of section A asks the number of years that the participants have taught English at school. It was to distinguish between those who have taught the current books more than the others and those who have taught the previous old type of textbooks. As highlighted in Figure 4, the distribution was even among the gender of the participants where as the number of years they had taught was different among them. As indicated in Figure 4, most of the participants (31 people, 87.5%) were highly experienced teachers.

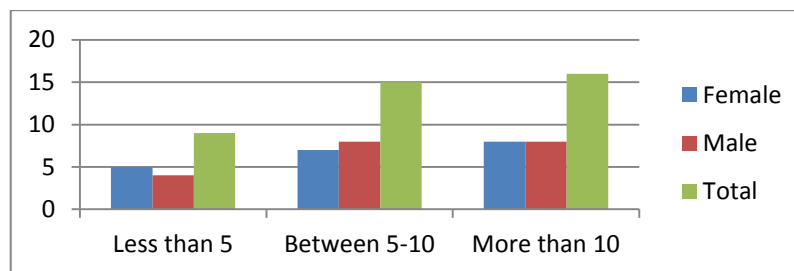


Figure 4: Years of Teaching English at school

In the 6th question of Section A of the teachers' questionnaire, the participants were asked about the number of hours they teach English at school per week. All of the participants (100% regardless of their gender) have highlighted that they teach English between 12 and 20 hours at school weekly.

The other component is the grades (i.e. in junior high school there are 3 grades and in high schools there are 3 to 4 grades) that they teach English (Table 2) at school. This is to investigate whether they have taught one book only or more of the textbooks and also to classify the teachers whether they teach at junior high school or high school. In the next item, the teachers are asked, is the number of years they have taught English at school (to highlight the importance of the sexism problem through these many years of direct contact with English language textbooks), and number of hours they teach English per week at school (to underpin how much they were exposed to the material per week to draw a conclusion on its effects on their opinion on sexism as norms).

In Iran English teachers usually teach all the grades in school. For instance a junior high school teacher teaches all 3 grades during a semester and it is the same for the high school teachers. Therefore, the researcher requested the participants to focus on one of the school textbooks which they would prefer and wish. Then they were asked to complete this section of the questionnaire. Table 2 highlights that there is a normal percentage of distribution among their preference. As mentioned earlier there were 40 teachers (20 female and 20 male). Among the 20 same sex participants, the researcher tried to have equal number of teachers who were teaching in junior high school (10) and high school (10). That is the reason that the percentage for each group (junior and high school) is measured as 100%. It is necessary to mention that in high school section majority of the teachers preferred to focus on the last year textbook which is called pre-university (*Pish-Daneshgahi* in Iran).

Table 2: Grades They Teach

Grades	Junior High			High School			
	Grade1	Grade2	Grade3	Grade1	Grade2	Grade3	Grade4
Female	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	5 (50%)
Male	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)
Total	5 (25%)	7(35%)	8(40%)	4(20%)	4(20%)	4(20%)	8(40%)

5.2 Survey on Sexism in the Images of the EFL School Textbooks

In section B, there are fifteen questions which are also categorized into 3 different groups. The first five questions (questions 1 – 5) seek their opinion about sexism portrayal awareness in the images of their EFL schools textbooks. This is to find out whether participants have noticed such a problem or they have just taken it for granted as a social norm (Table 3). The second group of questions (questions 6 – 11) investigates whether sexism in the textbooks images has any effect on their social life or their decisions in the future or not (Table 4). And the third group of questions (12 – 15) highlights the participants' desire to study on gender equality (Table 5).

As indicated in Table 3, all of the participants have noticed the difference between the portrayal of males and females in the images of the textbooks. All of the participants (100% regardless of their gender) have noticed that more males than females in the images (q1), that there are fewer active females than males in the images (q2), that females are less important (focused) in the images (q3), that males outnumbered females in the images (q4) and that even in mages of exercises males are more than females (q5). According to Table 3, only one male respondent (2.5%) has not noticed that even in mages of exercises males are more than females (q5) meanwhile for the rest of the questions regarding images of the textbooks all of the participants have noticed such a difference in the numbers of male images compared with female image.

Table 3: Participants awareness of sexism in the images of their EFL textbooks

No	Statement	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I have noticed more males than females in the images.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Total	100%	0%	0%	0%
2	I have noticed that there are fewer active females than males in the images.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Total	100%	0%	0%	0%

3	I have noticed that females are less important (focused) in the images.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Total	100%	0%	0%	0%
4	I have noticed that males outnumbered females in the images.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Total	100%	0%	0%	0%
5	I have noticed that even in mages of exercises males are more than females.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	18 (90%)	1(5%)	1 (5%)	0%
		Total	90%	2.5%	2.5%	0%

Table 4 indicates that all the female respondents (100%) think that having many males in the images can influence students' (people's) opinion toward equal abilities of both genders (q6). Whereas 95% of the male respondents share the same idea with female respondents and 5% (2 people) do not think that having many males in the images can influence students' (people's) opinion toward equal abilities of both genders. Overall, 95% of the respondents agree with the statement and 5% (only 2 males) do not agree with the statement in question number 21.

Table 4: *Effects of sexism in the images on students' social life & future*

No	Statement	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	I think having a lot of males in the images can influence students' (people's) opinion toward equal abilities of both genders.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	17 (85%)	1(5%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)
		Total	92.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
7	I think a lot of males in the images can influence students' (people's) personality toward abilities of both genders.	Female	16 (80%)	1 (5%)	1(5%)	2 (10%)
		Male	19 (95%)	1(5%)	0%	0%
		Total	87.5.5%	5%	2.5%	5%
8	I think a lot of males in the images can influence students' (people's) social behavior toward females.	Female	17 (85%)	1(5%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)
		Male	18 (90%)	1 (5%)	1(5%)	0%
		Total	87.5%	5%	5%	2.5%
9	I think a lot of males in the images can influence students' (people's) view toward life. (E.g. males are more useful).	Female	15 (75%)	1 (5%)	1(5%)	3(15%)
		Male	14 (70%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)
		Total	72.5%	10%	5%	12.5%
10	I think a lot of males in the images can influence students' (people's) self-	Female	16 (80%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)
		Male	18 (90%)	1 (5%)	1(5%)	0%
		Total	85%	5%	5%	5%

	confidence.					
11	I think having a lot of images of males with specific jobs can influence students (people) in selecting their future job.	Female	19 (95%)	0%	0%	1 (5%)
		Male	14 (70%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)
		Total	82.5%	7.5%	5%	5%

Table 4 also shows that only 85% of the female respondents think that many males in the images can influence students' (people's) personality toward abilities of both genders (q7) on the other hand, all the male respondents (100%) believe in the statement. 15% of the female teacher respondents do not think that many males in the images can influence students' (people's) personality toward abilities of both genders. All in all, 92.5% of the respondents agree with the statement and 7.5% (3 females) do not agree so.

Table 4 (effects of sexism on social life and future decisions of the students) also highlights, 90% of the female participants think that many males in the images can influence students' (people's) social behavior toward females (q8). 95% of the male participants share the same idea with the female ones. However, 10% (2 people) of the female teacher respondents and 5% (1 person) of the male respondents do not agree with the statement and do not think that many males in the images can influence students' (people's) social behavior toward females. Generally, 92.5% of the respondents agree with the statement but 7.5% of them do not agree with the statement.

Regarding question number 9 of the teachers' questionnaire, Table 4 indicates that 80% of the female respondents and 85% of the male respondents think that many males in the images can influence students' (people's) view toward life (e.g. males are more useful). Meanwhile, 20% (4 people) of the female respondents and 15% (3 people) of the male respondents do not agree with the statement. On the whole, 82.5% of the respondents agree that many males in the images can influence students' (people's) view toward life but 17.5% of the respondents do not agree so.

Table 4 shows that 85% of the female respondents and 95% of the male respondents think that many males in the images can influence students' (people's) self-confidence (q10) where 15% (3 people) of the female participants and 5% (1 person) of the male participants do not think so. Overall, 90% of the respondents think that the statement is true but 10% of the respondents do not think that many males in the images can influence students' (people's) self-confidence.

Table 4 also highlights that 95% of the female respondents and 85% of the male respondents think that having many images of males with specific jobs can influence students (people) in selecting their future job (q11). Only 5% (1 person) of the female respondents and 15% (3 people) of the male respondents do not agree with the statement. All in all, 90% of the participants think that having many portrayal of males with specific jobs can influence students (people) in selecting their future job but 10% of them do not think so.

As indicated by Table 5 (importance and desire to have gender equality), all of the participants (100% regardless of their gender) strongly agree with the statement of questions 12 (I would like to have an equal number of both genders in the images), 13 (I think this kind of research on gender equality in the images can be helpful in the future), 14 (I would like to have an equal number of both genders in the images of exercises) and 15 (I think it is important to know the reason(s)).

Table 5: Importance and desire to have gender equality

No	Statement	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12	I would like to have an equal number of both genders in the images.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Total	100%	0%	0%	0%
13	I think this kind of research on gender equality in the images can be helpful in the future.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Total	100%	0%	0%	0%
14	I would like to have an equal number of both genders in the images of exercises.	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Total	100%	0%	0%	0%
15	I think it is important to know the reason(s).	Female	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Male	20(100%)	0%	0%	0%
		Total	100%	0%	0%	0%

6. Conclusion and Implications

The results of this questionnaire show that all of the teachers are aware of sexism in the images of their books which is exactly the same results found by Vahdatinejad & Bahiyah Abdul Hamid (2017a) regarding the linguistic sexism in the Iranian EFL textbooks. However, the findings were unlike Agarwal & Shukla (2017) regarding the teachers' awareness of sexism.

Besides, the findings also proved teachers believe that sexism can have negative effects on their students' mindset and treatment of the other gender in future. This highlights Iranian teachers consider sexism as important issue comparing to Indian teachers who participated in Agarwal & Shukla (2017).

As underpinned by the results, the teachers would like to ban sexism in the images, and have equality in all the aspects of a textbook. This is the same request highlighted in Vahdatinejad & Bahiyah Abdul Hamid (2017a). Since the number of male and female students who are studying at schools in Iran is almost equal, teachers would like the textbooks to represent this equality in the images of the textbooks. So, it is no surprise that gender-biased course book contents have detrimental effects on learners (Demir & Yavuz 2017). Such discriminatory content may lead female students to restrict their social, behavioral, and linguistic roles (Amini & Birjandi, 2012), and to experience feelings of exclusion, devaluation, alienation and lowered-expectations (Gharbavi & Mousavi 2012b).

Unfortunately, decisions at the level of course books require high officials to make. Although having a non-sexist society should be one of the biggest goals for any government, there are some issues involved such as religion, culture, politics, etc. Gender discrimination prevents a society from being fair. In order to avoid gender discrimination, EFL policy makers must start with the education system because it essentially constructs the mind and mentality of the people who are going to be the future of our society (i.e. students). To do so, we need to rethink about the school textbooks that we use which are a major source of information for students by eradicating linguistic sexism.

In order to represent a clear and fair view of the society, textbook writers have a great responsibility which includes displaying a society that provides equal opportunity for both genders. This would not happen unless they experience equality in the textbooks that unfortunately does not exist in the current textbooks. Therefore, textbook writers must note that textbooks' images need to be gender bias free as well. As it is highlighted by the findings, the negative effects of sexism in the images and gender-biased textbooks can influence students' lives and mindsets forever.

Riazi (2003) highlights that the teacher is the first in the class, and in control of everything. Despite the fact that the current Iranian EFL textbooks are sexist in both context and images (Vahdatinejad 2017b & 2017c), teachers have a more crucial role to manage the sexist

image in the class in a way that students would not realize the negative effects of gender biased textbooks.

There are several variables and factors which were not regarded in the present study and required further studies. Based on the title, only EFL teachers were involved in the survey and other subjects such as Literature, Physics etc. need to be investigated as well. Considering the participants of this study, further research on different participants may yield different results. Also the participants of the study were limited to EFL teachers not learners. This requires further studies on EFL students' opinion toward sexism in their school textbooks.

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Appendix A

Survey Questionnaire on sexism in the EFL textbooks

Dear Teachers,

This survey questionnaire is designed to identify your opinions on gender equality in the English Language School Textbooks. Thank you for your cooperation.

Signature:

Section A: Personal Details

Kindly, tick the answer which best suits your personal details.

1. Gender: Male Female

2. Age:

Less than 25

Between 25 - 35

More than 35

3. Do you have a computer at work? If yes, do you have access to the Internet at work?

Yes No Yes No

4. Do you have a computer at home? If yes, do you have access to the Internet?

Yes No Yes No

5. State the number of years you have taught English at school

Less than 5 years

Between 5 and 10 years

More than 10 years

6. State the number of hours you teach English language per week at school

Less than 12 hours

Between 12 - 20 hours

More than 20 hours

7. State the Grades that you teach English language at school

Junior High school..... High school

Section B: Survey on Gender in Images of the English School Textbooks

Please select the responses from *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree* that best describe your feeling toward the sentences by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate boxes. Please choose only one answer for each question.

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I have noticed more males than females in the pictures.				
2	I have noticed that there are fewer active females than males in the pictures.				
3	I have noticed that females are less important (focused) in the pictures.				

4	I have noticed that men outnumbered women in the pictures.				
5	I have noticed that even in the pictures of the exercises males are more than females.				
6	I think having a lot of males in the pictures can influence my opinion toward abilities of both genders.				
7	I think a lot of males in the pictures can influence students' (people's) personality toward equality of both genders.				
8	I think a lot of males in the pictures can influence students' (people's) social behavior toward equality of both genders.				
9	I think a lot of males in the pictures can influence students' (people's) view toward life (gender equality).				
10	I think a lot of males in the pictures can influence students' (people's) self-confidence.				
11	I think having a lot of males, doing specific jobs can influence students (people) in selecting their future job.				
12	I would like to have an equal number of both genders in the pictures.				
13	I think this kind of research on gender equality on pictures can be helpful in the future.				
14	I would like to have an equal number of both genders in the pictures of exercises.				
15	I think it is important to know the reason(s).				