

# Male and Female Social Actor Representation in *Four Corners 4*: A Critical Discourse Perspective

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## Abstract

This study aims at investigating the linguistic representation of male and female social actors in the *Four Corners 4* textbook, drawing on CDA. More specifically, van Leeuwen's (1996) framework, which highlights the connection of linguistic and social practices, is used as the analytical framework to examine gendered social actors in this English language teaching (ELT) textbook. To this end, content analysis was done to explore the frequency and proportion of each social actor. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis showed that there were some differences, though not statistically significant, between males and females regarding substitution, individualization, and activation. Males, in contrast with females, were included more as active and famous actors in social circumstances and they were more individualized. In addition, they were more activated through circumstantialization and participation. On the other hand, the case of formalization was mostly observed for males. Moreover, males and females were distributed equally in the textbook in terms of classification, genericization, and collectivization. The results reveal that the gender bias still exists, though to a small degree, in this ELT textbook, which is taught as a substitution for the previous ELT textbooks in many language schools in Iran.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Social Actors, Gender, Textbook Evaluation, *Four Corners*

## 1. Introduction

Richards (2001) claims that textbooks as the backbone of language curriculum and programs are used as a supplement for teachers' instructions. Instructional textbooks also "serve as the basis for much of the language input that learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the

classroom" (p. 1). Thus, textbooks alongside other materials in the classroom should reflect the world fairly; not only should the true picture of power relations in the society be considered in the textbooks, but also they should equip learners with an awareness to act against possible inequalities, biases and injustices (Keshavarz & Malek, 2009).

Second/foreign language (L2) textbooks play a very significant role in formulating students' worldview knowledge and they are known as practical tools for fostering social relationship and interaction (Florent & Walter, 1989); however, L2 textbooks as a representative of discourse models may represent the values and norms of a particular culture. That is to say, a plethora of cultural and social inclinations are sometimes observed in the textbooks. As a result, bias creeps in and, due to superiority of one social actor over others, the pedagogical outcomes of instructional materials might become inappropriate. Thus, it is useful for L2 learners and teachers to consider textbooks beyond merely a transferring tool for linguistic devices and instead, attend more carefully to how gender, culture, and social discursive patterns are realized in various L2 textbooks.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) can be of help in uncovering social discursive patterns associating linguistic and social practices in textbooks; the most important purpose of CDA is to disclose the underlying meanings in the text which is hard to access immediately at the sentence level by the first look (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). As van Dijk (2001) claims, CDA is an amalgamation of a variety of micro-sociological theories and theories on society and power that can provide some approaches to research with the primary aim of uncovering the relationship between language, society, power, ideology, values and opinions. CDA approaches are mainly dealing with understanding "texts and practices of reading and writing in relationship to questions of social change, cultural diversity, economic equity, and political enfranchisement" (Pennycook, 2004, p. 787).

As language is a significant means of socialization and gender can be represented, reconstructed, and negotiated through

language effectively (Hruska, 2004), gender manifestation and bias should be the focus of investigation; gender representation in instructional textbooks can motivate L2 researchers and educationalists to evaluate the effectiveness of the textbooks. Thus, this study tries to evaluate manifestations of social actors in one of the common ELT textbooks taught recently for upper intermediate level in many language institutes in Iran; it is hoped that the current study helps L2 stakeholders to improve their sense of critical thinking and makes them reflect on the social actors' representation as an important variable in textbook evaluation. Understanding of social actor roles in ELT textbooks helps to avoid possible gender bias, dominance, and inequities in ELT materials.

## 2. Literature Review

A long time ago, Lakoff (1975) tried to show discrimination in the way that women were represented in spoken and written English. She found out that women were more redundant and powerless in their speaking and the way they were being addressed. Gender, as a socially constructed entity, has recently tried to inspire the research, theory, and practice (Eckert & McConnell, 2003; Yaghubi-Notash, 2007).

Amini and Birjandi (2012), for instance, investigated gender bias in two Iranian textbooks at high school level. In their study, sexism was examined in terms of five categories: visibility, fitness, generic masculine constructions, occupations and activities done by each gender. Results showed that women were marginal and stereotyped; they were also underrepresented both linguistically and visually in proportion in the above categories. Besides, Bahman and Rahimi in 2010 conducted a similar study to examine different areas of gender bias in male and female representation in three volumes of high school textbooks. They wanted to see

whether males and females had equal first-place occurrences in instructions, exercises and sentences. According to the results, the presence of males was more highlighted than females regarding names, nouns, pronouns and adjectives associated with them; male-attributed terms came first more frequently than females and male characters appeared more frequently than female characters in reading passages of the textbooks. Moreover, the textbooks contained many male-generics in which women were almost invisible. Likewise, Ansary and Babaii (2003) evaluated two English textbooks: *Right Path to English I and Right Path to English II* (Birjandi & Soheili, 1999) at secondary schools in terms of sexism. They concluded that these textbooks would be regarded as sexist because they demonstrated an unequal role for females. Alemi and Jafari (2012), who analyzed gender and culture bias in three intermediate-level EFL textbooks taught nationally in high schools in Iran, came to the same conclusion.

Furthermore, Amal Saleh, Sajjadi, and Yarmohammadi (2006) investigated the representation of language as a social practice in Iranian EFL high school textbooks to reveal the ideology in social groups in Iran. They performed content analysis in terms of possible differences in social gender, race, and class. The analysis of sentences indicated that females were underestimated significantly. Yaghoubi-Notash and Nariman-Jahan (2012) on a similar road examined conversations in *Interchange* series (Richards, Hull, & Proctor, 2005) concerning gender representation. In their study, they focused on the ratio of cross-gender and same-gender conversations, conversation initiation, turn length, and speech complexity of both genders. They concluded that conversations represented a balanced gender manifestation regarding the above mentioned points.

In addition, there exists some research regarding the forms of gender bias in instructional materials in other contexts. For instance, in the context of Nigeria, Samuel (2012) studied males and females representation in ELT textbooks for junior secondary school students (*Practical English Book I & Book II, Intensive English Book I & Book III, Project English Book I, II, & III*). He reported that females were discriminated largely and they were subordinated. He concluded that female discrimination affected their accomplishments in the context of Nigeria.

In the light of social actor representation, several scholars have applied van Leeuwen's (1996) framework as the basis for their studies to discover the potential distinction between social male and female actors in ELT textbooks. For instance, Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2010) carried out a study to explore linguistic representation of social actors and gender identities in the *Interchange* textbooks. Their findings showed females were represented as more active, successful, prominent, assertive, and independent compared with males; women in these textbooks were foregrounded from the margin and the activities assigned to them were of high status. In conclusion, women were as crucial as men in their functions in *Interchange* series. On the contrary, Karimaghaei and Kasmani (2013), who used van Leeuwen's model for displaying social actor representation in *Top Notch 2A/2B*, reported that females were manifested as less successful and intellectual in the *Top Notch* textbooks and more ordinary jobs were assigned to women than men. Shirvani (2013) also reported almost the same results as regards *Summit* (Saslow & Ascher, 2006); that is, males were portrayed as more independent and active, and they were included more than females.

The above mentioned studies are significant, but they suffer from some limitations and gaps. The point at issue with some studies (e.g., Yaghoubi-Notash & Nariman-Jahan, 2012) is that they just sufficed with quantitative analysis for gender representation; some studies (e.g., Amini & Birjandi, 2012) did not utilize CDA perspective to examine gender bias, some (e.g., Shirvani, 2013) had a limited corpus (i.e., restricted to only readings and conversations). By the application of CDA as a tool for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data and expanding the scope of study to *Listening* and *Interaction* sections which are rich in terms of social interactions, the current research tries to evaluate a recently published ELT textbook i.e., *Four Corners 4* (Richard & Bohlke, 2012), often used as a substitute to *Interchange 3* (Richards, et al., 2005) by drawing on van Leeuwen's (1996) framework, which is one of the most frequently used and comprehensive models for analyzing actor representations.

### 3. Theoretical Model of Study

van Leeuwen's model assumes the premise that "all discourses recontextualize social practices" (van Leeuwen, 2008: vii), and recontextualizing principles are related to the basic units of social practice such as actors and their representations and identities. van Leeuwen (2008, p. 292) claims that CDA "has moved towards more explicit dialogue between social theory and practice, richer contextualization, greater interdisciplinarity and greater attention to the multimodality of discourse." The following is a brief description of several major elements in van Leeuwen's (1996) model, which are taken into account as the criterion for the analysis in the current study.

- **Exclusion/Inclusion:** Social actors are sometimes omitted or backgrounded to serve certain purposes.

- **Activation/Passivation:** Social actors can be activated (i.e., represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity), or passivated (i.e., represented as undergoing an activity or as being the recipient). Under the category of activation there are three subcategories: *Participation* where the active role of the social actors is foregrounded, *possessivation* in which possessive pronoun can activate a social actor, and *circumstantialization* where activation can be realized through prepositional circumstantials. Passivation, on the other side, necessitates a further distinction: the passivated social actor can be *subjected* or *beneficialized*. Subjected social actors are treated as objects in the representation; beneficialized social actors form a third party which, positively or negatively, benefits from the action.

- **Functionalization:** Functionalization occurs when social actors are referred to in terms of an activity, in terms of something they do, for instance, an occupation or role.

- **Classification:** In the case of classification, social actors are referred to in terms of the major categories by means of which a given society or institution differentiates between classes of people.

- **Relational identification:** Relational identification represents social actors in terms of their personal kinship, or work relations to each other, and it is realized by a closed set of nouns denoting such relations: "friend," "aunt," and "colleague,".

- **Nomination:** Nomination is typically realized by proper nouns, which can be *formalization* (surname only, with or without honorifics), *semi-formalization* (given name and surname), or *informalization* (given name only).

- **Indetermination:** Indetermination occurs when social actors are represented as unspecified, anonymous individuals or groups.

- **Abstraction and objectivation:** The former occurs when social actors are

represented by means of a quality assigned to them. The latter occurs when social actors are represented by means of reference to a place or thing closely associated either with their person or with the activity they are represented as being engaged in.

- **Genericization:** Genericization occurs when social actors are represented as classes. It is divided into two parts: (a) *individualization* which occurs when social actors are referred to as individuals and (b) *collectivization* occurs when social actors are referred to as groups which are realized by plurality, by a mass noun or a noun denoting a group of people.

#### 4. Purpose of the Study

Most class time is devoted to using and working on textbooks as the important backbone of educational program and assisting tools for teachers (Richards, 2001); if L2 textbooks show inappropriate language for specific situation, L2 learners will experience a failure and kind of misunderstanding in their cultural and social perceptions (Thomas, 1983). As a result, great care is required to avoid the presentation of bias in L2 textbooks used for teaching purposes. In Iran, many students attend language schools to improve their English proficiency. As far as ELT textbooks are used as a channel for transferring information and values, they can “reformulate, neutralize, and legitimize ideologies and construct learners’ world view” (Fairclough, 1992 & van Dijk, 2001); it thus is valuable to evaluate ELT textbooks taught in language schools to find out the possible drawbacks and strong points in terms of social actor gender representation. It is likely that sexism and gender bias are displayed in language used in ELT textbooks, and, consequently, their detrimental effects are conveyed to EFL learners without awareness. This may affect the future behavior of the learners once they

accept their own roles in society (Eisenberg, 2002). The present study then aims to analyze *Four Corners 4*, the more advanced-level textbook of *Four Corners* series (Richard & Bohlke, 2012) by relying on van Leeuwen’s (1996) framework, which is one of the most comprehensive models for analyzing the representation of actors from a social perspective. Thus, the following research question was explored:

- How are male and female social actors represented in *Four Corners 4* textbook?

#### 5. Method

This study collected data from *Four Corners 4* (Richard & Bohlke, 2012) regarding gender representations, based on van Leeuwen (1996) model, which is used as a CDA framework. The reason for selecting this textbook is that *Four Corners* series are recent ELT textbooks taught in many language schools, gradually replacing *Interchange* series. This textbook is designed for the intermediate level and upper intermediate students in line with Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and contains twelve units; each unit includes several sections as Vocabulary, Language in Context, Grammar, Speaking, Pronunciation, Interaction, Listening, Conversation, Reading, and Writing. All interactions, conversations, and listening sections were analyzed in this study due to the significance for gender representation in social contexts.

Two raters conducted content analysis to figure out the proportion of social actors by employing van Leeuwen’s (1996) social actor model. The raters included one with an M.A degree and the other with Ph.D. degree in TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language); both were familiar with the framework. To ensure dependability, the kappa measure of agreement was calculated to be .73, which was as an acceptable degree for inter-rater consistency (Peat, 2001).

After computing frequencies and proportions for male and female representations, a series of Chi-square tests of significance was also employed in the present study to examine the significant differences between both genders in terms of the selected categories of van Leeuwen's model.

## 6. Results

The results of the frequencies and percentages of data on the main elements of deletion (i.e., inclusion and exclusion), role allocation (i.e., activation and passivization), and substitution (i.e., personalization and impersonalization), and tests of significance

as regards male and female actors are depicted through tables.

### 6.1. Deletion

The process of inclusion/exclusion, categorized under deletion, is a central concern for critical discourse analysis. According to van Leeuwen (1996), "representations include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended" (p. 38). Table 1 reports a summary of data regarding inclusion and exclusion of social actors together with Chi-square results.

**Table 1.** *Descriptive and Chi-square Results for Deletion*

Deletion	Male	Female	Chi-square	Sig.
Inclusion (Total = 175)	92 (52.6%)	83 (47.4%)	.360	.548
Exclusion (Total = 0)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	-	-

As Table 1 shows, more cases of inclusion ( $N=175$ ) were observed. Besides, males were more represented than females; there was a difference between males (52.6%) and females (47.4%) regarding inclusion. However, the results of Chi-square test showed this difference between male and female representation in terms of inclusion was not statistically significant ( $p= .548$ ). Concerning exclusion factor, no case of exclusion was observed in the corpus, hence no Chi-square statistics on gender social actors.

### 6.2. Role allocation

In van Leeuwen's model (2008, pp. 32-33), "representations can relocate roles or rearrange the social relations between the participants." He also points out that representations of social actors can be either in active or passive roles. According to him,

"activation occurs when social actors are represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity, passivation when they are represented as 'undergoing' the activity, or as being 'at the receiving end of it'." (2008, p. 33). Table 2 displays the results of the frequencies and chi-square for role allocation in *Four Corners 4*.

According to Table 2, the number of activation ( $N=172$ ) outnumbered passivation ( $N=39$ ). Moreover, possession under the category of activation received higher frequency ( $N = 130$ ) than participation ( $N = 37$ ) and circumstantialization ( $N = 5$ ). When the test of significance was run, results showed that the difference between males and females concerning the major category of activation i.e., possession, participation, and circumstantialization was

**Table 2.** The Chi-square Results for Role Allocation

Role allocation		Male	Female	Chi square	Sig.
Activation (Total = 172)	Circumstantialization (Total = 5)	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	1.004	.605
	Participation (Total = 37)	20 (54%)	17 (46%)		
	Possessivation (Total = 130)	60 (46%)	70 (54%)		
Passivation (Total = 39)	Subjection (Total = 11)	6 (54.5%)	5 (45.5%)	.022	.581
	Beneficialization (Total = 28)	16 (57.1%)	12 (42.9%)		

not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 1.004$ ,  $p = .605$ ); males (60%) outnumbered females (40%) in terms of circumstantialization, and they (54%) participated more than females (46%) in social activities, but females (54%) received a greater level of possessivation in social activities than males (46%).

Qualitative analyses also backed up the above findings. The following are several examples of the participation and possessivation of male and female social actors.

**Example 1:** *Chad has been acting strangely. He couldn't come to the movies but he couldn't say why.* (p. 98)

**Example 2:** *Rafael took this photo after the storm yesterday.* (p. 11)

**Example 3:** *David works at Wilson's department store and sent this picture yesterday.* (p. 11)

**Example 4:** *Diana was invited to her classmate's house for dinner.* (p. 36)

**Example 5:** *It took Yumiko eight hours to get home after she visited her grandparents.* (p. 11)

Example 1, 2, and 3 indicate the participation of *Chad*, *Rafael*, and *David*, male social actors in different activities such as taking photo and working at a

department store. In example 4 and 5, a female social actor was possessivated with visiting her friend or family members (e.g. her grandparents), showing her tendency toward intimate relationship.

### 6.3. Substitution

Substitution is a principal type of transformation in which the elements of the real social practice are substituted with semiotic elements (van Leeuwen, 2008). Table 3 depicts the results about personalization and impersonalization under the major category of substitution. As Table 3 demonstrates, both males and females were personalized; in the case of impersonalization, there were no instances of objectivation, neither for males nor for females, but abstraction was observed for both social actors equally. Among the subcategories of personalization, informalization ( $N=81$ ) received the highest frequency. Moreover, females outnumbered males in functionalization, relational identification, semiformalization, informalization, and indetermination. However, Chi-square results did not show a statistical significance ( $\chi^2 = 9.08$ ,  $p = .169$ ). Considering nomination

i.e., addressing people's names, which can be represented in forms of formalization, informalization, and semiformalization, differences between males and females were noticeable. Females (88.9%) were semiformalized more than males (11.1%) through their first names such as *Rebecca*, *Ingrid*, and *Yumiko* used with their surnames (i.e., *Rebecca Sanders*, *Ingrid Muller*, and *Yumiko Kobayashi*). In contrary,

males (75%) were more formalized than females (25%), meaning that males were frequently addressed by their surnames and certain honorifics in many circumstances (i.e., *Mr. Luke*, *Mr. Brown*). Just in one case, "Ms." was used for a female character (i.e., *Ms. Davies* as an English teacher). In addition, females (69.3%) were more indetermined than males (30.7%).

**Table 3.** The Chi-square Results for Substitution

Substitution	Male	Female	Chi square	Sig.
Functionalization (Total = 27)	9 (33.3%)	18 (66.67%)		
Classification (Total = 30)	15 (50%)	15 (50%)		
Relational identification ( Total = 23)	10 (43.5%)	13 (56.5%)		
<b>Personalization</b> Formalization (Total = 4)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	9.08	.169
Semiformalization (Total = 9)	1 (11.1%)	8 (88.9%)		
Informalization (Total = 81)	40 (49.4%)	41 (50.6%)		
Indetermination (Total = 13)	4 (30.7%)	9 (69.3%)		
<b>Impersonalization</b> Objectivation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	-	-
Abstraction	6 (50%)	6 (50%)		



Furthermore, the qualitative analysis showed that females had prestigious jobs (e.g., interviewer, tour guide, news reporter, university teacher, nutritionist, and interior designer). Moreover, male and females were both equally represented in terms of their nationality and race. The following examples can further highlight the above issue. Examples 6 and 7 show that a female social actor (*Aicha Zoubier* and *Lucy*) is involved in a job activity which is not stereotypic. Example 8 demonstrates that a female (*Lucy*) is represented in a prestigious job as a nutritionist, but in Example 9, it is a male (*Todd Brown*) who is represented as a chef in a formal manner.

**Example 6:** *My name is Aicha Zoubier. I got involved in beautification projects a*

*few years ago. Another thing I do is creating more public green areas.* (p. 121)

**Example 7:** *In five years, Lucy will be working as a photographer.* (p. 117)

**Example 8: Nutritionist** (female): *So, Tom, I understand you have some questions about your eating habits.* (p. 27)

**Example 9:** *Our guest today is Chef Todd Brown. Welcome.* (p. 28)

To move further, males and female characters in the corpus were portrayed specifically or generically. Besides, social actors were sometimes referred to as individuals or groups. Table 4 shows the frequencies of genericization and specification role allocation and Chi-square results for the differences between male and female social actors.

**Table 4.** *The Chi-square Results for Genericization and Specification*

Genericization/ specification	Male	Female	Chi square	Sig.
<b>Genericization</b>	10 (50%)	10 (50%)	-	-
<b>Specification</b>			2.26	.357
Individualization (Total = 2)	2 (100%)	0 (.0%)		
Collectivization (Total = 6)	3 (50%)	3 (50%)		

As the data in Table 4 indicate, both males and females genericized equally. Also, they were collectivized equally. Under the role allocation of specification, collectivization received greater frequency ( $N=6$ ), and only two cases of individualization for males was observed; however, the distinction between males and females did not reach a statistical significance ( $\chi^2 = 2.26$ ,  $p = .356$ ) in favor of male role allocations. Example 10 depicts a male social actor in terms of individualization.

**Example 10:** *My hometown is Milan and it is well known because it is the birthplace of Thomas Edison, who invented the light bulb.* (p. 51)

## 7. Discussion

This study was designed to delve into females and males social actor depiction in *Four Corners 4* textbook, (Richard & Bohlke, 2012) with respect to van Leeuwen's (1996) social actor framework.

The findings of this study indicate that there were just a few cases of biased attitudes towards the role of males and females in social activities. The results on the inclusion and exclusion of males and females showed that there were no instances of exclusion, but males were represented more than females in the case of inclusion. In addition, even though the proportion of inclusion between both genders did not reach a significant difference, males participated more in various activities. Besides, the content analysis revealed that males were included more as eminent characters (e.g., *Shakespeare* and *Thomas Edison*) who did great jobs in the world; they were sometimes represented more as creative actors in such activities as taking photos, painting, designing and festival planning, proving their sense of innovation. One possible reason for the above issue can be the predominant perception of L2 textbook writers to foreground males since in many societies males are considered as a more independent or powerful figures. Even in western communities, as Eckert and McConnell (2003) point out, males appear more well-known and prominent. Possibly, gender perception as a societal norm existing in many societies can be observed in L2 textbooks. However, the above finding can be challenged by the results of evaluation of *Interchange* series done by Sahragard and Davatgarzade (2010); they reported that females were more activated. Perhaps, *Interchange* textbooks have adopted the discourse of marketing and advertising by utilizing the female characters. However, further research is required before making a strong conclusion.

Furthermore, the findings on the role allocation of each gender demonstrated that females were more activated. Also, female activation was more frequently realized by possessivation. But males were more foregrounded in terms of participation and

circumstantializations. This finding reveals that females, in general, tended to focus on their possessions and belongings more than males. Moreover, females were represented through possessivation when they attended to their nonphysical entities or talked about their emotional states in topics such as family members and friends, but males tended to highlight their physical belongings such as cars, cellphones, and briefcases in their daily activities. One possible reason that can justify the higher frequency of female representation through possessivation can be the sensitivity of females toward the things that they own; they tend to assert their sense of possessions more in terms of emotional matters; they tend to be more affective and sympathetic than males and more eager toward personal relationship and interaction. The above result of this study, however, is in contrast with what Sahragard and Davatgarzade have found in *Interchange* series in 2010. In their study, females were more activated through participation; however, in *Four Corners*, activation of females was manifested mostly through possessivation, particularly toward emotive things, perhaps due to personality or character differences between two genders.

As regards the substitution category, the results demonstrated that both males and females were personalized; however, females outnumbered males in functionalization, relational identification, semiformalization, informalization, and indetermination. The findings reveal that female actors were involved in terms of types of jobs they had in society. This is against the view that only ordinary, low-status, and daily chores at home should be assigned to females. This result is in line with Sahragard and Davatgarzade (2010) finding that females and males were associated with high status activities in *Interchange* textbooks. This issue challenges the traditional view of female exclusion in social activities; rather,

females are taken into account as important role characters to function in society; females in *Four Corners* were represented through newscaster, job interviewer, tour leader, and lecturer at university. In terms of relational identification, females received higher frequency. The reason may be due to the fact that females are more interested in maintaining intimacy with others, more eager to create affiliation bonds and connect with others in a warm manner. This finding is similar to Sahragard and Davatgarzade (2010) in the case of identification of females in their kinship and personal relationship. This close bond and kinship also influence the way females address each other (i.e., addressing more with their first names); however, as the results have demonstrated, males addressed each other more formally in the *Four Corners* textbook (e.g. *Mr. Reed* and *Mr. Luke*).

Finally, unlike the results of Sahragard and Davatgarzade (2010) about *Interchange* series, the results of the current study revealed that males were more individualized than females and collectivization was distributed equally between both genders. According to Eckret and McConnell (2003), men are supposed to be more individualistic and the sense of competition is stronger in males than females. The finding of the present study on individualization in *Four Corners*, mostly reflective of cultures in the West, can be interpreted according to the normative attitude of western cultures which support individuality more than collectivity. All in all, the findings of *Four Corners* analysis may reflect, to some extent, cultural and social underestimation and overestimation for, or against a given gender employed by textbook writer and other relevant stakeholders.

## 8. Conclusion and Implications

van Leeuwen's (1996) model of CDA, consisting of several discursive features to evaluate the ways in which social actors can

be manifested in texts, was utilized to analyze *Four Corners 4*, written for intermediate EFL students. The findings of the study demonstrate bias to a small degree. The representation of males and females was biased as far as males were manifested as more vigorous, self-reliant, and active in terms of inclusion. Besides, there was a more positive attitude towards males; the role of male social actors was most often foregrounded except in the case of personalization. However, there was not a statistically significant difference between male and female social actors in relation to inclusion/exclusion and passivation. Moreover, females and males were equally classified, genericized, and collectivized in the textbook. In conclusion, some attempt has been made in this ELT textbook to create more opportunities for females to participate in social activities and represent both genders in a somewhat balanced way in some social roles.

The results of this study imply that EFL teachers can use the *Four Corners* textbook for teaching purposes in language schools as it receives positive evaluation in many aspects. However, some traces of gender stereotypes and bias in the above instructional textbook should not be neglected. As Ellis (2002) claims, the gender bias in the ELT textbooks makes the sources unacceptable to be utilized. EFL Learners should be made aware of particular ideologies in the current ELT textbooks and encouraged to read their instructional English textbooks more analytically. EFL teachers should make their learners engaged in a critical discussion of language, gender and ideologies, as well as functionalization of males and females in their ELT textbooks. When EFL learners are unaware of gender bias and stereotyping, specific narrow ideologies can be exerted unconsciously.

Furthermore, the results of this study draw L2 textbook writers' attention to some

hidden aspects such as gender bias in L2 teaching. Teaching L2 should not be deemed only as teaching its formal, functional, phonological, and semantic features; stereotypic and gendered language can affect students' interests, perceptions and motivation as well as their inclination to the type of language in L2 communication. Therefore, ELT textbook writers should not exclude or underestimate a certain gender, or impose negative attitudes towards specific gender.

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