



# Representations and Perspectives of Gender Equality in EFL: Learning Among Moroccan Educators and Students

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## Abstract

Education has an impact on constructing gender, power relations, and cultural identities. Textbooks can promote gender disparities or encourage equality and equity. Educators and learners redefine gender roles through various perspectives that consider the educational discourse a potential mode of resistance and identity forming. The educational materials the instructors and learners use can impact gender identification in classrooms. Education could be a generator that reproduces gender inequalities or creates new realities that give women more opportunities for access and success in the public sphere. The theoretical background of the study confirms that educational institutions are included in the apparatus that shapes human lifestyles; education can produce or reproduce social principles and norms. It proves that learning English as a foreign language could shape students' thoughts about gender equality and socio-cultural beliefs. It shows that social education constructs teachers' and students' meanings and values that resist or perpetuate patriarchal ideas. This study adopts the mixed approach using both quantitative and qualitative methods besides content analysis. *Gate Way to English 2* is chosen non-randomly as a representative of the textbooks that are used in teaching English as a foreign language and designed for second-year Moroccan baccalaureate learners. Content analysis and the findings show that gender roles are represented negatively in *Gate Way to English 2*. Teachers' awareness of the gender gap in education leads them to call for equality in representing gender within textbooks. The learners adopt their educators' vision and ideas associated with gender even when they oppose the textbook content. Textbooks should be altered to spread ideas that go hand in hand with the speedy development of Moroccan society.

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**Keywords:** Gender representations, equality, education, EFL textbooks, students, teachers

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## 1. Introduction

Girls and boys acquire language and culture within families, schools, and society that may support gender inequalities unconsciously. They learn how to identify feminine and masculine from their parents and elders. They create imaginary boundaries in language, games, clothes, and appearance. Children find themselves obliged to play only within the same sex groups.

Persons could learn a language, cultural behaviors or principles, and norms throughout social institutions consciously and unconsciously. Students are not aware of the beliefs that are transformed in them and adopt behaviors that are reflections of their social education. Textbooks can carry traditional gender roles and negative performance of women. Wayne E. Ross (2006) assumes that most educational systems do not reflect the development that some societies achieved in gender equality.

Using a textbook to teach a subject generates beliefs, judgments, and assumptions. Learners face different portrayals of women and men performing social roles in text and images. Teaching materials can help transform people's lifestyles in the same way education changes students' knowledge. For Hamilton (1990) Schools in general reproduce social and cultural norms. Teachers, users of textbooks, can integrate values and principles that are associated with their beliefs in the messages that they communicate to their students; they can spread gender equality or inequality.

The language acquisition process leads researchers to think of the cultural meanings that are transmitted through oral or written messages. Students receive various coded messages that are full of cultural and social norms or principles from images and texts. Textbooks reinforce gender inequalities by transmitting negative meanings and stereotypical images of gendered identities and social functions. Gender roles in Gate Way to English 2 could associate women with powerful public functions or only with private ones. Teachers could transmit the same meanings or make changes to the books' content.

This investigation seeks to answer the following main research questions: How are gender equality representations portrayed in Gate Way to English 2? In what ways do EFL teaching materials promote gender equality, and how does this impact the learning experience? To what extent do textbooks exhibit gender biases in the representation of characters and themes within written texts in the context of EFL education? How do EFL textbooks challenge prevailing social norms related to gender equality? What are the attitudes of EFL teachers and learners

towards gender equality in the educational context? How do teachers evaluate the incorporation of gender equality in the textbook, and what factors contribute to the effectiveness or limitations of such efforts in promoting gender equity in EFL education?

This paper investigates the teaching materials that educators use in classrooms and the perceptions that they adopt from gender representations in textbooks of English. This investigation looks for the positive and negative statuses in which both women and men are portrayed. This research aims at understanding the representations of gender in education and the perceptions of students and teachers of gender equality. It explores the hidden practices that can alter students' perceptions and attitudes towards gender and equality.

Accordingly, this paper begins with an exploration of the theoretical framework, followed by a description of the adopted methodology, discussion, and analysis of the results. It examines gender representation in Gate Way to English 2, the way EFL teaching materials promote gender equality, the females' and males' representation in written texts, social change and the used textbook, teachers' and students' attitudes towards gender equality, and teachers' opinions toward gender representation within the students' book.

## 2. Gender and Education

From the very moment of birth, children embark on a journey of learning. “The daily learning process begins in the family and is continued by the institutions and members of society as a whole” (UNESCO, 2000). Family shapes kids' educational paths. However, traditional gender performance can seep from the family into the classroom; the educational system could mirror societal norms and principles. This makes it crucial to openly discuss gender biases in education, as classroom practices often reflect the larger social landscape.

*Oxford Dictionary* defines the gender gap as “a difference that separates men and women, in terms of attitudes, opportunities and status” (Dictionary). These disparities persist across the globe. the gender gap affects social institutions including family, education, workplace, and religion. The educational system has the power of shaping social and cultural disparities, as noted by Marsh in (1997). However, within the school walls, both students and teachers carry their baggage of gendered experiences, as Gray observed (2010).

According to Robertson, cited in Marsh (1997), androcentric or male-centered views are reflected in teaching where the teacher can see and value the world with a male eye which leads to generalizing personal experiences. As a result, there is a need to establish or adopt gender-

neutral educational policy. The educational effort will encourage changes in behavior that will create a more renewable vision regarding gender equality, equal opportunities, and social justice for present and future generations.

Classrooms contain different realities shaped by the various experiences of learners. Girls' experiences construct specific knowledge different from boys' understanding. Feminist pedagogy calls for engaging students' experience in the learning process. Macdonald confirms that "feminist pedagogy is distinguished from other teaching strategies by making women's experiences central in the production of knowledge" (Macdonald, Amie & S. Susan, 2002).

Most teachers and students regard textbooks as the basis of their courses. Most textbooks "tell both the learners and the teachers what to do, when to do it, and how to do it" (Tomlinson, 2012). Actually, the roles of the teacher in many educational institutions are multiple as controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, participant and resource but she or he must transform values and principles from the textbooks to the student (Sarosdy et al, 2006). In some cases, various instructors could find themselves obliged to respect reading materials, topics organizations, and mainly the curriculum. They may transform stereotypes for their students. Textbooks give the man the executive role when there is a presentation of an activity that involves men and women (Gray, 2010).

On the other hand, teachers are responsible for the content when they have a choice among various textbooks or other materials. Essentially, teachers and students use textbooks, in their teaching-learning process, that are approved by the school and the syllabus, following the national curriculum. Both interact with the textbooks that provide courses or instructors which are adopted by the educational central administrations (Sarosdy & al, 2006). Textbooks are different from one subject to another or from one age category to another, but their introduction of courses could be closer when it is associated with gender; for instance, some present fathers and brothers as leaders and may neglect women's social functions.

UNESCO (2009) says that "Textbooks allow access to all sorts of information. Not only do they develop the ability to read and write but they also encourage critical thinking, independence and creativity". The oppression of gender or even both gender and color could be embodied within a textbook while teachers could have the ability to choose the appropriate way to introduce information to their students. The provided knowledge of any textbook is related to an environment that provides the student with some expectations or knowledge; therefore, the textbook's knowledge could reinforce the existing knowledge or bring a fresh one.

According to UNESCO (2009), textbooks are always tools to construct individuals who have significant thoughts. Moreover, apart from the teaching and learning of basic lessons, students also adopt a lot of information that helps to challenge the common knowledge and values embedded in their acquisition of the mother tongue.

The textbooks are products of different participants, such as program designers and publishers, each one has his or her objectives and motivations. The publishers' main concern is profit; they can influence the content because they have the choice even while they are respecting the designed framework that is directed by the government or the country's policies. Bank (2007) confirms the previous ideas saying that "Textbooks, which are a key determinant of what gets taught, are published by for-profit companies and are adopted by states and/or local communities".

In the age of Artificial Intelligence and technology, each reading textbook is based on either recent research or beforehand studies. Textbooks need other learning facilitators to provide vital values and principles. They need analyzing, accuracy and conveying knowledge. The evolution of textbooks results from the best materials for learners and gives teachers tools to meet their student's expectations and theirs. Program designers need to adopt gender equality or equity while preparing a textbook that can serve the process of learning.

### 3. Methodology

This article adopts the mixed approach by using quantitative and qualitative methods. Mixing both approaches increases the legitimacy and consistency of the collected data and enhances the quality of the findings. The quantitative approach was used to verify the assigned function gendered identities within Gate Way to English 2. The qualitative approach was used to analyze and explain gender representations within the book. Non-probability sampling method helps in distributing questionnaires to teachers of English in the region. While probability sampling is used for learners. The chosen sample is from Darra-Tafilalet Regional Academy of National Education. This sample was chosen since it represents teachers and students of the second-year baccalaureate, population, that use *Gate Way to English 2*. It is chosen because of its feasibility and ease-access.

Students and teachers from Morocco participated in this study. All second baccalaureate students from Darra-Tafilalet region have equal chances to participate by fulfilling the questionnaire or participating in a one-to-one interview (see Appendices). The study adopts

both random and snowball sampling techniques. Students were randomly chosen while snowball sampling was used mainly for teachers. A total of 70 EFL female learners and 30 males were interested in the study. A sum of 20 female students participated in one-to-one interviews. This population is conveniently chosen because it represents one type of teacher of EFL. Along with 30 female EFL teachers participated in this study and 25 male teachers were involved in fulfilling the questionnaires.

Teaching materials of the English language are not unified for all students. Sometimes you find four textbooks for the same level. This article evaluates *Gate Way to English 2* which is used to help in teaching second baccalaureates learners. The textbook is chosen non-randomly. It is purposely chosen to represent used EFL textbooks in Morocco. It was published first on 31 July 2007. *Gate Way to English 2* was edited by Mohammed HASSIM, Mustapha BLIBIL, and Abdelkrim RASMY. It was published by NADIA EDITION in Rabat. The book presents ten units including formal informal and non-formal education, cultural issues and values, gifts of youth, women, and power, advances in science and technology, humor, citizenship, brain drain, sustainable development, and international organizations. The topics revolve around authentic life and carry social and cultural practices and behaviors that could help in teaching the main four skills writing, reading, speaking, and listening.

A checklist is used to help in gathering information from *Gate Way to English 2* and grouping data into categories such as professions, household functions, adjectives, and so on. This study will determine the quantity of depicted images of different genders in textbook photos or images. The image that includes only a male and a female will be involved in the category of 'both'. The fact that some pictures contain more than a woman and a man leads to counting all individuals and classifying them into a category of male or female. For the same character to appear more than once, each character will be counted as much as he or she appeared in the book. Counting male and female portrayed characters in this study relies on the mentioned characters' names or pronouns in the written texts or captions, so ambiguous individuals will be ignored. For female and male characters mentioned in texts, the counting will be for names and personal pronouns in each line.

In addition, the study will deal with jobs, careers, professions, or the work done by a woman or a man. There would be an examination of the characters' jobs to highlight the equality in assigning occupations. The focus will be on the diversity of the jobs that are associated with

women and men. Moreover, the use of adjectives to describe the female or the male will be investigated by determining the various used adjectives to describe a woman or a man.

Questionnaires were used as data collection instruments to collect data from both teachers and learners. They were used to investigate students' perceptions about gender equality and teachers' attitudes towards gender inequalities represented in the textbook. The first questionnaire was devoted to measuring students' opinions about social function and image associated with gendered identities in *Gate Way to English 2*. The second one was used to question educators' understanding of gender inequalities portrayed in textbooks and their participation in reducing gender inequalities in the educational context. Interviews are used in the study to elicit in-depth information about students' recognition of sexist language and images.

## 4. Results and Discussion

To analyze the collected data, Google Docs, XL, and SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) were used to classify and transform the data into charts and diagrams. Moreover, this study relies on content analyses as well. Erica Scharrer and Srividya Ramasubramanian (2021) introduce content analysis as a qualitative research method that would be used in social scientific approaches; it can be applied to any form of communication content that can be gathered and examined for analysis. In this study, content analysis involves analyzing the contents of the written language.

### 4.1. Gender Equality Representations in Gate Way to English 2

The social functions presented in Table 1 are associated with professions that are in the written texts of the investigated course book. Images help in understanding the social function or position of celebrities and famous Moroccan or international individuals. The collected data summarized in Table 1 bring together social positions and activities that are assigned to women, girls, men, and boys.

The collected data show that the majority of presented professions of characters in *Gate Way to English 2* are associated with men, almost 31, whereas 24 are linked to me. 43,36% of female characters were represented in different jobs though almost a higher frequency (56,36%) of male characters were depicted in various occupations. Cultural expectations and stereotypes influence women's and men's roles, mainly when there is an association between men and dominance in the private sphere.

**Table 1.** Women and men professions in Gate Way to English 2

		Women			Men			
<b>professions</b>	Activist	Prime Minister	Housewife	Actor	Novelist	Journalist	Secretary-General	
	Actress	Professor	King Advisor	Businessman	Player	Doctor	Singer	
	Athlete	Singer	Nurse	Chef Responsible	Politician	Driver	Solder	
	Comedian	Sociologist	Painter	Clone	President	Teacher	Student	
	Councilor	Student	Politician	Comedian	Scientist	Writer	Artist	
	Fashion Model	Stylist	Teacher	Engineer	Headmaster	Musician	waitress	
	Worker	Policewoman	Writer	Activist	Imam	Musician	Farmer	
	Author	Nurse	Scientist	Director	Supervisor	Boss		
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>			<b>22</b>				
<b>%</b>	<b>43.59</b>			<b>56.41</b>				

The portrayed men are associated with abilities, talents, competencies, qualifications, and skills. Males are presented in jobs that express dominance such as political leaders, decision-makers, chefs, and scientists. Additionally, women are represented within social roles such as singers, fashion models, and nurses. Many occupations that are associated with men are primarily masculine jobs; nevertheless, some functions highlight gender equally as in the case of politicians, teachers, writers, and students. Interview 6 (girl studying at 2bac) approves that there is an introduction of women in functions that link women to taking care of the husband, the children and the house and providing men with social functions that are associated with taking charge (economic and decision-making responsibilities). She said that ‘the jobs that are assigned to girls and women in Gate Way to English 2 are linked to taking care of family, children, and husband’; she continued, ‘while men’s occupations related to working outside the house to get an income.

Almost 44% of students believe that the textbook represents women in very traditional social functions according to Table 2 which presents students’ perceptions of women’s and men’s presentation in Gate Way to English 2. The collected data shows that 71% of participants believe that modern jobs represented in the textbook are distributed equally between women and men. No student linked taking care of kids to men; they could not imagine that men should take responsibility for children at home because there are no portrayed men within such



situations in the investigated textbook. Cultural norms affect students' interpretation of gender functions in educational materials. Learners' understanding is directed by gendered representation.

**Table 2.** Students' Perceptions of Women's and Men's Presentation in Gate Way to English 2

	Housework	Raising Children	Working Outside	Modern Occupations	Traditional Roles
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Women	43.00	30.76	26.00	15.11	6.43
Men	-	-	5.55	14.79	43.73
<b>Both</b>	57.00	69.23	68.45	70.10	49.16

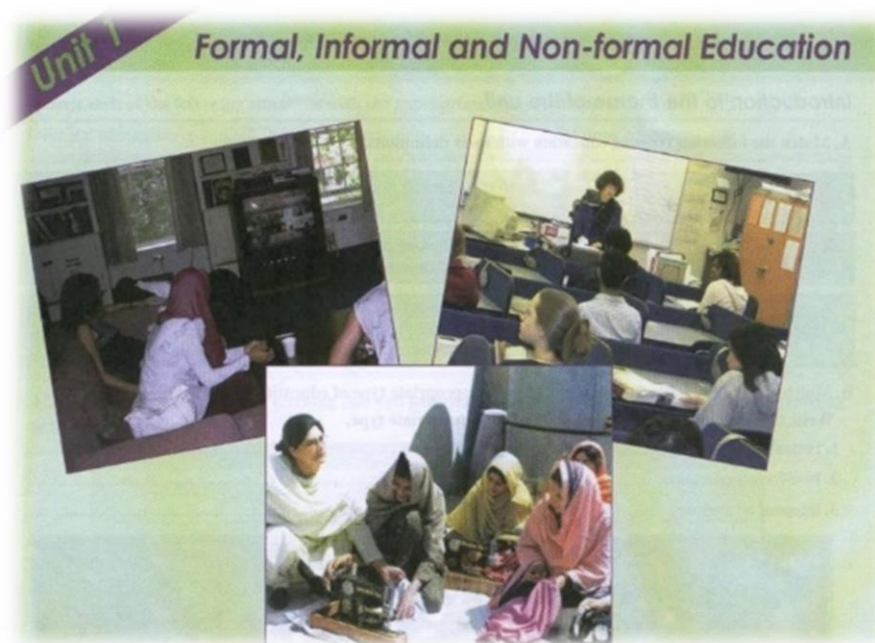
The collected results reveal that the vast majority of the introduced modern jobs are associated with men. Men are linked to decision-making occupations. Women are presented in social functions that are mainly within the private sphere; they are jobs that require feelings of caring while men are portrayed in status that necessitates intellectual or physical power.

For the eighth interviewee women as in the textbook are introduced as grandmothers, mothers, wives, businesswomen, thinkers, sociologists, farmers, and workers. Table 1 introduces a lot of functions that women perform but students most of the time notice only a few jobs that are connected to the stereotypical images of women and girls. Their perceptions of gender roles are reflected in their description of what they find within the textbook. *Gate Way to English 2* encourages educated powerful women by providing models of women who succeeded in spreading a huge impact on people around the globe.

Figure 1 presents some pictures of women doing at both private and public spheres as the first image of the first unit 'Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education. The images introduce the intellectual woman with high competencies, and some women learn some skills that may be related to getting a better income. Learners sometimes do not understand the importance of the visual aids that are in the textbook. They may not get a positive portrayal of women in the images because of the stereotypes that they get from their social or cultural environment.

There is a total absence of gender equality when we talk about doing housework. Learners need to recognize that the social division of gender roles is reflected in equality within the family and society as well. 30% of teachers chose to rank respecting religion as the first element that led to the unequal representation of social functions in the textbook. 36% of teachers rank media

representation of women as the second reason for the sexist representation of women in course books. 28% of educators ranked social and cultural principles as the first reason while 28% ranked women's rights first. Educators can be influential in challenging gender disparities and promoting gender equality by using teaching materials, methods, and approaches that are free from religious interpretation, social expectations, and cultural norms.



*Figure 1. Women's Competencies and Skills*

Pupils' perceptions of gender equality, in Table 2, stereotypically think that men do not participate in domestic roles; though, 57.00% of students think that women and men can do housework together. The textbook investigates the stereotypical social roles of women through the introduction of women in powerful situations throughout the presented units. Teaching materials are designed to help learners try to understand the lesson, but they send implicit cultural and social meanings.

The textbook lunches discussions about the promotion of women's rights and their participation in economic and social development. It introduces parts of research related to topics related to inequalities in improving health, nutrition or education, fertility, child morality, etc. (Hassim, Mustapha, & Abdelkrim, Gate Way to English 2, 2007). The central goal of EFL textbooks is to provide students with long-life learning skills. They need to develop their skills including those related to sustainable development, gender equality, and human rights.

Gender imbalance portrayed in social functions and professions within *Gate Way to English 2* can generate practices that align with traditional gender roles. The appearance of gender

inequality in association with household responsibilities underscores the deeply ingrained social division of gender functions. Traditional expectations regarding men's and women's performance within social institutions contribute to the reinforcement of gender disparities in textbooks. Religious interpretations could lead to the portrayal of women and men within functions that originated from the social practices that originated from the religious discourse. The textbook could perpetuate gender stereotypes as most Media tools because of the impacts of societal perceptions on the educational materials. Indeed, cultural norms and societal expectations can contribute to the perpetuation of traditional gender roles in the educational context.

**Table 3.** *Reasons behind Teachers' Perceptions of Gender Representations in the Textbook*

	<b>Respecting Religion</b>	<b>Socio-cultural Norms</b>	<b>Representation of Gender in Media</b>	<b>Educational Values</b>	<b>Social Change</b>	<b>Women's Rights</b>
1	30.00	28.00	16.00	24.00	15.00	28.00
2	20.00	22.00	36.00	19.00	11.00	15.00
3	18.00	15.00	18.00	14.00	30.00	16.00
4	7.00	7.00	6.00	20.00	11.00	7.00
5	10.00	13.00	8.00	12.00	14.00	13.00
6	15.00	15.00	16.00	11.00	19.00	21.00

Most learners think that *Gate Way to English 2* links women to take care and men to take charge. Teachers on the opposite side believe that the local culture presents patriarchal principles that represent women stereotypically. Teachers' beliefs in gender equality help some students in their understanding of women's and human rights through their explanation. Interviewee 7 assumes that her teacher presents positive ideas about women and associates girls with modern social functions stating that; "she the excellence of women in different jobs around the world". There are jobs that represent women in subordinate status compared with men; however, the portrayed images in the textbook present pictures in which women are presented while performing social functions that emphasize the intellectual abilities of women.

*Gate Way to English 2* as a sample of EFL textbooks in Morocco, introduces traditional and conventional ideas that promote gender inequalities mainly when students cannot get the main goal of an image. Teachers can help their students to understand the hidden meanings in words and pictures. They can transmit messages that promote gender equality because they are

exposed to human and women's rights. Few teachers perpetuate social stereotypes according to the students and teachers. They can adopt teaching materials, techniques, methods, approaches, and theories that encourage gender equality.

## 4.2. Gender Equality Promotion and EFL Teaching Materials

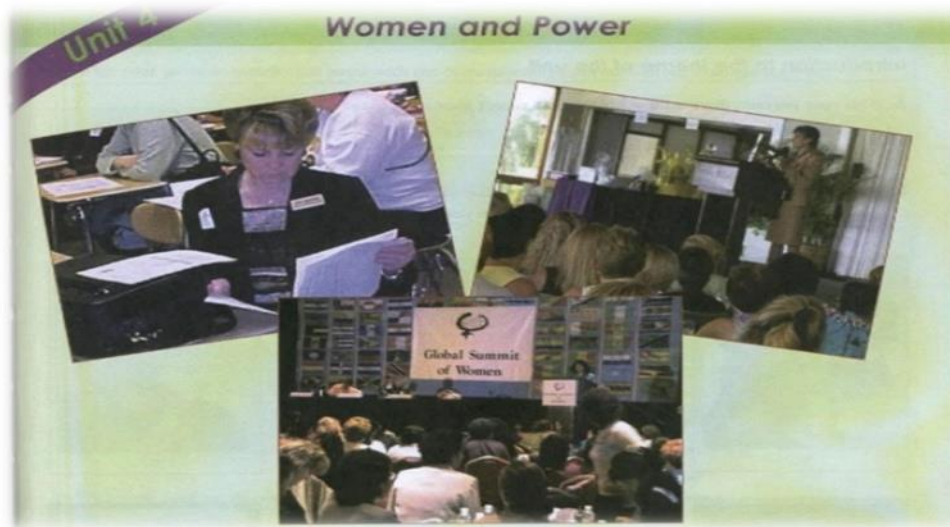
This article presents collected information from *Gate Way to English 2* that supports equality between women and men. Figure 2 shows that the textbook introduces famous women from different fields. The book mentions Angela Dorothea Merkel (Chancellor of Germany, the most powerful woman in the world in 2006), Leila Abouzeid (Moroccan author, the first Moroccan writer of literature to be translated into English, and radio and television journalist), Mary Robinson (Former President of Republic of Ireland and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), Chandrika Kumaratunga (President of Sri Lanka, the daughter of the world's first woman Prime Minister), Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf (Africa's first elected female leader and Elected president of Liberia in 2006), and Meryem Chadid (Famous Moroccan astronomer and first woman in the Arab world to set foot on Antarctica). The pictures of influential figures encourage women's participation in science, politics, activism, and decision-making. This paper reveals the hidden messages or meanings associated with girls' and women's skills in different fields as Figure 3 suggests.



*Figure 2. Influential Women*

Figure 3 confirms that *Gate Way to English* contains a unit that deals with women and power. Unit 4 discusses women's causes from an international viewpoint. It promotes equality between women and men through the introduction of women's activism or scientific participation through global conferences or The Global Summit of Women, leaders meeting across borders disciplines, and classes. The textbook shows women developing economic and social work

skills. Women are presented while they are developing their competencies and skills, preparing themselves for being financially independent as Figure 4 illustrates.



*Figure 3. Unit 4 Women and Power*

*Gate Way to English 2* contains a reading text that talks about women who are trying to increase their economic, political, social participation, and leadership. The topic invites students to think of raising the next generation through raising women's education and increasing their control over economic and educational resources. It is an invitation to invest in girls and women's futures in order to develop society.



*Figure 4. Investment in Girls Future*

The perceptions of both teachers and students about the textbook's presentation of women and men are revealed in Table 4. The overall percentage 33.00 % of teachers think that the textbook is not presenting women and men equally; however, 32.00 % of students believe that there is gender equality in presenting women and men throughout the textbook. The presentation of famous women as chancellors, authors, journalists, presidents, prime ministers, and

astronomers facilitates teachers' transmission of messages that promote gender equality to their students. The educational system creates equality through hidden means addressed to students.

**Table 4.** Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Women and Men Representation in Gate Way to English 2

Women and men's representation in TB	Teachers	Students
Women and men are equally represented	25.00	32.00
There is a bit misrepresentation of women and men	33.00	16.00
Women and men are very misrepresented	5.00	18.00
Gender-based presentation	25.00	12.00
Don't know	12.00	22.00

EFL students are exposed to women in decision-making positions and political leading responsibilities. They can consider them as models for their future social life. They believe that their teacher treats them equally regardless of their gender differences. Their teachers promote equality and introduce messages free from gender bias. Students' perceptions can be directed by teachers' attitudes toward gender equality, human rights, and social justice. Within the Moroccan educational context, learners have equivalent chances for access, but they may have equality for success. All over the world, education preserves social and economic disparities. Therefore, most textbooks perpetuate the same inequalities that are in society.

### 4.3. Textbooks Representation of Gender in Written Texts

The mentioned men and women in written texts can transform different meanings from the used images in a textbook. *Gate Way to English 2* presents women and men almost equally. A total of 45% among the mentioned characters in the textbook are women and 51% are men. The collected data illustrates that there are more male characters than female ones. The difference of 5% would not affect students' perceptions; however, this textbook could introduce real gender equality if it involves the equal appearance of women and men in written texts.

Table 5, on the other hand, shows that 40% of women appeared as characters in images while 58% of them are men whereas 2% of images present a man and a woman together. The collected data reveals that *Gate Way to English 2* represents women with fewer images in comparison with men. Images portrayal of women in images is not the same as that presentation in written texts This interpretation confirms that there is a kind of hidden inequality in written texts. Men have a greater space of visibility in visual aids. In general, the textbook is not reflecting the

real number of women and men in society. There are people who could say that the presentation of women and men in old literature is reflected in the used textbooks.

**Table 5.** *Women and Men's Appearance in Gate Way to English 2*

	Texts	Images
Women	45%	40%
Men	51%	58%
Both	4%	2%

The used adjectives in Table 6 contain pioneer, beautiful, coordinator, and team leader as words used to describe women while their men are described as gladiator, strong, brilliant, biologist scientist and successful. Men are linked to power intellectually and physically while women are linked to beauty and emotions according to the used adjectives in *Gate Way to English 2*.

**Table 6.** *Gate Way to English 2 Used Adjectives to Describe a Woman or a Man*

	Woman	Man
Adjectives	Pioneer	Gladiator
	Beautiful	Strong
	Coordinator	Celebrated
	Team Leader	Brilliant
	Energetic	Biologist
	Happy	Scientist
	Famous	Famous
		Successful

The textbook presents a few adjectives for both women and men. The association of a woman as a team leader, pioneer, or coordinator means that this textbook avoids highlighting women's abilities in public spaces. The adjectives were used to describe famous women that are nationally or internationally recognized. Interviewee 8 assumes that there are powerful women in the investigated textbook. Thus, women's representation through adjectives that reflect feelings does not have an impact on students' perceptions of *Gate Way to English 2* representation of girls and women.

## 4.4. Gender Equality in EFL Textbooks and Social Change

*Gate Way to English 2* contains different texts and images that introduce social change in association with gender. It is a book that transmits some ideas of social transition around the world. This textbook introduces feminists' ideas through reading texts or lessons. Students are introduced to different forms of developing women's skills and competencies. Such texts can be categorized within argumentative texts that support women's causes. Figure 5 puts emphasis on women working outside the home and feminists' activism. It encourages the independent woman, self-confidence, and women's personal identity. Students are asked to write an essay in which they express their opinions towards a certain issue bearing in mind all those ideas that are engendered in Figure 5.

**Writing: For and against essay**

**A. Read the following text and complete the outline below.**

Nowadays, more and more women work outside the home, which affects many people positively or negatively. Germaine Greer, the Australian feminist, said, "Most women still need a room of their own and the only way to find it may be outside their own homes." If it is true, can it be done without having a negative effect on the family?

One point in favour of mothers working is that their children often learn to be independent from an early age, which can only help them in the future. Also, in many families, the man's salary alone is not enough to cover all household expenses. Thus, the need for extra income arises, and the woman has to work. Moreover, working outside the home gives a woman a sense of her own personal identity and self-confidence. A woman who stays at home will always be known as "John's wife" and not as a person in her own right.

On the other hand, child care is expensive. Therefore, a large proportion of the money a working mother earns will be spent on childcare. What is more, if both parents are out working all day, they only see their children for a few hours in the evening. This can have a negative effect, as children may start to see their parents as strangers. Finally, a working mother usually has to look after both the children and home in her spare time, so she is actually doing two jobs instead of one, which can be very tiring. She may also miss out important events in her children's lives, such as their first words.

To sum up, there are many arguments both for and against working mothers. Every family is different and what is good for one family may not necessarily be good for another. Taking everything into account, it should be left to the individual mother to decide whether working or not is something that she wants to do.

*Figure 5. Argumentative text (Hassim, Blibil and Rasmy)*

The ideas that are introduced in texts overcome calling for egalitarianism between women and men. Figure 7 mentions sexual equality. Students in this text are introduced to equality for all gendered identities. Even if it is just a glance it will have a great impact on students' perceptions of sexuality issues if they understand the implicit meanings presented in words.

The ideas presented in figures 5 and 6 represent social changes that are associated with gender equality around the globe. Moroccan society is one of those environments that have witnessed important development in human and women's rights. The introduction of Leila Abouzeid, Fatima Mernissi, Chaibia Talal, and Aicha Chenna show gives trigger students' thoughts of gender equality, modernism, and social transformation. Some learners could adopt a few presented ideas and try to search for more ideas that are promoting gender equality and social justice.



Young people in developed countries have become very egalitarian in terms of sexual equality; they realize that responsibility must be shared in the home, in the family, in the educational sphere and in the workplace. While older generations are more traditional, the real challenge is not the gap between young and old, it is the cultural gap between those societies with egalitarian attitudes and those which remain more traditional.

*Figure 6. Sexual Equality (Hassim, Blibil and Rasmy)*


Figure 7 presents the icon Chaibia Talal which originated from the new Moroccan independent women context. Women that are powerful symbols in the national level provide girls with hope for becoming independent powerful women in the future. Such images help in reducing gender stereotypes that might be in learners' minds. *Gate Way to English 2* could be a source of ideas that support human's rights and equality between women and men.

**Grammar: Relative Clauses**

**A. Read the following text and answer this question.**

**Why do you think Chaibia's paintings were mainly about rural life?**

Not all artists who become famous have spent years studying. Chaibia Talal, who started painting when she was still a young girl, never had an art course. She was born in Chtouka, a small village near El Jadida, Morocco. She got married at the age of 14 before she became a widow at 15. Her realistic and simple paintings, which depicted the Moroccan rural life, have been praised by critics and art admirers alike. The people who appear in her paintings are mostly women. This energetic woman, who lived to be 85, continued to create works of wonder and charm until shortly before her death. Chaibia, who painted without any formal training, remains one of the twentieth century's most famous "primitive" artists.



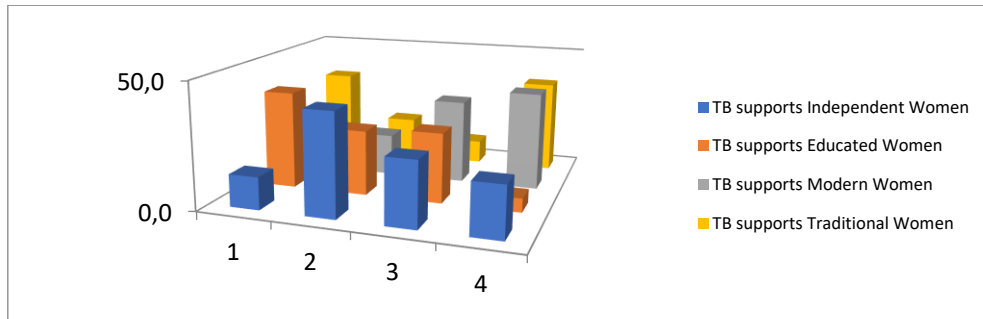
*Figure 7. The Energetic Chaibia Talal*

#### **4.5. Teachers' and Learners' Attitudes towards Gender Equality**

Moroccan teachers of English have at least a university level. Most of them have a BA. They have broader knowledge than their students do. Teachers use different teachers' books that are associated with students' books in the Moroccan classroom. The Ministers' guidelines are integrated into both books. They reflect the national policies and cultural principles adopted by the Moroccan educational system. Gender equality or inequality images presented in students' textbooks have a certain impact on students' attitudes toward gender.

The collected data presented in figure 8, reveal that 39 % of learners suppose that the students' book supports newly educated women and ranked it first, 41 % indicate students' book support

of independent women ranked it second, 32% believe that students' book supports modern women and ranked it third; while, students book support of traditional women is chosen to be the fourth by 38% of respondents.



**Figure 8.** *Students' Perceptions of Students Support of Women*

The introduction of women in powerful social positions chancellor, prime minister, astronomer, author, comedian, transmit equality meanings through providing boys and girls with models. In the same line, 20% of students think that the students' book is contains gender-based representation. A total of 55% of teachers believe that the students' book contains an equal representation of gendered identities. Educators transmit their perceptions of gender equality and roles to their students. They are believed to be the first models for students who adopt their teacher's attitudes towards social issues.

Teachers and students believe that education helps women to improve their skills and competencies; they think that education leads to the construction of more independent women. Both have positive attitudes toward gender equality in classrooms. The unit women and power help them to get a closer view of the global images of powerful independent women and forms of activism that could be accepted by the local culture.

Teachers' and students' books present gender roles taking into consideration the local culture, the national policies, and the international development of gender equality and social justice. Students at the baccalaureate level are introduced to gender equality implicitly through teachers' ideas and perceptions. Teachers' attitudes could have positive or negative impacts on students' perceptions and attitudes toward gender equality in society.

#### **4.6. Teachers' Evaluation of Gender Equality in Students' Book**

Table 7 illustrates the gender equality representations in students' books according to EFL teachers. The results reveal that 48% of respondents confirm that women and men are represented equally, 26% think that they are 'a bit misrepresented', and 10% of teachers do not where to categorize gender equality in the evaluated textbook.

**Table 7.** Teachers' Evaluation of Gender Equality in Students' Book

Gender Equality in S.B.	
Equally represented	48
A bit misrepresented	26
Very misrepresented	8
Gender-based	8
Don't know	10

Table 7 shows that teachers have different points of view regarding gender equality in students' books. Teachers convey concepts that they previously have about social functions to their pupils in association with their opinions about the content of the textbook. Likewise, teachers' description of gender roles in *Gate Way to English 2* is not shared among all teachers; their opinion depends on their educational background and knowledge.

A female teacher (aged between 22-27 years) holder of cultural studies BA said:

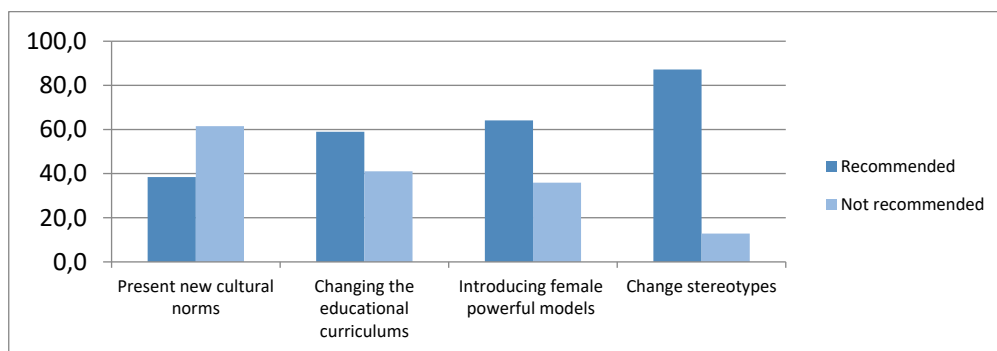
*Gender roles are somewhat presented in the book, not totally exist but there are some features in some units as "Brain Drain" that confirm that stereotype and spread them among the coming generations, (even there is "Women and Power" unit that changes a bit the view, but it is not enough to enhance the youths' minds and thoughts).*

The female teacher believes that there is only one unit that can represent gender equality among ten units. She confirms that there are units that can promote gender inequalities as in the case of the 'Brain Drain' unit which does not present intellectual women while they are Moroccan women working outside the country.

A graduated female teacher aged between 27 and 32 and specializing in Applied Linguistics said, talking about women in students' books, 'I don't know, but I think they are not misrepresented'. A male teacher, within the same age category, who majored in Applied Linguistics thinks that the representation of women in the investigated textbook is 'somehow fair'. Besides, a female teacher aged between 22 and 27 years, majored in Gender Studies, and holder of a Ph.D. said, textbooks call for "gender equity and equality in its texts, themes, pictures, and units'.

The previous testimonies demonstrate that there are teachers who believe that students' textbooks present women and men equally. There are few teachers who think that the patriarchal society leads to some misrepresentations of women in the investigated textbook. However, they confirm that gender stereotypes are not presented explicitly. Other teachers think that *Gate Way to English 2* women and men equally.

The collected data presented in figure 9 shows that 84% of teachers call for changing the wrong ideas contained in students' books with new ones that support gender equality. About 62% of teachers assume that there is a need for presenting more powerful women in textbooks, and 60% of respondents recommend the transformation of the educational curriculum to a modern one that promotes gender equality and social justice. Moroccan society is changing, and learners need to be guided toward positive transformation. Students' books need to be improved most of them were published in 2007 and many ideas about society have changed. Teachers are aware of the needed changes and try to accommodate the teaching materials that they with the new educational atmosphere and the international social development as well.



**Figure 9.** Female and Male Teachers' Recommendations

Women and men working as teachers of English in Morocco recognize all the activities that are within the units of the used textbooks. They have some freedom in introducing activities that are not in students' books, but they must respect the national guidelines. Teachers might have less awareness of the principles and norms that are related to gender equality. However, there are many teachers who assume that textbooks need some modifications to go hand in hand with the changes that take place all over the world. They call for including teachers while changing books by taking into consideration their recommendations. They assume that students should not be considered commercial targets of publishers; students' book designers, and publishers should promote ideas and norms that support sustainable development, human rights, social justice, and gender equality.

The analysis highlights the importance of considering cultural divisions in understanding the portrayal of gender roles in educational materials. The study suggests that educators can play a pivotal role in challenging stereotypes and promoting gender equality by actively engaging with students and adopting inclusive teaching practices. Additionally, the impact of cultural and religious influences on the representation of gender roles highlights the need for culturally sensitive educational materials that challenge, rather than reinforce, traditional norms.

## 5. Conclusion

The whole world is in a rapid process of change and students need to follow global development. Educational guidelines should help students to develop skills that are needed outside schools. Social issues presented in the educational context need to be updated as well. This article tried to evaluate gender equality representation in *Gate Way to English 2* and investigate teachers' and students' perceptions of women and men in the textbook. It presents teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward gender equality representation in the investigated students' book.

*Gate Way to English 2* is one of the students' books that are used to teach the English language in Moroccan classes; it echoes the national policies and the social principles of Moroccan culture. The study suggested that students' books reinforce gender inequalities, teachers have positive attitudes toward gender equality, and students have negative perceptions of women's social functions. The investigated textbook reflects the social shared ideas in texts, images, or opinions. The hidden meanings in textbooks are transformed for students through teachers that may make some alterations to the original messages. The results reveal that there are some images of gender bias in *Gate Way to English 2*.

The portrayed women and men in images and texts are not presented equally. Men appeared more than women in the textbook. Throughout the students' book, men are introduced in association with varied jobs and not linked to housework. The presentation of women within leading positions and political leadership situations can reduce gender inequalities representation in the book. Accordingly, teachers can control the produced messages within English classrooms. Students and teachers have some awareness of the negative images that are portrayed in the textbook and try not to share sexist ideas in the educational context. Both show that they have positive attitudes toward gender equality. Teachers are treating their learners equally and implementing social justice in their designed lessons. There are instructors who

believe that there is an equivalent introduction of women and men in the textbook and do not take into account the existence of conventional messages.

This article generates several suggestions for different collaborators in the teaching-learning process within the Moroccan EFL context including:

- Student books should provide an unbiased quantity of women and men in words and images.
- Textbooks should present men doing housework as they do for women.
- Teachers need to be aware of gender equality and women's empowerment issues. They need to get cultural training that is related to gender, sexuality, and human rights.
- Teachers need to go beyond the textbook (GBT) and avoid distributing ideas that are not against gender equality.
- Students' book publishers and educational program designers should be aware of gender equality and women's empowerment through education.

Education, gender equality, and women's empowerment are very appealing multidisciplinary fields of investigation. The results of this study are associated with the Moroccan cultural and educational context; the examination of gender disparities in Gate Way to English 2 would be different from the analysis of a different teaching material within the same context. Researchers could research forms of resistance to gender discrimination in the educational context and ways of promoting gender equality and empowering women within classrooms. Further research is needed to investigate possible methods or ways of overcoming the social negative conventions that hinder gender equality promotion. They could conduct comparative studies of the different textbooks used to teach English in the Moroccan context.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Questionnaire: For Teachers

This study is part of a scientific research project in gender studies and education. It aims to investigate the representation of gender roles in Moroccan textbooks. The data you provide will help in an investigation of gender role representation in textbooks. You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire spontaneously, and I assure you that your identity will be kept anonymous. Thank you for your time and collaboration.

Please, put a tick in the box corresponding to your answer.

#### Section I: general background information:

**1. What is your gender?**

- (1) Male  (2) Female

**2. How old are you?**

- (1) 22-27  (2) 28-32  (3) +32

**3. What is your educational level?**

- (1) PHD   
(2) Graduate   
(3) Undergraduate

**4. What is your specialty?**

- (1) Applied Linguistics   
(2) Cultural Studies   
(3) Gender Studies   
(4) Literature   
(5) Translation   
Others: .....

**5. How many years have you been teaching English?**

- (1) 1-5 years  (2) 6-10  (3) 11-20  (4) +20

#### Section II:

**6. To what extent do you think stereotypes about gender roles are represented in Gate Way to English 2?**

- (1) Very represented   
(2) Represented   
(3) Somewhat represented   
(4) Not represented at all   
(5) I don't know



**7. What are the social roles assigned to males and females in the textbook?**

Social Roles	1. Males	2. Females	3. Both
Doing Housework			
Raising children			
Working outside			
Modern occupations			
Traditional roles			

**State if there are other roles and determine the gender roles to which they are confined!**

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**8. Which of the following statements best describes your opinion about the representation of gender roles in Gate Way to English 2?**

(1) Equally represented	
(2) Somewhat misrepresented	
(3) Very misrepresented	
(4) Gender-biased	
(5) I don't know	

Others: .....

**9. What are the reasons behind gender roles division in textbooks, rank them according to their importance: (from 1-6)**

Respecting religion	Social and cultural norms	Representation of males and females in media	Educational values	Social change	Women's rights

**10. Please rank where gender roles division is mostly represented in the textbook? Please rank (from 1-6)**

Texts content	Pictures	Topics chosen	Jobs	Assigned tasks	Ajectives

### 11. Do you agree or disagree with these statements?

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Wife does not need to work if her husband is working.					
Women should be confined to domestic work.					
Religious and political leaders must be males.					
Men and women are equal in rights and duties					

### 12. What are some of the suggested recommendations for more equality in gender roles division within textbook?

- (1) Changing stereotypes
- (2) Introducing female powerful models
- (3) Changing the educational curriculums
- (4) Present new cultural norms

### 13. How would you describe gender in Gate Way to English 2?

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Referring back to the study and aim of this questionnaire, are there any other points which you would like to add which have not been included.

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**Thank you again for your collaboration.**

## Appendix B: Questionnaire: For Students

This study is part of a scientific research project in gender studies and education. It aims to investigate the representation of gender roles in Moroccan textbooks. The data you provide will help in an investigation of gender role representation in textbooks. You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire spontaneously, and I assure you that your identity will be kept anonymous. Thank you for your time and collaboration.

**Please, put a tick in the box corresponding to your answer.**

### Part one:

**1. What is your sex?**

(1) Male

(2) Female

**2. How old are you?**

(1) 16-18

(2) 19-20

(3) +20

**3. What is your specialty?**

(1) Lettres

(2) Sciences Expérimentales

(3) Sciences Mathématiques

(4) SVI

(5) PH

(6) Sciences et techniques

(7) Génie électrique

Others .....

### Part Two:

**4. What are women and men's social roles in Gate Way to English 2?**

Gender roles	1. Males	2. Females	3. Both
Doing Housework			
Raising children			
Working outside			
Modern occupations			
Traditional roles			

**5. How are women represented in the textbook?**

- (1) Independent                       (2) Controlled   
 (3) Free                                       (4) I don't know

**6. What are the profiles of women presented in the textbook?**

- (1) Educated                       (2) Non-educated   
 (3) Traditional                       (4) Leaders                       (5) Modern

**7. To what extent men and women are equal in the textbook?**

- (1) Very Common                       (2) Common   
 (3) Nearly common                       (4) Not common at all

**8. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A girl should work at home.					
A woman can lead the family.					
Education helps the girl to be independent from man.					
A woman should be powerful.					

**9. Rank those reasons that are behind gender roles from the most important to the less important: (from 1-6)**

Misinterpretation of Religion	Social and Cultural Norms	Lack of Awareness	Lack of Education	Patriarchal Society	Poverty

**10. Rank these phrases about textbooks from the most important to the less important (1-4)**

Support Traditional Women	Support Modern Women	Support Independent Women	Support Educated Women

**11. Do you think that the textbook introduces men and equally?**

(1) Equally represented	
(2) Somewhat misrepresented	
(3) Very misrepresented	
(4) Gender-biased	
(5) I don't know	

**12. What does your teacher of English think about women and men’s roles?**

Gender roles	1. Males	2. Females	3. Both
Taking care of children’s education			
Work inside the house			
Working outside the house			
Doing Homeworks			
Raising children			

**13. Do you think that your teacher of English prefers:**

- (1) Boys                       (2) Girls                       (3) Both

**14. Do you think that the teacher considers women independent?**

- (1) Yes                       (2) No                       (3) Not sure

**15. Describe how you think being male or female may influence your attitude to learning English?**

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**Referring back to the study and aim of this questionnaire, are there any other points which you would like to add which have not been included**

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**Thank you again for your collaboration.**

## Appendix C: Interview

I'm a researcher from Ibn Tofail University. I'm doing research in your city and I thought it would be a good idea to interview you so that I can better gather much information concerning my research Thesis which is about gender representation in Gate Way to English 2. I would like to ask you some questions about your ideas and points of view Vis à Vis this issue. The interview should take about 10 minutes. Are you available to respond to some questions currently?

Let me begin by asking you:

- 1) What are the jobs that women and men do according to your textbook?
- 2) How do you describe the women that you see in pictures in the textbook?
- 3) How can you describe the men that are in the pictures in the textbook?
- 4) What are the adjectives that are used to describe women in the textbook?
- 5) What are the adjectives that are used to describe men in the textbook?
- 6) Are there any powerful Moroccan women in the textbook or only traditional women?
- 7) Does the teacher talk more about men or women?
- 8) Which type of women does your teacher talk about? What did you think at that moment?
- 9) Is there equality between girls and boys in the textbook?
  - Yes
  - No
- 10) Do you think it is very normal nowadays to find women in leading positions? Why?