(This) is Not My Water Bottle: Gender Discourse Analysis of DepEd English 1-3 Textbooks

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Textbooks, when used by children in their formative years, are sources of symbolic models, who they identify with and from whom they learn what they perceive as socially accepted behavior. This research analyzes four Department of Education (DepEd) K-12 English textbooks for Grades 1 to 3. It aims to identify gender representations as constructed in the textbooks with the use of Sara Mills' Feminist Stylistics Analysis and Kress and Van Leeuwen's Multimodality Theory. The two theories were used as supplements in order to identify gender construction as portrayed by the materials' linguistic and non-linguistic resources. Through careful analysis, the research found strong gendering in professions (e.g., doctors, cops are males; nurses, teachers are females) and in division of household tasks (mothers as caretakers; fathers as providers). Illustrations in the materials were found to play a huge role in and heavily impact gender construction in the materials. For example, a seemingly non-gendered sentence, "This is not my water bottle" is shown to exhibit gender bias due to its accompanying illustration (a flower drawn on the water bottle). Change in the DepEd guidelines for textbook evaluation, particular to gender, is suggested to aid the DepEd, publishers, and other content producers to assess and ensure gender-sensitivity in textbooks.

Keywords: Elementary Textbooks, Learning Materials, Gender Discourse Analysis, Gender, Gender Representations

Introduction

Textbooks are an indispensable part of the school environment and curriculum. It is stated as "one of the reasonably available measures for the improvement of the quality of education" (Ivic et al., 2013). Students, teachers, and other education stakeholders have been found to rely on textbooks to provide security during times of change particularly when there is a shift in curriculum; textbooks allow a degree of standardization for stakeholders, and a framework or guide for teachers and students in navigating a new curriculum (Ivic et al., 2013; Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Seguin, 1989). Due to their unique position as an authoritative source of content in the classroom, textbooks' can play a crucial role in shaping children's ideas about the world, including that of gender. It has been found that at 3-5 years old, children are already aware of their categorization as "boy" or "girl;" and in the years after until they are 8, this understanding plays a big role in their choices of play and their learning of socially-accepted behaviors for their sex (Kohlberg, 1966; Etaugh et al., 1989; Martin, 2011; Wood, 2003).

One of the mandates of DepEd's Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy states that it shall "ensure that learning resources (LRs) are free from gender biases and stereotypes, and use gender-fair and inclusive language, positive images, and messages" (2017, p. 10). Through this mandate and its social content guidelines, DepEd recognizes the need for balanced and non-stereotypical representation of genders in our textbooks. This study aims to provide awareness and understanding of gender representation in school materials that can be used to better guidelines and practices for textbook production, in relation to representation and social biases.

Statement of the Problem

The study answers the main question: How is gender constructed in DepEd-approved English 1-3 textbooks? This main question is answered by addressing the following specific sub-questions:

1. In the selected materials, what representations of gender are constructed by:
   a. linguistic resources?
   b. non-linguistic resources?
2. How do the linguistic and non-linguistic resources in the text interact to construct gender?

Language use is shaped by and perpetuates gender ideologies

Sara Mills' (1995a) Feminist Stylistics Analysis works on the premise that language use is a choice and that each choice carries different meanings. The producers of a text construct gender at three different levels: on the level of the word, or simply, the use of the different pronouns and the choice of lexical items; on the level of the phrase, the metaphor through which it chooses to represent females and males; and, lastly, on the level of discourse, what character roles it assigns to its female and male characters and through which perspective it gives information (Mills, 1995a).

English, in particular, is sexist in how it treats women linguistically as the marked form in its treatment of males as the norm (generic pronoun 'he', universal 'man') and nouns for women as derivatives of their male nouns counterparts (mistress to mister, hostess to host); the male nouns, associated with prestige, in contrast to their women counterparts which are associated with "sexual and non-prestigious meanings" (Mills, 1995a, pp. 83-86), at times even derogatory. The use of Ms. and Mrs., according to Mills, is another sexist convention in language for it requires women to reveal their marital status, unlike their male counterparts (1995a).

Besides the features of language, Mills and Cameron, among other linguists, have studied how linguistic phrases and expressions can be used to unearth gender bias; "Children and women first" is based on the notion that men are protectors of the weak children and women (Cameron, 2006, p. 24).

Eliminating sexist biases will take more than eliminating sexist features of language; however an understanding of how language is used to perpetuate gender ideologies is necessary in order to help craft guidelines as to how learning materials (LMs) intended for children may be used to promote gender equality and encourage resistant reading against gender-biased texts.

The Role of Illustrations in Meaning-Making

Besides verbal content, learning materials intended for children often consist of illustrations. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) in their book Reading Images, argue that verbal language as we know it has transformed from being the medium of communication to being one medium of communication. They set out to argue how visual images serve as a semiotic mode with elements that have their distinct uses and valuation and discuss how meanings of written texts may be varied or embedded upon by its other modes such as the material it is written on, the material it is written with, and the layout of the material it is located in. In their Compositionality Theory, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) enumerate three interrelated systems of composition: information value, which refers to where elements are placed in a text; salience or how elements are emphasized or made to attract the viewer's attention; and framing or the grouping of elements in the text through presence or absence of framing devices such as lines (1996, p. 183).

The textbooks studied are made to teach English to Filipino students who are aged 6-8 (Grades 1 to 3); and the language and illustrations used in them are the result of choices made by producers and informed by assumed knowledge about men and women. The textbook is an artifact and can be used to identify which ideas or stereotypes about gender are present and perpetuated in the world in which it is used.

Gender Ideology in Philippine Culture

The Filipino family is marked by a division of roles between mothers and fathers, particularly that mothers do unpaid care work at home and fathers are breadwinners of the family; deviating from this dichotomy has been tied to a lost of self-esteem and for fathers, being called derogatory labels such "macho-nurin" or "under the saya" (Dionisio, 1994; Hill, 2011; Honculada, 1994). Though the rigidity of this dichotomy has softened over time as more and more women take on work outside the home, prevalent gender ideologies on motherhood still expect them to be the primary caregivers at home, resulting in a double burden or an expectation to take on duties both inside and outside the home (Hill, 2011; Honculada, 1994, pp. 92-93; NEDA, 2019).

Among mother-away transnational families, it has been found that OFW mothers have made maximal use of telecommunication services to still be present in their children's lives, sometimes still being the ones to manage expenses from afar, and if not able to do so, would relegate these tasks to eldest daughters or other extended family who are women (Parrenas, 2008). A more recent study done by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA, 2019) concluded that patriarchal expectations affect women's choice to work – that is, families that adhere to strong patriarchal values have a significant effect on married women's participation in the labor force. The study used data from national survey datasets and focus group discussions with women of various religions, ethnicity, and labor force status from six regions in the Philippines; and found that when and if working, gendered expectations maintain that women are still tasked with the responsibility to stay with and care for their children. Narratives from the discussions indicate that this stems from societal pressure and the expectation of not only the respondents' husbands, but also their children. A respondent reported, "even my child has this perception that the mothers should stay at home and they learn this from school. From the beginning of early education, they were taught that mothers should stay at home" (2019). Another study, taken from ethnographic accounts from Naga, Bicol, found that even when mothers' accounts clearly show higher wages than their husbands, wives downplayed their contributions to family income in order to fit the traditional stereotypes (Hill, 2011, p. 242).

In the global care economy, women from developing countries migrate to do care work

abroad, giving these women more opportunities to work and gain financial capabilities, yet the dominant placement of women to care work (nurses, caretakers) and service-oriented work also serve to reinforce patriarchal values of women's domesticity and nurturing nature (Dionisio, 1994; Enloe, 1983; Bergeron, 2016; Mills, 1995b; Parrenas, 2008). These same values also play a part in the so-called "feminization of labor," in which work that parallel duties at home are undervalued and underpaid (Cleveland et al., 2000, pp. 180-181). In the Philippines, for example, female-coded professions such as primary school teachers and nurses have an average monthly salary of P 17,874 and P 20,715 a month, respectively; while the male-coded profession doctors are paid, on average, P 51,251.00 a month (PSA, 2023).

The previously mentioned study in Naga found that state programs such as micro lending policies provide only, for women, income generating projects "that are likened to hobbies, time-fillers, and other alternative livelihood activities" or simply, activities that women can do along with their many responsibilities at home (Hill, 2011, pp. 232-233); at the same time, men from poorer backgrounds who might benefit from the said alternative livelihood programs are not presented these options nor targeted by these programs because they are expected to be farmers and thus, offered programs that only involve lending of instruments for farming and agricultural productivity (e.g. seeds, fertilizer, livestock) (2011, p. 235). Even state programs and policies that supposedly aim to help the poor are marred with gender expectations, limiting the opportunities that would supposedly help families better their situations.

The Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) from 2002 included Work Experience or Vocational Education, which included automotive and woodworking, for boys and Home Economics, which included topics such as foods, and home and family, for girls (Javier & Mogol 2005, pp. 110-111). This shifted during the development of K to 12 curriculum when subjects specifically prescribed for boys and girls were eliminated and that these topics were integrated into Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan (EPP) and Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE). The World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2023 reported that the Philippines ranked 16th out of 146 countries in terms of gender parity, with the highest scores in educational attainment and health and survival; dominant gender ideologies and patriarchal values are constantly being renegotiated in family, labor, and schools in the country.

Internalization of Gender Roles

There are two prominent theories in the literature on the socialization of children into sex roles: social learning theory, wherein children learn through their environments which of their behaviors are rewarded; and cognitive-developmental theory, wherein children achieve gender constancy as early as three or four years and from then on, look to same-sex models to know which behavior to exhibit (Bandura, 1977; Kohlberg, 1966; Mischel, 1966; Etaugh et al., 1989; Martin, 2011; Wood, 2003). A study by Lisa A. Serbin, Kimberly K. Powlishta, and Judith Gulko show how these two theories may interact. Their study worked with children aged 5 to 12, to identify the various aspects of sex-typing during the different ages and to examine the contributions of cognitive and environmental factors to sex-role development. The study found findings that were consistent with Kohlberg's: children displayed greater knowledge of positive behavior related to their sex. It also found that children "whose mothers frequently performed nontraditional sex-typed household and child-care tasks were less sex-typed in their own preferences" (Serbin et. al., 1993, p. 63). All in all, their findings suggest that cognitive and environmental influences had an additive effect to the development of sex-typing knowledge among children (Serbin et. al., 1993).

Central to the theories of gender identity are modeling and socialization through same-sex models. The materials, as a learning resource in school, are one such source of these models. Ruth Robbins in her book, Literary Feminisms, argues, "representation is not the same thing as reality, but it is a part of reality" and can be a springboard of the situation of women in the world (1965, p. 52). Internalized patriarchal values are found to affect choices and expectations of women and men and the opportunities that may be presented to them

(Javier & Mogol, 2005; Hill, 2011; NEDA, 2019, Parrenas, 2008). One way to battle inequalities in reality is to provide transformative representations; as Robbins (1965, p. 33) says, "if literature can be one of the sites of the oppression of women, it can also be the site of an imagined alternative".

Gender in Textbook Evaluation

In line with DepEd's Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy, forms on the evaluation of learning materials have an item that guards against gender discriminatory representation in textbooks. In the evaluation tool provided by DepEd, one of the items under Content Evaluation is that of the material being "free of ideological, cultural, religious, racial, and gender biases and prejudices" (H. Ferrer, personal communication, September 15, 2019). This is one of ten items under the first component, content quality. Each item is allotted four maximum points, indicating very satisfactory and a minimum of one point for not satisfactory. For the material to pass the component, the score required is 30 out of 40 (H. Ferrer, personal communication, September 15, 2019). Another evaluation tool from 2009 shows that social content only accounts for 20% of the third component, presentation and organization; this component is only allotted 10% in the overall evaluation of textbooks. Thus, social content accounts for a meager 2% in the overall evaluation process (DepEd, 2009a). In both reiterations of the evaluation tool, it is possible for a textbook to receive a low score in social content and still pass the overall standards set.

A separate more detailed document, social content guidelines, is provided to guide the evaluators in the process. This document (DepEd, 2009b) enumerates the following items under gender:

1. Avoid sexist language, bias, and stereotyping of males and females as to professions, occupations, contributions to society, and home and family roles and behaviors.
2. Do not differentiate either explicitly or implicitly between the capability of males and females to contribute to the political, economic, or social well-being of Philippine society or the world.
3. Maintain balance in treatment of gender roles, occupations, and contributions in the text and illustrations.

These items are consistent with a later version of the said guidelines provided by DepEd to the researcher in 2019 (H. Ferrer, personal communication, September 15, 2019). This study hopes to provide insight on the effectiveness of DepEd's evaluation tools in terms of eliminating gender bias.

Methodology

The study investigated DepEd English Learning Materials produced for public schools nationwide after 2012, the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum. The books and their publication dates are as follows:

1. *English Activity Sheets (Grade 1), published 2016*
2. *Let's Begin Reading in English (Grade 2), published 2013*
3. *Let's Get Better in English (Grade 3), published 2015, with a reprint in 2017*

The three books were intended for use in the school year 2019-2020. A fourth book, *UnionBank English* (Grade 2), published 2013, was also included in the study. It is tagged as a resource that can be used in various lessons for grades 1, 2, and 3 in the curriculum guide and is available for download online to the public, making it accessible to teachers and students alike.

Tabulation was done to list all instances of female and male characters in the materials. Table 1 provides an overview of what data or information from the learning materials was tabulated.

Table 1

Data from textbooks that were tabulated

Linguistic Analysis	Assigned gender; name; lexical item; classification of lexical item (noun/verb)
Location in the Material	Book Classification; Unit; Page; Sentence
Illustration (Non-linguistic)	Accompanying illustration? (yes/no/illustration only); Congruent (yes/no/n/a); Physical Appearance/Clothes

Quantitative content analysis was done, specifically, manual frequency counting through Microsoft Excel to account for common associations of lexical items assigned to males and females. Qualitative analysis of the context was performed afterwards using Sara Mills' Feminist Stylistics Analysis supplemented by Kress and Van Leeuwen's Multimodality (Compositionality Theory). To facilitate the analysis, the data were further grouped into and discussed using the following classifications: professions, family roles, and illustrations. Congruence of illustrations with linguistic resources was also done to identify the role of illustrations in gender construction.

Identifying Assigned Gender

Gender of the characters was identified based on the following: personal pronouns referring to the characters, the characters' names, and/or the illustrations accompanying sentences about these characters. Admittedly, of these three methods of identification, the last two involved judgments based on gender norms—that is, they were based on which names in the Philippines are typically given to females versus males and on the type of physical features and clothing in illustrations which are typically associated with men versus women. In consideration of this, the researcher took great care to take into account as many factors as possible in identifying the gender of a character and added the category X for cases in which there was not enough certainty about the identification.

For identifying gender through names, the use of Filipino name markers such as Aling, Ate, Manang, Lola for women and Mang, Manong, Kuya, Lolo for men were considered, as well as other common Filipino naming conventions such as the -o ending for men, and -a ending for women in name pairs (e.g. Miko - Mika, Angelo - Angela). When applicable, data from the list of most popular names by gender from the Philippines Statistics Authority (PSA, 2009) were also used. Characters who had names which may be given to both women and men and who had no other identifying features were assigned to the category X, signifying that gender could not be determined.

For identifying the gender of illustrated characters, Table 2 shows the features which were considered.

Table 2

Matrix for Gender Identification (Illustration)

	Male	Female	X
clothes	pants, polo, shorts	Skirt, dress	Features could not be discerned, limited, or confusing
hair	short hair	Varying hair length, ponytail, pigtails, bun, presence of ribbon/headband/clip	

A textbook, to be an effective learning tool, must establish a connection between the students' everyday life and its content; providing additional motivation for readers to engage with it (Ivic et al., 2013). With this in mind, the classification of physical features in illustrations was based on the clothing and hair. In terms of clothing, women are depicted as wearing a blouse/shirt and skirt, a suggested school uniform/outfit for girl students in the country (K-12 Academics, 2019), and dresses. In terms of hair, boys are required by the DepEd guidelines to sport short hair to be "at least one (1) inch above the ear and three (3) inches above the collar line" (Llego, n.d.); so boys are portrayed with short hair with little accessories, while women are often depicted with hair in varying length, styles, and accessories such as a headband, ribbon, or hair clip. Markers of gender in illustrations can be a separate subject for study, but for the paper's purpose, they were used to aid in gender identification.

The category X was also used for instances in which characters' features could not be discerned and visual data were limited or confusing. Additionally, X was also used for characters referred to by the gender-neutral pronouns (if no gendered illustration or gendered linguistic reference accompanied the sentence). Given this, the X may also signify efforts of the LM producers to be gender neutral, specifically the use of pronouns such as "he/she".

Discussion of Findings

Stereotypical representations of men and women were found in the materials studied. These are discussed in two parts: profession and family roles. Both discussions tackle findings and answer the first research question. The last research question is answered in the final discussion on the role of illustrations in the construction of gender in the textbooks.

Professions

Table 3 shows the top frequently occurring occupations shown to be exclusively assigned to women or men in the materials.

Table 3

Top frequently occurring professions exclusively assigned to men and women in the materials

	Women	Men	
Grade 1 LM	Salesperson (1) Nurse (1) Cashier (1) Librarian (1)	Tanod (3) Guard (3) Dentist (2) Doctor (2)	Janitor (1) Carpenter (1) Zoo owner (1)
Grade 2 *UnionBank LM*	Nurse (5) Cashier (1) Dressmaker (1)	Soldier (8) Chef (4) Cop (4) Carpenter (3) Boatman (2) Construction worker (2) Driver (2) Engineer (2)	Barber (1) Chief (1) Coach (1) Fisherman (1) Hunter (1) Janitor (1) Lion trainer (1) Mail carrier (1) Pilot (1)
Grade 2 LM	Dentist (2) Actress (1) Help, washer (1)	Fisherman (8) Factory worker (7) OFW (3) Shop owner (3)	Fireman (2) Pilot (2) Postman (2) Traffic enforcer (1)
Grade 3 LM	Cashier (2) Nurse (1) Vendor (1)	Traveler (3) Carpenter (2) Conductor (2)	Layman (2) Mail carrier (2) Photographer (1)

In numbers alone Table 3, men characters are shown to do more varied work and do more professional work than women characters in the materials. In the Grade 2 *UnionBank* LM, there are 67 male characters distributed among 27 professions, compared to 51 instances of female characters distributed to 11 professions. In the Grade 2 LM, the number of men shown to be working a profession (122 instances distributed among 25 professions) is more in number and more varied than that of women (92 instances distributed among 15 professions). Lastly, in the Grade 3 LM, the number of men in a profession is more than double (59 instances) than that of women (27 instances). The only exception is the Grade 1 LM which shows an equal number (20) for both men and women. More than half of the women in the Grade 1 LM are teachers, a service- or care-oriented profession.

Professions in the materials are shown to be gendered with females being shown as teachers (Table 4), nurse, and other service work, while men are assigned the professions of soldier, cop, tanod, and engineer. Males are also shown to exclusively hold the professions of more varied and numerous jobs (factory worker, OFW, shop owner, pilot, etc.). Despite this, there is some evidence that the materials veer away from portraying certain professions as stereotypical. The Grade 3 LM portrays captain as female through verbal elements—a sentence, "They chose her as the team captain." (p. 196); and the Grade 2 LM illustrates females as dentists (pp. 318, 322) and assigns them the profession security guard (pp. 314-315) and doctor (p. 394).

Teacher is one profession that appears the most in the LMs. Table 4 shows the breakdown of occurrences of the teacher profession found in the materials.

Table 4

Occurrence of teacher profession in the learning materials

	Women	Men	X
Grade 1 LM	11 (26.19%)		31 (73.81%)
Grade 2 UnionBank LM	29 (31.52%)		63 (6848%)
Grade 2 LM	29 (8.63%)		307 (91.37%)
Grade 3 LM	4 (9.52%)	3 (7.14%)	35 (83.33%)

Teachers are associated with females not only in the instructions but also in the stories and sentences found throughout the books. In the Grade 2 *UnionBank* LM, when given a proper name, teachers are always female. The following are names of teachers found in the materials: Mrs. Santos (p. 112), Miss Lim (pp. 39-40), Miss Dina (p. 51), Mrs. Elena Cruz (p. 236), and Miss Nora (p. 331). The same naming convention is used in the Grade 2 LM. Teachers, (and even nurses and librarians) when named in the textbook are all female. Moreover, all their names, save for one, are prefixed by Mrs./Ms., a sexist convention in language (Mills, 1995a). In the Grade 2 *UnionBank* LM, the prefix Miss/Mrs./Mr. is only used with teachers.

The Grade 3 LM shows care in terms of gender-neutrality of teachers in the instructions. Teachers are never referred to with the pronoun "she." The instructions consistently use "s/he" and/or

"I" to refer to the students' teacher. Outside of the instructions in the Grade 3 LM, there is also almost equal distribution of male and female teachers in the material. However, it is worth noting that all three instances of male teacher are of Efren Peñaflorida (pp. 296, 300). Though showing a male teacher is positive in that regard, it should be mentioned that he is depicted as "special": he is never shown to teach in a regular classroom or wear the same uniform as the rest of the female teachers are shown in. He is also introduced as a hero and not a teacher, making it clear to readers that Peñaflorida is outside of the normal or an extraordinary teacher.

An Exercise on Aspirations

A closer analysis of one exercise indicates that it is not merely professions that are shown to be gender-specific in the textbooks, but also student aspirations. One lesson features a poem used as a springboard for teaching *consonant clusters/blends* (Fig. 1).

Figure 1

Lesson on Clusters/Blends (Grade 2 UnionBank LM, pp. 252-253)

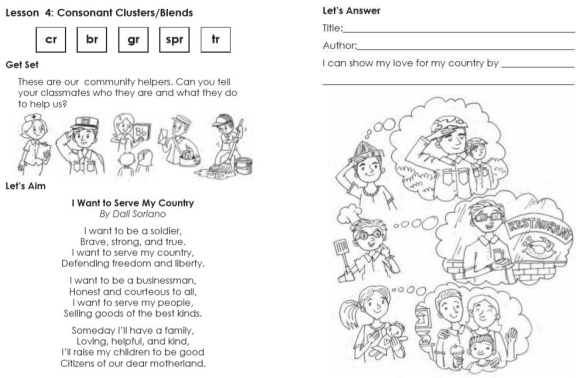


Figure 1 contains 2 pages of the resource-with the poem on the left side and the exercise on the right side. In the exercise, students are expected to fill in the blanks that follow prompts with realizations about themselves based on what they have read in the literature.

When Sara Mills' Feminist Stylistics Analysis was applied to the poem by itself, it appears to use gender-neutral language: the pronoun "I" refers to the persona. Moreover, it only has one gendered noun, *businessman*. However, looking closely at the lines from each stanza, in which the *I* referred to is a different person, leads to several interesting insights. Linguistically, the third stanza distinctly differs from the first two. Firstly, every line of the third stanza relates to the persona's relationships with others. For example, the second line of each stanza is used to enumerate characteristics (adjectives) of the *I. Brave, strong, true,* and *honest* are characteristics which can be exemplified through individual action. Conversely, *courteous, loving, helpful,* and *kind* are characteristics which are shown when one is interacting with others. Three of these adjectives are given in the last stanza. Lastly, when comparing the final lines of the stanzas, the first two directly state the ways the persona will serve his/her country. In comparison, the lastline states that his/her children will be good citizens of the country. It puts the persona, *I*, in the background by doing this. It is as if s/he is a supporting character to the children that will be raised to be good citizens.

The two pages (Fig. 1), one with the poem and the other with the illustrations, are shown as a pair in the textbook. Using Kress and Van Leeuwen's Multimodality, the poem that comes first has the "Given" information value, while the illustrations on the next page are "New." It can be understood that these are not just random examples but illustrations of the various personas in the poem. The first two boys are the soldier and the businessman, the speaking personas of the first two stanzas, while the girl is the realization of the persona of the last stanza. The problem is, as stated before, there is no indication of the gender of the personas in the poem, yet the illustration is presented as an interpretation of the poem. If a child were to read the poem on its own, the child could simply choose which among the three personas s/he relates to the most. However, with the picture on the next page, the child becomes limited as to which persona s/he can relate to.

In addition, the illustrations on page 253 (Fig. 1) mirror not only the structure of the poem (vertical arrangement of the illustrations), but also some of the differences found in the lines of each stanza. For example, each child is portrayed to have an object or doing an action related to their dreamed future. The first two boys are shown to salute and to have a cooking utensil, with the addition of a chef's hat as if to distinguish it from cooking in a domestic setting. In comparison, the girl is portrayed with a doll which can be seen to represent children or family. This is also true in the illustration of their dreamed futures. In the illustrations (top and middle), men are foregrounded whereas the woman is situated behind her family (bottom), relegating her to a supporting role—her hands on her husband's shoulders are also clearly seen to highlight her relationship to family, further enhancing how the third persona's future or dreams are tied to her family and relationships.

From the analysis of both visual and verbal elements, it can be said that in the reading lesson found in the English 2 textbook, girls are given only one option for serving the country: the task of taking care of a family. For young women to aspire to be loving wives and mothers is not wrong; however if it is presented as a young girl's only option and if the same option of serving in the domestic sphere is not presented as an admirable aspiration for young boys, then it becomes problematic.

This is a clear example of how the studied materials can perpetuate gender roles and stereotypes. In showing how women, in lieu of dreaming and wanting a profession, dream of starting and caring for a family echoes the idea of women's lives centering on family. Are women and young girls natural caretakers or are they brought up to develop these traits and skills through early socialization and modeling? Though these representations in the material reflect some aspects of reality, particularly the abundant number of women in education and service work (NEDA, 2019; PSA, 2018), it is also important to consider how they can form part of reality by socializing children and teaching gender roles through modeling (Bandura, 1977), observational learning (Mischel, 1966), and symbolic interactionism (Serbin et. al., 1993), among others. It is a disservice to show certain professions as exclusive to females or males for they might lead to limiting the choices of young children who might think that what is shown to them are their only options for serving the country or perhaps the only careers they can succeed in, especially since these materials are an integral part of the learning process in schools and have been found to affect students' knowledge, points of views, and attitudes towards reading (Hill, 2011; Ivic et al., 2013; Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Seguin, 1989). Furthermore, most, if not all, of the instances of stereotypical gendering in professions can be changed without changing or sacrificing the objective of the exercises shown in the material. If in the Grade 3 material, verbal elements are observed to consciously avoid gendering in professions—for teachers in instructions and security guards, surely it is not impossible to

expand this care to eliminate gendering of professions throughout the book and for all the professions. As Robbins says, images or representations in literature can also be transformative, "the site of an imagined alternative" (1965, p. 33).

Family Roles

Two illustrations from the Grade 1 LM can be used to summarize the depiction of mothers and fathers in the textbooks. These illustrations show a parent with their child. Figure 2 shows a mother tucking her child into bed—the accompanying sentence is "Good night", while Figure 3 shows a child thinking of his father coming home from work—the accompanying sentence is "Father is not yet home". The two contrasting images show closeness between mother and child and the distance, at times even absence of fathers.

This dynamic can also be gleaned from the number of times fathers and mothers appear in the textbooks. Table 5 below shows the frequency occurrence of "mother" and "father".

Figure 2

"Good night" (Grade 1 LM, p.3)

Figure 3

"Father is not yet home." (Grade 1 LM, p.44)

Table 5

Occurrence of father and mother in the Learning Materials

	Mother	Father
Grade 1 LM	23 (63.89%)	13 (36.11%)
Grade 2 UnionBank LM	97 (57.06%)	73 (42.94%)
Grade 2 LM	134 (65.05%)	72 (34.95%)
Grade 3 LM	47 (68.12%)	22 (31.88%)

In all the materials, mothers significantly appear more frequently compared to that of fathers. In interpreting this data, it is important to consider that the materials' target users are children; this frequent occurrence of mothers compared to fathers reflects the social expectations of mothers being more present in the lives of their children (Honculada, 1994; Hill, 2011; NEDA, 2019). It both reflects and perpetuates the notion that mothers are caretakers of home and family (shown to interact with children and to accomplish household chores).

Food Preparation in the Home

In the materials, cooking is one of the ways through which a mother cares for her family. Table 6 shows some instances of mothers cooking, buying, and/or preparing food. The second column presents all instances of fathers shown in association with the same set of verbs. To facilitate the discussion, the sentences in the table are referred to with the table number and sentence number.

Table 6

Instances of mothers and fathers cooking, buying, or preparing food in the materials

Mother	Father
1. When Mother finished cooking, Mother told Mary to call her Father. (Gr2 UB, p. 190)	11. Father likes to cook with a pan. (Gr2 LM, p. 117)
2. Mother made a sandwich for me. (Gr2 LM, p. 104)	12. "And I bought ensaymada," said Father. (Gr2 LM, p. 4)
3. Inay has a big pan that she uses when she cooks. That pan is hers. (Gr2 LM, p. 205)	13. Father bought ensaymada. (Gr2 LM, p. 5)
4. It's Independence Day. Mommy had no work. She took the pan and oil. What would she probably do? (Gr3 LM, p. 274)	14. Father bought ice cream for my brothers and me. The chocolate ice cream is ours. (Gr2 LM, p. 216)
5. Mother is not there (there = kitchen). (Gr2 LM, p. 3)	15. Dad made my sister a sandwich. The sandwich is (hers). (Gr2 LM, p. 224)
6. My mom goes to the market every day. She buys fish, vegetables, meat, and fruits from the vendors. She loves to go to the market to buy our food. She goes home happy to cook our meals. (Gr2 LM, p. 412)	
7. Complete the sentences below in order to form a simple sentence: Mommy cooks _____. (Gr3 LM, p. 261)	
8. Danny and Almira buy mother grocery items. (Gr3 LM, p. 114)	
9. One day, mother asked the three brothers to look for malunggay leaves that she would need to cook dinner. (Gr2 LM, p. 231)	
10. Mother asked Lara to buy eggs from the nearby store. (Gr2 UB, p. 462)	

Numerous sentences in the materials presuppose that it is the mother's responsibility to cook for the family, with sentences that insinuate that she is happy and willing to do so even during holidays (6.6, 6.4). In one story, a child upon waking up searches for her mother and immediately looks for her in the kitchen (6.5). Grammar exercises that have no need for gendered characters assign the verb "cook" to mothers (6.7), showing the text assumes that these sentences are relatable or within the experience of the student. Other sentences, though not directly talking about cooking, mention mothers as the reason for children acquiring cooking ingredients (6.8-6.10). These examples among others validate and reinforce the notion of mothers as the default caretakers of family (Hill, 2011; Honculada, 1994, pp. 92-93; NEDA, 2019).

In contrast, all the other LMs (leave for four instances in the Grade 2 LM) never show fathers cooking or preparing food, unless done in a professional setting as a chef. Among the four exemptions, only one explicitly states a father cooking (6.11).

Caretaker of Home

Another role of mothers shown consistently in all the materials is as caretaker of home—performing various household chores and maintaining cleanliness. Table 7 presents instances of mothers and fathers partaking in tasks of caring for home.

Table 7

Mothers and fathers shown caring for home in the materials

Mother	Father
1. Mother is having a rest. The whole house is in a mess. Help her keep things tidy. (Gr2 UB, p. 166)	11. Father cleans the vegetable garden. (Gr2 UB, p. 160)
2. Mother (likes) the shirt on clothes (pin). (Illustration shows woman hanging clothes on a clothesline) (Gr2 UB, p. 132)	12. Father sweeps the yard. (Gr2 UB, p. 151)
3. Mama has a rag. Who has a rag? (Gr2 LM, p. 150)	13. Tatay Felix cleans the house. (Gr2 UB, p. 174)
4. She (mother) makes our home clean and tidy. (Gr2 UB, p. 145)	14. Dadcleans the car. (Gr2 LM, p. L.345)
5. Sara helps her mother in doing the household chores. (Gr2 UB, p. 261)	
6. He ran home and pulled one nice, rectangular white sheet from his mother's clothesline. (Gr2 UB, p. 303)	
7. "From my mother's laundry," answered Jose. (Gr2 UB, p. 303)	
8. Mother keeps the lampin in the cabinet. (Gr2 UB, p. 308)	
9. My mother sweeps the floor. (Gr3 LM, p. 138)	
10. He helps mother wash the dishes. (Gr3 LM, p. 56)	

The first example under instances of Mother is from an exercise on classifying objects titled "I Can Help." Students are tasked to categorize a set of illustrated objects found in the home. There are other situations that can be presented to show the need to organize. Despite this, the provided context is that the mother is resting and that because she is doing so, there is no one to take on her role of cleaning up the household mess. The child reader is asked to help specifically the mother, thereby suggesting that the task of keeping the house in order is primarily her responsibility. Other members are often described as helping mother at home (7.5, 7.10), instead of simply doing chores. Moreover, there are instances in which the mother is shown to be in possession of laundry, clotheslines, (7.6, 7.7) as if they were her territory.

Related to this conflation of the mother role and housework is the gendered representation in a story titled "The Pixies and the Lazy Housewife" (Gr2 UB, pp. 275-276). While not explicitly described as a mother, Bessy, the story's main character, is described as a lazy housewife. In the story, Bessy pretends to be sick to take advantage of the pixies who help her do the housework. The pixies find this out and teach her a lesson: messing up her house and threatening to pinch her if she does not learn to clean her house. This validates the social construction of women, specifically mothers and wives, as responsible for housework. Moreover, it even shows a certain prejudice against women who are not good at or refuse to follow this expectation.

Another story from the Grade 2 LM (pp. 194-195), where a family welcomes a new baby is all about the different family members volunteering to help watch over the baby so that their mother "can do other things." The "other things" mentioned refers to household tasks or chores that the mother might not have enough time due to the baby's arrival. It is important to recognize that in the story the family members explicitly state that taking care of the baby is Mama's task ("we need

to help Mama take care of the baby", p. 195) and that they are there only to help her with this task. Thus, her children offer to watch over the baby and fold clothes; both, among other things, presumed to be the mother's tasks. It is also noticeable that the father in the story, though the one to hold the baby in the accompanying illustration (a positive representation: fathers being in a caretaker role) and the one to initiate the conversation on helping does not, in the actual story, offer any sort of help in doing the household chores, but instead only directs the children to help.

Two of the three sentences from the second column of Table 7 refer to cleaning in the context of gardening, an activity done outside the house. And despite the use of "clean" in sentence 7.14, washing cars has only been given to males; automotives which are traditionally a subject associated with boys ((Javier & Mogol 2005, pp. 110-111). This leaves only one sentence to be weighed and found wanting against the high number of sentences in stories and exercises that depict the mother as the default performer of domestic chores. In addition, sentence 7.3 shows that mothers are the default choice of nouns for partnering with cleaning implements in the materials. It is from a reading lesson on words with a short *a* sound. The context to the sentence given is, "Let us see what are inside Marlyn's house. Listen as I read the sentences. Look at the pictures beside the sentences." The only word important to fulfill the objective of the exercise is the word rag, a word with a short a sound; yet the producers chose to pair it with the word 'Mama' when it could've made no difference to the exercise's purpose if it were 'Papa' instead. These examples reinforce the stereotype of mothers as caretaker in the home.

Caring for Children

In the materials, mothers are more often depicted as affectionate and caring for children's needs. Table 8 lists some instances in which mothers are shown to address the needs of their children either through feeding (8.1, 8.2, 8.9, 8.11, 8.12) or by making sure they are prepared for school.

Table 8

Instances of mothers and fathers shown caring for their children in the materials

Mother	Father
1. The (angry, caring) mother feeds her daughter. (Gr1 LM, p. 81)	13. Father gave me (a, many) kiss. (Gr2 UB, p. 86)
2. Mother feeds me. (Gr1 LM, p. 44)	14. "Moses, school starts next week," says Father. "Are you ready for school?" (Gr2 LM, p. 31)
3. The lad took a nap on Mama's lap. (Gr2 UB, p. 36)	
4. Mother woke you up to get ready for school. (Gr2 UB, p. 52)	
5. She take good care of us. (Gr2 UB, p. 145)	
6. After putting thigs together, Mother can have time for the baby. Draw some of the things that the baby needs. Color them. (Gr2 UB, p. 169)	
7. He waited for his mother to clean him up. (Gr2 UB, p. 171)	
8. This is the Mother who cares for you. (Gr2 UB, p. 204)	
9. She (mother) picks up the baby and puts her in the crib. (Gr2 UB, pp. 216-217)	
10. She (mother) covers the baby with a blanket. (Gr2 UB, pp. 216-217)	
11. Nanay gave the aby a bib./ What did Nanay give the baby? (Gr2 LM, pp. 181, 182)	
12. My mother prepares our clothes. (Gr2 LM, p.412)	

In contrast, fathers are seldom shown in this light. More often they are described as being at work or absent (Table 9). Other than those listed in Table 8, in the materials, fathers are characterized to be affectionate only when with their partners, as part of a pair.

Table 9

Instances of fathers and mothers shown working in the materials

Father	Mother
1. Your father arrived fromwork before dinner. (Gr2 UB, p. 52)	9. This is my mother. She works in an office. She washes our clothes and cleans the house. (Gr2 UB, p. 109)
2. My father is a farmer. (Gr2 UB, p. 107)	10. Her mother and Kuya Paeng leave the house even before sunrise to see the fish and shells in the market. (Gr2 LM, p. 146)
3. My father is a hardworking man. He works at a farm mostly at daytime. (Gr2 UB, p. 145)	
4. I'm going to help my father in the store tomorrow. (Gr2 UB, p. 314)	
5. My dad is a cook. (Gr2 UB, p. 140-141)	
6. Dennis waited for his father to come home. (Gr2 UB, p. 171)	
7. Let's pray for him (Daddy) to have a safe flight. Daddy is leaving tonight. (Gr2 UB, p. 180)	
8. How does your father go to work? (Gr2 LM, p. 401)	

In the materials, fathers are dominantly portrayed as doing work outside of the home; mothers, if shown to work, are still doing housework (9.9).

Furthermore, mothers are depicted assigned to the role of caretaker of both home and children, while fathers are shown to be workers. This reflects prevalent gender stereotypes of mother as caretaker and father as income provider that persist and affect the lives of families even to this day: mothers and fathers are found to tie their self-esteem in their ability to fulfill these stereotyped roles (Hill, 2011); mothers work long hours a day: burdened with work both inside and outside the home (Hill, 2011; Honculada, 1994); and children expect their mothers to spend more time with them (NEDA, 2019).

The dichotomy between mothers and fathers represented is long-seated and has been taught in our educational system when young girls are taught to be wives who are capable of caring for the home (Dionisio, 1994; Javier & Mogol, 2005, p. 45). That these same scenarios–women expected to take on household tasks despite working, interacting more with their children; fathers being heralded as hardworking income providers–which are found in the school materials studied, reflect and both affirm these gender stereotyped roles in the eyes of children. Like in the findings in previous sections, this raises the question on representation and reality; and whether literature can be used as a site of presenting alternatives to reality. This perpetual cycle of learning and reproducing stereotypes becomes even more concerning when one considers how gender identities and these stereotypes play a role in shaping people's livelihood (Hill, 2011, pp. 232-233).

There is a clear effort to deviate from the stereotypical and traditional representation (especially for fathers) in the last two materials (Grade 2–*Let's Begin Reading* and Grade 3 *Let's Get Better in Reading*) when they are shown to cook and dispaly affection to their children. However, there is still a lot left to be desired—the sheer frequency of instances that mothers are

dominantly assigned the caretaker role shows that the gender ideology expressing that women are destined to be mothers is still very much present and at work in the production of the materials.

Role of Illustrations

Incongruence is common in the materials, in that non-gendered terms are gendered through illustrations. This matters most when images are used as placeholders for students in the books, particularly illustrations used for the pronoun "I".

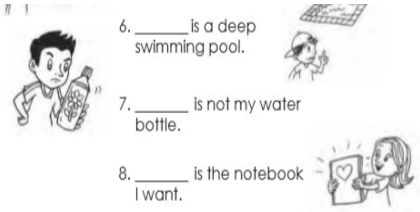
Choices such as these may lead female readers to feel excluded. The choice of portraying "I" as male is an echo of the issues raised by feminists (Cameron, 1992; Mills, 1995a) about males being the uncontested norm–evidenced through generic masculine nouns and pronouns (in this case, visual representation of the pronoun "I" as masculine). Research has shown the importance of representation in making marginalized groups be recognized. In the use of language alone, Mills cites Bem's study that found sex-unbiased advertisements for male-related jobs encouraged more females to apply for them (Mills, 1995a, p. 64).

Notably, there are no solo female illustrations accompanying any of the exercises which ask the reader to take on the persona of "I." Others feature both female and male characters as personas for the gender-neutral pronouns and one involves a young girl with her mother doing a task stereotypically associated with being female: going to a dress shop at a mall with her mother (Gr2 UB, p. 431).

Other exercises assign illustrations stereotypically to gender-neutral sentences. Exercises on demonstrative pronouns, for example, ask students to identify the best demonstrative pronoun to use in a sentence: _____ is a rose, _____ is my toy car. The first sentence is given a female illustration, and the latter, a male one. Another version of the exercise (from which this thesis is named) uses the sentence "_____ is not my water bottle." The accompanying illustration is a frowning young boy holding a water bottle with a flower design, as if to signify a dichotomy: flowers are for girls, not boys (Fig. 4).

Figure 4

(This) is not my water bottle from an exercise in Grade 2 *UnionBank* LM (p. 249)



Another aspect through which illustrations affect gendering is through repeated use of illustrations, especially for professions (see Fig. 5 and 6). The same image is used consistently for the same lexical item, resulting in gender-neutral linguistic elements being exclusively assigned to specific genders. This results in the gendering of the terms teacher, doctor, and police which is alarming, especially when one considers that a simple alteration (such as changing hair length or clothes) could have been done to solve it (Fig. 7).

Figure 5

Illustrations of doctor in Grade 1 LM (pp. 79 and 48)

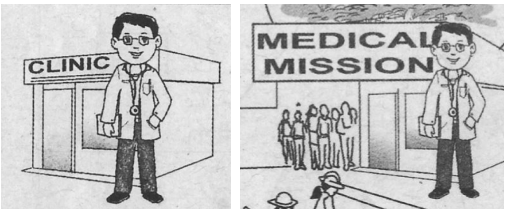


Figure 6

Illustrations of teacher in Grade 1 LM (pp. 79 and 48)

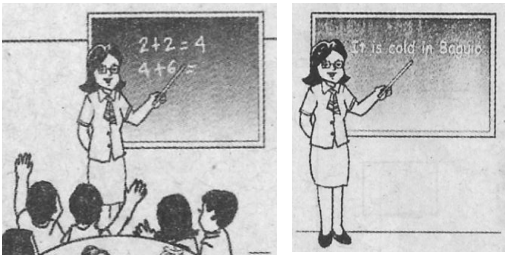
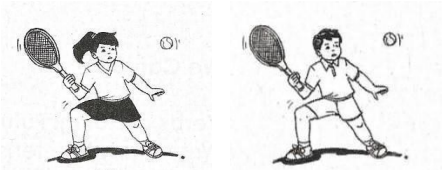


Figure 7

Illustrations for "tennis" in Grade 2 LM (pp. 332 and 360)



These findings on incongruence highlight the need to consider illustrations with more care in the evaluation process and to ensure the production of distinct and well thought out illustrations for the materials since stereotypical representations of an activity/profession may be reinforced or contested depending on the use of illustrations.

Conclusion and Implications

The analysis of gender construction in both linguistic and non-linguistic resources in the four DepEd English 1-3 textbooks found many stereotypical representations of women and men in professions and family roles. Although there were cases where a conscious effort to use gender-neutral language and non-stereotypical roles was evident, roles and associations based on stereotypical gender ideologies are still prevalent in all the materials: women are mothers, caretakers, and nurturers and men are income providers.

In response to the first research question, the choice of lexical items in the material reveals stereotypical notions of female characters and male characters. Females are mostly associated with lexical items relating to family, taking care of the home and children, and professions requiring a caretaker role. Males, meanwhile, are mostly associated with lexical items referring to work/careers and are shown as income providers. Similarly, non-linguistic resources or illustrations reveal doctors, cops, and firefighters, repeatedly shown as males, and teachers, and nurses, as females.

Lastly, to answer the second research question, illustrations in the text do not always reinforce linguistic resources' construction of gender. In most cases, the illustrations contradict the gender-neutral linguistic elements of the material and are the cause for them being gendered, playing a huge role in the gender bias shown in the materials.

Though gender representation in the material reflects some aspects of reality (women in education and service work), it is also important to consider how they can form part of reality as an avenue through which children learn and internalize gender roles. It is a disservice to show certain professions as exclusive to females or males for they might lead to limiting the choices of young children and in turn, contribute to systemic gender oppression.

This study hopes to raise awareness among education stakeholders about the way gender is constructed in textbooks. Teachers and school administrators, with better understanding of gender-biased representation in learning materials, may be more mindful in choosing empowering and gender-sensitive materials in their classrooms. Textbook producers, with the results of the study, gain information as to how current guidelines on textbook production, particularly of social content, may be improved to ensure gender-sensitivity in textbooks and learning materials for students in the country.

The findings point to the need to improve guidelines on social content, particularly gender, for the materials to ensure that the mandate on gender mainstreaming be done. This indicates the need to check and reevaluate how these materials are illustrated and evaluated, and that gender training is needed not only for the writers of the materials, but also the illustrators.

Recommendations of the Study

First, the research findings point to the need for better understanding of how gender is constructed in different classroom materials among various education stakeholders. Teachers can supplement gender-bias textbooks with more empowering classroom materials. They can also design their lessons or provide questions that will allow their students to challenge the gender-bias representation in the materials. Textbook producers, meanwhile,

are recommended to work closely with illustrators to make full use of the role of illustrations in the construction of gender representation in the materials they produce.

Second, it is recommended that researchers hold dialogue with textbook producers to understand the process of textbook production and evaluation, and to consider this in their research. Moreover, interviews with teachers and observations during classes are recommended to factor in the ways that teachers and students use the materials or textbooks in the analysis.

Finally, findings point to the need for a better evaluation tool of social content for textbooks. It is recommended that the evaluation tool be improved in terms of explicitly stating the aspects of the material that need to be checked to ensure that materials are gender-bias free. The tool should list statements that can be used to explicitly check for gender bias/stereotypes in the following aspects identified in the materials studied: professions, family, and illustrations. It is recommended that the tool be a pass-or-fail evaluation stage separate from the scoring criterion set for the material's content, layout, etc. With this arrangement, a material cannot be approved for distribution to our public schools if it scores what would have been a low or barely passing score in the criterion for social content.

In both text and illustration, both male and female characters should be portrayed engaging in varied and non-stereotypical activities and professions in order to encourage an open environment where children are free to choose their activities and careers without the pressure of gendered societal expectations and the ostracization that comes when one does not conform to these expectations.

This research hopes that upon laying out what gender-stereotypical representations still exist in the learning materials that we allow our children to consume as part of the context of learning English and even after these materials have supposedly passed a rigorous evaluation process by the DepEd, teachers, parents, and producers of these said materials can take a closer look at the process of their production and see what else can be improved and ensure that these stereotypical representations do not limit the dreams and goals of children–individuals everywhere.

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