Inclusion/Exclusion and Role Allocation in Marketized EFL Syllabus: Gender from CDA Perspective

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Abstract—**Power relations are discursively constructed, de/reconstructed, and negotiated through discourse. CDA in its commitment to accounting for the underlying elements and dimensions of power can typically concentrate on syllabuses as tokens of power in the institutionalized discourse of education. Employing the notion of 'social practice', the present study focused on '*Four Corners*' series as conversational English books in Iranian EFL situation. This study usedInclusion/Exclusion and Role Allocation binary notion from among many dichotomous notions in van Leeuwen's social actor network (2008). Additionally, a 20-item questionnaire was designed and made reliable (Cronbach's alpha = 0.79) for female and male teachers' reaction. Results indicated that the '*Four Corners*' series did not treat male and female characters differently regarding Inclusion/Exclusion; however, with Role Allocation the differences were significant. The series allocated a more active role for men than for women. The information from the questionnaire indicated different response patterns from male and female teachers in descriptive terms which might account for a various classroom discourse around gender enacted depending on the gender of the teacher. Implications of the study are discussed.**

Index Terms—**CDA, gender, inclusion/exclusion, role allocation, four corners**

I. INTRODUCTION

Social world is deemed to be an outgrowth of practices whichare deeply rooted in language and which shape a myriad of factors including identity, status, power relation, etc. Socialization and cultural reproductionwould, correspondingly, have to take place througha set of ongoing two-way practices that are discursive in nature, collectively called 'social practice' (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). A method of discourse analysis that best fits the demand of accounting for the use of language systems of social power, and ideology is CDA. Such an approach, in effect, "sets out to capture the dynamic relations between discourse and society, between the micropolitics of everyday texts and the macropolitical landscape of ideological forces and power relations, capital exchange, and material historical conditions (Luke, 2002, p. 100). In taking such an approach, CDA boasts the quality of "uncovering the techniques through which discursive limits are extended and narrowed down" (Wodak & Mayer, 2009, p.34) to detach discourse for examining acceptable language in a particular society at a particular time.

CDA benefits from variety of theoretical foundations in order to achieve its objectives, i.e.

a) Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) which regards language as a social semiotic system in which meaning as focal point is obtainable through analysis of the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic levels of discourse,

b) van Dijk's sociocognitive discourse analysis (see van Dijk, 2009) in which he limits the focus on society-discourse-cognition triangle,

c) Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) that emphasizes the discourse used by elites to maintain domination. His employed typology draws on elements such as nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation, intensification and mitigation (Wodak, 2001), and

d) van Leeuwen's social actor network addresses sociosemantic register of the realization of participants in social practice. In brief, three major themes shared by all CDA models are "the concept of power, the concept of history, and the concept of ideology" (Wodak, 2001, p.3).

Along these lines, CDA expands the scope of linguistic analysis to capture the larger socio-political and socio-cultural contexts for naturalized rationalized, indoctrinated characteristics of discourse (seeRashidi, 2010). Much beyond investigating simple meaning conveying, CDA commits itself to fleshing out ideology imposing through institutionalized language use as 'practice'. Gender, with its multi-faceted social nature, is one of the most intriguing aspects of inquiry for CDA especially within the system of education.

Gender and education in themselves have their far-reaching social implications, which can be very intriguing for CDA. Gender, for one thing, is associated with how humans are seen as community members. As Connell (2008) puts it,

"the way human society deals with human bodies, and the many consequences of that "dealing" in our personal lives and our collective fate" (p.10). On the other hand, gender is already an area of controversy in educational systems where either of the genders might be marginalized disempowered and under-represented (see Bloomberg, 2007). In fact, gender alludes to the social construction of male and female characters. Virtually, all societies have apparent divergence for both genders, imposing certain roles upon male and female 'social actors' (van Leeuwen, 1996) in order to establish presupposed ideologies since in spite of conducting gender role actions by individuals, their volition have no influence on the matter. In fact, the roles are values which may be conveyed through language in distinctive and discriminatory ways. Besides, the discursive negotiation of cross-gender relations is also reflective of imposed ideologies which worth monitoring since gender should be studied in conspicuous cases, and that gender is most conspicuous "in cross-sex interaction between potentially sexually accessible interlocutors, or same-sex interaction in gender-specific tasks" (Brown & Levinson, 1983, p.53 cited in McEhlinny, 2004, p.150).

At first, gender was regarded a sociolinguistic variable such as age, class, and ethnicity, but since the 1970s, Robin Lakoff's well-known essay, '*Language and Women's Place*' (Lakoff, 1975), lead to the institution of a branch of knowledge as language and gender. "Language and gender is an area of study within sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and related fields that investigates varieties of speech associated with a particular gender, or social norms for such gendered language use" (Tannen, 2006), or in other words, study into language and gender regards how language have influence upon how society notifies and interprets gender. Gender-biased language involves language use in line with realization of genders in one-sided manner. Such a kind of language includes "words, phrases, and expressions that unnecessarily differentiate between women and men or exclude, trivialize, or diminish either gender" (Parks &Robertson, 1998, p. 455).

Discrimination in education is expressible through distinctive factors such as (double) hidden curriculum, and gender-biased language. The concept of (double) hidden curriculum originated in the work of the American researcher Philip W. Jackson, '*Life in Classrooms*' (1968), and since then, the new field of research initiated with the aim of taking students' perspectives concerning learning into consideration. Although the official curriculum publicizes the generally accepted educational roles, the (double) hidden curriculum stays around unconscious level. Three crucial aspects of the hidden curriculum are the organization of schools, curricular content, and communication inside and outside of the classroom (see Pattalung, 2008). Accordingly, textbooks play an important role in hidden curriculum through being reflective of curriculum orientation which may have distinctive realization of genders. They affect students' perception in a straight line by the way they portray the male and female social actors and their manners in society.

Research on gender representation is well-supported by a wealth of literature; however, not all studies have been dealing with gender issues from CDA perspective. Parham (2013) investigated gender representation in '*English Time*' series. She could show that there were no significant differences between male and female characters in the conversations regarding the frequency of participation in conversations, number of turns, length of turns, and visibility. However, Parham (ibid.) could demonstrate that females outnumbered males in turn initiation, whereas males were more dominant in terms of graphic portrayal. Johanssen and Malsmjo (2009) focused on four English language conversational series. They showed that two of the series over-represented males while the other two did so for the female characters. Within '*Wings*' series which were investigated, some books were biased for male while others indicated female over-representation. Some other books in the series contained a dominance in certain aspects, e.g. number of characters (ibid.). Sano, Iida and Hardy (2001) in the Japanese context went over five Japanese EFL textbooks and found that there was no gender imbalance regarding lexical uses. However, females in some textbooks were shown to be using more words. Males were depicted as central social actors, and spoke more than women in some series but less than them in some other series. Females proved to be talking about men more than the other way round. Male-oriented and female oriented topics were of similar distribution, but the chapters were more focused on male rather than on female characters. Alemi and Jafari (2012) doing a corpus analysis on global book series for EFL textbooks could show that females were less visible in terms of proper name reference. Esmaili and Amerian (2014) employing CDA analysis concentrated Iranian EFL textbooks reported a severe gender imbalance against women.

With the background in mind, due to the probable effects of the textbooks on establishing learners' viewpoints and stereotypes in the Iranian context with explicit and implicit gender discourse, the present study seeks to explore the Inclusion and Exclusion of such stereotypes. The study draws on vanLeeuwen's social actor network (2008) to address the following research questions:

1. Are male and female characters subjected to Inclusion and Exclusion in '*Four Corners*' series conversations from CDA perspective?

2. Is Role Allocation realized differently in '*Four Corners*' series conversations for male and female characters from CDA perspective?

3. How do teachers who teach '*Four Corners*' series react to the gender roles and issues discursively negotiated in the syllabus?

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Materials

The material selected for evaluation is elementary level (book 1 and 2) of '*Four Corners*' textbook series. The series is a set of leveled EFL textbooks that carries learners from beginner to intermediate level of proficiency which is described as a complete course in oral communication aimed at adult students who are fundamentally functional in the four skill areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. '*Four Corners*' has been authored by Richards and Bohlke (2012). Each book contains 12 units, each of which is divided into four parts (a, b, c, & d), including exercises for improving the four skills.

The motivation for the choice of textbooks was mostly the personal interest of the researchers and due to the scarcity of studies on the particular series. The series was published in 2012, which implies that the latest reflections of ideologies within the second decade of the twenty-first century are assumed to be contained. This study among other similar types can contribute to a more intimate understanding of gender issues in EFL textbooks after more than four decades of research.

B. Participants

A total of 35 Iranian EFL teachers including 13 male and 22 female teachers voluntarily took part in this study. They aged between 20-40 and had a minimum several semesters teaching experience of the series under study from different language institutes in Tabriz, Eastern Azerbaijan Province in northwest of Iran. The assumption was that these teachers had a good command of content, design, and objectives of the series under investigation. The study took around 3 months which corresponded with a single seasonal semester in the respective language institutes.

C. Data Collection Procedures

The first stage in the analysis was to identify the conversation, interaction, and reading sections and determine what typologies to scrutinize. Conducive to fulfill the objectives of the study, all of the utterances in cross-gender conversation, interaction, and reading sections were read critically, focusing on each utterance separately and in conjunction with the adjoining utterances.

D. Data Analysis Procedures

The investigation relied on vanLeeuwen's model (2008) for variable operationalization. The rationale for employing this framework is that it is inclusive enough to embrace nearly all aspects of gender representation from a social viewpoint. In fact, the textbooks were analyzed in order to figure out the gender representation in terms of power relations.

Based on the mentioned details concerning the methodologies, van Leeuwen's model (ibid.) has been utilized as central framework in the study to decontextualize the representations of social actors through examining the typology introduced by the network in male and female social actors' language use. Since textbooks do not constitute all forms of realization, for empirical justification, the following segments of van Leeuwen's social actor network (2008) are regarded as indicators in discourse analysis: Inclusion/Exclusion, and Role Allocation (Rearrangement). In brief, the definitions are provided based on vanLeeuwen's specification of the essential properties of the categories.

As for the third research question, a 20-item Likert-type questionnaire was handed out to 13 male and 22 female teacher who were involved in instruction of '*Four Corners*' series.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

To answer the research question 1, i.e. 'Are male and female characters subjected to Inclusion and Exclusion in '*Four Corners*' series conversations from CDA perspective?', cross-gender conversations, interactions, and reading passages were examined for the use of gender-biased language in Inclusion/Exclusion. Inter-rater agreement for Inclusion/Exclusion turned out to be quite high (k = 081).

Deletion is a significant element in CDA which may provide the Inclusion and Exclusion of social actors. As van Leeuwen puts it, "representations include and exclude actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended" (2008, p.28). Inclusion is the main factor in reflection of power as an important aspect of CDA. With respect to the conversations, the actor with high frequency in Inclusion category focuses on the way the actor dominates the conversations in general and in society patterns in particular. Exclusion has also been a major source for critical investigation of social actors. Some exclusions background the presentation of social actors by having the focus on the other actor while some others "leave no traces in the representation, excluding both the social actors and their activities" (ibid., p.29) which are remarked as Back grounding and Suppression respectively.

Table 1. summarizes the Inclusion and Exclusion of the social actors along with the presentation of chi-square. The reason behind using the chi-square analysis is to examine the significant differences between the observed frequencies of the elements of the categories at hand.

TABLE 1.
CHI–SQUARE RESULTS FOR COMPARISON OF M&F INCLUSION/EXCLUSION ROLES

Category	Male	Female	X^2	df	Sig.
Inclusion	94	76	1.906	1	0.167*
Exclusion	0	2	-	-	-

* not significant

As Table 1 demonstrates, although male social actors are included with a higher frequency than female social actors, the apparently high frequency as such fails to be significant at p < 0.05. Besides, both social actors are mostly in category of Inclusion rather than Exclusion. Female social actors outnumber in Exclusion category based on two instances which is not enough to be conclusive.

Concerning the second research question, i.e. 'Is role allocation realized differently in 'Four Corners' series conversations for male and female characters from CDA perspective?', the roles attributed to social actors including agent or actor, patient or goal and so on which play important role in critical studies were focused on. In van Leeuwen's terms "representations can reallocate roles and rearrange the social relations between the participants" (1996, p.43) related to which he has provided the Activation/Passivation dichotomy for analysis. Inter-rater agreement for Role Allocation occurrences was calculated to be 0.87.

TABLE2.
CHI-SQUARE RESULTS FOR COMPARISON OF M&F ACTIVATION/PASSIVATION ROLES

Category	Male	Female	X^2	df	Sig.
Activation	153	113	6.015	1	0.014*
Passivation	12	13	0.04	1	0.841

* p< 0.05

The result according to Table 2 manifests that in the series under investigation, both social actors are realized in activated roles and hardly ever passivated which may be indicator of the fact that the books are prepared for EFL learners with low or average proficiency level. Consequently, the situation has led to the absence of any passivated strategy which requires complex linguistic skills. Considering the activation roles, the results brings into the sight that males are more frequently represented as dynamic agents. As Table 2 features, the difference for Activation category is significant (X^2=6.015) at p< 0.05 which is not the case for Passivation category. Since male Activation frequency was higher, it is statistically argued that males are more significantly activated in the series investigated.

For research question 3, i.e. "How do teachers who teach 'Four Corners' series react to the gender roles and issues discursively negotiated in the syllabus?", the 20-item Likert scale (see Appendix) was distributed among the male and female teachers. The reliability of the scale was already established with Cronbach's alpha equal to 0.79. The results appear in Table 3 below:

TABLE 3.
MALE AND FEMALE TEACHERS' MEAN PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO 20-ITEM LIKERT-TYPE QUESTIONNAIRE

No.	Item	Teacher Gender	SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	It is generally perceivable throughout the '*Four Corners*' series that female characters are less present than the male characters.	Male	0	15.38	30.76	38.46	15.38
		Female	4.54	4.54	31.81	50	9.10
2.	Female characters in the books are generally represented as powerful people with important social roles.	Male	0	7.69	38.46	38.46	15.38
		Female	0	27.27	31.81	31.81	9.10
3.	There is usually an indirect reference to the male characters in conversations and readings.	Male	0	7.69	15.38	69.23	7.69
		Female	0	18.18	22.72	54.54	4.54
4.	There are more anonymous references to women than that to men.	Male	0	0	23.07	53.84	23.07
		Female	0	4.54	45.45	31.81	18.18
5.	Men are more often named informally compared to women.	Male	0	30.76	30.76	30.76	7.69
		Female	0	27.27	27.27	45.45	0
6.	There is usually a more specific distinction allocated to men than to women.	Male	0	15.38	30.76	30.76	23.07
		Female	4.54	18.18	27.27	50	0
7.	Most typically males are generic characters. (The book uses male labels and nouns to refer to all humans).	Male	0	23.07	53.84	7.69	15.38
		Female	9.10	18.18	31.81	36.36	4.54
8.	Males in the book have been shown to be more independent than women.	Male	7.69	23.07	38.46	30.79	0
		Female	0	27.27	9.10	59.09	4.54
9.	Women are mostly doers of action, while men are recipients.	Male	0	0	38.46	30.76	30.76
		Female	0	18.18	22.72	54.54	4.54
10.	Verbs associated with male characters mostly involve 'thinking', 'calculating', and other abstractions.	Male	0	38.46	7.69	15.38	38.46
		Female	0	40.90	27.27	27.27	4.54
11.	Verbs associated with females are mostly about 'appearing', 'showing', 'having' , etc.	Male	0	38.46	0	46.15	15.38
		Female	0	36.36	27.27	36.36	0
12.	Generally speaking, men are represented as more powerful, independent, and distinguished than women.	Male	23.07	15.38	7.69	23.07	30.79
		Female	4.54	18.18	18.18	27.27	31.81
13.	Powerful characters are equally distributed among males and females.	Male	30.79	23.07	7.69	38.46	0
		Female	4.54	45.45	27.27	22.73	0
14.	Males are over-represented in the books, while females are under-represented.	Male	7.69	15.38	46.15	30.79	0
		Female	0	22.72	9.10	45.45	22.72
15.	Women all through the book receive general referencing, while men are distinguished by their names.	Male	0	7.69	23.07	23.07	46.15
		Female	0	13.64	36.36	40.91	9.10
16.	Female roles are more socially prestigious.	Male	0	7.69	46.15	15.38	30.79
		Female	4.54	9.10	13.63	63.63	9.10
17.	Women are pictures passive and vulnerable.	Male	0	15.38	38.46	46.15	0
		Female	0	13.63	13.63	59.10	13.63
18.	There are general hints in the book about women who are better problem-solvers and superior thinkers.	Male	7.69	23.07	23.07	46.15	0
		Female	0	31.82	27.27	31.81	9.10
19.	Women more than men represent the typical and central community members.	Male	0	0	23.07	61.53	15.38
		Female	0	13.63	13.63	40.91	31.81
20.	Men possess a larger share of verbs indicating action and possession.	Male	15.38	46.15	7.69	30.76	0
		Female	13.63	18.18	36.36	27.27	4.54

As the Table 3. clearly illustrates, for item 1. female teachers reacted more to all responses. Their agreement and disagreement was on average more than that of male teachers. For item 2., male teachers agreed and disagreed less than females, but were more undecided. For item 3., disagreement in both genders was more than any other response. For item 4, the general pattern is more tendency towards agreement on the part of female teachers whereas for the males the responses tilt to disagreement. As far as item 5 is concerned, male teachers agree and disagree to the same extent, but the number of the teacher who strongly disagree is more than that of the female teachers. For item 6, females respond more moderately than males. With item 7, male teachers are dominantly undecided while females mostly disagree. As for item 8, female teachers seem to disagree more strongly than females who seem to be react more moderately. Items 8, and 14 show a similar pattern in that males tend to agree while females tend to show disagreement more frequently. Items 9 and 19 also share a pattern except for 'Disagree' item. Item 10, shows a similar pattern for the agreement since 'Strongly Agree' is null in both and 'Agree' is very close in number; however, females have chosen more of the remaining response options. Regarding the first two options, i.e. 'Strongly agree', and 'Agree', item 11 is so close to item 10, but males unlike females were not 'Undecided' at all. With item 12, there was a stronger agreement on the part of males. The same applied to disagreement, but when it comes to 'Strongly disagree', both males and females show null response. As far as item 13 is concerned, the males marked 'Strongly Agree', more than females, but with the option 'Agree' it was the opposite. Females were more undecided, but males disagreed more with the idea contained in the item. In terms of item 14, males and females showed an almost equal degree of agreement; the former were more undecided than the latter. Nevertheless, the disagreement rate was much stronger in the case of females. In the case of item 15, male and female teachers both showed null reaction to 'Strongly Agree' while females agreed more and were more undecided. Females' disagreement was even more drastic. Item 16 showed a more or less similar pattern between male and female teachers in that the disagreement pattern was very close in numerical terms though female agreement exceeded that of the male teachers. In item 17, male teachers' disagreement was more than agreement, but it was even

more so in the case of female teachers. In the case of item 18, male teachers, there was a moderate level of disagreement. In response to item 19, there was more disagreement on the males' part while females agreed and to the same extent were undecided though less drastically than their disagreement. Finally, with item number 20 on the questionnaire male and female teachers showed a similar degree in terms of 'Strongly Agree', but the item 'Agree' received a higher rate of selection. Females were more undecided, but in general, the females' disagreement was higher than that of males with this item.

IV. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Concerning the first research question, the results and data analysis could show that neither of the genders are significantly included or excluded in the series under investigation. In terms of the Inclusion/Exclusion dichotomy, these series show a more promising picture compared to the older series where females were mostly marginalized. This finding is in line with Parham (2013), Sano, Iida and Hardy (2001) and Alemiand Jafari (2012), whereas it is partially confirmed by Johannsen and Malsmjo (2009), but this particular finding is, nonetheless, diametrically opposed to that presented by Esmaili and Amerian (2014).

The answer to the second research question revealed that males were more activated as characters in conversations. This is in congruence with the findings from more traditional syllabus types where women were marginalized (see Esmaili & Amerian, 2014). However, the finding is refuted by Parham (2013), Sano, Iida and Hardy (2001) and Alemiand Jafari (2012). Some part of the findings by Johannsen and Malsmjo (2009) lend support to the answer to this research question.

The descriptive data from the questionnaire yielded different response patterns across male and female teachers. The interpretation from the descriptive part, as it concerns research question 3, hinges upon contextual factors. In fact, male and female teachers are generally found to react differently to gender Inclusion/Exclusion and Role Allocation patterns, which might mean a different classroom discourse around the syllabus can be enacted depending on the teacher's gender.

It seems that under the condition of raising learners' consciousness awareness and making them to be critical thinkers, it is likely that the textbooks under investigation might meet educational needs. As far as the context is concerned, the indispensable role of teachers in presenting the corpus should not be underrated since they are the right agents in dealing with gender-biased contents, and stimulating learners' consciousness toward the same content. In brief, in educational context, there should be avoidance of any imposition of gender-biased point to the learners by any possible way. It is hoped that the investigation of newly published marketized EFL textbooks for gender and power relations might be able to provide to teachers and syllabus designers in selection and preparation of curriculum since the individuality of learners is an important issue which needs consideration.

APPENDIX

Dear colleague Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Please respond to each item by ticking the right box. The context assumed for this questionnaire is '*Four Corners*'. Your scholarly views are invaluable to the process and findings of the research.

No.	Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	It is generally perceivable throughout the *'Four Corners'* series that female characters **are less present** than the male characters.					
2.	Female characters in the books are generally represented as **powerful people** with important social roles.					
3.	There is usually an indirect reference to the male characters in conversations and readings.					
4.	There are more **anonymous** references to women than that to men.					
5.	Men are more often **named informally** compared to women.					
6.	There is usually **a more specific distinction** allocated to men than to women.					
7.	Most typically males are **generic characters**. (The book uses male labels and nouns to refer to all humans).					
8.	Males in the book have been shown to be more independent than women.					
9.	Women are mostly doers of action, while men are recipients.					
10.	Verbs associated with male characters mostly involve **'thinking'**, **'calculating'**, and other abstractions.					
11.	Verbs associated with females are mostly about **'appearing'**, **'showing'**, **'having'** , etc.					
12.	Generally speaking, men are represented as more powerful, independent, and distinguished than women.					
13.	**Powerful characters** are equally distributed among males and females.					
14.	Males are **over-represented** in the books, while females are under-represented.					
15.	Women all through the book receive general referencing, while men are distinguished by their names.					
16.	Female roles are more socially prestigious.					
17.	Women are pictures passive and vulnerable.					
18.	There are general hints in the book about **women** who are better problem-solvers and superior thinkers.					
19.	Women more than men represent the typical, central community members.					
20.	Men possess a larger share of verbs indicating action and possession.					

Thanks

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