

Between the Keys

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From the Publication Chair

Jim Smiley, Tohoku Bunka Gakuen University

Hello everyone. Welcome to the final issue of *Between the Keys* in 2015. Temporarily, I'm taking over the editor chair for this special issue on gender bias in EFL materials. James Essex will be back next year with our regular line up. In the meantime, if you have an idea for an article, please feel free to contact James via our website and discuss your ideas with him.

The JALT International Conference just past focussed on the learner. This provided a very useful framework for materials writers to consider how the learner develops their voice in the second language through the materials we create. No voice can exist without models: just as the baby copies the parent, the student utilises the language of the textbook. If that language contains bias, writers consciously or unconsciously promote that bias in the output of students, even if that is bias that the students don't accept in their own native speaker voice.

Such biases are often subtle and some are blatant. Simply being aware of the issues will go a long way to rectifying the amount of gender bias in EFL textbooks, but some issues may be missed by the casual reader. I urge close reading of the articles in this special issue.

In this issue, Melodie Cook describes a longitudinal change between the textbooks by the same author separated by a decade. Cook finds that gender bias is still prevalent in EFL materials even though the situation is ameliorated to some extent. She concludes her paper with some useful recommendations for writers about how to prepare more bias-free texts.

Brien Datzman presents an analysis of a commonly-used textbook in Japan. He uses Lakoff's 10-item framework as the base for the analysis in which he concludes that the work is relatively bias free. Although Datzman's article will be of use as a case study in authoring modern texts, he does point out some more subtle examples of bias. The wider question regarding the role that EFL materials have in mimicking native speaker discourse or as instruments of critical change becomes an important one for writers.

Jim Smiley applies the Bechdel Test to EFL materials. He uses this test to present a short overview of the main themes in gender studies in EFL.

The final 'piece' is a paid-for infomercial from an independent publishing house offering its wares to our members.

Between the Keys is published by the JALT Materials Writers Special Interest Group (MW-SIG). The editors welcome contributions in the following areas: publishing issues, classroom activities, page layout or desktop publishing, experiences in publishing or materials design, announcements of materials-related meetings or newly published materials, or any other articles focusing on aspects of materials writing or publishing. For information about reprinting articles, please contact the editor. All articles contained in *Between the Keys* ©2015 by their respective authors. This newsletter ©2015 by Materials Writers SIG.

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Co-ordinator's Column

Adam Murray, Miyazaki International College

Dear MW-SIG Members,

I'd like to take this chance to introduce myself. My name is Adam Murray and I am the new coordinator. I am currently based at Miyazaki International College in sunny southern Kyushu. (Some of you may be familiar with Miyazaki city because it was the site of the 2014 PAN-SIG Conference). Like most educators, I am continually making supplementary materials to provide additional support for my students. Until now, I have limited experience with commercially published textbooks. I have been involved with piloting and I co-authored a niche classroom-use textbook with Pearson Kirihara a few years ago. Recently, I have been interested in the development of listening materials.

Despite the ubiquitous nature of classroom materials, quality materials are an important part of each teacher's toolbox. As coordinator, I would like to make sure that the MW-SIG continues to provide a quality service to not only the members, but also to the foreign language teaching community as a whole.

In the next couple of weeks, I am planning to send the membership a description of what I would like to accomplish in the upcoming year. I look forward to meeting you at upcoming events.

In your service,
Adam Murray

JALT International Conference

JALT2016: 42nd Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition

Transformation in Language Education

Aichi Industry & Labor Center – WINC Aichi

Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan

November 25th - 28th, 2016

Deadline for proposal submissions: February 15, 2016

Gender Bias in ESL/EFL Textbooks: 10 Years Later

Melodie Cook, University of Niigata Prefecture

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to provide evidence that gender bias still exists in textbooks, even though research has been charting its presence since the late 1970s. The paper starts with some background information about previous studies on gender bias in language textbooks. Then, the author presents the results of a language textbook analysis she undertook in 2005, the purpose of which was to highlight the presence of gender bias via visual representations of women. This is followed by an analysis of both textbook texts and visuals in a 2014 textbook. The findings of this small study show that not only does gender bias exist, there is also a sense that an idealized and highly sanitized image of English speakers is presented to students.

The purpose of this paper is to compare EFL textbooks published approximately 10 years apart to see if there have been any changes concerning gender bias. Previous researchers examining gender bias in language textbooks found that in language textbooks there weren't as many female as male characters, that males were portrayed in more dominant roles, that men spoke first, that women were depicted in "traditional" occupations, that they were often shown talking on the phone, shopping, complaining, cleaning, or asking for help with "brainwork", and their topics of conversation included cooking, child rearing, movie stars, neighbours, and the affairs of others. When depicted visually, women were often shown in grocery and depart-

ment stores, were young, less active than their male counterparts and dressed in a more formal, narrow range of styles, and if depicted doing a variety of activities, there was no supporting text (e.g. Hartmann and Judd, 1978; Porreca, 1984; Sunderland 1992; Poulou, 1997; Ma 1998; and Lesikin 2001).

Background

This paper is a follow-up to one I wrote about 10 years ago (Cook, 2005), in which I examined such topics as a) gender-based language, b) female and male presence, c) characteristics of women, female expression and power relationships, d) women's roles, activities, and conversational topics and e) visual depiction and description of women. The references I used for the paper were published from the late 70s to the early 2000s, so I took the authors' ideas about the "grammar" of gender bias and used them as a framework to examine visual representations of women and men in a recently-published (at that time) textbook: *World Link* (Stempleski et al, 2005).

My analysis of *World Link* (Stempleski et al, 2005) yielded similar results to those found by authors referring to older textbooks. First, not only were there more images of males than females in the book, males were also engaging in a greater number and variety of occupations. For those females depicted doing "non-traditional" work such as firefighting, there was no accompanying text, explaining, for example, who the women were, what their work was like, etc. In

fact, there were more images of women unsupported by text than of men. In addition, males were portrayed as being more active than females, who were often depicted as young, slender, and formally dressed. In summary, it seemed that the same types of gender bias demonstrated in this 2005 textbook were similar to those found in textbooks published 15-20 years earlier.

Focus

It is necessary for us to continue searching for and eliminating bias in textbooks, especially those pitched to female Japanese students who aim to advance socially, economically, and personally (Nagatomo, 2012). Thus, for this current study, I examined how gender bias is demonstrated in a more recent textbook. I analyzed OUP's *Stretch* (Stempleski, 2014), a beginner-level four-skills text, which is representative of many similar English communication/conversation textbooks. The chapters were entitled "Jobs", "Daily activities", "At the moment" (present continuous activities), "Feelings", "On the weekend", "Downtown", "People we admire", "At a supermarket", "Health problems", "Cities", "Music", and "Travel plans".

A typical chapter begins with vocabulary and listening exercises, usually accompanied by eight small images (drawings or photographs), and followed by speaking exercises with a dialogue accompanied by an image that is directly or tangentially related to it. The chapter then focuses on grammar, with a grammar box and two or three exercises accompanied by about seven small images. The next page, reading and writing, usually has a reading comprehension based on a reading which is generally

accompanied by a large photograph. This is followed by a page of viewing activities. Two large screen shots from the video are accompanied by a series of questions. The last page, presenting, is accompanied by both small and large images related to presentation style. On this last page, in the bottom right corner, is a presentation guide – either a male or female pointing out a presentation tip. Two of the guides are white males in their 20s; two are females about the same age, one Caucasian, one Asian.

I examined both texts and images in this book for instances of gender bias. To do the former, I first looked at all texts in which males and females were "characters" (i.e. dialogues, names referred to in activities), and all images in which people were depicted. I counted the total number of images, the total number of females and males portrayed, and the size of images they were portrayed in. I also looked at thematic relationships between images and texts, in other words, if images were supported by texts. I noted any anomalies that caught my eye as I was analyzing the textbook.

Findings

First, I found that in *Stretch*, males are depicted more often than females (see Table 1).

Table 1: Percentages of appearance of females and males

	Total	Small Images	Large Images
Female	42.5%	63%	57%
Male	54.7%	36%	47%

In addition, women had a better

chance of being depicted if they were with a man; there were 51 small and 13 large images in which both men and women were shown.

Despite this, in some respects, this textbook has attempted to present gender in a balanced way. In conversations, females and males take the same number of turns and generally alternate taking turns with longer segments of talk. Also, both men and women are depicted engaging in wide range of activities. Still, I found a number of problems. For instance, the presentation guides' body language seemed strikingly different to me; specifically, the female presentation guides' body language was more closed and "cute" than the males'. In addition, in two images of mixed groups – groups containing both sexes – playing soccer, women appeared behind the men. There were also a number of texts accompanied by "token" pictures of women (no direct relationship between text and image). Also, in a chapter entitled "Feelings", in a dialogue, a man invites a woman out; in the same chapter, a woman stresses out about social networks. The underlying messages here were that men invite women and women tend to be neurotic about their online presence. In a dialogue in the chapter entitled "Downtown", one woman is asking another for directions, but the image shows two women asking a man for help. In addition, throughout the book, most texts referring to a man cooking are accompanied by an image of a restaurant chef, reinforcing a stereotype about men being better cooks than women. Finally, one consolidation activity refers to real males, but only fictitious females.

More significantly, there were several

cases of whole pages in chapters being devoted to male characters, but none to females. I was also particularly surprised to see that in two chapters, one entitled "People we admire", and the other "Music", women were very much underrepresented. In the first, there are 32 males and 8 females shown, (and all but one, a fictitious grandmother, are dead). Fictitious grandmother "Mimi", the most senior "character" in the entire textbook, is portrayed as a former gym teacher and athlete, who now helps others, bakes, volunteers, travels, and plays with her grandchildren, (like all good female seniors should). The chapter entitled "Music" depicts 34 males and 14 females, and that chapter opens with content solely about male musicians. While there is a passage about Shakira with a large photo of her, a photo of equal size with an unidentified male appears with a reading on a Toronto live music house. What both these chapters imply is that women are less admirable and less likely to be musicians than men.

Finally, what I found especially striking about this textbook was its portrayal of the idealized native English speaker in terms of race and appearance. I tried to gauge non-Caucasian presence, estimate the average age of people depicted, look at their body types, and see if disabilities were depicted or talked about in the text. First, although it is commonly known that the number of non-native speakers of English is greater than the number of native speakers, depictions of speakers of English as Caucasians greatly outnumbered depictions of non-Caucasians from as low as 7.8% in chapter 1 to as "high" as 45% in a chapter about music, where black,

male musicians were featured prominently. The average age of the textbook characters appeared to be between 20 and 30. Females and males were depicted as attractive, slender and physically fit except in a very few cases (pictures of Queen Victoria, Oliver Hardy, and a group of older Indian women), and there were a few images of children, when families or sports were the themes. There were no obvious disabilities depicted, and no LGBT couples appeared.

Conclusion/ Recommendation

What I found was interesting and merits further and wider study. Although the author and production team of *Stretch* apparently attempted to represent women equally with men, there is still work to be done: there is a need for English-speaking people to be represented as they really are, rather than being portrayed in such an idealized, fantastical, and sanitized manner. In the meantime, teachers can also address this issue by being aware of all kinds of bias, pointing out areas of bias to students, and having students work with and fix it.

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Bio data

Melodie Cook has lived in Japan for 19 years, and has taught at the tertiary level in both Canada and Japan. She is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Niigata Prefecture and her research interests are in teacher education, expatriate teacher beliefs about entrance examinations and expatriate family experiences with education in Japan. Her hobbies are weight training, knitting, and Japanese drumming. If asked, she will tell you that her muscular biceps are the result of the knitting. She thanks Diane Hawley-Nagatomo for assistance with this manuscript.

Gender Representation in a Modern EFL Textbook

Brien Datzman, Nagasaki University

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate how one current EFL conversation textbook represents gender through linguistic features found in both male and female speech and visual representation of each gender in the text. The text was analyzed for Robin Lakoff's (1975) 10 features of female linguistic representation as well as amount of talk, conversational topics, and interruptions. Vocabulary, grammar, discourse, and vocal patterns were all evaluated, as well as firstness, occupation, omission, and visual representation and treatment of males and females. A quantitative and qualitative analysis based on the preceding criteria found both genders to be linguistically and visually represented in an equal, fair, and positive way.

Over the last 40 years there have been numerous studies on the differences between male and female language and gender representation in texts. Robin Lakoff's 1975 gender study has served as the starting point for many of these studies. Based on her own observations, Lakoff contended that the following features could all be identified as a means of expressing uncertainty, tentativeness, or a lack of confidence in women's speech.

1. Lexical hedges or fillers, e.g. you know, sort of, well, you see
2. Tag Questions, e.g. she's very nice isn't she?
3. Rising intonation on declaratives, e.g. It's really good?
4. Empty Adjectives, e.g. divine,

charming, cute.

5. Precise color terms, e.g. magenta, aquamarine
6. Intensifiers such as just and so, e.g. I like him so much.
7. 'Hypercorrect' grammar, e.g. consistent use of standard verb forms.
8. 'Superpolite' forms, e.g. indirect requests, euphemisms.
9. Avoidance of strong swear words, e.g. fudge, my goodness
10. Emphatic stress, e.g. it was a BRILLIANT performance.

More recent studies have added other features such as dominance of conversation and interruptions. Since her study many have suggested that rather than categorizing these features as an inherent weaknesses, that they are characteristics of a female subculture to be seen on equal footing with the speech characteristics of a male subculture. This paper is intended to focus on the representation of some of these features in an EFL textbook and will only briefly touch on the implications that may arise from them.

Research has also been done on gender representation in texts. These studies have looked at categories such as firstness, occupation, omission, and visual representation. Findings reveal women were often omitted, misrepresented, and represented unequally in texts. The EFL textbook will also be examining male and female representation in these categories.

The textbook selected for analysis

was *Breakthrough English 1* (BE1), written by Miles Craven and published in 2008. After listening to all of the cd's, reading the tape scripts and written texts, evaluating the images, and gathering the data, tables were created to compare results and were evaluated in the context of Lakoff's hypotheses and other relevant research. Before presenting the results of the evaluation, it is important to note that the text has been

specifically designed and written for young intermediate to high intermediate East Asian adults studying English. This implies that the language used is aimed to provide a model for learners of English and may not be an accurate representation of natural discourse, thus limiting the instances of some of the linguistic features found in the study above. With that caveat, the results are as follows.

Table 1: *Breakthrough English 1*, 2008

Conversation Type	Women	Men
12 Interviews	5 Female Interviews 155, 119, 83, 102, 114 = 573 Words	7 Male Interviews 110, 103, 91, 117, 161, 157, 137 = 766 Words
6 Same Gender Conversations	3 Female Female Conversations 73, 129, 126 = 328 Words	3 Male Male Conversations 97, 121, 102 = 320 Words
28 Mixed Gender Conversations	28 Women 49, 28, 36, 40, 66, 40, 34, 16, 47, 62, 16, 17, 12, 73, 52, 61, 57, 76, 61, 52, 38, 32, 49, 36, 41, 36, 83, 36 = 1,246 Word	28 Men 56, 30, 28, 40, 54, 36, 54, 28, 21, 58, 24, 6, 15, 58, 47, 52, 61, 56, 72, 53, 43, 48, 32, 50, 43, 30, 49, 50 = 1,194 Words
Results	36 Women Total = 2,147 words Avg. 59.6 words/conversation	38 Men Total = 2,280 words Avg. 60 words/conversation

Discourse

The textbook was examined for any evidence of Lakoff's linguistic features as well as amount of talk, conversational topics, and interruptions.

Dominance of Conversation – Amount of Talk

Coates (1994) cites a number of studies on amount of talk to support her statement that 'research on conversational dominance establishes unambiguously that it is men who dominate the floor in mixed interaction.' She cites studies done in a variety of settings; staff meetings (Eakins and Eakins 1978), television panel discussions (Bernard), experimental pairs (Argyle et al. 1968), e-mail discussion via computer (Herring 1992), and husband and wife pairs in spontaneous conversation (Soskin and John 1963). James and Drakich (Tannen 1993) in a comprehensive review of the research on gender and amount of talk found that while the majority of the research found men to talk more than women that the results weren't consistent. There are studies in which women were found to talk more than men and numerous others in which there were no differences between the sexes. The amount of talk in *BE1* more closely resembles some of the findings quoted in James and Drakich's review than those found in Coates'. In Table 1 the difference between the amount of talk is only 133 words (Male>Female). As will be seen throughout this paper it appears that the author is giving equal, or near equal, representation to both sexes. Although it does not represent the bulk of the research findings to date, that of male dominance in conversation, it does succeed in giving both sexes equal

representation.

Topics of Conversation

Research (Wardough 1992) has shown that when men talk to other men the content is focused on competition and teasing, sports, aggression, and doing things. When women talk with other women the focus tends to be on self, feelings, home, and family. In mixed interactions both genders tend to reduce the amount of their own gender 'talk'. While it isn't clear that the author made a conscious choice to represent these findings there are some instances in which the conversational topics reflect these findings.

In *BE1* there is only one instance of competition and teasing and that is in one of the three male only conversations. There is only one instance of a discussion of feelings and that is in one of the three female only conversations. Men talk about sports 40% more than women. There is also evidence that men and women are toning down their 'gender talk'. In mixed interactions men and women talked more about topics that can be seen as a middle ground. School, shopping, and future plans all appear to be a common ground for men and women in the textbook. There are some other noticeable differences in topics which run contrary to the research discussed above. Men talk of house and home 80% more than women. In addition women talk about sports more than the research might suggest, both with other women and with men.

Linguistic Features

Table 2 shows linguistic features found in the textbook.

Table 2: *Breakthrough English 1, 2008*

Pattern	Female	Male
Interruptions	1	4
Fillers	46	41
Hedges	9	10
Intensifiers	19	7
Questions	68	58
Total	143	120

Interruptions

Interruptions are seen as a violation of the turn taking rules of conversation. Holmes (1995) has shown that whether the interaction is taking place between co-workers, husband and wife, or doctor and patient the pattern holds, men interrupt women more often than women interrupt men. If the woman is the doctor or the patient the pattern holds.

In *BE1* there are only five total interruptions. However, the interruptions, one in particular, do provide a valuable model of how interruptions can have a negative effect. In Conversation 1, Jim, while not changing the subject, is clearly trying to dominate the conversation with three interruptions. This exchange

also exemplifies women’s not interrupting or overlapping in cross sex interactions as they have been found to do in female-female discussions. This example provides a good example of how interruptions can be rude and viewed as negative. Other examples of the interruptions in *Breakthrough* are made by interviewers and can be seen as facilitative or supportive rather than dominating the conversation.

Conversation 1: *Breakthrough English 1, Student Book Unit 10 pg. 64*)

Kate: Really? Well now I’m thinking about Egypt or...

Jim: Egypt! I came back from Cairo three weeks ago. The Pyramids are amazing.

Kate: Are they? Anyway, I want to go there or maybe South Africa because...

Jim: South Africa! I traveled around South Africa last year....for six months.

(Kate could overlap or interrupt here)

Kate: Hmm. Well, there’s Europe too,

Table 3: *Breakthrough English 1, 2008*

Hedges	Female	Male	Filler	Female	Male	Intensifier	Female	Male
I guess	3	7	Well	16	9	Very	9	3
I think	3	2	Really	5	6	Really	4	2
You know	2	1	So	7	8	Pretty	3	2
I mean	1		Er...	6	11	Fairly	2	0
			Hmm	6	3	So	1	0
			Oh yes?	6	3			
			Um...		1			
Total	9	10	Total	46	41	Total	19	

	Female	Male
Intensifiers + Fillers + Hedges	74	58



of course. I'd love to visit Italy, and...

Jim: Italy! Did you know I lived in Rome for two years?

Kate: No, I didn't know that, Jim.

Jim: Would you like to have lunch? I can tell you all about it.

Kate: No, thanks, Jim. I'm ...er...busy. Bye!

Hedges, Fillers, and Intensifiers

Lakoff hypothesized that women use more hedging and boosting devices than men. The total number of intensifiers, fillers, and hedges found in *BE1* reflects both Lakoff's predictions and much subsequent research on gender and the use of hedging and boosting devices. Although *BE1* does not reflect Lakoff's claims on female use of hedges, it does, slightly, on fillers and, clearly, on intensifiers.

Questions

Lakoff only hypothesizes about tag questions in her list of linguistic features. However, it has been found that women use questions, in general, more than men. Pamela Fishman's (Thorn, 1994) recording of three heterosexual couples in their homes for over 50 hours found the women asking two and a half times the questions that the men did.

The textbook does reflect the research that women ask more questions than men, but only slightly. A further study of the different types of questions found in the text would be more revealing but is beyond the scope of this paper.

Politeness

Throughout all of the conversations in *BE1* most of the characters are polite with one another and provide appropriate responses to their conversation partner's statements and questions. However, a closer look reveals that women are slightly more polite than men. Women use the polite response of thank you, thanks, or no thanks four times as much as men (16:4). It is particularly evident in the interview sections of the text where men make an observational comment or simply thank the interviewee, while women thank their interviewee or give a word of encouragement.

Conversation 3: *Breakthrough English 1*, 2008

Male Interviewers

Ex. 1) Wow Kim. You're very busy these days.

Ex. 2.) OK. Well, thank you Ben. That's all.

Female Interviewers

Ex. 1): Great! Thanks for telling me about Hong Kong's markets. John,

Table 4: *Breakthrough English 1*, 2008

Conversation	Female	Male
Same Gender Conversations	10 questions	19 questions
Mixed Gender Conversations	58 questions	39 questions
Totals	68 questions	58 questions

now can we...

Ex. 2) Well that's a busy week, for sure. I hope you have fun, Erol! Good luck with your exams.

Written Text

Written text analysis included firstness, omission, and visual representation and treatment. Hartman and Judd's review (1978) of then-current ESL/EFL textbooks found evidence that ELT material reflected sexist attitudes and values in all of these categories. Porreca (1984) found this still to be true years later. The aim of this section is to examine *BE1* and to see to what extent, if any, this is still true today. The results were as follows.

Sex Firstness

The firstness of males and females, the number of times that males or females were presented first in exercises, examples, or sentences was counted and it was found that the percentage of male firstness and women firstness are both near 50% (Women: 46%, Male: 54%). This is in rejection of the social 'norm' of always treating men first, women second (Harashima, 2005). This along with other data analyzed leads one to believe that the author made a conscious effort to present both genders in a fair, balanced, and equal way.

Omission

After counting all of the sex-linked nouns, proper names, and non-generic pronouns in the text it was found that the total number of references of women and men is nearly identical (82:81). In Table 5, it is again noticeable that the author consciously gave an effort to treat men and women equally. The references almost mirror each other and the differences in number is no more than one in

any reference category. Also the author has avoided any age related or sexist references to either men or women. In fact the author has introduced a relatively recent phenomenon into the text, that of the househusband.

Table 5: *Breakthrough English 1*, 2008

Female	Male
First Name 57	First Name 56
She 7	He 8
Sister 5	Brother 4
Woman 3	Man 2
Her 3	Him 3
Girlfriend 2	Boyfriend 3
Girl 1	Guy 2
Mom 1	Father/ Dad 2
Wife 1	Househusband 1
Ladies 1	
Total: 82 References	Total: 81 References

Occupational Roles

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003:30) define traditional women's jobs as ones that "are in the service sector and often involve nurturing, service and support roles". An analysis of the data in the textbook did not find evidence of women being placed into solely traditional, stereotypical roles. The majority of characters presented in the text were students and most of the professions named are popular part-time jobs for university and or high school students. There is only one female-exclusive masculine generic construction, actress.

Interestingly, there is one example of a misused masculine generic pronoun which can be seen as a subliminal form of sexism. In the following excerpt a male cashier is talking to his friend, a female customer.

Table 6 : *Breakthrough English 1*, 2008

Women		Men	
Tutor 2	Cashier 4	Cashier 3	Clerk 2
Office assistant	Waiter 2	Delivery Driver 2	Nurse
Clerk 2	Tour Guide 2	Scientist	Director
Politician	Artist	Student 15	Teacher
Police Officer 2	Student 20	Police officer	Musician 7
Teacher 3	Musician 3	Office Worker 3	Salesperson 4
Office Worker 4	Salesperson 2	Manager	Host
Manager	Actress	Actor	Athlete 2
		Cook	Computer office worker
		Househusband	Unemployed
Total = 16 occupations		Total = 20 occupations	

Conversation 4: *Breakthrough English*, 2008

Jo: Anyway are you enjoying your new job?

Kevin: It's OK. I guess. I need the money.

Jo : You don't sound very happy about it. Are you sure you're ok?

Kevin: Well, it's my boss. Jo: Oh, no. What's he like?

In this conversation Jo seems to be assuming that the boss is a man. There is no frame of reference given in the conversation that would support this assumption. One might therefore conclude that Jo is assuming 'the boss' is a man, because 'the boss' is usually a man. Throughout the text the author has given a fair representation of both women and men, and an anti-sexist one, but it seems that the author or editors may have overlooked this.

Visuals

Studies of past and present textbooks have often shown a gender bias in textbooks through an analysis of the number and treatment of images (Hartman and

Judd 1978, Porreca 1984, Peterson & Kroner 1992, Babaii & Ansary 2001). Porecca (1984) found that women are represented only half as often as males in both texts and illustrations. Although women are less represented than males in BE1, the difference is not that great. It shows a ratio of 1:1.1 with women being represented in 47.5% of images and men in 52%.

Treatment of Images

Ansary and Babaii (2003) found in their analysis of two current English language teaching textbooks that "sex-related activity types revealed that females were fundamentally shunted into indoor passive activities such as sitting in the classroom, watching TV at home, reading, etc" while males were mainly portrayed "in outdoor active roles of playing football, driving a car, riding bicycle, washing a car,....".

Conclusion

Overall *Breakthrough English 1* represents both genders linguistically and visually in an equal, fair, and positive way. The author has represented both genders

Table 7: *Breakthrough English 1*, 2008

Activity Type	Female	Male
Active Outdoor	39	41
Active Indoor	33	30
Passive Outdoor	2	0
Passive Indoor	12	13
Working	12	13

almost equally in amounts of talk, use of intonation, and in their visual representation and treatment. Both genders talk about and are pictured doing a variety of different activities and jobs. Both genders are portrayed as active participants in all conversations. In addition to this the author has assigned both genders relevant linguistic characteristics to their own gender. Men's speech is represented in the focus of one conversation, competition and teasing, and many others in the predominance of sports. Women's speech is represented in the focus of one conversation, about feelings, and in their use of intensifiers and fillers. The author achieves this without over representing those qualities to a point where a student or teacher might see those linguistic attributes as stereotypical. Women and men in the text are seen as active, confident, engaging, and interesting.

This paper was limited to investigating gender speech in an EFL textbook in the context of Lakoff's observations concerning female speech. It also took into consideration some of the subsequent research those hypotheses initiated, as well as past studies on gender representation in EFL textbooks. A more detailed and thorough study might include a dynamic perspective, taking into account the views of the publisher and author and their processes, along with the views of prospective users of the textbook,

teachers and students. It would also be enlightening to see to what extent, if any, the language presented is revealed in female and male students' language after having completed the textbook.

In the final analysis of an EFL textbook, publishers, teachers, and writers may ask the questions; does the text represent the natural discourse of men and women in society today and the research that defines that discourse, most likely concordances made from native English speakers, and does it attempt to portray both genders in a positive light with some of the tendencies we know to be true of that discourse? We may also ask ourselves as educators working in an EFL situation to what extent do we want to reflect the natural discourse and the cultural values embedded in the speech acts of native English speakers? As seen above research done on gender and linguistics has only begun recently and is far from consistent or conclusive. Following future studies and the impact they have on the materials we use in our classrooms will be interesting and, hopefully, enlightening.

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Applying the Bechdel Test to EFL Textbooks in Japan

Jim Smiley, Tohoku Bunka Gakuen University

Introduction

No language is neutral. Every word choice taken contains nuances that permeate into the deeper, richer and subtle meanings of the locutions. Language has power, and by using language we utilise the mechanics of that power. Whether we are conscious or not of these choices is irrelevant to their meaning; the choices contain sub and pretexts and are elements of the wider context (Wallace & Poulson, 2003). Writers have long been aware of this and have urged for more care against potentially destructive subconscious uses of particular language (Lakoff, 1973). In EFL, many researchers have demonstrated that textbook language is not value-neutral and have shown that sexism is prevalent in modern textbooks around the world (for example, Bahman & Rahimi, 2010; Cook, 2005; Datzman, 2013; Ghorbani, 2009; Hall, 2014; Hawkins, 2007; Hellinger, 1980; Kemp, 2011; Nagatomo, 2010; Renner, 1997).

Several modalities have been analysed to understand the degree to which sexism is present in EFL materials. Initially the work of Hartmann and Judd (1978) was based on a subset of Lakoff's scheme for analysing language at the textual level, or what Parham (2013) calls

micro level discourse analysis. The macro level includes "whatever surrounds the text" (p. 1676). Kress and Van Leeuwen's work (2006) into reading visual images allowed a further dimension of investigation, and more recently multimedia EFL/ ESL online programmes have been the subject of gender analysis (Marefat & Marzban, 2014).

In this article I expand the repertoire by taking the Bechdel Test and applying it to some EFL textbooks. The cartoonist Alison Bechdel created a strip in 1985 called "The Rule" in the series *Dykes to Watch Out For* ("Bechdel Test," 2015). Two women discuss which movie to go to. One character offers the 'rule' explaining that she only sees films that satisfy the conditions. The 'rule' in question is a series of three statements: "One, it has to have at least two women in it, who, two, talk to each other about, three, something besides a man" (Bechdel, 2005). The strip implicates a paucity of qualifying movies as they forgo the cinema trip in the end.

The Bechdel Test therefore is able to examine the degree to which a set of contrived situations is likely to match reality from the perspective of participants and, more narrowly, topic selection. If textbook writers are to correct the "relative invisibility of female characters" (Sunder-

land, 1992, p. 85), the Bechdel Test may offer one tool for critical analysis.

Prior Frameworks

Various frameworks exist that provide materials writers with areas for considering aspects of gender in EFL materials. Hartman and Judd's (1978) seminal study presented a taxonomy of elements divided into the image of gender representation and the actual language involved. They define 'image' as the presentation of scenarios in which gender roles are depicted, often with the female role as an object of humour or ridicule, the making of derogatory comments on gender, and as the general promoting of sexist stereotypes. Their meaning of 'language' is the linguistic terms used to transmit often occluded cultural notions of gender. Porreca (1984) builds on Hartman and Judd's research and describes six aspects of problematic gender representation: 'omission', a consideration of the number of appearances of males and females in a textbook which generates a ratio of male/ female presence. Hartman and Judd note that this ratio is not a complete measure of presence. Their example of a textbook chapter called "Famous men of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" without a corresponding chapter for famous women is indicative of omission; 'firstness', an analysis of the placing of males and female terms in the discourse; occupations, a description of which gender does what; 'nouns', an analysis of noun use in regard to gender; masculine generic constructions, how masculine terms are used to include females; and 'adjective' use, how particular adjectives become associated with each gender. Hellinger (1980) reframes 'omission' as 'exclusion' and adds 'subordination',

which represents women lower in the social hierarchy, and 'distortion', which depicts stereotypical and often negative female behaviour patterns. Together, Hellinger argues, the cumulative effect of using these gender representations is "evidence of degradation" (p. 273) of the status of women in German school English textbooks.

Research expanded beyond the textual level into teachers' use of in-class language to study how gender is represented there (Sunderland, 1990), and included the development of "a lived curriculum" that responds to ESL women learners' "multiple concerns" (Norton & Pavlenko, 2004, p. 505). The ethnically sanitized textbook (Otlowski, 2003) fails to address the real lived experiences of many learners including their need to deal with social issues in the target language. More recently, Kress and Van Leeuwen's model for reading visual images (2006) and Halliday's (2014) Functional Systemic Linguistic framework have provided further routes of investigation into EFL gender representation (see for example, Kordjazi, 2013; Marefat & Marzban, 2014).

Methodology

This study used four conversation textbooks that had named characters and are in current use in tertiary education in Japan. The four texts featured dialogues in 50 of the 52 conversations with just two having three characters. All books are targeted at the false beginner or lower elementary level. The sample of four books cannot be considered representative of the general market as the policy of some publishing houses is not to use character names in dialogues, favouring instead the use of A and B denominations. The works are:

two works published by Oxford University Press (*Passport*: Buckingham & Whitney, 2002; *Smart Choice*, 2nd Ed Starter, Wilson & Healy) and two by Pearson (*Impact Issues 1*, Day, Shaules & Yamanaka, 2009; *English Firstrand 1*, Helgesen, Brown & Wiltshier, 2009).

Each dialogue (triologue) was analysed for the sex of the named characters, the characters assumed societal role (i.e. student, housewife, etc.), the role of the characters in the conversation and to see if the dialogue would pass the Bechdel Test.

Results

The oldest work, *Passport*, has 15 conversations, only one of which has a conversation between two females contrasting with four featuring only males. The female-only conversation has a secretary showing another around a work setting. In this respect, the book passes the Bechdel Test. However, having only a single female-only dialogue out of 15 promotes female invisibility. Furthermore, the female who does recur throughout is in a subservient administrative role who is named only by her given name while she talks with men who are labelled 'Mr'. In one conversation, she is the subject of a date proposal.

The other OUP book, *Smart Choice* (SC), has 12 dialogues, of which one is female-only and one is male-only. An attempt has been made to present a balanced role in one dialogue where a younger male job seeker is interviewed by an older female. In this one, the male has a given name while addressing the female by 'Ms'. The Bechdel Test is turned on its head in SC because the female-only conversation does not refer to males but the male-only dialogue's subject is the

cuteness of some nearby girls.

Impact Issues' (II) 20 topics are varied between monologues, dialogues, non-spoken texts and one triologue. The female-only dialogue is about shoplifting and thereby passes the Bechdel Test. As a parallel to SC, the male-only text is about one male's problems with his date. In terms of gender representation, II has three stories containing male hero figures (no female heroes) and two units see the female as the one upholding family values against a single male family story.

English Firstrand (EF) has 12 conversations. Two of these are female-only in which neither discuss males. The single male-only story is about girls. One more Bechdel Test pass. EF goes further than SC in reversing the typical representation of the subordinate female into the one holding power, information and status. SC has four conversations in which a male asks a female for a date. EF has the female ask the male. Although the rubric downplays the context by framing the discussion as "*Friends* are making weekend plans" (emphasis added), the language used maintains the balance of power with the female as she directs all questions, rephrasings and final summing up. The shop assistant in EF is male to a female shopper, and it is a female who informs a male passerby of directions when he gets lost. Again in a parallel with SC, a male job seeker is interviewed by a female. Yet in EF traditional gender stereotypes are present. It is a male who goes skiing and a female who dances. When discussing holiday plans, it is the male who takes the hero role as his holiday involves riding elephants whereas it is the female who goes back to her family.

Of the 55 conversations in the four

textbooks, there were nine male-only and five female-only discussions. The Bechdel Test was passed in all five of these female-only conversations. *Passport*'s five male-only dialogues only featured work, but the remaining four in SC, EF and II were about girls or family.

Discussion

It is difficult to concur with Aydinoglu (2014) who asserts that “[a]lmost all of the research in the world and in Turkey agrees that there is bias in favour of men in the coursebooks” (p. 234). Helgesen et al. in *English Firsthand* seem to actively subvert sexist notions by placing a female agent in power situations. Their female asks for a date, is the workplace superior, is the holder of information. Wilson and Healy similarly have the female in the power role in the office.

Some research in the Japanese context in EFL textbooks does show sexism in compulsory and high-school education texts. Togano (2009) reports the unmarked use of ‘he’ to refer to both genders and lack of visibility of females in some current use high-school texts. Lee supports this conclusion though noting that more authors use gender-neutral terms and ‘Ms’ (Lee, 2014). In studies of university textbooks, the picture is different, probably reflecting the wider target market of the texts selected for analysis and their respective authors’ cultural background. I could find no study of gender representation in textbooks written primarily by Japanese authors for the Japanese tertiary market. At this level, Datzman (2013) finds that *Breakthrough English 1* “represents both genders linguistically and visually in an equal, fair, and positive way” (p. 12). Similarly, Hawley-Nagatomo’s (2010, p. 58) study

on her own textbook *Conversation Topics for Japanese University Students* “did not have the same type of gender imbalance regarding visibilities as noted in some of the early studies of gender representation in EFL materials”. Both studies, however, did point out areas of concern in gender representation.

The information derived from using the Bechdel Test on lower elementary EFL textbooks may be limited because of the following reasons. Three of the four books have an underlying progressive grammar syllabus. The topics and situations chosen to display appropriate language are restricted to those which are deemed age appropriate for first-year university students and are judged to be of general interest to most while avoiding topics of potential offence (Helgesen, 2012, but see Cleary, 2012, for an opposing view in relation to the situation in Japan). Also, the length of most dialogues is between 10 and 20 conversational turns, inhibiting the chances for extended discourse. Instead, a grammar item is highlighted in a suitable setting. However, although a narrow grammar syllabus with a controlled vocabulary set and restricted situational fields work effectively to prevent Bechdel Test fails, a single sentence is often enough to display sexism, as in “Doctors and their wives often go to expensive restaurants” (Beebe, 1996, p. 107), or as in *Passport* where the main female is a subordinate secretary. Worth noting in these four books is the prevalence of sex-based themes such as dating, the appearance of the opposite sex and failed attempts of men to get dates. Is it possible that in the attempt to avoid gender misrepresentation, authors are unwittingly promoting what Attwood calls the

“sexualised culture” (2006, p. 78) which includes “a contemporary preoccupation with sexual values, practices and identities; the public shift to more permissive sexual attitudes; the proliferation of sexual texts; the emergence of new forms of sexual experience” (p. 78)? Attwood describes 2000s America, and this trend is also found in the UK, another inner circle English speaking set of countries (Coy, 2013). Hartmann and Judd ask language teachers, and materials writers by extension, “Is it our business to prescribe “correct” language usage, or to describe it as accurately as possible?” (1978, p. 390). The debate about sexism and gender representation in EFL textbooks in Japan needs to widen to a critical discussion of how attitudes to sex are portrayed. This highly charged political debate awaits us.

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PanSIG: Past and Future

James Essex, Publications Officer

Cast your minds back to the second weekend of May. Where were you? Many of us were in Kobe for the PanSIG conference, a jam-packed weekend of papers, posters and presentations. I'll cut to the chase and talk about Greg Goodmacher, our main man, whose highly motivational presentation 'Creativity with Teaching Materials' alone was worth the trip to Kobe.

His laid-back yet informative presentation allowed for discussion about creativity and teaching materials (the hint was in the title of the presentation, folks!) which included ways to make textbooks more engaging, stimulating and useable in the classroom. In addition, he explained how to turn reading sections into cooperative texts involving oral communication and challenging tasks, and the creation of learning games based on standard textbooks.

I'm sure many of us have used – or want to but are not really sure how – to use tools like YouTube, newspapers, restaurant menus etc. Greg also offered his wisdom on how to adapt these for classroom use and use these more effectively.

And just when you thought it didn't get any better, how to make and adapt materials so that they appeal to students with differing learning styles was also discussed. These students are, after all, our customers so to speak, and with the theme of the conference being 'Raising the Happiness Quotient', we all want to know how to keep our customers happy... and coming back for more. As a mate-

rials developer myself, this part of the presentation was the proverbial cherry on the cake, and judging by the reaction of others in the room, many people went home with little light bulbs above their heads ready to turn their ideas into materials.

Greg's legacy from the presentation? One's materials are never really finished, but rather constantly-evolving. They can, no, should be revised to better fit class needs and augmented to create more enriching learning and teaching experiences.

And finally, a date for your diaries. PanSIG 2016 will be held in Nago, Okinawa from Friday 20th May to Monday 23rd. Although at the time of going to press the speakers and theme had not been decided, if this year's conference is anything to go by, next year's promises to be just as good, if not better given the sun, sea and sand of Nago.

Be there... or be writing your materials.

The writer of this article would like to thank the MW SIG for a grant which made it possible for him to attend.

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**The MATSDA/University of Liverpool 2016
Conference
Authenticity and L2 Materials Development
June 18th-19th, 2016**

Plenary Speakers

**Gail Ellis Rod Ellis Alan Maley
Hitomi Masuhara Freda Mishan Julie Moore
Ivor Timmis Brian Tomlinson**

Venue

South Campus, University of Liverpool

Times

Registration: 08.30 on June 18th and 19th

Conference: 09.00-18.00 on June 18; 09.00-17.00 on June 19th

Fees (to include lunch and coffee)

Students: £85 (£50 for one day)

MATSDA members: £125 (£75 for one day)

Non-members: £150 (£90 for one day)

MATSDA Membership

Contact Susie Pearson at <matsdamembershipsec@nile-elt.com>

Booking, Accommodation Enquiries and Payment

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/english/our-events/matsdajune2016/>

Offers of Papers

To offer a paper for a forty minute presentation or to offer a poster presentation please contact:

Brian Tomlinson <brianjohntomlinson@gmail.com>

<http://www.matsda.org>



IN ATTENDANCE

Presiding Officer:	Jim Smiley, Coordinator
Officers:	Jim Smiley, Coordinator, Program Scott Petersen, Treasurer James Essex, Publications
Non Officer Voting Members:	4
Non Members:	4
JALT Executives: Liaison	Mark Brierley, SIG Representative
Recording Secretary:	Cameron Romney

OFFICER REPORTS

Jim Smiley, Coordinator

Jim reported that the SIG is in good shape, the publications are on track, the SIG has been doing well with outreach to chapters and the membership numbers are good.

However, Jim noted that while the SIG is in good standing, there is a lack of volunteers to be officers. If not enough members will step forward to have multiple people in all officer positions, then he would move to dissolve the SIG.

Scott Petersen, Treasurer

Scott reported that the SIG is in good financial health with significant funds to cover all current and up coming expenses.

Travis Holzclaw, Membership

No report.

James Essex, Publications

No report.

Jim Smiley, Program

The SIG sent Greg Goodmacher as a featured speaker to the Pan-SIG conference in Kobe in May. At the national conference, the SIG sponsored Cameron Romney as a featured speaker and held a lively discussion at the SIG forum.

NEW BUSINESS

Jim suggested that the SIG sponsor Marcos Benevides as a featured speaker at the 2016 PanSIG conference in May. This was accepted by the membership and officers.

Jim mentioned that he had been in contact with Okinawa Chapter about a possible co-sponsored event with Cameron Romney as the speaker. The details are still under discussion.

Member Cameron Romney nominated John Campbell-Larsen to be the SIG's 2015 Best of JALT recipient for his presentation, "From a page full of text, to a mouth full of air" presented on behalf of the SIG at both Nara Chapter and Shinshu (Nagano) Chapter meetings. This was accepted by both the membership and officers.

There was discussion about what to do about the SIG website, if the SIG were to be dissolved as the hosting fees were due soon. As the SIG was not dissolved, the website hosting contract will be renewed.

OFFICER ELECTIONS

Mark Brierley, the SIG Representative Liaison, suggested that a discussion of whether or not to dissolve the SIG be moved to after the election. He also suggested that the SIG begin by nominating and electing the non-coordinator positions first. This was accepted by the membership and officers.



Treasurer: *Scott Petersen* agreed to act as the SIG treasurer for only one more year and was unanimously elected. *Marcus Grandon* agreed to act as co-Treasurer for the year in order to take over for Scott next year.

Membership: *Travis Holzclaw* (not in attendance, but spoken for by Jim Smiley) agreed to act as membership chair for only one more year and was unanimously elected.

Publications: *James Essex* agreed to continue as publications chair and was unanimously elected.

Program: *Greg Goodmacher* agreed to be the program chair provided that someone else could help him, specifically with Pan-SIG planning. He was unanimously elected.

Coordinator: Non-member *Adam Murray* stepped forward to become the coordinator, agreeing to become a member immediately following the AGM. He was unanimously elected. Outgoing coordinator Jim Smiley noted that this has happened before with a non-member volunteering, being elected and then not actively managing the SIG.

Member-at-large: *Jim Smiley* was unanimously elected to help with the transition to the new coordinator.

NON ELECTED OFFICERS

A Website Editor was not found.

Mailing list editor was not found.

Layout editor: *Jeanette Dennisson* agreed to work with Scott on learning how to layout *Between the Keys*.

PanSIG 2016 Representative: *James Essex* agreed to continue representing the SIG on the Pan-SIG 2016 planning committee.

Self-Publishing: Academic Press Japan

Ladies. Gents. We've been asked to write an 'infomercial' for our modest self-publishing service, but truth be told, we're not all that comfortable hammering away at promotion, huffing 'n' puffing and bellowing like carnival barkers. It's fun, sure - but it's just a spectacle.

If you're seriously considering independent publishing, you're in the hunt for cold hard facts, solid performance, and results without the drama - and certainly minus any risk, gamble. Good so far? Read on.

You teach. You make your own lessons - and son of a gun, the lessons work. You've got a whole pack of great lessons - and they always seem to suit your needs, talents, style, goals best. That, of course, is your book. Polish it up a bit, tap an artist for flair, hold it gently, lovingly - it's your treasure. Give it a hairstyle, add a dress - escort it to the promenade and, well, introduce it to suitors. Waltz, jive, tango, cha-cha. Would you like to dance with my masterpiece? That's the dream, isn't it?

With a little care, there is every reason in the world that a few folks out there strutting and posing in classrooms from Sapporo to Naha will be astonished by your performance, you virtuoso you, you Nijinsky-with-a-piece-of-chalk, you lion tamer, you prophet, you guru, you Man Who Would

Be King.

Enough already. Here's what we can do for you: print your book at a very low rate, but with high quality; handle all the negotiations with bookstores, fight for and win favourable retail/wholesale rates, ship on schedule, do all accounting, answer the phone, feed the fax, run a staffed office all year long, steadily market, promote, expand sales, accept returns, be sure you're paid, and a whole lot more. ISBNs? Yup, can do. And emergencies - as in an extra 70 books for next week? Yes, can do. Quite a bit. Almost everything you need. Check us out.

We are your supporting team. Yet - here's what's special: you own your stuff, you have copyright, you have control, you can market too, go decide your next step wherever you like. It really is the best of all worlds if you have the heart of an artist, with no need to bow to an editor.

We are a team of four - both foreign and Japanese - plus outside advisors and consultants, seasonal staff. We're in Kansai permanently. Our backgrounds are in mass media and film - Japanese television and advertising, studios, Hollywood over 40 years; university instruction for 25 years. Retire? No. We're going to help you guys publish, instead. Here's our website for contact: <http://academicpressjapan.com>



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The Materials Writers SIG is dedicated to continually raising the standards in the creation of language teaching materials, in all languages and in all media, whether for general consumption or for individual classroom use. The editors encourage participation from colleagues using new media or teaching languages other than English.

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