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“The representation of gender in ELT textbooks.”

A critical analysis of Austrian ELT textbooks from 1976 to 2013.

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Blerta Brahim

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1. Introduction

Gender equality is a topic of general importance in education and therefore in textbooks. Textbooks serve as a means of socialization and convey knowledge and values. Thus, the omission, underrepresentation, or the wrong representation of gender in textbooks can impart wrong values. Arguably, the representation of gender equality is meaningful in all subjects; however, examining textbooks from different subjects would exceed the scope of this thesis. Furthermore, it can be argued that English as a subject is powerful because of its role as a Lingua Franca worldwide, and thus students are most likely to need and use English not only in the classroom but also in the 'real' world. The relevance of English is further underlined by being classified as a main subject which is compulsory from the 5th grade onwards in Austria. Therefore, the following thesis aims to investigate the representation of gender in Austrian English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks between 1976 and 2013. It is of special interest to see whether, and to what extent, the portrayal of women has changed within the last four decades and to examine the underlying factors, thereby answering the question of whether gender bias still prevails in ELT textbooks. This is done by dividing this thesis into a theoretical and an empirical part.

The first chapter of the theory part encompasses the discussion of advantages and disadvantages of textbooks, textbook usage by different teacher types, and the textbook production process. This chapter asks the difficult question of how important textbook content is, and if it is the teachers' responsibility not only to transfer knowledge but also to raise learners' critical awareness towards somewhat problematic topics, such as the promotion of gender bias. Moreover, it is essential to look at the production process in order to demonstrate the role of publishers, authors, and the society. It is stressed that authors face certain restrictions by publishing houses, who in turn are put under pressure by the demands of the market. The reflection of certain prevailing values of a society and culture seem to be crucial for the production of successful titles and therefore might hinder creativity and innovation when creating new textbooks.

The second chapter covers different aspects of gender in general and in connection to textbooks specifically. Firstly, the groundwork for the terminology is laid by discussing

the difference of 'sex' and 'gender'. The notion of 'doing' gender is a crucial concept for this study in order to explain that textbooks may support or may challenge the reproduction of certain constructs, such as those of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' by their representation of women and men. This (mis-)representation may be on a textual or on a pictorial level, which is why the connection of gender and language is examined. It is discussed to what extent the generic masculine contains or neglects women and which pedagogical implications might follow. Furthermore, it is discussed how gender equality in classroom materials is secured by the Federal Austrian Ministry of Education, and the discussion draws on the general curriculum as well as on specific guides that were published in order to aid publishers, schools, and teachers in producing and selecting appropriate materials. The section is concluded by shortly reviewing findings of other studies concerned with detecting gender bias. On the one hand, this serves as an acknowledgement of what has already been done in this field and, on the other hand, constitutes an important point of comparison for my own study. These studies explain that gender bias was mostly found in language as well as in visuals to a varying extent and in different areas. However, none of these studies encompasses Austrian ELT textbooks, and therefore it is of interest whether and to what extent findings might overlap.

This is then followed by the empirical part of this thesis. Firstly, the methodology is explained in detail. The outcomes of the study are roughly divided into quantitative and qualitative findings. The quantitative analysis aims at detecting existing gender bias on the basis of numbers. Firstly, a rough overview is given by comparing the number of appearances of women and men in text and pictures. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of each textbook on the unit level since overall numbers only partly enable the reader to draw the right conclusions. By discussing every textbook and looking further into occurrence of characters in different units, it is possible to see whether the distribution of women and men is equal throughout the textbooks. Based on the published gender guidelines to promote equality by the Federal Austrian Ministry of Education, different areas of gender bias are examined. These areas encompass the representations in family, leisure time, and work settings and aim to show that gender bias can come in many forms and variations and that, therefore, looking at the overall impression does not suffice.

The quantitative analysis is complemented by the qualitative analysis. For this purpose, extracts that possibly promote gender bias or reproduce gender stereotypes from each textbook are given and discussed at length. This is concluded by a short review and discussion of my findings.

2. Textbooks in English Language Teaching (ELT)

The first chapter examines the usefulness of English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks and demonstrates their advantages as well as their disadvantages. When reference is made to textbooks, generally ELT textbooks are meant. Textbooks have been criticized for their static nature that lacks flexibility and hinders creativity in the school routine (Allwright 1982). Others, on the other hand, value the textbook for its coherent framework and the routine that it supplies. It is believed that it encompasses the vital language elements required by all learners; as different as the individual learners might be (O'Neill 1982, Hutchinson 1996). Nonetheless, both critics and supporters, stress the importance of flexibility in teaching materials. Furthermore, the importance of the teacher is discussed. Teachers might 'teach by the book', supplement or adapt activities or even create their own curriculum. Therefore, textbook usage in the classroom has to be taken into account when debating textbook usefulness. In order to understand the textbook better, I shall continue to give some insights into textbook production. Here it becomes evident that textbook authors cannot create tasks completely freely but are restricted by publishers and by prevailing cultural ideas. Publishers tend to be very careful and conservative when creating a new textbook in order to have a well selling title. Finally, it has to be acknowledged that the time and society we live in determines which ideas are acceptable and promotable and which are not.

2.1. Textbook usage

Textbook usage is a highly controversial topic. Whether one is a textbook supporter or opponent, the textbook usually plays an integral part in the classroom and in the reality of teachers and learners. Despite textbook criticism, the demand for textbooks seems to be high since they continue to be published. There are many who criticized and still criticize the textbook. Allwright (1982, cited in Hutchinson 1996: 57), for example,

states that the “unpredictable nature” of the classroom demands flexible teaching materials yet a textbook is static, prescriptive, and has a fixed order. Thus, the textbook turns out to be more useful for lesson planning than for being integrated into the classroom. This is because students might react differently to a task than was expected by the textbook writer or by the teacher. (Allwright and Bailey 1991, cited in Hutchinson 1996: 59). If teachers strictly abide to their lesson plan or to the textbooks this stifles communication along with creativity and motivation of the learner (Hutchinson 1996: 59). It would then follow that the flexibility of the teacher and their ability to adapt to their students’ needs is more crucial than that of the teaching materials. Even if teachers do not use textbooks but prepare their lesson plan independently, they have to observe their students’ reactions. Therefore, it seems that it is not textbooks in general that stifle creativity but more the teacher’s inflexibility or unwillingness to depart from their lesson plans. Nevertheless, teaching materials should support teachers in doing so, and it seems that lesson plans are more easily adaptable than the fixed unit in a textbook. Whereas authors such as Allwright (1982) see textbooks as an enemy of creativity, other authors have argued in their favor.

Supporters argue that textbooks can serve as a “stimulus for content and learning opportunities” (Hutchinson and Waters 1987 in Hutchinson 1996). O’Neill (1982: 109) further claims that textbooks are valuable because of the unpredictable classroom; they offer the safe haven teachers and learners can return to in case chaos ensues and tasks move in unplanned directions. For this reason, textbooks indeed promote creativity, so the argument. Chaotic situations, on the other hand, pose extreme stress for both teachers and learners and therefore hinder creativity. The textbook offers routine, and routine has been shown to minimize stress and to make learning more spontaneous (Hutchinson and Torres 1994, cited in Hutchinson 1996: 59).

Of course, no textbook can offer to cater to every single individual learner’s needs but this might never have been the aim of the textbook. O’Neill (1982: 106) underlines that “[a]lthough one group’s needs diverge at various points from another’s, there is often a common core of needs shared by a variety of groups in different places studying under different conditions at different times”. Further advantages of the textbook are its coherent structure, its common thread, and the possibility for students to revise the last

lesson and to prepare for the next. Loose materials, on the other hand, tend to get lost or damaged and often do not follow a common thread consistently (O'Neill 1982: 107).

Still, the textbook is a prescriptive tool, but it needs to allow for adaptation and improvisation. Hutchinson (1996: 58) emphasizes that the textbook structure is fixed but that it does not oblige the teacher to follow it thoughtlessly. Teachers are free to adapt tasks according to their classroom reality and to the specific needs of their students by leaving out certain tasks or units and supplementing with other material. Nonetheless, textbooks do pose a certain authority that especially young teachers might feel reluctant to undermine since textbooks are written by experts, and thus their content is of high quality. Yet, these 'experts' do not teach in this particular classroom and tasks adaptations might be required.

Generally, textbook use is always highly contextualized and shaped by various factors. These factors include teachers, learners, the classroom, and the school itself. Teachers, for example, might unconsciously shape the content and interpret tasks according to their own beliefs and preferences (Chouliaraki 1991: 34, cited in Hutchinson 1996). Moreover, the learner's beliefs and their personality might interfere with their interpretation of the textbook content, possibly causing it to differ from the textbook author's intentions. Other possibilities are that schools could be rather conservative or liberal and thus they may create room for certain strand of thoughts and might try to suppress other opinions. Interestingly, a study by Hayes (1986, cited in Hutchinson 1996: 88) found a relatively high concurrence between the expected textbook use by the authors and the actual use by the learners. This again highlights that the prescriptive nature of the textbook has an impact on recipients; otherwise, tasks would possibly be carried out differently by different students. On the other hand, Hayes (1986, cited in Hutchinson 1996: 88) found that learners used additional strategies for task solving that were not expected by textbook authors, supporting the idea that students remain creative to some extent. Hutchinson (1996: 88) therefore proposes that "[...] teachers and learners are creative, intelligent people who reinterpret and negotiate this 'script' provided by textbooks."

2.2. ELT textbooks in the classroom context

In order to gain further insights into the usage of textbooks inside the classroom, the next section explores the ‘teacher-textbook-relationship’. Shawer (2009) examined teacher-dependency on the curriculum and on teaching materials, foremost the textbook, but also teachers’ guides. He found that there are 3 types of teachers and named these categories “curriculum-transmitters”, “curriculum-makers”, and “curriculum-developers”. “Curriculum-transmitters” showed little flexibility in their lesson planning. They strictly adhered to the textbook; their lesson planning was very static and did not create any surprises for the students (Shawer 2009: 180). Disturbingly, material supplementation or adaptation to their students’ needs was not provided. Moreover, lessons were taught in high accordance to the textbook, what Shawer (2009: 180) phrased a “[...] unit by unit, lesson-by-lesson, page-by-page, task-by-task [...]” manner. Shawer reported further, as confirmed in interviews by teachers and students, that another unit would not be started up until the completion of the last unit. Further, “curriculum-transmitters” frequently consulted the teacher’s guide and followed its pedagogic instructions diligently.

The second category was phrased “curriculum-planners” – they did not rely on the textbook but applied “micro- and macro-strategies” to adapt the curriculum to their classroom reality (Shawer 2009: 177). Critical macro-strategies included curriculum development, supplementation, adaptation, and experimentation. Micro-strategies describe the specific steps applied to adjust the curriculum. Teachers “used a multi-source of input” (Shawer 2009: 178) and integrated authentic materials, such as newspaper articles, blog entries, and leaflets. Another prominent strategy was “cherry-picking”, (Shawer 2009: 178) meaning that teachers chose what seemed useful for their students and completely omitted other parts of the textbook. According to Shawer (2009: 178), “curriculum-planners” used the textbook in a very flexible order; further strategies included skipping tasks and topics or adapting them as required. Generally, these teachers saw the textbook and curriculum as an inspiration and worked with what benefited their student’s needs and omitted or supplemented what did not.

The third category described “curriculum-makers”. They were mostly independent from textbooks and developed their own teaching materials (Shawer 2009: 179). Before starting teaching these teachers assessed their students’ needs and interests and then created a list of topics for the course. They completely organized the “pedagogical content” themselves as well as the “curriculum skeleton of pedagogical activities and topics” (Shawer 2009: 180), because their approach was to discover students’ deficiencies and to adopt the curriculum content to them instead of adapting the students to the curriculum.

The third approach seems to be the most desirable one because teachers tailor the course content to their students’ needs and wishes. Yet, making one’s own curriculum is neither realistic nor possible in every school context due to the immense amount of time that making a curriculum for every class would take. Moreover, especially nowadays in the age of standardized testing students must have knowledge of certain topic areas to pass the tests, and teachers carry the responsibility to prepare their students sufficiently. Unfortunately, this might lead to learning to pass the test on the student’s side and to teaching closely to the textbook on the teacher’s side. In a context of limited possibilities, the approach of the “curriculum-planners” seems the most favorable one. These teachers work with the existing curriculum and textbook but adapt, skip, and supplement where reasonable (Shawer 2009: 178). These techniques leave them with the opportunity to work with their students’ needs and to have the freedom to change instructions and tasks. It is noteworthy that experimentation was another strategy highly valued by curriculum-developers (Shawer 2009: 178). In other words, if a lesson or task did not go as planned, they changed and improved it taking into consideration their students’ reactions. Textbook authors can neither consider these reactions nor can they cater to every classroom and every individual learner. This poses a problem for students of “curriculum-transmitters” since these teachers strictly adhere to textbooks. It seems they would not change or even notice tasks that went wrong. They might not evaluate their lessons and would therefore teach the exact same lesson repeatedly until the textbook authors change the instructions.

Seeing how differently textbooks can be used, the question arises of whether the discussion of textbooks as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is not somewhat misplaced. Is it not rather a

question of how teacher trainees can be taught to use the textbooks correctly instead of following it blindly? Since “curriculum-transmitters” exist and will, most likely, continue to exist, it is essential to further examine textbook content and their representation of sensitive topics. For students who are forced to study every task as instructed by the textbooks, it is a priority to protect them from the influence of misrepresentations.

2.3. ELT textbooks and the influence of publishers, authors, and the society

In order to understand the composition of textbooks better, it is crucial to explore their production process and to understand their determining factors. There are different aspects that interact when creating a textbook; some of them are the current society’s view, the author’s view, but also the publisher’s view. It is vital to highlight that even though textbooks are used in an educational context, their main purpose is not only to educate but to be sold. Publishers produce textbooks to sell them and to make profit because, like any other business, they could not survive by praise alone (Littlejohn 1992: 200). Littlejohn (1992: 200) points out that publishers invest considerable amounts of money into marketing and promotional gifts, hoping to cover these costs with a well selling textbook. Since the production costs of textbooks are extremely high a “misjudged title” can have “disastrous results” (Littlejohn 1992: 206). Therefore, publishing houses cannot afford to be too innovative but need to follow a conservative approach by orienting themselves on titles that were popular in the past. Littlejohn (1992: 206) stresses that publishers produce “[...] material on the basis of what they feel sure *will* sell rather than what they believe may sell.” and thus “the materials will need to be conservative rather than radical, and minimally evolutionary rather than revolutionary, in order to minimize the risk to capital.”

Of course, authors are needed to produce said materials, and published authors are generally preferred since they are familiar with the guidelines of publishers. Further appreciated qualities are confidentiality and reliability, since meeting the deadline is of absolute priority for publishing at a time when textbooks are purchased by schools (Littlejohn 1992: 215). Littlejohn’s study (1992) demonstrates that publishing houses are rather pragmatic businesses that look for very basic characteristics in their authors rather than for an innovative, extravagant, and eccentric ‘master mind’ who tries to

create something that has never been done before; it could go wrong and the risk is too high. This also leads publishers to be very cautious when it comes to sensitive topics.

Gray (2010: 119) points out that publishers communicate this very clearly: “Topics which coursebook writers are advised to avoid are generally referred to within ELT publishing by the acronym PARSNIP (politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, isms and pork).” Even though it is only a piece of advice, if an author wants to achieve publication it can be assumed that these are strict rules rather than debatable guidelines. These topics might seem offensive to certain groups of people or even to whole countries and cultures and thus might not sell. This situation of cautiousness leads to a cycle where publishing houses cannot and will not take risks by including sensitive topics but continue reproducing the successful titles and, I would argue, this is understandable from their point of view. It is not the production where change must happen first, but it is in the market. As in every other sector, changes will only appear once the demand and pressure from the consumers is high enough.

Maybe the pressure has to come from the Ministry of Education by explicitly making sensitive topics, such as homosexuality, part of the curriculum for schools. I argue that it does make sense to do so in our diverse, multicultural world; the broader the topics covered are, the broader the recognition of individual learners with textbook content may be. Different cultures, religions, and sexualities are most likely part of the students’ real world and should therefore be covered in the fictional textbook world, especially so in ELT textbooks because of the role of the English language as a *Lingua Franca*. More and more people from varied backgrounds and with different first languages find English to be their common ground for successful communication. Nonetheless, not only linguistic competence is required for that but just as much cultural competence is needed as well. It is therefore in favor of communication to broaden topic diversity in ELT textbooks.

Furthermore, it has to be stressed that these textbook studies focus mostly on globally published textbooks and therefore are only partly able to explain the findings of my own study that focuses on Austrian ELT textbooks. Locally published textbooks have different possibilities since publishers and authors are much more familiar with the

culture and the customs. Depictions of same sex couples, for example, might be highly problematic in eastern countries, but they would most likely be supported or at least accepted in Austria.

Within the frame prescribed by the publishers, authors have still some room for creativity. Therefore, there have to be explicit reasons why textbook writers create the tasks a certain way and not another. Andrew Littlejohn (1992) looked closer into the role of the author to answer this question. His interviews with textbook writers showed that authors saw teachers and learners in a rather negative light. They felt restricted in writing their materials because of the sort of teachers that would teach with them (Littlejohn 1992: 147). Authors divided teachers into mainly two categories, 'traditional' and 'modern' teachers. They felt they had to supply materials that met the needs and expectations of the majority of teachers, that was, in their view, the 'traditional' teacher.

Textbook authors described the traditional teachers as teaching by the book, boring, and rather nervous personalities (Littlejohn 1992: 148). The imagined needs of the traditional teachers were to feel confident and in control of their classrooms; otherwise they would become anxious. Therefore, the activities in the textbook have to leave the control with the teacher and cannot hand it to the students as, for example, open end questions would do because of unexpected answers. Activities that help teachers to retain control are those where they know exactly who says what and when (Littlejohn 1992: 50). Activities such as roleplays are seen as giving more control to the learner because the teacher loses supervision and cannot control what learners are actually doing in the pair work. Therefore, textbook writers created exercises in a way that helps teachers and decreases possibly occurring problems (Littlejohn 1992: 151). Moreover, textbook authors support untrained teachers that do not have knowledge of pedagogical principles and therefore rely on textbook instructions to a greater extent.

Nonetheless, there was also the notion of the 'modern' teacher, a teacher who is motivated and ready to take risks. Littlejohn states that 'modern' teachers were seen as a minority, and it would thus be unreasonable to create exercises solely for them as one interviewed author makes clear:

B2: I suppose one aims at a fairly mediocre teacher. In most countries this will account for 60-70% of the teachers. There is no point in writing material

for the teacher who is not a trained English teacher, not a trained teacher, doesn't have the language. These are [indistinct]. It goes against one's sentiments to write off classes as bound to be failures but you are failing other people and failing the future if you didn't because there is no way in which any course you write can be taught by them with any success.

Interestingly, students are seen in a rather pessimistic light as well. Authors expressed worries about the cognitive and linguistic proficiency of learners and held the opinion that the cognitive factor has to remain low in the tasks; otherwise students will lose interest. Students are further described as having low motivation and a preference for easier and straight-forward exercises (Littlejohn 1992: 155). Furthermore, students are believed to have more fun if tasks are not too challenging – challenging tasks would be threatening for the learner and in turn impose stress on the teacher. Littlejohn (1992: 160) further points out that the authors interviewed dismiss learner involvement completely because, again, it would transfer control from the teacher to the learner and cause tension.

Overall, Littlejohn's interviews provided valuable insights. Textbook authors seem to take on much more responsibility than they might have to. Planning the exact lesson plan and ensuring that nothing goes wrong are high aims and leave little room for experimentation. They imagine the worst-case scenario and therefore try to minimize any trouble causing factors, such as a high learner involvement. This view of the classroom is a problematic one; obviously not every classroom has the most inspiring teacher and the most motivated learners, but materials should at least allow for these kinds of learners.

Materials can be inspiring and should try to engage the learner and show the teacher what can be done; they can introduce new ways of thinking, new teaching skills, and thereby broaden the teachers' horizon. It should not automatically be assumed that teachers reject what they are unfamiliar with; some might rejoice at the sight of 'modern' teaching materials. Even if not, at least motivated students have the opportunity to work with the textbooks themselves. Producing a textbook for the boring, uninspired classroom might result in this classroom. Especially young teachers might respect the authority of the textbook in a way that does not allow them to introduce their own teaching materials or might result in trying to copy pedagogical instructions

when creating their own lesson plans. That makes the textbook a powerful tool that can inspire or stifle motivation. It might also result in harsh criticism and rejection by teachers. Littlejohn's (1992) study highlights the issues of writing textbooks and the impossibility of catering to every individual classroom and learner.

Many of Littlejohn's (1992) findings are supported by the testimony of the two authors Jan Bell and Roger Gower. Bell and Gower (1998: 118) hold the view that textbooks cannot possibly meet the needs of every individual learner in every context, but textbooks are still a useful resource if approached reasonably. The best approach is to use textbooks as one of many resources and to supplement and adapt where necessary. Bell and Gower (1998: 120) further acknowledge that creating a textbook is a compromise on many levels; one of them is to stay between "innovation and conservatism" in order to be successful. Since textbooks are used in different context, maybe even in contexts not intended by the authors, they have to be flexible enough to be working. The design of a unit should allow skipping or supplementation of activities and thereby leave the teacher in charge (Bell & Gower 1998: 120). The quality of a textbook as a resource rather than a "prescriptive" medium is underlined (Bell & Gower 1998: 122).

This testimony of two textbook authors further hints towards the fact that textbooks are not meant as a solution for everything and do not and cannot do the teacher's job. If more authors adopted this realistic approach and made this very clear in their instructions, the problem of teachers who simply 'teach by the book' could be improved. Especially young teachers could benefit from explicit references in textbooks, reminding them that main ideas of activities are given but adapting is not only allowed but wished for.

A further determining factor in textbook production are prevailing cultural ideas. Littlejohn (1992) made clear that publishers and authors play an important role in the production process; despite that, certain constraints are given by the time and culture we live in. Therefore, Littlejohn (1992: 236) proposes that the textbook is indeed a "cultural artifact". In order to explain his idea he draws on the theory of Marx and Engels

(1970 [1845]) who proposed that those in power will promote certain ideas to their own benefit and to strengthen their status as this quote underscores:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. (Marx and Engels 1970 [1845]: 64).

In other words, it is not by accident that certain ideas are prevalent in a society and in educational materials such as textbooks. Textbooks mirror prevailing standards and thereby foster them. Through “ideological coding”, ideologies are presented as “natural” and “commonsensical” and so hegemony is achieved (Littlejohn 1992: 256). The ideas promoted by the ruling class are adopted uncritically and therefore secure their status of power. In a patriarchy, therefore, it is in men’s interest to leave the men in charge and women dependent on them. Hence, the underrepresentation of women in textbooks for decades is no surprise. By seeing instances of the ‘working dad’ and the ‘stay-at-home mum’ year after year in textbooks from a very young age on, students learn that these gender roles are ‘natural’ and not social constructs. Gender, however, as well as sexual preferences, are constructs and not a given.

Students should learn to be critically aware of ideas presented as normal; textbooks and teachers can play a vital part in raising this awareness by challenging power structures. This opportunity is especially given in ELT textbooks since they introduce a new language and a somewhat new culture. Students might be more likely to accept ideas that would seem absurd in their own culture because different languages are connotated with different countries and different cultures. This is a huge chance to deconstruct prevailing power structures.

In conclusion, it can be said that many different factors are to be considered when it comes to textbook usage and textbook production. Textbooks have advantages, such as offering routine and a coherent structure, as well as disadvantages, being a too

prescriptive medium and therefore, possibly hindering creativity. The criticism of textbooks focuses on their nature rather than on their content. For example, the fact that tasks are prescribed to be done a certain way, such as 'written' or in 'pair work' or within a specific timeframe. It is thought that teachers accept these instructions and do not deviate from them and therefore might create a rather limiting experience for teachers and students. In spite of this, it could be shown that the 'type' of teacher is vital in the textbook debate. Teachers can choose to strictly adhere to the textbook or they can choose to adapt lessons according to their classroom reality. Therefore, teacher education should aim at raising awareness among prospective teachers and should provide the tools for a successful usage of textbooks. Further, it was highlighted that the production process is of critical importance. Authors have to follow certain guidelines given by the publishers and publishers have to produce titles based on the demand of the market in order to make profit. In order to show how textbooks are linked to promoting ideas, the next chapter deals with gender in ELT textbooks.

3. Gender in ELT textbooks

This chapter serves as a link between the theoretical textbook analysis and the empirical part of my study. First, a mandatory definition of the terms 'sex' and 'gender' is given as well as criticism that has been voiced by Judith Butler is discussed. It is highlighted that the debate of 'doing' gender is especially important in the classroom context since teaching materials 'do' gender as well but could and should deconstruct certain power structures. I give an overview of how language and gender are linked and what implications linguistic invisibility might have for women. Lastly, since Austrian ELT textbooks are the special focus of this thesis, I cover how gender equality is secured by the Federal Ministry of Education and discuss certain published guidelines as well as the curriculum.

3.1. Gender and sex

Most people are familiar with the distinction between sex and gender. Sex referring to the biological concept of humans denoted by anatomy, chromosomes, or physical

features whereas gender is understood as being a social construct, such as the role within the society, and features that are said to be typically 'feminine' or 'masculine', for example a typical maternal side. Even in different methodological guides the idea of sex and gender is taken on. The UNESCO methodological guide for gender equality in teaching materials, for example, defines sex and gender. "Sex refers to the biological differences between males and females. It relates to the observable difference between their genitals and to their physiological functions in procreation." (UNESCO 2009: 27) and

"Gender" is related to culture and the social division into "masculine" and "feminine". Gender therefore pertains to the qualities, tastes, aptitudes, roles and responsibilities associated with men and women in a society. Definitions of masculine and feminine vary enormously – demonstrating their social origin – since every society develops its classification on the basis of its own criteria and principles. The concepts of masculinity and femininity are not developed independently of each other but are mutually dependent. (UNESCO 2009: 27)

This definition most likely suffices for the context of a textbook analysis; yet, it seems crucial to shortly discuss that these definitions have been disputed. In one of her most significant publication, 'Gender Trouble', Judith Butler challenges the distinction between gender and sex and criticizes the definition of sex. She questions the stability of binary sex. Sex is understood to be biological, a given and hence natural. Butler disagrees with the 'naturalness' of the sexed body; instead she claims that there is no 'natural body' but the body has always already been gendered (Salih 2002: 55). There is no body before the cultural discourse. As with gender, it is not so much what one is but what one 'does' (Salih 2002: 55). A common misunderstanding of Butler's theory is that, therefore, gender can be chosen and done however a person chooses to do it. But Butler underlines that gender is a process, namely "a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (Butler 1990: 45) and cannot be chosen by the individual. This is underlined in following passage: "Surely, there are nuanced and individual ways of doing one's gender, but that one does it, and that one does it in accord with certain sanctions and proscriptions, is clearly not a fully individual matter. (Butler 1988: 525)". Here the division between performance and performativity is crucial and the difference

of their meaning is important for the understanding of Butler's theory. Performance "presupposes the subject" whereas performativity negates the subjects.

The act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence, gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again. The complex components that go into an act must be distinguished in order to understand the kind of acting in concert and acting in accord which acting one's gender invariably is. (Butler 1988: 526)

In this sense, gender acts cannot be performed freely but happen in culturally regulated paths. If gender is not 'done' correctly it is punished by the society. Butler points out:

Performing one's gender wrong initiates a set of punishments both obvious and indirect, and performing it well provides the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity after all. That this reassurance is so easily displaced by anxiety, that culture so readily punishes or marginalizes those who fail to perform the illusion of gender essentialism should be sign enough that on some level there is social knowledge that the truth or falsity of gender is only socially compelled and in no sense ontologically necessitated. (Butler 1988: 528)

It becomes clear that the concepts of sex and gender are not areas completely separate from each other but rather interwoven. Once a baby is born, it is immediately assigned its sex, and with this it already carries all the expected gender roles from day one. It is already a 'gendered body' because it does not exist as a body and is not free to choose its gender at a certain age. From the very beginning, parents and society will guide their 'gendered' way by telling them explicitly or inexplicitly what is appropriate behavior for a boy or for a girl. Parents are children's role models and society their mirror in demonstrating how gender is accordingly being 'done' day by day, action by action. Those actions cannot be chosen freely; if gender behavior does not mirror the sexed body, confusion arises and behavior will be described as 'wrong' from family, peers, and society. A person is expected to fulfill the gender roles in accordance with their sex; that is, feminine if female and masculine if male.

People who still choose to 'do' their gender differently because they feel sex and expected gender behavior does not correspond have to expect restrictions from the society. Drag is an example where gender is seen as being 'done' wrong. A male person enacting feminine gender behavior makes people feel confused at best or angry and violent at worst. Drag demonstrates that some human beings choose their gender according to what they feel they belong to, but society reacts with severe punishment and shows clearly that sex and gender cannot be seen as two completely independent categories.

Butler's theory demonstrates that questioning the categories of sex and gender is crucial when talking about gender equality. Gender equality does not just mean the equality of men and women but the equality of men, women and anything that is in between. When teaching children that the equality of men and women is of importance, it automatically implies that there are either men or women in our society and that there is space for only those two identities. A notion that is problematic because children then learn that people that do not identify as either 'man' or 'woman' are 'abnormal'. That being said, this study builds on the established terminology of 'woman' and 'man' too, for it is an important starting point to equalize the representation of women and men.

3.2. 'Doing' gender

A further important contribution to the notion of sex and gender is that gender is being 'done'. West and Zimmermann (1987) criticize the traditional definition of sex and gender as well. In their article "Doing Gender" they propose their own definition. To set out the distinction between sex, sex category, and gender is crucial. Sex is established according to certain biological criteria, such as genitalia at birth or chromosomes before birth. West and Zimmerman (1987: 127) emphasize the fact that there is nothing 'natural' about these criteria, but that they are socially agreed upon in our culture and may differ in other cultures; indeed there are cultures that have employed the idea of "cross-genders" (West & Zimmermann 1987: 132).

A sex category is assigned after sex is established; but sex category and sex do not have to be congruent (1987: 132). Membership of a certain sex category can be obtained through claiming membership “even if sex criteria are lacking” (West & Zimmermann 1987: 127). West and Zimmerman criticize Goffman’s (1976) definition of gender “display” that states that gender is being acted like a scripted play in front of an audience (West & Zimmermann 1987: 130). In his view, gendered behavior is produced on the one hand and recognized on the other. That would mean that there is a certain ‘script’ one could learn in order to belong to one sex category. West and Zimmerman negate the idea that gender is something that ‘is’ but rather that it is something that is ‘done’. Gender, according to the argument, is established in everyday interaction with others and has to be adapted to different situations and contexts. Therefore, gender is not a fixed set of traits but rather something that is produced in everyday life.

3.3. Gender and language

Not only is gender constructed but so is the language system. Dale Spender (1980) dedicated her book *Man Made Language* to the invisibility of women in the English language, a language dominated by men, she claims. The basis of her argument is laid by Sapir-Whorf (Carroll 1976) who claimed that language does not simply represent reality how it is but rather constructs it; it is therefore not ‘natural’ but shapes ideas and meaning (Spender 1980: 139). This becomes problematic when a language simply leaves out females. Spender defends her claim that male grammarians secured male dominance through language by citing the thought-provoking works of different authors.

In 1553 Thomas Wilson, for example, stated that *man* should come before *woman* in text because it is more ‘natural’ (cited in Spender 1980: 147) and “[j]udging from the success of this particular ploy, it appears that Mr. Wilson’s [male] audience appreciated the ‘logic’ of this particular rationale, and accepted it.” (Spender 1980: 147). In 1646 Joshua Poole concluded that “[...] it was not only natural that the male should take ‘pride of the place’ it was also *proper* because, in his line of reasoning, the male gender was the *worthier* gender.” (Spender 1980: 147, original emphasis). There was, of course, no

evidence needed for male grammarians of his time to accept his claim. Next, the groundwork was laid for the generic masculine:

The seal was set on male superiority, however, when in 1746 John Kirby formulated his 'Eighty Eight Grammatical Rules'. These rules, the product of Mr Kirby's own imagination, contained one that indicated the esteem in which he held females: Rule Number Twenty One stated that the male gender was *more comprehensive* than the female. (Spender 1980: 148, original emphasis).

Thus, it follows that *men* includes *women*, and *he* includes *she*. Interestingly, even though Kirby pronounced this grammatic rule already in the 18th century, it was not adapted by the majority of the population. The common usage to refer to a mixed group of people remained *they* as in *Anyone can play if they learn* or *Everyone has their rights* and not *he*, for it made more sense. Nevertheless, the 19th century male grammarians, Spender states (1980: 149), were so opposed to the usage of *they* and established *he* as the correct form and *they* as incorrect through an Act of Parliament in 1850. It is questionable why the use of *they* when referring to a group of men and women was rejected so vehemently. This was probably not due to the compliance of congruence of person and number but more likely another way to establish and support the supremacy of men in society by silencing women linguistically and making them invisible (Spender 1980: 150). For this is exactly what happens when reference does not explicitly include women but rather excludes them with allegedly masculine generic forms – women become invisible. Spender (1980: 162) argues that women must become visible in language to become visible in reality.

In fact, many studies support her case and demonstrate that masculine forms are not as generic as they pretend to be. These found that men usually thought of themselves when reading *he* whereas women thought of a male person and *not* themselves; therefore women felt excluded from reference (Spender 1980: 151). An example sentence would be *Everyone has to decide for himself what is right*. Women have to explicitly "look for clues" to know whether *man* and *he* includes them or not. Men, on the other hand, can be certain that *he* refers to them but *she* does not (Spender 1980: 157). Furthermore, Spender (1980: 159) reports of an experiment she conducted herself. She asked her class of 14-year-olds to eliminate the female references in a few sentences and

instructions were followed diligently. When she asked the students to eliminate the male reference chaos ensued, and the male students protested passionately; they were not used to be excluded from reference. For Spender linguistic gender inequality results in and supports the gender inequality in the real world. She makes clear that the masculine generic is unlikely the result of coincidence, and by prohibiting the common usage of *they* at their time Spender asks herself who it is who is resisting the 'right' form.

By asking where language comes from and by investigating the roots of the masculine generic Spender could demonstrate that language and its grammatic rules are not 'natural' and were always question to change. If girls grow up with a language in textbooks where they are not included, they might learn that it is normal to be excluded in the real world or to be always second choice in a profession. Girls might even learn that certain professions are not achievable for women since they do not feel included in the masculine generic forms. Problematic terms are on the one hand, *-man* compounds, such as *fireman* or *policeman* that do not have a female counterpart and, on the other hand, occupations, such as *air hostess* or *nurse* that are stereotypically for women but also lower status jobs. Spender has been also criticized for her work by Black and Coward (1981) because she did not include the notion of discourse in her theory. Despite this, she started an essential conversation about awareness in language.

Another study that underlines the problematic use of masculine generics was conducted by John Gastil in 1990. Gastil's study aimed at finding out what images were evoked by the pseudo-generic 'he' and more inclusive alternatives *they* and *she/he*. He found out that the use of *he* evoked mostly male images for women and men. The use of *he/she* proved to be more generic than *he*. It evoked a quite balanced number of female/male images for female participants; however, male participants still imagined mostly men. The use of *they* proved to be the most generic term and proved to evoke a fairly equal number of females/males. Interestingly, *they* was again more generic for women than for men (Gastil 1990: 637). It seems that men are simply so used to be included that unless the pronoun is *she* they imagine themselves. This fact as such becomes only problematic considering that women do not enjoy the advantage of permanent linguistic inclusion. Growing up boys take this confidence to claim their place in society. In the classroom inclusive language is highly important for a number of reasons. Girls should

be able to grow up knowing they can attain any occupation they want. They should have the same learning opportunities and feel motivated by activities that explicitly include them and their opinion. Girls and boys should be critical of stereotypes and know that a society should promote equal rights for women, men, and transgender people of any race, nationality, religion and sexual preference. This is of course a very high aim to set and cannot be achieved by textbooks alone. Still, I think gender inclusive language, equal of any gender, and a vast diversity in any other aspect would not just enhance the feeling of equality among students but would also represent the real world more correctly. We live in a multicultural world, and we should raise our children to appreciate and respect every person for the very sake of them being human.

3.4 Gender equality in the curriculum

The importance of gender equality in language was also recognized by the Federal Ministry of Education in Austria and resulted in a number of guidelines on how to incorporate inclusive language. These guidelines published by the Federal Ministry of Education (bm:ukk/ bmb) include the *Leitfaden zur Darstellung von Frauen und Männern in Unterrichtsmitteln* which is a guide for the representation of men and women in teaching materials, the guide *Erziehung zur Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männer* (Education to equality of men and women), as well as the general curriculum (*Lehrplan allgemein*). The guide is meant for everybody who is concerned with the production or usage of teaching materials; in particular producers, authors, schools, teachers, and students and is based on a number of laws; those include the *Schulunterrichtsgesetz* (SchUG), the teaching principle to education to equality (Unterrichtsprinzip *Erziehung zur Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern*) of 1995 and the ratification of the convention to abolish every form of discrimination in 1982 (*Konvention zur Beseitigung jeder Form von Diskriminierung der Frau*) as well as of the *Recommendation CM/Rec (2007)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender mainstreaming in education*. (2012: 3).

The *Leitfaden zur Darstellung von Frauen und Männern in Unterrichtsmitteln* (Guide for the representation of women and men in classroom materials) was first published in 1999 and revised in 2012. The aims of the guide are that teaching materials should

support gender equality, show gender-related inequalities, offer possibilities of identification for boys and girls, talk about the important works of women in history, and teach students to be critical of ideas that negate gender equality. The exact words in the guide are (2012: 4):

Der vorliegende Leitfaden soll dazu beitragen, dass in den Unterrichtsmitteln

- eine die Gleichstellung und Partnerschaft fördernde Darstellung der Geschlechter erfolgt;
- geschlechtsspezifische Ungleichheiten und Benachteiligungen sowie deren Ursachen aufgezeigt werden;
- für Mädchen und Buben positive Identifikationsmöglichkeiten hinsichtlich eines veränderten Rollenbildes geboten werden;
- Leistungen von Frauen den historischen Tatsachen oder gegenwärtigen Verhältnissen entsprechend auch genannt werden;
- gesellschaftliche Strömungen kritisch hinterfragt werden, die der Gleichstellung der Geschlechter entgegenwirkt.

Further aims are to aid textbook authors to create according materials, to support teachers in choosing correct teaching materials, and to help students detect instances of gender inequality, as well as to be critical towards them (2012: 5). The guide is concerned with 3 main sections; namely 'behavior and way of living' (*Verhalten und Lebensweisen*), work (*Arbeit*) and society (*Gesellschaft*). The first part 'behavior and way of living' (2012:6) talks about the importance of which characteristics can be seen

- Are both sexes equally portrayed as active, emotional, silent, passive, wild and scared?
- Are men/women shown having non-stereotypical characteristics?
- Are men/women presented as equally responsible for childcare?
- How are instances of non 'gender-conform' characteristics judged?
- Do teaching materials show real life family situations, i.e. also include single mothers, patchwork-families, people in same-sex relationships and elderly or handicapped persons.
- Are non-stereotypical lifestyles judged explicitly or inexplicitly (2012: 7)
- Are men and women shown in private and working areas?

The next section 'work' is concerned with following questions (2012: 7-8):

- Do men and women have occupations?
- If so, which occupations?
- Are men and women shown in occupations that are not stereotypical, such as a male nurse or female technician.
- Do men and women occupy high-prestige jobs?
- Are explanations shown for the division of the jobs between men and women?
- Are problems of working men and women discussed, such as different earnings and the compatibility of job and family?
- Are men and women shown to do equal amounts of household chores?
- Are running the household and raising children equally valued as having a paid occupation?

The next section deals with the 'society' (2012: 9):

- Are women presented in the public spheres, such as political occupations?
- Are the situations of gender in-/equality presented in other countries and cultures?
- Is the discrimination because of gender, ethnicity, religion, age or sexual orientation talked about?

The guide once more stresses the importance of teaching materials in achieving gender equality. They have a central role in socialization and transmit certain values and codes. The representation of men and women alongside with the language used provides a basis for 'gender-according' behavior. Additionally, it is underlined that gender is not biologically determined but rather socially constructed and 'done', a point I discussed earlier. Achieving gender equality is a concern of all subjects and should be taken seriously. 'Undoing Gender' is about making gender a "seen, but unnoticed feature" (2012: 11). It is crucial to highlight the commonalities instead of differences; thereby it allows boys and girls to behave the way they want to rather than trying to 'do' gender-appropriate behavior. Both language and pictures play a crucial part in constructing gender (2012: 11).

The guide *Erziehung zur Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern. Informationen und Anregungen zur Umsetzung ab der 5. Schulstufe* (Education to equality of men and

women) was published 2011 in its third edition and devotes a section to foreign language learning. It is stated that the use of unusual communicative behavior might be easier in foreign languages because new languages offer the opportunity to take risks and experiment with the language (2011: 110). Therefore, foreign language learning has an important part in establishing gender equality. Points to consider are how language can be used to support this aim, how often and in which roles men and women are presented, and if the myth of the generic masculine is part of the language and reproduced (2011: 110).

Moreover, the general curriculum (*Lehrplan allgemein*) recognizes and supports the education to gender equality. Several instances could be detected. Schools are advised to deal with the issue of gender equality in every aspect of teaching and learning. Students should learn to be critical towards stereotypically gendered roles.

Schulen sind im Zuge von „Gender Mainstreaming“ und Gleichstellung der Geschlechter angehalten, sich mit der Relevanz der Kategorie Geschlecht auf allen Ebenen des Lehrens und Lernens auseinanderzusetzen. (Allg. Lehrplan: 2)

In den Bildungsbereichen sind auch jene Zielsetzungen enthalten, die von folgenden Unterrichtsprinzipien vertreten werden: Gesundheitserziehung, *Erziehung zur Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern*, Medienerziehung, Musische Erziehung, Politische Bildung, Interkulturelles Lernen, Sexualerziehung, Lese- und Sprecherziehung, Umwelterziehung, Verkehrserziehung, Wirtschaftserziehung, Erziehung zur Anwendung neuer Technologien, Vorbereitung auf die Arbeits- und Berufswelt. (Allg. Lehrplan: 3, my emphasis)

Die Schülerinnen und Schüler sind zu einem verantwortungsbewussten Umgang mit sich selbst und mit anderen anzuleiten, insbesondere in den Bereichen Geschlecht, Sexualität und Partnerschaft. Sie sollen lernen, Ursachen und Auswirkungen von Rollenbildern, die den Geschlechtern zugeordnet werden, zu erkennen und kritisch zu prüfen. (Allg. Lehrplan: 3)

Die Vorbereitung auf das private und öffentliche Leben (insbesondere die Arbeits- und Berufswelt) hat sich an wirtschaftlicher Leistungsfähigkeit, sozialem Zusammenhalt, einer für beide Geschlechter gleichen Partizipation und ökologischer Nachhaltigkeit zu orientieren. Dabei sind auch Risiken und Chancen der neuen Technologien zu berücksichtigen. (Allg. Lehrplan: 4)

The very last paragraph is problematic when talking about the participation of ‘both genders,’ signaling that there are only two genders and not recognizing transgenders.

Based on these documents it can be seen that nowadays gender equality, at least the equality of men and women, is taken very seriously by the Federal Ministry of Education in Austria. However, the first law to address this topic was enforced only in 1982. It will be interesting to examine the representation of men and women in textbooks before such laws were established. There has been a high interest on sexism in ELT materials, and the next section gives a literature review of what studies have found.

3.5. Sexism in ELT textbooks

The next section gives a short review of different studies examining sexism in ELT/ESL textbooks. Despite the fact that these studies are from different decades and were conducted in different countries and settings, their results show many commonalities.

One of the most cited studies in detecting sexism in ESL textbooks was done by Karen Porreca in 1984. She showed the different types of sexism present in textbooks. Porreca (1984: 705) found different instances of sexism; amongst them omission of females in both texts and illustrations. Male occurrences outnumbered females in both categories (Porreca 1984: 712). By omitting females, unimportance and the lack of appreciation is signaled. Further, females were underrepresented in occupational roles and often described in terms of their family relations. The imbalance grows further if one considers that there were whole units that dealt with women exclusively, such as “Women around the World: The Soviet Union”, rather than an attempt at integrating them throughout the textbook (Porreca 1984: 713). Moreover, women were mostly described with adjectives of the category ‘appearance’, ‘emotionality’ and ‘physical state’ (Porreca 1984: 718). “[...] the adjectives for women in the category of Physical Appearance seem to suggest a preoccupation with attractiveness. Beautiful, pretty and sexy modify female nouns [...] a total of 34 times.” (Porreca 1984: 718). Another instance of sexism was the high usage of masculine forms as generics in all ESL textbooks analyzed (Porreca 1984: 716). The linguistic and pictorial invisibility of women has manifold negative pedagogic results. It is stated that females experienced explicit learning disadvantages when encountering masculine generics. For example, the effect on recall was higher for males when using masculine generics but higher for

females when using female inclusive forms. Thus, textbooks using only 'male language' disadvantages female learners in the classroom. Further, especially young learners tend to trust the written word and do not have a critical attitude towards it. They focus on learning the new language and take the tasks as given. Therefore, female learners are taught to adapt the male language from an early age on even though it does not feel natural to them.

Matsuno's (2002) analysis of Business English Textbooks revealed sexism in different areas as well. These were the omission of females, stereotypes in representation of men and women, the disadvantaged allocation of occupational roles for women and the use of masculine generics (Matsuno 2002: 84). The number of female and male characters was fairly balanced; but the overall number of male characters mentioned in a text was higher than that of female characters (Matsuno 2002: 87). Further gender bias occurred in the category 'occupation'. Men were typically presented in high status and high prestige jobs, such as millionaires, CEOs and managers (Matsuno 2002: 88). Women were, unfortunately, primarily described by their personal relationships, such as 'mothers', 'wives' and 'aunts' and generally prioritized family to work. If women were working, it was mentioned that they were either single or they had no children and therefore suggesting the incompatibility of work and family (Matsuno 2002: 91). Another evidence of gender bias was the engagement with the topic of divorces; seemingly only of concern for women. It was women who were being divorced and needed to seek help of a therapist (Matsuno 2002: 93). Men were the ones who typically divorced their wives for their secretary or just in general for younger women. A highly problematic view on this topic since it leaves women in a passive and depended state. Furthermore, women were concerned with their appearance and it was suggested that looks is just as essential to find work as skills are (Matsuno 2002: 92). Where elderly, sick and disabled persons were portrayed, they were portrayed by female characters (Matsuno 2002: 94). Thus, indicating that weak and female is somewhat the same and that women are in need of help whereas men are strong, rich, and independent. The only positive results were that gender-neutral terms were used in addition to masculine generics. The usage of 'men' and 'his' for unknown gender was still used but more inclusive forms, such as 'they' or 'his or hers' appeared as well – signaling a progress in acknowledging the importance of linguistic female visibility. (Matsuno 2002: 94).

Samadikhah & Shahrokhi's (2014) study focused on Iranian ELT textbooks and examined gender bias in manifold areas; among them were the representation of female and male characters in illustrations, female and male titles, firstness in mixed gender dialogues and activities. The distribution of female and male characters was fairly balanced (Samadikhah & Shahrokhi 2014: 127). Nonetheless, males showed supremacy in pictorial representation and also dominated the category of firstness in mixed gender dialogues, indicating a more active role in initiating conversations. This might result in poorer language exercise opportunities for girls if dialogues are performed as suggested by the textbook (Samadikhah & Shahrokhi 2014: 128). Further, titles were used unequally; Mr. for men but Miss, Ms. or Mrs. for women. This is problematic because the different forms for women give information about their marital status; thus, indicating it is of importance. Men are simply approached as Mr., not indicating if bachelor or married (Samadikhah & Shahrokhi 2014: 129). Additionally, the occurrence of *Mr.* was reported to be generally higher than all female counterparts together, suggesting that men are in position of power more often than women. The exploration of the category 'activities' showed progressive results. Samadikhah & Shahrokhi (2014: 130) reported that some activities were dominated by women and some by men and that activities were not allocated according to stereotypical gender roles. On the one hand, this could be interpreted as progress, on the other hand, the domination of activities means that they were not equally distributed among men and women. Equal representation is desirable as to suggest that students can take part in all activities; be it partying, driving, shopping or social activities.

In 2009 Lee and Collins examined how gender is represented in 10 Australian ELT textbooks. Their topics of interest included linguistic and pictorial stereotyping in social and domestic roles, the use of masculine generics, omission of women and the phenomenon of male firstness. Some of the findings were that male characters outnumbered female characters, that the portrayal of men and women in social and domestic roles was unequal, and that men were predominant in pictorial representations (Lee & Collins 2009: 362). Men were also shown to be more active whereas women were more passive and were more prominent in the household. Yet, there were also some positive developments in the textbooks analyzed regarding the

linguistic construction (Lee & Collins 2009: 364). The generic *he* was widely avoided and substituted by the inclusive pronoun *they* when reference was unclear. Moreover, the usage of the forms *he/she* and *his or her* were prominent. Another positive development was that the textbook authors included mainly gender-neutral compounds, such as *firefighter* instead of *fireman* or *chair* instead of *chairman* (Lee & Collins 2009: 365). Additionally, inclusivity was achieved by referring to *men and women* instead of *men*. Overall, men were still represented more often in text and pictures, in social roles and as being more active. Women were underrepresented, more prominent in housework and shown as being passive (Lee & Collins 2009: 364).

According to the authors the textbooks present a fairly realistic view of the Australian society. They raise the vital, yet unanswered, question if textbooks should show society how it is or how it should be (Lee & Collins 2009: 366). In my view, change must start somewhere. Obviously, it would be desirable if reality changed and gender equality would be achieved and textbook authors could simply reflect this positive development. This will, unfortunately, not always be the case and therefore it makes sense to encourage change while students are still young and in education, and to make students aware and critical of the fact that what reality looks like right now does not necessarily have to be correct or desirable. Reality has been and can be changed for the better. If ideologies are depicted uncritically and thereby taught and relearned then there certainly is a problem with representing what are, stereotypes for example. Showing reality is always at the same time 'doing' and reproducing reality. Problematic teaching materials can also be a gift if seen as a chance to discuss misrepresentations. It can never be known for certain how textbook contents are taught inside the classroom; reader response, for example, is a neglected research area that might offer fruitful answers to this question (Sunderland et al. 2000).

Overall, the gender bias detected in different textbooks indicates that there is still plenty of room for improvement in the representation of women in order to be equal to that of men. It is of interest to see if similar findings can be found in Austrian ELT textbooks. The next chapter gives information about the methodology of my study and subsequently presents and discusses findings.

To sum up, it can be said that gender and sex are crucial categories for the investigation of sexism in school textbooks. Nonetheless, they are not as easily defined as is pretended in some contexts. Sex is generally understood as referring to the 'biological criteria' of a person and gender is thought of as being a 'social construct'. Butler (1990) disputed the definition in her main work 'Gender Trouble' and showed that sex as well is a construction. Indeed, a set of ideas that were agreed upon by society to determine whether a baby is a *boy* or a *girl*. West and Zimmermann (1987) argue as well that gender is something that is being 'done' in everyday interactions. Still, it is underlined that the arbitrariness of gender does not imply that it can be chosen freely since restrictions of the society can be expected if gender is not 'done' correctly. This is especially important for my following textbook analysis, since it can be seen that textbooks as well support the process of 'doing gender' by their representation of men and women in certain ways. The subsection 'Gender and Language' explained the origin of the generic masculine forms and their problems in everyday usage; they foster linguistic invisibility and thereby exclude women from reference. This might lead to demotivation for girls in the lessons. Lastly, I discussed gender equality in the teaching context and referred to several guidelines issued by the Federal Ministry of Education in Austria. Those guidelines form the basis for the analysis of selected Austrian ELT textbooks and my findings are thoroughly discussed in the next chapter.

4. Gender equality in selected ELT textbooks – an empirical study

4.1. Methodology

The following chapter describes the methodology used in order to answer my research question of whether and how the representation of men and women changed over the recent decades in Austrian ELT textbooks. First of all, I decided to choose one textbook per decade and selected only textbooks that were permitted for the Austrian school market for the 4th grade of lower secondary schools. The first step was to count characters in the text and illustrations in each textbook. Concerning the characters in text, I counted all female and male designations, such as names and occupational roles or family designations that indicate gender, such as mother, father, air hostess, or waiter.

Names were counted only once if it was clear from the context that it designated the same person as, for example, in dialogues. In order to stay within the scope of my thesis, I did not include pronouns in my research, such as *he/she* or *him/her*; this could be of interest for further studies and a way to test the frequency of male generics. In the next step, I counted the characters in text and illustrations and divided them into the categories *female*, *male*, and *female and male*. If an illustration included two or more characters of the same sex, it was still counted as one illustration for the respective category. Group pictures including women and men were counted within the category *mixed sex illustrations*.

After gaining a broad overview of characters and illustrations, an in-depth analysis of the numbers was possible. I examined the numbers of characters and illustrations in each unit and looked for explanations of why certain units had a higher number of females or males in texts and illustrations. The analysis of each unit made further informative data available. For example, a higher number of female occurrences was not always positive by itself since units often had typically 'feminine' topics, such as *Mother's shopping list* (I learn English: 1976), that accounted for the impression of a seemingly fair division of characters. This describes the first part of my study and is aimed at giving an overall impression of all textbooks under analysis.

The second part of my study examines the representation of women and men in the areas of 'family and relationships', 'leisure time activities', and 'work'. Each area is focused around specific questions that are inspired by the *Guidelines for the Representation of Men and Women in Classroom Materials* (2012) issued by the Federal Austrian Ministry of Education. The subsection 'family and relationships' investigates the occurrence of family designations, such as *mother* and *father* in text as well as at the occurrence of relationships types in illustrations. The next two subsections, 'leisure time activities' and 'work,' focus specifically on illustrations. Points of interest included whether the representation of the characters supports or challenges stereotypes; therefore, activities and occupational roles were carefully counted, listed, and then interpreted.

This second part focuses primarily on the illustrations in the textbooks for a number of reasons. Firstly, illustrations have become increasingly important within the textbook over the years. *More! 4* (2013) was the first textbook to contain more illustrations than characters in the text. It is important to stress that only illustrations of persons were included in my research since these were of immediate relevance. Therefore, it can be concluded that the number of illustrations is even higher, when including animals, landscapes and such. Secondly, illustrations are absorbed much faster than text, being bright in color and often occupying more space on a page than text. The more recently published the textbooks under analysis were, the higher the number of whole picture stories became. Possibly, even if a whole unit were left out, students might still skip over the pages and see the illustrations without necessarily reading the text. In the next step, a discussion of the findings is offered as well as possible reasons for detected differences.

After an extensive presentation and discussion of the quantitative analysis, I decided to include qualitative examples. Qualitative examples are meant to supplement the quantitative data, for it can be argued that neither quantitative nor qualitative data provide the full picture by themselves. The qualitative analysis offers a discussion about selected problematic passages in each textbook and demonstrates that gender equality in numbers does not necessarily mean gender equality in content. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis offer valuable insights. The last chapter of my thesis is then followed by a general discussion and tentative suggestions for improvements of future textbooks.

4.2. ELT textbooks under analysis

I chose 5 textbooks to analyze the representation of women and men. In order to see how representation changed over the past decades, I decided to pick one textbook from each decade, approximately 10 years apart from each other. To guarantee comparability all textbooks had to be from the same school grade. I chose the 4th grade of lower secondary schools (AHS) since students are approximately 14 years old, and gendered topics, such as romance, are likely to be included. I chose the textbooks according to three general prerequisites:

1. The schoolbooks had to be published in the decade of interest, so I could compare results over time.
2. Textbooks had all to be published for the 4th grade of lower secondary schools (AHS) so results would be comparable.
3. All textbooks had to be admitted to the Austrian school markets, since I decided to focus on ELT textbooks used in Austria

Therefore, following textbooks were chosen:

Table 1 Selection of textbooks

| Textbook | Publisher | Authors | Publication date | Units | Number of pages |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| I learn English 4 | ÖBV | Bregar et al. | 1976 | 20 | 184 |
| I learn English 4 | ÖBV | Bregar et al. | 1986 | 20 | 184 |
| The New You&Me 4 | Langenscheidt-Longman | Gerngroß et al. | 1997 | 14 | 144 |
| English to go 4 | ÖBV | Westfall&Weber | 2006 | 16 | 144 |
| More! 4 | Helbling Languages | Gerngross et al. | 2013 | 14 | 169 |

It is important to note that even though this overview comprises five textbooks from different decades, in the following section I only offer a closer analysis of four textbooks. The reason for this is that the textbooks *I learn English 4* from 1976 and 1986 are completely identical in content, despite their 10-year difference. This was something I could not have expected and therefore decided to omit the discussion of *I learn English 4* 1986 to avoid redundancy.

5. Quantitative analysis

The following subsections offers a general overview and an in-depth analysis of the quantitative results of gender representations in the four textbooks under analysis.

5.1. General overview

The following section offers a general overview of the representation of men and women of the textbooks introduced above. As a reminder, the column *No. of characters* refers to any instance of females or males in text; illustrations include only images of women, men or women, and men; other images such as scenery or animals were not counted. The following table offers a quick overview of the textbooks under examination:

Table 2 General overview of textbooks

| Textbook | Year | No. of characters | No. of illustrations | No. of pages | No. of units |
|-------------------|------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| I learn English 4 | 1976 | 249 | 50 | 184 | 20 |
| The New You&Me 4 | 1997 | 255 | 88 | 144 | 14 |
| English to go 4 | 2006 | 154 | 59 | 144 | 16 |
| More! 4 | 2013 | 208 | 263 | 169 | 14 |

The title *I learn English 4* from 1976 contains the least number of pictures (50) but ranks in second place for number of characters (249). The illustrations are usually drawings and take less space on the page, compared to the later textbooks. This is probably due to the higher production costs of color printing in the 1970s. *The New You&Me 4* (1997) ranks highest in the number of characters with 255 and has the second highest number of illustrations (88). It could be said that the trend from the 1970s to the 1990s moved towards more illustrations; however, *English to go 4* (2006) includes only 59 pictures, a few less than *The New You&Me 4* in 1997, and as well the least number of characters, namely 154. Unsurprisingly, *More! 4*, being the most recent publication analyzed, has the highest number of pictures in their textbook, 263, and is therefore the only textbook where the number of pictures outweighs the number of characters in text. This stronger emphasis on visual representation might be explained by the time and society we live in and underlines the importance of smartphones, computer games, and YouTube and Co.

Pictures are recognized earlier than text, and the more pictures there are the more likely students might be captivated by the textbook. It is important to note that the table serves only as an overview of the four textbooks analyzed, and that it is too early to draw any conclusions. The number of characters and illustrations do not determine the quality of any of these textbooks nor do they give an in-depth analysis. Nevertheless, they serve as an important first step to compare the different ELT textbooks chosen.

5.2. In-depth analysis

The next section aims to give a deeper understanding of the individual textbooks. Therefore, each textbook is divided into its units as to gain more information about the representation of men and women in text and illustrations. Each textbook is dedicated a table on its own for reasons of clarity and is followed by a general discussion of the newly gained data. The detailed overview of each textbooks allows for a much more explicit analysis of the representation of men and women. The textbooks are discussed in chronological order.

5.2.1. I learn English 4 (1976)

Table 3 gives a detailed description of female and male appearance in every unit of *I learn English 4 (1976)*.

Table 3 I learn English 4 (1976)

| Unit | Char. f | Char. M | Illustr. f | Illustr. m | Illustr. f/m |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Unit 1 (Paul and Mary talk about their holidays) | 11 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unit 2 London | 2 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 0 |
| Unit 3 The African people | 12 | 14 | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| Unit 4 David Livingstone | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Unit 5 India | 0 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Unit 6 Rikki-Tikki-Tavi | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unit 7 Australia | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | |
| Unit 8 Mother's shopping list | 10 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unit 9 What's your line | 5 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unit 10 Winter sports | 5 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Unit 11 New York | 6 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unit 12 Who was this man | 4 | 18 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Unit 13 Let's read and laugh | 15 | 26 | 7 | 8 | 0 |
| Unit 14 Bill is ill | 11 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unit 15 A sad Monday Morning | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unit 16 In the street | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unit 17 At the restaurant | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unit 18 At the hotel | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unit 19 Asking one's way | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Unit 20 What we'll do during the holidays | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 99 (39,8%) | 150 (60,2%) | 16 (32%) | 30 (60%) | 4 (8%) |
| Total number | 249 | | 50 | | |

The ratio of the number of women versus men in text and illustrations in *I learn English 4* reveals significant gender bias. Males outnumber females in text and in pictures. Male names and other explicit male designations, such as father, grandfather, son, or waiter occur 150 times whereas female appearances in text mark only 99 in number. Therefore, females are severely underrepresented (Porreca 1984, Lee&Collins 2009, Matsuno 2002). Furthermore, women are also pictorially underrepresented by a ratio of 16 to 30. Therefore, portraying men almost twice as often as women. Looking more carefully at the representation in each unit, it can be seen that only 3 units feature more females than males, namely Unit 6, Unit 8, and Unit 18. In Unit 6 and Unit 8, women outweigh men only slightly (3:2); however, Unit 8 offers vital insights. The title of Unit 8 *Mother's shopping list* reveals why females appear almost twice as often as males (10:6) in the text. The whole unit is concerned with the 'feminine' sphere of grocery shopping for the family. Several exercises tell students what mother has to buy for her family. Unit 8 as such promotes the stereotypical representation of women as mothers. No effort can be seen to include women equally throughout the textbook, and if it was not for a unit specifically about mothers, female underrepresentation would be even higher in *I learn English 4*.

5.2.2. The New You&Me 4 (1997)

Table 4 offers a detailed description of female and male occurrence in every unit of *The New You&Me 4 (1997)*.

Table 4 The New You&Me 4 (1997)

| Unit | Char. f | Char. m | Illustr. F | Illustr. m | Illustr. f/m |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Unit 1 Welcome to Australia | 4 | 10 | 2 | 3 | |
| Unit 2 This sporting life | 8 | 10 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Unit 3 Native Americans | 7 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| Unit 4 You are what you eat | 14 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Unit 5 A quiet room | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Unit 6 Can we save the planet | 6 | 6 | 2 | 1 | |
| Unit 7 New York New York | 4 | 4 | 0 | 2 | |
| Unit 8 Bookworms | 7 | 8 | 2 | 2 | |
| Unit 9 Growing up | 21 | 29 | 4 | 4 | 1 |
| Unit 10 Images of Ireland | 16 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Unit 11 Dilemmas | 7 | 8 | 3 | 2 | |
| Unit 12 The history of everybody things | 7 | 6 | 2 | 1 | |
| Unit 13 Jobs | 16 | 14 | 3 | 2 | |
| Unit 14 Project Poetry | 9 | 5 | 5 | 2 | |
| Total | 125 (49%) | 130 (51%) | 33 (37,5%) | 45 (51,1%) | 10 (11,4%) |
| | 255 | | 88 | | |

The overall number of the occurrence of men and women in text and illustrations in *The New You&Me 1997* seem to show an equal representation. The ratio of women and men in text is 125 to 130; the slight underrepresentation cannot be said to constitute gender

bias. The pictorial representation includes 33 females and 45 males, the difference is still representative but much smaller than in 1976. The positive changes are most likely due to the new principle *Education to Equality of Women and Men* issued by the Federal Ministry of Education in 1995. The general curriculum (*Lehrplan allgemein*) issued in 1995 reflects the new principle and includes several claims to secure gender equality.

Nonetheless, in order to gain further insights and to analyze if gender equality was indeed accomplished, an in-depth analysis of the units was needed. Therefore, I highlighted the units where females outnumber males in text or illustrations in the table above. From 14 units, 6 units have a higher number of female characters. Looking at the table, it is impossible not to notice that women outnumber men in the last 5 units. An equal inclusion of women throughout all units would have been more suitable in order to fulfil the new guidelines regarding gender equality. The only other time more women are featured is in Unit 4 *You are what you eat*. As indicated by the title it can be correctly assumed that the chapter deals with diet and food disorders. Interestingly, females are featured twice as often in text with a ratio of 14: 7; thereby suggesting that dieting is still a stereotypically 'feminine' problem, and that women are more often concerned with their body image than men. Moreover, the females in Unit 14 *Project Poetry* also outnumber males with a ratio of 9: 5 in text. Therefore, possibly promoting the idea that girls are stereotypically more interested in reading literature and poetry than boys are. Next, the higher pictorial representation and close to equal representation in text of women in Unit 11 *Dilemmas* can be explained by the story *How dare you* that spreads out over 3 pages in the 6-page-long unit. The story is about a mother who becomes violent and unreliable after her husband divorces her and therefore works with the problematic stereotype that wives are usually the ones who are left and are unable to cope with it.

There is also one positive trend to be noticed in *The New You&Me*. Females outnumber males slightly in Unit 16 *Jobs* and therefore claim that the world of work is not primarily 'masculine' anymore. The high number of women implies the importance of women in the job market. Whether the occupations themselves foster stereotypes is discussed in the subsection that deals with occupations. Overall, the textbook could improve the representation by aiming to have an equal distribution of women and men throughout the whole textbook instead of only in certain units. It might happen that the last two or

three units are omitted due to time reasons at the end of the school year. Further, the concentration might be lower in the last few weeks before the summer holidays and girls might feel neglected during the school year.

5.2.3. English to go 4 (2006)

Table 5 offers a detailed description of female and male occurrence in every unit of *English to go (2006)*.

Table 5 English to go 4 (2006)

| Units | Char. f | Char. m | Illustr. f | Illustr. m | Illustr.f/m |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Unit 1 What's new | 5 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Unit 2 Make it to the top | 3 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Unit 3 Join us | 8 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Unit 4 Down under | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Unit 5 The police report | 3 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Unit 6 Eureka | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Unit 7 Is the past perfect | 8 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Unit 8 Luck of the Irish | 7 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Unit 9 On a binge | 9 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Unit 10 The math whiz | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Unit 11 My second family | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Unit 12 From the inside out | 6 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| Unit 13 Buy now, pay later | 4 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Unit 14 Today and tomorrow | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unit 15 It's festival time | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Unit 16 This is me | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 77 (50%) | 77 (50%) | 23 (39%) | 25 (42,4%) | 11 (18,6%) |
| | 154 | | 59 | | |

Of all the analyzed textbooks, *English to go 4 2006* is the most balanced textbook in terms of gender equality. Female and male appearance is exactly the same in text with 77 occurrences for both and thus suggests that the authors consciously made an effort to include women. The pictorial representation of women is slightly outnumbered by men; the ratio of 23: 25 is minimal and therefore not significant. As for the equal inclusion of women among the units; 8 out of the 16 units feature more women in text or illustrations. None of the units deal with stereotypical 'feminine' topics but include rather neutral unit headings, such as *Join us*, *Down Under* or *Eureka*. Therefore, on the level of numbers only, gender bias could not be detected. This could be a success of the gender guidelines represented in the *Guide for the Representation of Women and Men in Classroom Materials* of the Federal Ministry of Education issued in 1999. Nevertheless, cautiousness must be exercised when drawing conclusions from quantitative data only. Quantitative data offers valuable insights, yet it cannot detect all instances of possible gender inequality. The subsection looking into gender equality in different areas might give more significant results.

5.2.4. More! 4 (2013)

Table 6 offers a detailed description of female and male occurrence in every unit of *More! 4 (2013)*.

Table 6 More! 4 (2013)

| Units | Char. f | Char. m | Illustr. f | Illustr. m | Illustr. f/m |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Unit 1 Welcome to Ireland | 9 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| Unit 2 The curious case of the locked room | 5 | 12 | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| Unit 3 Kids speak out | 9 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 3 |
| Unit 4 Beautiful Boston | 8 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 15 |
| Unit 5 A working life | 7 | 6 | 13 | 16 | 4 |
| Unit 6 Hungry | 14 | 11 | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| Unit 7 Superheroes | 8 | 11 | 7 | 10 | 17 |
| Unit 8 Travelling down under | 5 | 9 | 1 | 11 | 8 |
| Unit 9 Body talk | 10 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 12 |
| Unit 10 Crazy collector | 3 | 7 | 2 | 13 | 2 |
| Unit 11 A fair world | 5 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| Unit 12 Ready for reading | 6 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 0 |
| Unit 13 Space | 5 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Unit 14 Best friends | 5 | 4 | 16 | 2 | 10 |
| Total | 101 (48,6%) | 107 (51,4%) | 77 (29,5%) | 94 (35,7%) | 92 (35%) |
| | 208 | | 263 | | |

More! 4 2013 is the most recently published textbook under analysis. It shows a slight underrepresentation of women in text (101: 107) and a more significant underrepresentation in illustrations (77: 94). Furthermore, some of the units that are higher in female characters deal with stereotypical 'feminine' topics. Unit 6 *Hungry*, Unit 9 *Body talk* and Unit 12 *Ready for reading* support the notion that diet, body issues, and literature are primarily 'feminine'. In Unit 6 *Hungry*, women appear 14 times and men 11 times in the text, indicating the stereotypical preoccupation of women with diet and food. With 14 females, it has the highest number of women throughout the whole

textbook. Nevertheless, the difference in number between women and men in this unit is smaller than in other textbooks and could show an attempt in deconstructing prevalent stereotypes. Moreover, Unit 9 *Body talk* features more women than men, 10: 7; the unit is concerned with the question of piercings and tattoos – a question that is rather gender neutral and does not indicate gender bias. Unit 12 *Ready for reading*, then again, features more women in text and illustrations, suggesting that reading is still stereotypically more popular with teenage girls than with teenage boys. Again, the general impression of the numbers seems to indicate a balanced representation in text; a closer look into the units reveals instances of gender bias. Additionally, women are underrepresented in illustrations, foremost in Units 2, 5, 7 and 10. The pictorial overrepresentation of men in Unit 7 *Superheroes* indicates that the realm of superheroes is still seen to be masculine. This is further indicated by the title that does not explicitly include female heroines. Generally, equal pictorial representation should be aimed for, as pictures are recognized faster than text.

In these two overview tables one can see the results very clearly.

Table 7 Number of females/males in illustrations

| Textbook | Year | Illustrations f | Illustrations m | Illustrations f/m | Total |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| I learn English 4 | 1976 | 16 | 30 | 4 | 49 |
| The New You&Me | 1997 | 33 | 45 | 10 | 88 |
| English to go 4 | 2006 | 18 | 25 | 11 | 59 |
| More! 4 | 2013 | 77 | 94 | 92 | 263 |

Table 8 Number of female/male characters

| Textbook | Year | Characters f | Characters m | Total |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| I learn English 4 | 1976 | 99 | 150 | 249 |
| The New You&Me | 1997 | 125 | 130 | 255 |
| English to go 4 | 2006 | 77 | 77 | 154 |
| More! 4 | 2013 | 101 | 107 | 208 |

Table 7 includes an overview of the representation of women and men in illustrations, Table 8 demonstrates the representation of women and men in the text.

5.3. Research areas

This section aims at detecting gender bias in different areas, including ‘family and relationships’, ‘leisure time activities’, and in the world of ‘work’.

5.3.1. Family and relationships

This subsection and the following two draw specifically on the *Guidelines for the Representation of Women and Men in Classroom Materials* (2012: 6-9). The guide emphasizes the importance of gender equality in all spheres of life, including family and relationships. Thus, I examined all illustrations in the textbooks closer in accordance with these questions:

- How are family relations portrayed?
- Are a variety of family constellations (i.e. traditional family, single parents, patchwork-family, same-sex relationships) depicted?
- Are women and men equally present in their private and social life?
- Are women and men equally responsible for the education of their children?
- Are household chores equally done by women and men?

It has to be noted that only two of the textbooks under examination were published after these guidelines were issued. These were first published in 1999; but only the revised version of 2012 is accessible via the homepage of the Federal Austrian Ministry of Education. I deliberately decided to analyze all textbooks according to the new guidelines in order to see if and how representation in the category *family* changed over the decades and if the guidelines actually had any influence on textbook content. Considering the publication date of the guidelines above, *English to go* (2006) and *More!* (2013) are expected to show the widest variety of family constellations.

Table 9 demonstrates the different family constellations clearly.

Table 9 Family constellations

| Family constellations | I learn English 1976 | The New You&Me 1997 | English to go 2006 | More! 2013 |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Heterosexual relationships | 1 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| Same-sex relationships | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Traditional families | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Single mothers | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Single fathers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Patchwork families | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

In order to represent real-life family patterns and relationships, not just traditional families, i.e. families consisting of father, mother and child, and heterosexual relationships should be included. The inclusion of same-sex relationships, patchwork-families, and single parents is realistic and reasonable. As the guide was issued in 1999, it was not expected that older textbooks would demonstrate a wide variety of lifestyles. As can be seen in the table above the textbooks under analysis offer only a limited variety in the portrayal of different family constellations. Considering the few illustrations and the time of publication, it was not surprising that *I learn English* (1976) showed only three instances of relationships. Both illustrations of families fall into the category 'traditional family' and the one relationship included is a heterosexual relationship. It is important to note here that homosexuality was illegal until 1971 in Austria; this might have been a reason why representation of homosexual couples was still widely avoided a few years later. Moreover, the traditional family still outweighed any other forms of families in the 1970s, and thus it can be said that this was a fairly correct representation of the family life. Since then things changed, and it is the reality of many students to live with only one parent or within a patchwork-family.

The New You&Me (1997) was published more than 20 years after *I learn English* and partially acknowledges this fact. It includes two instances of the traditional family and two instances of single mothers as well as one instance of a heterosexual couple. It has to be noted that illustrations are not referred to as 'single parenting' explicitly but it is

rather implicitly conveyed by the context. In one situation, for example, a mother is shown to look for a vacation destination with her children and no father is pictured or mentioned in the accompanying text.

Another 10 years later *English to go* (2006) was published and more variety in the representation of families and relationships could have been expected. One is, however, disappointed. It rather seems that the authors of *English to go* avoided the controversial topic altogether by only including a single instance of a family; a traditional at that. The final textbook under analysis, *More!* (2013), is the most recent and the only one published after the revised guidelines were issued. Despite this, the representation of nine heterosexual relationships, three traditional families, and zero same-sex couples or single parents negates any deviation from the norm but rather promotes heteronormativity as the ideal.

The traditional family constellation is not a reality for many students any more, yet the textbooks convey a different idea. The expectation that newer textbooks would acknowledge changing family situations and modern relationships types was not met. Rather, the textbooks convey the image of a society as conservative as it was 40 years ago when it comes to the topics of love and families. The omission of homosexuality nowadays reproduces the idea of “compulsory heterosexuality” (Butler) by including heterosexual couples only. Therefore, it transmits the message that only heterosexual relationships are ‘natural’, whereas many 14-year-old students might experience different feelings and learn that affection for the same sex is ‘abnormal’. Almost all textbooks discuss relationships; yet, it is understood that love apparently happens only between a man and a woman. The lack of variety was especially surprising in the issues of 2006 and 2013 and indicate that any deviation of the ‘norm’ is still not acceptable or desirable in our society. Newer textbooks will hopefully orient themselves to the guidelines to gender equality and include a greater variety of lifestyles.

This section aims to answer the questions above by detecting the occurrence of different family designations within the text. Family designations encompass terms such as *mother*, *father*, *aunt*, and *uncle*. Counting occurrences proved to be a valuable strategy in

order to answer the question of whether women and men are both equally present in family life.

The following table gives an overview of family designation in all four textbooks:

Table 10 Family designations (female)

| Designation female | 1976 | 1997 | 2006 | 2013 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Mum/mother | 14 | 14 | 9 | 13 |
| Grandmother | 2 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| Aunt | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Housewife | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Daughter | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Sister | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Wife | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 27 | 29 | 15 | 20 |

Table 11 Family designations (male)

| Designation male | 1976 | 1997 | 2006 | 2013 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Dad/father | 13 | 9 | 3 | 8 |
| Uncle | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Grandfather | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Brother | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Son | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Husband | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 17 | 17 | 6 | 11 |

It can be seen that even though the number of females approached the number of males in text in recent years (see Table 8), women are still more often described in terms of their family relations.

In *I learn English* (1976) females outnumber males in family designations. This is particularly interesting considering the fact that women are overall significantly underrepresented in text (99: 150). Out of 99 times women are described in terms of their private life 27 times, demonstrating that women are more often described in relation to others (*my mother, my sister*) than in relation to themselves. Men, on the

other hand, are mostly referred to by their name rather than in relation to others; only 17 family designations could be counted. The lack of female importance is further signaled by the fact that the term *husband* is never used to refer to a man but *wife* is used three times; therefore, men talking about *my wife* is seen more natural than women referring to *my husband*. The findings clearly underline gender bias and the stereotypical allocation of roles in *I learn English* (1976).

Twenty years later, *The New You&Me* (1997) had increased the numbers of females drastically, as demonstrated in the earlier discussion. Closer analysis reveals that women are described according to their family status almost twice as often as men (29: 17). Women are referred to as *mothers* five times more often than men as *fathers* (14: 9), the designation *grandmother* outweighs that of *grandfather* (5: 2) and the term *housewife* appears twice. The higher number of the terms *mother* and *housewife* suggests that childcare and household chores were still interpreted to be 'feminine' rather than of equal responsibility for women and men. Other family designations appear in similar frequency; *aunt* and *uncle* (1: 1), *sister* and *brother* (4: 3), *daughter* and *son* (2: 1), and *wife* and *husband* (1:1). The avoidance of describing women in relation to men, as wives, can be seen as an improvement in comparison to *I learn English* (1976).

Another nine years later, *English to go* (2006) succeeded in including the exact same number of female and male characters (77: 77), yet, unfortunately, women are still more often described in relation to their family than men (15: 6). Moreover, *mothers* appear three times as often as *fathers* (9:3), implying and reproducing the maternal role of women as 'natural'. Positively, no instances of the term *housewife* can be found, therefore acknowledging its problematic usage since it lacks a male counterpart. The ratio of the terms *grandmother* and *grandfather* (2:2), *aunt* and *uncle* (1:0), *daughter* and *son* (0:1), *wife* and *husband* (1:0), and *sister* and *brother* (2:0) are fairly equal but overall show a slight overrepresentation of female family designations.

More! (2013) was expected to be the most progressive title since it was published only four years ago. Surprisingly, women are described in terms of family relations almost twice as often as men (20: 11). Women enact *mothers* 13 times, whereas men enact *fathers* only eight times. Suggesting that even in 2013 'childcare' as a category is still

primarily assigned to women rather than to both parents. The occurrence of grandmother and grandfather (2:1), aunt and uncle (1:1), daughter and son (1: 0), and sister and brother (1: 1) is fairly equal. Yet, women are referred to as *wives* twice, whereas men are never referred to as *husbands*; supporting the problematic interpretation that marital status is of higher importance for women and that being a wife is some sort of accomplishment rather than a neutral description.

Overall, family designations decreased from 1976 to 2006 but then increased again in *More!* in 2013. It is telling that the term mother has been steadily the most often used term in relation to family designations in the last 40 years. This indicates that it still seems to be more 'natural' to portray a female with children than a male and therefore reproduces the stereotype that the education of children is still a mother's task rather than a father's. Thus, it can be said that the textbooks under examination reproduce stereotypes rather than promote gender equality in the section 'family life'. This is a clear demonstration that stereotypes and ideologies do not change quickly, and it might still take decades to counter the impression that there are certain things that are 'natural' and 'commonsense' instead of 'constructs'.

The question of whether women are more active than men doing household chores in pictures can, unfortunately, not be answered since almost no instances of the respective category can be found. A wider range of textbooks would be needed to answer that question reliably.

5.3.2. Leisure time activities

This subsection examines character performance in illustrations that can be assigned to the category 'leisure time'. It is of interest if and how far activities changed over the decades in order to promote gender equality. I focus on activities that can be described as leisure time activities. I included instances of studying too when it was not in the classroom context, suggesting that it was done in the student's free time. My analysis aims to investigate and answer the following questions specifically:

- Which activities are pursued by men and women?
- Are men and women depicted in 'atypical' activities?
- Are women and men equally active and passive in their behavior?

Table 12 Leisure time activities

| Leisure time activity | I learn English 4 1976 | You & Me 4 1997 | English to go 4 2006 | More! 4 2013 |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Watching TV | 2f | 2f | | |
| Digging a hole | 1m | 1m | | |
| Playing records | 1m/1f | | | |
| Picking flowers | 1m/1f | | | |
| Listening to music | 1f | | | |
| Climbing a tree | 1m | | | |
| Ice skating | 1m/1f | | | |
| Skiing | 1m | | | |
| Talking on phone | 1m | | | |
| Sleeping | 1f | 1m | | |
| Riding a bike | 1m | 1m/1f | | |
| Playing soccer | 1m | | | |
| Catching fish | 1m | | | |
| Exercise | | 6m/3f | 1f | 1m/1f |
| Eating | | 2f/1m | | |
| Studying | | 3f/1m | | 1f |
| Cutting hair | | | 1f | |
| Spraying | | | 1m | |
| Drinking | | | 2m/2f | |
| Reading | | | 1f/1m | |
| Gardening | | | 1f | |
| On the phone | | | 1f | 2f/1m |
| Swimming | | | 1f | |
| Reading | | | | 2f |
| Writing letters | | | | 1m/1f |
| Surfing | | | | 1m |
| Total | 18 (7f/10m) | 22(11f/11m) | 12 (8f/4m) | 11(4m/7f) |

I learn English (1976) has the second highest number of illustrations of leisure time activities; 18 instances can be counted. This is especially interesting considering that it has the fewest number of illustrations overall. Generally, males outnumber females in this category too (10: 7). It can be said that men are more active and often seen in stereotypical 'masculine' spheres, i.e. playing soccer, skiing, climbing trees, and digging holes. Women are pictured in more passive activities, including sleeping, listening to music, and watching TV. The only instance of an 'atypical' activity is a boy picking flowers; yet, he does so together with a girl and it could thus be most likely interpreted as offering help rather than challenging gender roles. *The New You&Me* (1997) has a slightly higher number of characters shown in leisure time activities, 22. Females and males both appear 11 times respectively, signaling gender equality in number. Nevertheless, men still enact primarily active roles, i.e. exercising and digging holes, whereas women are more often seen watching TV, eating, and studying. Therefore, 20 years after *I learn English* was published, the stereotype that men are rather active and women are rather passive still prevails in *The New You&Me*. In *English to go* (2006) a decrease in depictions of characters in their leisure time can be noted. Women occur twice as often in leisure time activities as men with a ratio of 8: 4 and are shown to be more active, i.e. exercising, gardening, swimming, than in the previously discussed textbooks.

Interestingly, *More!* (2013) has the fewest illustrations that show characters in their leisure time. Women can be seen studying, reading, talking on the phone, as well as exercising and writing letters. Men are surfing, writing letters, exercising, and talking on the phone. Even though overall female representation is higher (7: 4), three out of seven women occupy passive roles whereas no man appears passive. Therefore, it can be said that stereotypes still prevail in *More!* (2013) and 'feminine' is still understood to be passive. Of course, conclusions drawn from a rather small sample can only be tentative; nonetheless, they aid in showing certain trends, directions and improvements over the decades. It is noteworthy that visuals of characters in their leisure time can be seen to be generally decreasing from 18 instances out of 50 illustrations in 1976 to 11 instances out of 263 illustrations in 2013. This seems to indicate that leisure time is interpreted as being a less important topic for 14-year-olds overall or might indicate that in our society leisure time activities are not as highly valued as other activities. Rather, studying and

working are of importance in order to be successful in life. It seems that leisure time is a luxury that not even 14-year-olds are allowed to have.

5.3.3. Work

This subsection investigates whether women and men are equally present in the working world and, moreover, if occupations are divided into stereotypical spheres. The following questions are specifically of interest in my analysis:

- How are women and men portrayed in the working environment?
- Do women and men pursue stereotypical occupational roles?
- Do women and men pursue 'atypical' occupational roles?
- Are men and women equally seen in management roles?

Table 13 Occupations

| Occupation | I learn English 4 1976 | You & Me 4 1997 | English to go 4 2006 | More! 4 2013 |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Receptionist | | 1f | | 1f |
| Mechanic | | 1f | | |
| Nurse | | | 1m | |
| Teacher | | | 1m | 1f |
| Aid worker | | | 2f | |
| Chemical technician | | | 1f | |
| Museum guide | | | 1f | |
| Chef | | | 1m | 2m |
| Cooper | | | 1m | |
| Brick mason | | | 1m | |
| Carpenter | | | 1f | |
| Police officer | | | 1m | 3m |
| Youth counsellor | | | 1m | |
| Judge | | | 1f | 2m |
| Company owner | | | 1f | 1m |
| Professional shopper | | | 1m | |
| Maid | | | | 1f |
| Journalist | | | | 1f/1m |
| Manager | | | | 1m/2f |
| Office clerk | | | | 2m |
| Athlete | | | | 3m |
| Photographer | | | | 1m/1f |
| Soldier | | | | 1m |
| Web designer | | | | 1f |
| Shop assistant | | | | 1f |
| Electrician | | | | 1m |
| Waiter | | | | 2m |
| Factory worker | | | | 1f |
| Dentist | | | | 1m |
| Mechanic | 1m | | | 1m |
| Doctor | | | | 1f |

| | | | | |
|------------------|------------|-----------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Flight attendant | | | | 1f |
| Dancer | | | | 1m |
| Dinner ladies | | | | 2m |
| Head master | | | | 1m |
| Plumber | | | | 1m |
| Farmer | | | | 2m/1f |
| Singer | | | | 2f |
| Pilot | | | | 1f |
| Astronaut | | | | 1m |
| Total | 1 m | 2f | 15 (8m/7f) | 46 (30m/16f) |

It is interesting to see the gradual increase of characters in work situations. This might be partly due to the general increase of pictures over the years; however, it cannot be explained so simply, as illustrations of leisure time activities decreased. It seems to indicate that work grew in importance over the decades. Another reason might be that English is nowadays needed in almost all working contexts and therefore textbook authors specifically try to include relevant vocabulary. The increase in number is quite drastic, from 1 working person in 1976 to 46 working persons in 2013. The one person working in *I learn English* (1976) is a male mechanic. Furthermore, *The New You&Me* (1997) also has only two characters in occupational roles. The two women are a receptionist and a mechanic, respectively. The inclusion of women in the working world is a positive sign; still, both textbooks offer too few examples to draw meaningful conclusions.

In 2006 *English to go* has an increased number of characters in working situations. Overall, 15 pictorial examples can be counted and show 8 males and 7 females. The quite balanced representation indicates gender equality. Women occupy roles including aid worker, chemical technician, museum guides, judge, and company owner. The jobs offer a variety of different areas and cannot be said to be gender specific. Men also employ a variety of occupational roles, including a nurse, a teacher, a brick mason, and a chef. Looking at the number only can be misleading in *English to go* (2006). Rather than including the different illustrations throughout the units there is a section called *Jobs* at the end of every few units where three job descriptions paired with a picture are listed. Even though an inclusion throughout the unit would be desirable, *English to go* promotes gender 'atypical' roles including female technicians and male nurses.

More! includes the highest number of occupational roles with 46 instances, also having the highest number of illustrations overall. Since *More!* is the only one of the textbooks

under analysis that was published after the revised gender guidelines were issued, gender equality in this category is expected. Nonetheless, of the 46 instances only 16 are of females and 30 of males. Therefore, gender bias can be detected in number. Still, a few instances of women pursuing atypical roles, such as women as pilots, doctors, and farmers can be seen. Other instances show women in typical 'feminine' occupations, such as maids, dinner ladies, and flight attendants. Men have traditionally high-prestige occupations, such as headmasters, astronauts, police officers, judges, and company owners. Other jobs include plumbers, mechanics, electricians, and soldiers, fostering men in the traditional 'masculine' spheres. Overall, women partially claim the 'masculine' sphere; men mostly stay in their own sphere and do not pursue 'atypical' occupations.

6. Qualitative analysis

The following subsection is complementary to the quantitative analysis, as it deals with specific examples taken from the textbooks analyzed and discusses them thoroughly. Both techniques are important in detecting gender bias in textbooks. I proceed to give the example of the textbook first and then analyze problematic passages. Thereby, it gives the reader the opportunity to read the extracts and form their own opinion. It must be noted that interpretations are always subjective to some extent and therefore can vary. Nevertheless, the abstracts of selected textbooks give valuable insights about cultural appropriateness concerning gender equality during a certain time in history. It can be seen that all four textbooks of different decades, ranging from 1976 to 2013, show gender bias to a different extent. Gender bias is visible in terms of fostering the gendered spheres of men and women, the omission of women in history, and the preoccupation of women with stereotypical topics including love, physical appearance, childcare, and diet.

6.1. I learn English 4 (1976)

Example 1 (Lesson 9 *What's your line?*, p. 68)

What can a boy become ?

He can become a bricklayer, a carpenter, a joiner, a gardener, a locksmith, a mechanic, an electrician, a printer, a painter and decorator, a plumber, a butcher, a baker, a watchmaker, a tailor, a waiter, a shop assistant, a chemist, a postman, a farmer, a teacher, a policeman, a lorry driver, an office worker or a fireman.

Now I'll tell you what they do

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| A bricklayer builds walls. | A butcher makes sausages and sells meat. |
| A carpenter makes the wooden parts of a building. | A watchmaker repairs watches and clocks. |
| A joiner makes chairs, tables, cupboards and shelves. | A tailor makes jackets, trousers and coats for gentlemen. |
| A locksmith makes keys and fits locks to doors. | A waiter serves meals at a restaurant. |
| An electrician installs fuse-boxes. | A chemist sells medicines, pills and tablets. |
| A printer prints books and newspapers. | A postman brings letters, postcards and parcels. |
| A painter and decorator paints doors and windows and decorates walls. | A farmer cuts the corn and brings in the harvest. |
| A plumber fits water-pipes and water-closets. | A fireman puts out fires. |
| | An office worker works in an office. |

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What can a girl become ?

She can become a housewife, a dressmaker, a typist, a cook, a hairdresser, a waitress, a nurse, an air hostess, a shop assistant, a teacher, a taxi driver or an office worker.

What do they do ?

A housewife looks after the children and tidies the rooms.
A typist types letters.
A cook cooks the meals in the kitchen.
A taxi driver drives a taxi.
A waitress serves meals at a restaurant.
An air hostess prepares meals in a plane and looks after the passengers.
An office worker works in an office.

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Lesson 9 of the textbook deals with professions after school and is called 'What's your line? What will you do after you have finished school?'. What follows then is a clearly stereotypical categorization into masculine and feminine spheres. The first exercise is called 'What can a boy become' and includes around 20 different professions. Indeed, a very limited view on what a boy can become is presented. The occupations listed are all stereotypical, including bricklayer, carpenter, policeman, butcher, and painter. The task describes a fixed sphere into which boys, and only boys, can enter. The heading leaves

little room for interpretations, and it is doubtful if girls would be able to enter the masculine sphere. Moreover, boys who may not have wanted to acquire these stereotypical professions might have had difficulties at that time in that society. Therefore, the list of gendered occupations clearly fosters and reproduces stereotypes. Seemingly, boys have to pursue occupations that are 'masculine' and according to their prescribed gender identity; they have to be hard-working and mostly pursue physical work. 14-year-old boys learn that certain jobs are appropriate for boys and for boys only. Interestingly, it is not mentioned that the list is by no means exhaustive or that the occupations mentioned could be pursued by girls, too.

To emphasize the distinct spheres, there is a whole separate section about girls, of course, headlined 'What can a girl become?' The very first item listed is housewife, followed by other typically feminine occupations including dressmaker, typist, cook, hairdresser, and waitress. Undoubtedly, these are professions that restrict women to the 'feminine' spheres because they are thought of as being appropriate for them by the authors. In the 1970s the awareness of gender equality was different from nowadays, and therefore the promotion of stereotypes comes as no surprise. Exactly these kinds of passages played a role in the whole movement of gender equality in textbooks, because girls and boys acquire not only educational knowledge but also gendered knowledge from educational materials. They learn that 'masculine' and 'feminine' behavior is 'natural'. As discussed earlier, there is nothing natural about a girl being a housewife, a hairdresser or a waitress. Girls learn to accept the restriction of their gender from an early age. It is further noteworthy that the amount of occupations 'a girl can do' is barely half of those described as suitable for boys, thus suggesting that the world of work is 'masculine'. Additionally, mentioning the term housewife first seems to imply that this 'profession' is the most desirable one.

Example 2 (Lesson 9 *What's your line?*, p. 76)

What a housewife has to do

She has to look after the children.

Try this:

She has to tidy the rooms.

She to dust the furniture.

..... to make the beds.

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..... to polish the floor.

..... wash the dirty linen.

..... mend the socks and stockings.

..... cook the meals.

..... keep the flat in order.

..... go shopping.

..... clean the windows.

..... help the children with their homework.

A recipe:

BAKED APPLES

For two people you need 2 large cooking apples, syrup or brown sugar, sultanas or currants.

- 1. Wash and carefully take out the core of each apple.*
- 2. Place apples on a buttered baking tin, and into the holes left by the removal of the cores place a dessertspoonful of syrup or brown sugar and a few sultanas or currants.*
- 3. Bake for 30 minutes at 300 degrees. Serve with whipped cream or custard.*

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In order to leave no doubt regarding a housewife's duties, the next exercise consists of approximately 10 sentences telling girls what a housewife must do. She has to tidy the rooms. She has to dust the furniture. She has to make the beds. She has to polish the floor. She has to wash the dirty linen. It seems as if this is a guide of 'How to be a good housewife' rather than a textbook – there is no such explicit and detailed page-long description of any other profession. It is even followed by a recipe of Baked Apples, since a good housewife has to know how to 'cook the meals' as well. Girls learn from the textbook which tasks a housewife has to attend to in order to be a good housewife. Therefore, it seems very clear that a man's sphere is at work and a woman's sphere is at

home. The lack of a male counterpart to 'housewife' suggests that after marriage and after starting a family, a woman's new job will be that of a housewife; she has to "help the children with their homework" (1976: 76) while the husband is at work.

Example 3 (Lesson 9 *What's your line?*, p. 77)

What they don't do

A housewife doesn't repair cars.

Try this:

doesn't

A baker doesn't repair

A taxi driver doesn't cook

An electrician doesn't make

A hairdresser doesn't


A waitress

The section is followed by an exercise of what certain jobs do not do, which might be a way to learn the negation, but at the same time it, again, fosters gendered spheres by telling boys and girls that there are certain restrictions. It has educational character, nonetheless, when the exercise starts with the negation "A housewife doesn't repair cars" (I learn English 1976: 77). One has to wonder why a housewife is seen as unable to repair cars. Maybe she is a housewife but what if she is also a skilled mechanic? Girls learn that this not their domain. There are certain things that they can do, like washing the linen, but other things that they cannot do, like repairing cars, simply because of their assigned gender. As a result, 14-year-olds might become completely disinterested in subjects such as math, physics, or chemistry since their future occupations do not need those traits. It is understandable that these kind of exercises in textbooks could be highly demotivating for young girls who may have other aims and wishes but learn that their aims are unrealistic simply because they are girls. They learn that they should rather adhere to pre-given occupational roles than try to aim higher. There is no encouragement that, of course, girls can be mechanics and lawyers too if they choose to, and that boys can be 'housemen' too, if they choose to. Though this viewpoint might be too advanced for the 1970s, it is nonetheless problematic and worthy of discussion. These findings explain the myriad of studies in the 1980s about gender bias in school

textbooks – it was an important and fruitful discussion, yet gender bias can still be found nowadays.


Example 4 (Lesson 10 *Winter sports*, p. 89)

What did the teacher show Peter?




correct


He showed **him** how to correct the test.




do



fill




sharpen




clean

What did mother show Betty?




bake


She showed **her** how to bake a cake.




sew on



sweep



clean



put in

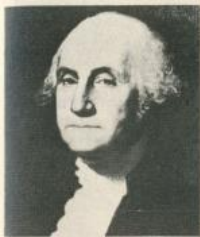
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This exercise once more explicitly highlights crucial skills for boys and girls. The first part is called “What did the teacher show Peter?” (I learn English 1976: 89) and includes activities, such as doing the homework or sharpening a pencil. All of the exercises concern school work and indicate the significance of these skills for boys, because school and education is their sphere. The teacher is, of course, also male, as made explicit by the example sentence “He showed him how to correct the text.” (I learn English 1976: 89) When it comes to Betty, the teacher does not teach her, rather her mother does. Her mother shows Betty how to bake, how to sew on buttons, and how to sweep the floor. It seems to be no coincidence that none of these ‘skills’ concern education or at least a profession. They simply teach girls, again, how to be a good housewife. This exercise fosters the stereotypical spheres of what girls and boys should learn. If girls only have to acquire the skills of a housewife, the question arises of what school can actually teach

them that their mother cannot. Girls learn that their sphere is at home, and that they are not be able to compete with boys or enter 'masculine' spheres. Seemingly, the necessary knowledge can be acquired from their mothers and then passed on to their own daughter, reproducing completely arbitrary gender roles as 'natural' because they were taught to do so.

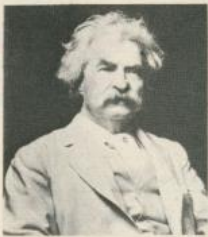
Example 5 (Lesson 12 *Who was this man?*, p. 111)

A Quiz: Famous americans




◀ The man after whom the capital of the USA is named.

.....




A famous American writer, author of "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn". ▶

.....




◀ A President of the USA. He was murdered in Dallas.

.....



A great American inventor. He invented the gramophone and the moving picture. ▶

.....



◀ A famous American pilot. The first man who flew without stopping from New York to Paris.

.....

Can you match the following names with the pictures?

John F. Kennedy, Thomas Alva Edison, Charles Lindbergh, Mark Twain, George Washington

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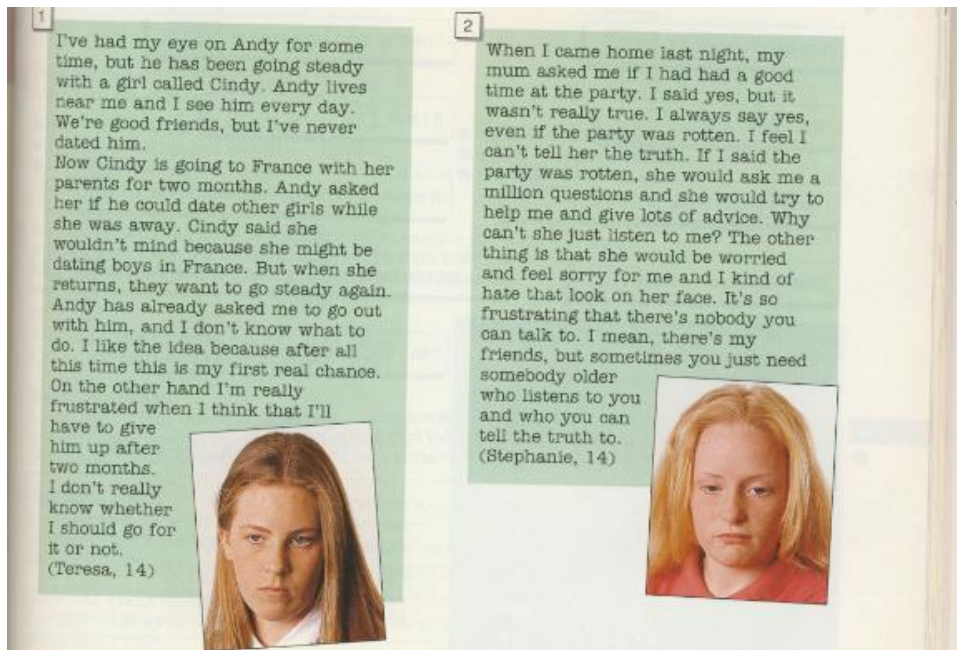
The entire unit features the achievements of Abraham Lincoln and other famous men. The famous men include President John F. Kenney and Thomas Edison. Boys learn to claim and broaden their sphere, and they learn that they possess the potential to be successful; after all, so did their ancestors. They see famous men as role models and know that they can become like them if they take their education seriously.

However, there is no corresponding unit about achievements of famous women in history. The omission of females seems to imply that only men ever accomplished something meaningful in history, and that women were completely absent, probably at

home watching the children. This is not true at all but only promotes men's social sphere. Girls see that women have never attained great achievements in history – otherwise it would be mentioned in a textbook, surely. They learn that they are simple beings, not smart enough, not hard-working enough, or not persistent enough to reach their goals. It is suggested that girls are meant to learn from their mothers how to stay at home, clean, and raise their children – and be content with that, because it is 'natural'. Mothers reproduce the power structures unconsciously by teaching their daughters to be like them and by raising their boys to be like famous men. If there is not one single role model for a girl who achieved greatness through education, then there is no motivation for girls to pursue an educational path. A whole unit about famous men, not meant in the generic sense, silences and makes women invisible.

6.2. The New You& Me (1997)

Example 6 (Unit 9 *Growing up*, p. 83)



This unit deals with the different problems teenagers might encounter while growing up. The extract above shows two teenagers talking about their problem. I want to highlight Teresa's problem here: she likes a boy who has a girlfriend, but gets the chance to go out with him for a summer. None of the boy's problems concern love but rather school and family life. Therefore, the section seems to imply that love is stereotypically 'feminine,' and that boys are rather concerned with school. It is significant that none of the two girls seem concerned about their educational life. On one hand, this could be, of course, due to their good school grades; on the other hand, it also hints towards girls' preoccupation with boys. The representation is unequal because it is suggested that boys do not deal with love issues while growing up; this is highly unrealistic. The textbook should acknowledge the fact that love and love-sickness is equally important for girls and boys. Moreover, the content of Teresa's letter is troublesome; she asks whether she should date a boy who already has a girlfriend while they are on a break. Clearly, she thinks about doing something that is below her self-worth. Girls of that age need to be encouraged that their worth is not defined by the interest a boy has in them. If exercises always shows girls in regard with love problems, then they define themselves in relation to love too. The implication is that if they have a boyfriend or if a boy is interested in them, they are worthy and pretty. If they do not have a boyfriend,

they have a problem. If wanted or not, this is somewhat suggested with every exercise that shows a girl dealing with her broken heart or a love issue. Teenage girls need to learn to define themselves in other ways than by 'being liked by a boy.' The preoccupation with love in media and in textbooks gives a highly questionable message to girls, and the younger they are, the more easily influenced they are. Girls deal with a greater variety of problems while growing up. Moreover, concentrating on problems without showing coping strategies seems rather depressing. Unfortunately, no possible solutions are offered, and no thought-provoking questions are asked. In the worst case, teachers will simply let their students read the letters and ask for their opinions on how to solve the problem but will not offer useful coping strategies.

Example 7 (Unit 11 *Dilemmas* p. 105)



The story *A real break* is rare evidence of established stereotypes being questioned. When the father receives a job offer that would require moving, he insists it is his decision since he is 'the head of the family'. Refreshingly, the story is not simply left there but followed by critical questions to be discussed by the students who encounter the text. One of the questions is "Do you think that the father is fair to his family why/ why not?" (The New You&Me 1997: 105). It therefore questions the patriarchal role of the father and encourages students to consider the fairness of his actions. In my opinion the questions do not go far enough to challenge stereotypes. The question should not only be if it is fair – it is of course not – but where the idea of men being the 'head of the family' even comes from. Why can he even make such a claim, and what does it mean

that society supports this? Why does he think his opinion is of highest importance and therefore justifies his decision? Why can he exercise such a power upon his family, and why does he think it is right to do so? Where does this notion come from that men are the head of the family and therefore get to decide for other people's life? All these are crucial questions – it should not just ask about 'fairness'. Students will most likely say 'no, it is not fair' but might not think further if not encouraged to do so. It would be a good starting point to question patriarchy and learn where it originated in order to question power structures outside this story. The questions are too focused on the story and do not integrate the bigger picture. The first question is a yes/no question and probably elicits yes/no answers rather than lead to an engaging discussion. The possible solutions are given and therefore, as well do not encourage students to think about answers themselves. In conclusion, this story is a good starting point in questioning stereotypical roles but could go further.

Example 8 (Unit 14 *Project poetry* p. 129)

Advice

by Judith Nicholls

Do put a coat on,
and fasten that shoe,
I'd take a sweater
if I were you . . .

It's chilly at nights now,
you're bound to catch flu.
I'd button up warmly
if I were you . . .

Please yourself if you must,
but I know what I'd do.
I'd stay at home now
if I were you . . .

The nights have drawn in,
you never know who
might be lurking out there
just waiting for you . . .

I don't know what the youth
of today's coming to!
They do what they like
and like what they do!

Now when I was young,
it caused hullabaloo
if I stayed out past nine –
and I never dared to.

If I were young now,
I know what I'd do . . .
I'd enjoy every minute
if I were you!



Stevie:

I think the poem is about a mother who worries all the time about her daughter going out too often. She's angry because when she was young, she had to stay at home most of the time. She had also wanted to enjoy her teenage years but she couldn't.

The song *Advice* is about a mother scolding her daughter. Interestingly, not once in the whole poem are the words *mother* or *daughter* explicitly mentioned. It could just as well

be a father scolding his son. Yet, the picture next to the poem stifles all imagination instantly. It is almost needless to ask students what they think the poem might be about because the picture tells the story clearly. A mother points at her daughter with her index finger and her daughter looks somewhat sad or misunderstood. The picture fosters the stereotype of mothers being overprotective, very talkative, and redundant. It further implies that childcare belongs to the 'feminine' sphere, and that it is not the fathers' responsibility. Students' responses might still be similar without the telling picture and without the suggested answers under the poem. The majority's first thought might still be of their mother scolding them, thus suggesting that childcare and nagging is assigned to women unconsciously already. In order to challenge the automatic, stereotypical picture in student's imagination, a father and his son could be shown. It would show that also fathers as well care about their children and are concerned with their education and well-being. It would further demonstrate that boys should have certain restrictions and should be careful at nights, too. The line "you never know who might be lurking out there waiting for you" immediately evokes the image of a young woman being attacked by a man. It clearly fosters the stereotype of women being the weaker sex and thus need to be more careful than boys.

6.3. English to go 4 (2006)

Example 9 (Unit 12 *From the inside out*, p. 86)

The golden swan: a story from Laos

Once upon a time there was a farmer who died and there was no one to take care of his wife and two young children.

The farmer was dead but he came back as a beautiful golden swan and he swam in the lake near his wife's house, so he could be close to his wife and children and the city he came from.

One day, while he was swimming on the lake, he heard his wife and children crying because they were hungry. He was so sad and had so much love for them that he wanted to help. He went to the window of their house. When the children were sleeping, he called his wife and said, "I have come back to help you. You and the children do not have any food and you are very hungry. Take one of my golden feathers. Get money for it and use the money to buy some food. When you need more, call me back and I will give you another one."

The farmer's wife was surprised and happy. She went to the window. The swan had flown away, but he left one of his feathers by the window. When she touched the feather, it turned to* gold.

The wife bought food and clothes for her children but nothing for herself. The day came when she again ran out of money. She called out to the golden swan and soon he

flew back and gave her another feather. Again, it turned into gold and she went and sold it to buy clothes and food. But this time she spent lots of money on herself. She even met a man at the store. She gave him a nice meal and he asked her to marry him.

She thought to herself, "Yes, I want to marry you, but first I want to get rich and get as much money as I can." So that evening she called again for the golden swan to come to her window. When the golden swan came, she ran and caught the swan in her hands and took as many feathers as she could.

The next day she went to the place she had put the feathers to take them and buy things for herself. But there was no gold. There were only feathers. There was no more gold and no more money. She was very unhappy and she began to cry. But it was too late! Even though she cried and cried, still the golden swan did not come back. And her new boyfriend did not come back either, because she did not have any food to give him.

Words and phrases
to turn to = hier: sich verwandeln

The authors of *English to go* paid close attention to a balanced gender representation and were careful not to foster typical stereotypes. Nonetheless, the stories *The golden swan: a story from Laos* and *The faceless doll: an Iroquois story* have questionable implications for women.

The golden swan: a Laos story is about a dead husband turning into a swan after his death and coming back to help his poor family. His feathers turn into gold and feed the family. After a while the wife's greed grows and she plucks all the feather of the swan. She wants to be the richest woman in the town and to treat her new boyfriend. But the feathers do not turn into gold this time because her intention has been a wrong one. She did not take out of need but out of greed. The story can be seen as teaching morals

exclusively; however, the negative character is, unfortunately, a woman. Thus, it leaves room for a sexist interpretation; namely that all women are greedy and ungrateful beings, and men are too helpful for their own good. It leaves a bitter taste because it is almost impossible not to feel sympathy for the swan and resentment towards the wife. One message is of morals, but the other messages is unavoidably that women are greedy, selfish, and superficial if offered too much. Since the story is a tale, it is, of course, not possible to simply rewrite it; despite this, it is possible to ask critical questions as, for example, which wrong implications could arise from this representation of women. The question of 'What is the message of the story' is asked, unfortunately not in regard to problematic gender representations.

Example 10 (Unit 12 *From the inside out*, p. 87)

The faceless doll: an Iroquois story

The three sisters of the Iroquois, Corn, Beans, and Squash, are the three spirits that sustain* life. In the beginning, the Corn Spirit was so happy to be one of the three sisters and be able to help her people that she asked the Creator for more ways to help her people. The Creator heard the Corn Spirit's wish and made a doll with a beautiful face from her husks*.

Then the Creator gave the doll to the children of the Iroquois. The doll passed from village to village and from child to child. Each time, the people said she was beautiful, and the doll became so vain* that the Creator became angry and told her to stop being so self-centered. If she continued, the Creator warned, she would have to be punished.

The doll tried to be more humble, but one day, when she was walking by a creek*, she looked into the water and saw her reflection. She stopped to admire* her beauty. The all-knowing Creator saw her admiring herself and sent a giant owl down from the sky to snatch* her reflection from the water. When she looked into the water again to admire her beauty, her reflection was gone. She could no longer see her face and admire her beauty.

Ever since, when an Iroquois mother gives a faceless corn husk doll to her child, she usually tells the legend of the corn husk doll.

Words and phrases
 to sustain = erhalten
 husk = hier: Schale
 vain = eingebildet, eitel
 creek = Bach
 to admire (oneself) = (sich) bewundern
 to snatch = wegschnappen


The next tale *The faceless doll: an Iroquois story* tells the story that women should not be too vain about their looks. The creator made a beautiful corn husk doll for the Iroquois children, but the doll got too vain because of the amount of compliments she received; the creator warned her and said she should become humbler. The doll tried but one day she saw her reflection in the water and could not but admire herself, and thus she was punished and she could not see her reflection anymore. The implication of the story is that beauty fades, and that other qualities are more important in a person. These implications are all true, for as we get older, appearance changes, and life is more than being pretty. Nonetheless, it seems again like only women are concerned with their looks and that only women are vain and thus must be punished.

6.4. More! 4 (2013)

Example 11 (Unit 2 *The Curious Case of the Locked Room*, p. 17)

2 Read Detective Ward's notes and write the names of the people under the pictures.

Jasper Ford / 40 years with the company / knew Murdoch's father / office clerk
Oliver Wilson / nephew / computer programmer
Isabel Miller / project manager / attractive / was working with Murdoch on top secret project
Charles Dunning / head salesman / bit of a playboy / very good-looking



| | | | | |
|-------|--|--|--|--|
| name | | | | |
| ative | | | | |

The section about the murder story has some problematic passages. The four suspects are described in regard to their profession and different qualities. Only two of them, Isabel Miller and Charles Dunning, are explicitly described by their appearance as 'attractive' and 'very good-looking' respectively. When the inspectors investigate the possible reasons for murder, Inspector Fell notes: "Isabel Miller. Hmm. Ward's notes say that she's very pretty. And Murdoch was rich! Maybe she had fallen in love with Murdoch." (More! 4 2013: 17) I fail to see how these two things are related –a woman's attractiveness and a man's wealth does not imply romantic interest by itself. Apparently, it is suggested that she fell in love with Murdoch because he was rich, and he might have fallen in love with her because she was pretty. This reduces women, once again, to their looks and implies that women's attractiveness is mandatory in order to find a partner, but that men simply have to be wealthy. It seems to be enough for men to become successful in order to attract women's interest. The troublesome pedagogic implications might be that boys learn that money makes them attractive and that girls learn that attractiveness might make them rich. Therefore, this story emphasizes the stereotypical importance of women's looks.

Example 12 (Unit 3 *Kids speak out*, p. 26)


19
CD 1
MP3
SbX

2 Emily thinks a boy is really nice. What's his name? Read the text quickly to find out.

3 Read the text carefully. Then listen.

Incident during a Maths lesson

Emily wasn't listening to the teacher.
She was looking at something.
A photo — a photo of a boy.
His name was Anthony.
Anthony from 4c.
Emily liked him a lot. She whispered his name.
"Show me what you've got there!"
That was Chris. Chris sat behind Emily.
Emily didn't want to give him the photo.
So Chris took it. Tore it out of her hands.
He showed it to all the other boys.
"Look – Emily's new boyfriend!"



They giggled and laughed and looked at her.
Emily got angry.
"Give me the photo back!" Emily shouted out loud.
"Stop it, Emily, will you!" the teacher said.
Now the teacher was angry with Emily.
The world can be unfair!

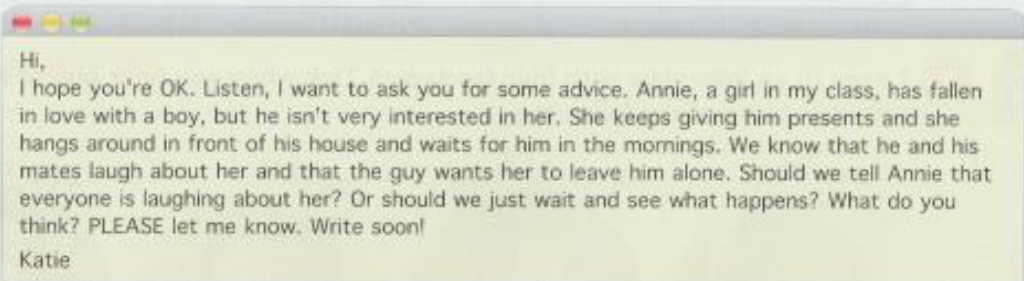
The story *Incident during a Math lesson* once again demonstrates the female preoccupation with men. The story is about a girl who looks at a picture of her crush rather than paying attention to the lesson. The boys in her class steal the picture and tease her with it. Falling in love seems to mean not being able to focus on anything else but their crush. Young girls might learn from the passage that the inability to concentrate is part of 'being in love' and copy this behavior. It is crucial to convey that falling in love is something beautiful, but there are still other spheres in the life. This passage supports stereotypes of emotional, irrational girls and wild young boys.

Example 13 (Unit 3 *Kids speak out*, p. 30)

B1St

You have received the following email from a friend in England. Read it carefully and answer it. In your email:

- tell Katie what you think about the situation
- tell her what she should do
- tell her who could help her.



Just a few pages later we encounter the next text passage that is about a girl dealing with unrequited love. Her friend seeks advice because Annie had fallen in love with a boy and fails to see that he is not interested. She is blindly in love, giving her crush presents and waiting for him in front of his house, not noticing that she is made fun of. Again, the girl

is in love, and again she is blind and unrealistic. One has to wonder why the majority of girls are unhappily in love. Arguably, boys fall in love with girls just as often as the other way around. The preoccupation of girls with love seems to promote that femininity is equivalent to emotionality and that masculinity is equivalent to rationality. It would be refreshing and not unrealistic to encounter stories about boys being in love. It would help girls to see that boys have feelings as well and boys could see that there is nothing 'unmanly' about having feelings. Love is an important topic for students of that age but biased representations only promote problematic ideas. It would be more helpful for students to learn coping with rejection. Self-worth comes from other sources, a point that is crucial for teenagers whose bodies are changing and who do not quite know what to do with their feelings.

Example 14 (Unit 6 *Hungry?*, p. 58)

YOUR STORIES



Shannon

I was never really fat and I was never really thin. I was somewhere in the middle.

That's what I thought. Maybe I was a little overweight. When I was fourteen, I was invited to Rebecca's birthday party. When Rebecca ate the third piece of cake, I heard her sister say: "If you go on eating like that, you'll get as fat as Shannon!" That hurt. Most of my friends at school

were thinner than me and being thin like a model was a topic all the girls talked about all the time.

Not long after the party, I started to throw up after eating. At first, I threw up only once or twice a week. But soon I felt that this wasn't enough. Whenever I ate something, I had the feeling it was too much. Whenever I had the chance, I looked in the mirror. And I didn't like what I saw. "Fat, fat, fat," I thought.

And there were times when I opened the fridge as soon as I got home from school. I stuffed myself with food and afterwards I felt so bad about it that I ran into the bathroom.

It was a terrible time. I often had stomach ache. I often felt very weak and I often felt sick. I didn't enjoy eating any more. It didn't matter what I ate. My friends knew that something was going on, but I never talked to them about my problem.

When we were on holiday in Italy, I tried to stop throwing up after eating. But I couldn't. When I looked in the mirror,

I was sure I had gained 20 kilos, but of course I hadn't.

Then one day I collapsed in the gym at school. After the lesson my P.E. teacher told me to come to her room. She offered me a cup of tea and she talked to me. I couldn't tell her about my problem, but I promised I would talk to my mum.

So I wrote a letter to my mum and left it on the kitchen table one day before I left the house.

I was scared when I came home, but my mother hugged me and said, "We'll solve this problem together."

Every week I go to a meeting of a group of girls who have eating disorders. We talk about our problems and I feel much better. I eat regularly and don't throw up any more. And I don't look in the mirror all the time. I'm a little overweight again, but I have learned to accept it. At Rebecca's party for her fifteenth birthday, I met a boy. When he walked home with me, I knew I had finally beaten my problem. ●

The story of Shannon deals with eating disorders. She is very concerned about her weight because of a friend's comment and develops a bulimic eating disorder to lose weight. She finally tells her mother about the problem and gets professional help. The end of the story is especially thought-provoking. when she is walked home by a boy, she

states that “I knew then that I had finally solved my problem” (More! 4 2006: 58). It is not stated directly why, but one can assume because finally a boy is interested in her. Seemingly, all that makes her feel ‘healthy’ and increases her self-worth is the affection of a boy. Further, it fosters the stereotype that only girls deal with eating disorders. It is thought that indeed 90 to 97% of all eating disorders concern girls (BMFJ 2017). However, there are also boys who suffer under their weight and this should be part of the discussion. The questions that follow the text are simply true or false and summary statements. A critical discussion could be invited with questions such as ‘Do only girls suffer from eating disorders?’ ‘What is implied by the last sentence of the story?’

Further, the story’s ending is thought-provoking. Shannon states that she is a little overweight again but that she “has learned to accept it” (More! 4 2006: 58). That makes it seem as if she has no power over her weight and puts her in a passive state where ‘acceptance’ is all there is. Girls are taught to accept their body rather than to embrace it. Weight is a complex topic but an important part of its constituents is diet. Teenagers are often oblivious of the fact that it is what you eat rather than how much that makes a difference. A balanced diet and certain amount of physical activity does not only enhance physical attractiveness but also the general well-being. Food is our fuel and nutritious food is good fuel – these points are missing in Shannon’s story. Highly interesting, finally, is the fact that Shannon looks pretty and thin. She does not look ‘a little overweight’ as the text states. The text claims that it is alright to be overweight but the picture tells a different story. So do the pictures in the whole textbook – there is not a single instance of overweight people. It is therefore hard to see how students should learn that not looking like a top-model is normal when all they see in media, and even in teaching materials are, in fact, models. Representations of overweight people would much rather support the fact that thin is not the ideal than a single line in the whole textbook, paired with a picture of a very thin looking girl.

The idea that that exposure to “thin-ideal” TV programs and magazines is positively associated with eating disorders is supported by several studies. Harrison (2000: 124) examined the influence of media consumption in 6th, 9th, and 12th teenage girls and found that “thin-ideal” media consumption was positively associated with eating

disorders. These included anorexia nervosa, bulimia, a higher drive for thinness as well as a higher body dissatisfaction. However, Harrison (2000: 138-139) points out:

Indeed, a common counterargument to the assertion that thin-ideal media exposure causes eating disorders is that people with eating disorders seek out these media because these media reflect the disordered audience's worldview, give justification to its concerns, and provide practical information on how to continue to lose weight or avoid getting fat.

In regard to textbook research this counterargument does not prove valid since students cannot choose textbooks themselves. Therefore, it seems even more critical to include a wider variety of body types. Indeed, this might be the only time students are exposed to other than 'thin-ideal' characters. The positive correlation between exposure to the unachievable and often photo-shopped ideal and the promotion of eating disorder needs to be recognized, and textbooks can be seen as a chance to be more diverse than fashion magazines and to recognize their important educational role.

Example 15 (Unit 14 *Best friends*, p. 130-133)

21
CD 3
MP3

2 Read and listen to part 1 of the play.

THE CONFLICT

What do you think of Dylan?

He's OK, Lisa, but he's not my type. And he has the wrong friends.

The wrong friends, Sheri? Why?

Well, they just aren't cool.

So which boy do you like?

Jamie. He looks great, doesn't he?

But Sheri - Jamie can only talk about football.

I don't care. He's cool!

Anyway, Jamie has a girlfriend. Jenny.

She's two years older than you. Why should Jamie be interested in a fifteen-year old?

I know. But I can take him away from her.

We'll see, Lisa. We'll see.

130 UNIT 14

2 DAYS LATER ...

What? You went to Jamie's party?

Yeah. It was great. Jenny couldn't come to the party, so Jamie and I ...

I don't believe it.

Well, there was a little "accident". He broke a glass and he cut himself. I helped him clean up the glass. We talked a bit. We danced a bit. And then we kissed a bit ...

LATER AT SCHOOL ...

Sheri! You're crazy! What if Jenny finds out?

Keep away from Jamie. He's my boyfriend!

I'm warning you! Leave him alone.

But he likes me!

Jenny? Oh, she won't find out!

Don't worry. I can take care of myself.

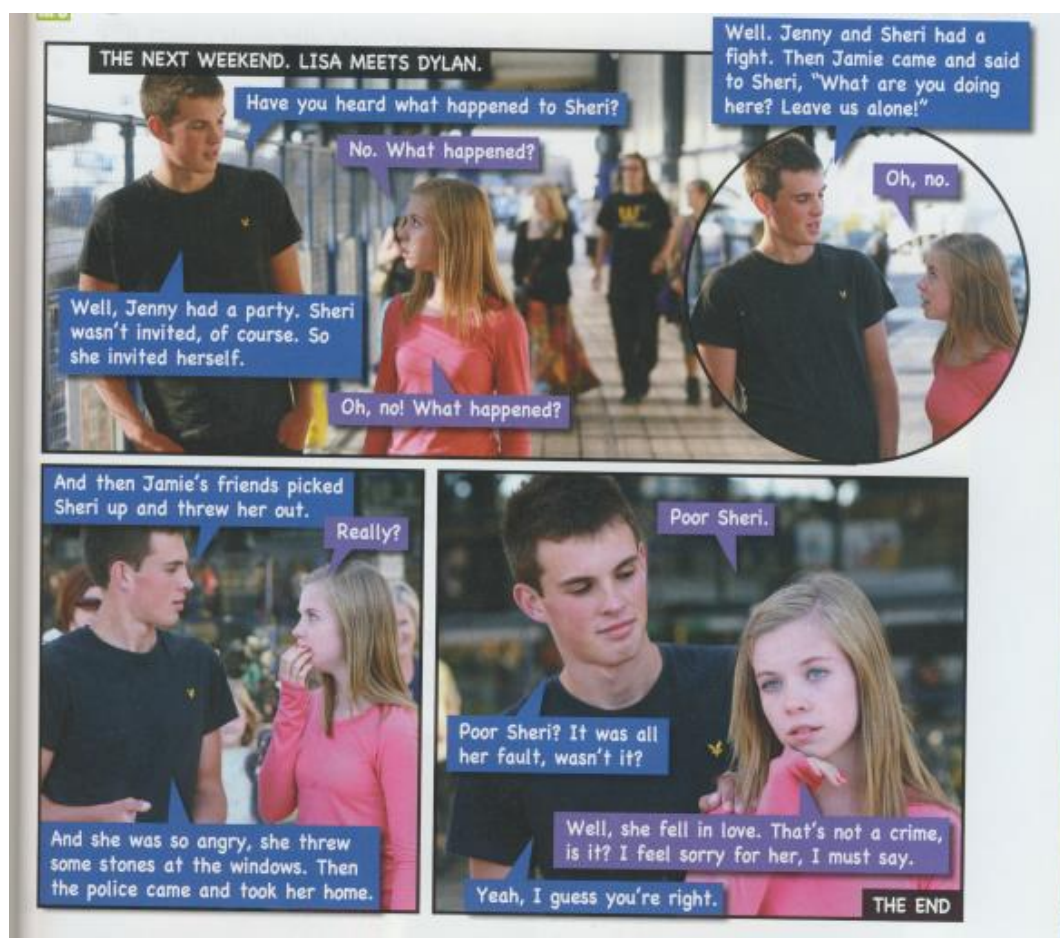
5 Put the sentences in the correct order. Write 1 – 5.

- ☐ Jamie and Sheri kissed.
- ☐ Jenny finds out about Sheri and Jamie and is angry.
- ☐ Jenny wasn't at the party.
- ☐ Sheri thinks Jenny won't find out.
- ☒ 1 Sheri went to Jamie's party.



7 Underline the correct words.

- 1 Sheri wasn't at the rap show / cinema on Saturday.
- 2 She went to Jamie's house / school with him.
- 3 Jenny's not in town at the moment / next weekend.
- 4 Lisa thinks it's OK / wrong that Sheri is seeing Jamie.
- 5 Sheri tells Lisa to stop telling her what to eat / do.



The Unit 14 is called *Best friends* and includes troublesome implications about women and their behavior. As can be seen above, it is about two best friends who talk about their crushes. The main characters are Lisa and Sheri; Sheri is interested in Jamie who has a girlfriend. Lisa advises her to forget him since he is taken, but Sheri does not listen. Two days later she tells her best friend, Lisa, that she kissed Jamie at a party. Jamie's girlfriend Jenny finds out about this and threatens Sheri to leave her boyfriend alone; she even gets physical, grabbing Sheri's arm. The next day Sheri lies to Lisa about going to a rap show; however, she is really spending the evening at Jamie's house. Lisa judges Sheri's actions and the two girls stop talking to each other. A week later, Lisa learns from Dylan that the situation escalated. Sheri went to Jenny's party uninvited, and it resulted in a huge fight between the two girls. Finally, Jamie came to the scene and told Sheri to 'leave them alone' and is thrown out by Jamie's friends. Lisa feels sorry for her friend.

The picture story raises many questions. First of all, it seems that girls only think about boys and about how they can 'take them away' from each other. Secondly, Jamie does not have an active role in the whole picture story. He is never shown as talking actively. It

seems that this is just between Sheri and Jenny who both like the same boy. There is no instance, whatsoever, where it is mentioned that Jamie might be doing something wrong, or that he takes responsibility for his actions. The omission of Jamie in the picture story has a very interesting and manipulative effect on the reader. It gives Jamie a weak role that indicates his passive role in the whole story. By not seeing him it is much harder to judge his character than Sheri's. Since Jamie does not claim an active part in the pictures it suggests that he never played an active part in the cheating process, a clearly wrong conclusion. When Jenny learns about her boyfriend's unfaithfulness, she confronts Sheri but not her boyfriend, when clearly he has done something wrong too. He even cheats on his girlfriend twice and is not held accountable, suggesting that his behavior is accepted or fully blamed on Sheri's seduction. It appears to be a topic solely between the girls to figure out. Interestingly, Jenny seems not to be hurt by her boyfriend's actions and does not consider ending the relationship. There is no instance of Jamie being sorry for cheating or apologizing to his girlfriend, as well as to Sheri, for playing with her feelings when he was not seriously interested. Girls are depicted as superficial, vicious, reckless, and simply mean. It is clearly proposed that Sheri is the one to blame and therefore, she has to suffer under the consequences. This is also indicated by her friend Lisa when she says "that is wrong" and "what if Jenny finds out" (More! 4 2013: 1329 but never raises the issue of Jamie's part in this, since cheating always involves two people. Not only the third person outside the relationship can be blamed but so can the person inside the relationship. Forcing Sheri to enact the role of the 'other woman' who tries to steal another woman's man manifests the stereotype that women primarily fight over men when women should be taught that they can empower each other.

Furthermore, the title *Best friends* is misleading – the unit is not really about best friends but about two women fighting over a boy and promoting a highly problematic stereotype of women. The story ends badly for Sheri but has no apparent repercussions for Jamie. When Sheri goes to Jenny's party and a fight ensues, it is the first time in the whole story that Jamie is forced to take initiative – yet, this is only indirectly communicated through Dylan, another character. When he is confronted with both girls in the same room he says to Sheri "What are you doing here? Leave us alone!" (More! 4 2013: 133). Her presence at other times seemed to have been fine, since his girlfriend

was not there. Therefore, this is teaching boys to only show loyalty when being forced to. Moreover, it teaches teenage boys that it is somewhat alright to be unfaithful because it does not have any repercussions for them and they can choose from a wide range of 'offers'. Women's only option seem to be to either simply endure unfaithfulness or to hope for the best. Sheri, on the other hand, is judged by society, by her friend Lisa, by Jenny, and by Dylan; she is humiliated and thrown out of the house. Lacking any dignity, she cannot control herself and throws stones at the windows like a 'mad woman'.

The story could serve as a learning experience for the students if the question dealing with the text would be critical. This is unfortunately not the case – the questions are simply true/false and summary questions asking students to reproduce what they have learned so far. There is no critical discussion about the text's depiction of women. Of course, this could be done by the teacher, but this cannot be expected since there is no question provided to invite a discussion.

Through a few extra pictures the story could have been made much more appropriate. On the one hand, Jamie has to have an active role in the pictures in order to demonstrate explicitly that he had an active part in cheating. Pictures are much more quickly absorbed and thus this could lead to simply blaming Sheri and feeling sorry for Jenny. Women are either victim or aggressor – neither role is especially desirable. Jenny's character could also have been more active and she could have confronted her boyfriend rather than Sheri. She could have served as a role model, an independent woman who does not tolerate unfaithfulness because she knows her self-worth. Sheri could have learned from her mistake after being humiliated, and the two girls could have talked about the incident. Moreover, Jamie should be the one who suffers in the end – not Sheri, or at least not only Sheri. Jamie needs to occupy a more reflective and mature behavior or he will serve as a negative role model. His character could show regrets over his actions, feel sorry for hurting his girlfriend's feelings and for playing with Sheri's feelings. Further, a scene of him talking about his problems with his best friend, since this is the unit topic, could be included and demonstrate that boys have and can reflect their feelings as well.

This unit simply fosters the stereotype that girls' main concern is how to get a boyfriend. Especially for 14-year-olds, who might experience their first relationship, this might serve as a learning unit. They learn to confront the 'other' girl but not their boyfriend. They do not learn to doubt the boy's sincerity or to think about the if they even want to be with someone they cannot trust. It is well possible that these are the topics the teenagers have dealt or have to deal with in real life and thus is it so important to teach them to be critical of thoughtless actions. They should be critical towards this story and the representation of boys and girls. Unfortunately, this is not something that is promoted by the textbook authors. Is the picture story entertaining? Of course. Will the students like to read it? Probably. It is not much text but many pictures and a lot of drama – close to the TV-shows that students might like to watch. Textbooks should, however, not try to copy shows or to be simply entertaining. Textbooks do have an educational function, and the tasks should reflect this responsibility.

Through the repetitive representation of women in traditional roles, stereotypes seem 'natural' and, at the same time, perpetuate gender hegemony (Merskin 2006: 5). Indeed, many studies support the idea that female and male characters in prime-time television shows contribute to the construction of gender stereotypes and influence the viewer's expectations and beliefs (Lauzen et al. 2008: 201). Further, women enacted more often social roles and were more active in the areas of home, family, and romance, whereas men were more likely to enact occupational roles. Even though, of course, television programs and textbooks are not the exact same thing, parallels can be drawn. Women in textbooks are as well more often seen coping with problems concerning family, romance, and home and have an important role in the construction of stereotypes.

7. Discussion

The following section reviews and discusses the findings of my study once again. Based on the quantitative and qualitative data, it can be said that gender equality is yet to be achieved in ELT textbooks in Austria. Unfortunately, in all four textbooks male illustrations outnumber female illustrations, and in three out of four textbooks male characters outweigh female characters. Only one textbooks has the exact same number of female and male characters, none of the textbooks features more women than men. At

unit level, gender bias was even more prominent because units high in female appearances often covered stereotypically feminine topics; this was often already revealed by the headings, such as *Mother's shopping list*, *You are what you eat* or *Hungry*. Furthermore, the quantitative analysis showed that women are more often described in terms of their family relations, mostly occupying the role of the educator. In all four textbooks, the designation *mother* outnumbers that of *father*, indicating that women are primarily responsible for child care and therefore, the first person of reference for children. This implication is contradicting to the current view that the education of children should be equally distributed between father and mother. Inequality was further evident in leisure time and work settings. Women are widely seen as passive and men as active, often in physical activity. In three out of the four textbooks under analysis, women are underrepresented in occupational roles and therefore reproduce the idea that work is still a 'masculine' sphere. By reviewing the findings of the quantitative data, it becomes apparent that gender bias is present in all areas of interest, simply to a different degree. The expectation that more recent textbooks would support gender equality to a greater extent proved to be only partially true. In terms of numbers only, the awareness seems to be generally higher, and the number of female appearances approaches that of males. Yet, the in-depth examination of gender representations in different settings, then again, demonstrated that the depictions still heavily rely on stereotypical gender knowledge. Therefore, gender bias is still present, just in different and perhaps more hidden forms. The findings of the qualitative analysis broadly support those of the quantitative analysis. For example, female underrepresentation is highest in *I learn English* (1976) and at the same time shows many problematic passages that needed to be examined in the qualitative analysis. *More!* (2013), however, despite almost achieving gender equality in overall numbers, has as many problematic passages as *I learn English* (1976). This highlights the fact that gender equality is still a topic that needs explicit attention and should not be waved aside as being too much discussed already. Overall, quantitative as well as qualitative findings support the claim that gender bias is still present. Representation of women improved over the years, yet equality has not been established in all areas.

8. Conclusion

This thesis aimed at giving a critical analysis of selected Austrian ELT textbooks from the last 40 years regarding gender equality. In order to set the frame, the first chapter dealt with the importance of textbooks in ELT in general. Advantages and disadvantages have been discussed and analyzed critically. It was stressed that the teacher's role is of immense significance when talking about textbooks, and that the various teacher personalities are dependent on the textbook to a different degree. Furthermore, I examined the role of the publisher, the textbook authors, and the society in the production process. It could be shown that textbook authors cannot be blamed alone for certain textbook content because they work within a framework restricted by publishing houses whose priority it is to make profit. Moreover, it was stated that textbooks can never cater to the needs and wishes of every teacher and every learner; therefore it is the most reasonable approach to use the textbook as only one of many mediums and to adapt and supplement activities when needed.

The second chapter laid the groundwork for the empirical analysis by introducing terminology and gender guidelines for classroom materials. Various aspects of gender were discussed including the difference of 'sex' and 'gender', the notion of 'doing' gender, and the connection between gender and language. Finally, different gender guidelines to ensure equality that were issued by the Federal Austrian Ministry of Education were introduced, examined, and discussed.

The next part focused on the data gained through the examination of the selected textbooks. Firstly, a short literature review of available studies was given and served as a point of comparison. The data then was gained in two steps, firstly by counting male and female occurrences in text and illustrations, and secondly by reading the content of the textbooks thoroughly. The analysis of the data was divided into quantitative and qualitative results and should be understood as complementary to each other. Neither quantitative nor qualitative analysis would have been sufficient by themselves since a different depth of analysis was possible by examining the textbooks in terms of numbers and content. The results demonstrated that gender bias is still present in all four textbooks.

It was interesting to see how the representation of gender, and especially of women, changed over the decades. The general impression of the textbooks definitely showed the slow progressions towards gender equality. The textbook of 1976 and the textbook of 2013 are poles apart. The issue of 1976 featured statements about women that would be impossible nowadays, at least in Austria. Of course, while analyzing and evaluating data, I considered the time of publication and the prevailing beliefs of that time. It could not have been expected that a textbook from the 1970s shows the same degree of awareness towards gender equality as the textbook published in the 21st century. Therefore, I also had to be more critical towards the content of newer issues since the consciousness is a different one. For example, a slight overrepresentation of men in the 70s would have been almost positive, whereas any overrepresentation in recent textbooks serves as a point of discussion. After years of praising gender equality and after incorporating gender equality in the curriculum and issuing several gender guides for classroom materials, there is simply no room at all for even the slightest reproduction of stereotypes. However, this study could demonstrate that stereotypes are rather persistent, and that their deconstruction might take many more decades or even centuries.

Another interesting point that arose while reading the textbooks was the look of men and women. This area would be worth further examination since most of the men and women showed stereotypical appearance. Men had generally short hair, in older issues often a moustache, and wore suits or pants and a shirt. Women, on the other hand, almost always wore make-up such as mascara, they wore some sort of jewelry, often rings, earrings, bracelets or necklaces, and they had almost exclusively long hair. This describes just my personal impression and would need further investigation in order to compare how many percent of women and men are indeed portrayed in a stereotypical way. The impression that men and women have to look a certain way is as well a construction and should not be left unquestioned by publishers, textbook authors, illustrators, ministries, teachers, and students.

9. Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit geht der Frage nach, wie sich die Darstellung der Geschlechterrollen in österreichischen Englischschulbüchern über die letzten vier Jahrzehnte verändert hat.

Um diese Frage zu beantworten, wird zuerst der Grundstein mit einer allgemeinen Lehrbuchanalyse gelegt. Es werden Vor- sowie Nachteile von Schulbüchern dargelegt und diskutiert, weiters wird betont, dass das Vorliegen bestimmter Inhalte im Schulbuch nicht mit der Durchführung im Unterricht übereinstimmen muss. LehrerInnen haben daher die wichtige Rolle sich gründlich und kritisch mit Lehrmaterialien auseinanderzusetzen. Letztendlich obliegt es der Lehrperson Aufgabestellungen so zu verändern und anzupassen, dass sie zu ihrer Unterrichtsrealität passen, anstatt sie bedenkenlos für ihren Unterricht zu übernehmen.

Jedoch sollten Lehrmaterialien eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit bestimmten Themen ermöglichen und fördern. Die wichtige Rolle von Schulbüchern im Sozialisierungsprozess von Kindern und Jugendlichen ist weitgehend anerkannt und daher sind Inhalte die eine Reproduktion von Stereotypen und vermeintlich „natürlichen“ Geschlechtsunterschieden unterstützen als einflussreich und problematisch anzusehen.

Die Wichtigkeit der Gleichstellung der Geschlechter sowie der Dekonstruktion von Geschlechterstereotypen wird auch vom österreichischen Bildungsministerium anerkannt und wird daher in diversen Stellen im Curriculum sowie in speziell entwickelten Guides zur Lehrmaterialerstellung festgehalten.

Der zweite große Abschnitt der vorliegenden Arbeit, besteht aus einer empirischen Analyse. Dafür wurden vier Englischschulbücher, die in den Jahren von 1976 bis 2013 publiziert wurden, einer quantitativen und qualitativen Analyse unterzogen. Die quantitative Analyse dient dazu die Frage zu beantworten, ob Frauen im Allgemeinen unterrepräsentiert sind. Dafür wurden alle Erscheinungen von Männern und Frauen im Text sowie in den Illustrationen gezählt. Ferner, wurde untersucht wie Frauen und

Männer in den Bereichen „Familie und Beziehungen“, „Freizeitaktivitäten“, und „Arbeit“ dargestellt werden. Die qualitative Analyse beschäftigt sich intensiv mit einzelnen Text- und Bildausschnitten, die stereotypisches Rollenverhalten darstellen und damit reproduzieren.

Die Resultate der Schulbuchanalyse zeigen auf, dass die Gesetzestexte und Guidelines zur Förderung der Geschlechtergleichstellung der letzten Jahre, die Darstellung von Frauen zwar verbessert und ausgeweitet haben, doch dass sich dennoch stereotypisches „Geschlechterwissen“ hartnäckig in Schulbüchern hält.

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