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Neveen Kamal Zaki Mostafa

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par

Neveen Kamal Zaki MOSTAFA

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**LA REPRÉSENTATION DE LA FEMME DANS LES MANUELS DE LANGUES
(ARABE, ANGLAIS ET FRANÇAIS) EN ÉGYPTE : ENJEUX DIDACTIQUES ET
SOCIÉTAUX POUR LE XXI^{ème} SIÈCLE**

**THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS (ARABIC,
ENGLISH AND FRENCH) IN EGYPT: DIDACTIC AND SOCIETAL ISSUES FOR
THE 21ST CENTURY**

Sous la direction de Greta KOMUR-THILLOY

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Abstract

Egyptian women continue to face numerous challenges in the third decade of the 21st century, despite international and local efforts to enhance their agency and promote gender equality. The prevalence of ideological and societal challenges in Egypt means that many women still struggle. In response to this issue, Egypt's Vision 2030 is a comprehensive development plan that aims to build a cohesive society promoting equal rights and opportunities for both men and women by 2030. However, there is a scarcity of systematic research measuring the effectiveness of current textbooks in promoting the national vision of women's emancipation.

This dissertation aims to address this problem by analyzing the portrayal of women in language textbooks (English, French, and Arabic) used in secondary public education in Egypt. The aim is to highlight the gap between the country's vision and the current sexism reinforced by academic curricula. A quantitative content analysis approach was used to avoid the author's bias. Brugeilles and Cromer's (2009) framework was adopted, focusing on individual and collective characters in texts and images to reveal representations of gender roles, the pedagogic significance of characters, gender negotiation of the public sphere, nouns associated with genders, and women's attire.

Through the lens of Social Identity Theory, students' questionnaires were designed to investigate the effect of the existing power dynamics between males and females in the society on their acceptance of gender representations in the textbooks under review. Additionally, secondary school language teachers completed questionnaires to determine their stance on gender equality and the importance of positive female representation in textbooks.

The results of this study shed light on the various forms of sexism present in each language textbook and their relation to perception of local and foreign languages in the Egyptian discourse community. This in-depth analysis also reveals the necessity of tailoring culture-specific counter-stereotypes to combat local forms of existing sexism reflected in educational materials. Moreover, teachers' answers demonstrate unconscious bias driven by religious ideologies that would impede gender equality efforts if they remained unaddressed in government-sponsored training.

Keywords: Egyptian women emancipation, social representations of women, sexism in textbooks, language textbooks, language index, counter-stereotypes, Arabic language textbooks, English language textbooks, French language textbooks, attitudes towards languages in Egypt.

Résumé

En cette troisième décennie du XXI^e siècle, les femmes égyptiennes restent confrontées à de nombreux défis, malgré les efforts internationaux et locaux visant à renforcer leur pouvoir d'action et à promouvoir l'égalité des sexes. La prévalence de problèmes idéologiques et sociétaux en Égypte signifie que de nombreuses femmes sont encore en difficulté. En réponse à ce problème, la Vision 2030 de l'Égypte est un plan de développement global qui vise à construire une société cohésive promouvant l'égalité des droits et des chances pour les hommes et les femmes d'ici à

2030. Toutefois, les recherches systématiques visant à mesurer l'efficacité des manuels scolaires actuels dans la promotion de la vision nationale de l'émancipation des femmes sont rares.

Cette thèse vise à aborder ce problème en analysant la représentation des femmes dans les manuels de langues (anglais, français et arabe) utilisés dans l'enseignement secondaire public. L'objectif est de mettre en évidence l'écart entre la vision du pays et le sexisme actuel renforcé par les programmes scolaires. Une approche quantitative d'analyse de contenu a été utilisée pour éviter le biais de l'auteur. Le cadre de Brugeilles et Cromer (2009) a été adopté, en se concentrant sur les personnages individuels et collectifs dans les textes et les images pour révéler les représentations des rôles de genre, la signification pédagogique des personnages, la négociation du genre dans la sphère publique, les noms associés aux genres et les vêtements des femmes.

À travers la théorie de l'identité sociale, des questionnaires ont été conçus pour les étudiants afin d'étudier l'effet des dynamiques de pouvoir existante entre les hommes et les femmes dans la société sur leur acceptation des représentations de genre dans les manuels scolaires examinés. De plus, les enseignants de langues du secondaire ont rempli des questionnaires pour déterminer leur position sur l'égalité des sexes et l'importance d'une représentation positive des femmes dans les manuels scolaires.

En outre, des professeurs de langues de l'enseignement secondaire ont répondu à des questionnaires afin d'identifier leur position sur l'égalité des sexes et l'importance d'une représentation positive des femmes dans les manuels.

Les résultats de cette étude mettent en lumière les différentes formes de sexisme présentes dans chaque manuel de langue et leur relation avec la perception des langues locales et étrangères dans la communauté discursive égyptienne.

L'analyse révèle également la nécessité d'adapter des contre-stéréotypes spécifiques à la culture pour lutter contre les formes de sexisme existant dans le matériel pédagogique. Finalement, les réponses des enseignants à des enquêtes témoignent des préjugés inconscients motivés par des idéologies religieuses qui entraveraient les efforts en faveur de l'égalité des sexes s'ils n'étaient pas pris en compte dans les formations financées par le gouvernement.

Mots-clés : Emancipation des femmes égyptiennes, représentations sociales des femmes, sexisme dans les manuels scolaires, manuels de langues, index des langues, contre-stéréotypes, manuels de langue arabe, manuels de langue anglaise, manuels de langue française, attitudes à l'égard des langues en Egypte.

ملخص البحث

تواجه المرأة المصرية العديد من التحديات في العقد الثالث من القرن الحادي والعشرين، على الرغم من الجهود الدولية والمحلية لتعزيز وكالتهم وتعزيز المساواة بين الجنسين. وتعني انتشار المسائل العقائدية والاجتماعية في مصر أن العديد من النساء لا يزالن يعانين. ورداً على هذه المشكلة، فإن رؤية مصر 2030 هي خطة تنمية شاملة تهدف إلى بناء مجتمع متماسك يعزز المساواة في الحقوق والفرص بين الرجال والنساء على حد سواء بحلول عام 2030. ومع ذلك، فإن البحوث المنهجية لقياس فعالية الكتب المدرسية الحالية في تعزيز الرؤية الوطنية لتحرير المرأة نادرة.

تهدف هذه الرسالة إلى معالجة هذه المشكلة عن طريق تحليل تصوير المرأة في الكتب المدرسية للغات (الإنجليزية والفرنسية والعربية) المستخدمة في التعليم الثانوي العام. والهدف هو تسليط الضوء على الفجوة بين رؤية البلاد والجنسانية المعززة حالياً

من خلال المناهج الدراسية الأكاديمية. تم استخدام نهج تحليل المحتوى الكمي لتجنب تحيز الكاتب. وتم اعتماد إطار عمل بروجيلز وكرومر (2009)، مركزاً على الشخصيات الفردية والجماعية في النصوص والصور للكشف عن تمثيلات الأدوار الجنسانية والأهمية التربوية للشخصيات، والتفاوض على الجنس في المجال العام، والأسماء المرتبطة بالأجناس، وملابس النساء.

تم تصميم استبيانات الطلاب من خلال نظرية الهوية الاجتماعية للتحقق من تأثير الديناميات السلطوية الحالية بين الذكور والإناث في المجتمع على قبولهم لتمثيلات الجندر في الكتب المدرسية التي تم استعراضها. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، قام مدرسو اللغة في المدارس الثانوية بملء الاستبيانات لتحديد موقفهم من المساواة بين الجنسين وأهمية التمثيل الإيجابي للإناث في الكتب المدرسية.

تسلط نتائج هذه الدراسة الضوء على مختلف أشكال الجنسية الموجودة في كل كتاب لغة وعلاقتها بمؤشر اللغة في مجتمع الحوار المصري. كما تكشف هذه الدراسة العميقة عن ضرورة تصميم نماذج مضادة للصور النمطية المحلية لمكافحة الجنسية الموجودة في المواد التعليمية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، توضح إجابات المدرسين التحيز اللاواعي الذي يدفعه الأيديولوجيات الدينية والتي ستعرق جهود المساواة بين الجنسين إذا لم يتم التعامل معها في التدريب المدعوم من الحكومة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: تحرر المرأة المصرية ، تمثيلات اجتماعية للنساء ، الجنسية في الكتب المدرسية ، كتب اللغة ، مؤشر اللغة ، النماذج المضادة للصور النمطية ، كتب اللغة العربية ، كتب اللغة الإنجليزية ، كتب اللغة الفرنسية ، المواقف تجاه اللغات في مصر.

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Introduction

Girls' education is crucial for the transformation of communities. Girls who receive a secondary education are more likely to avoid child marriage and live healthy lives. They also have more opportunities to earn higher incomes and secure better futures for themselves. Despite the fact that the vast majority of Egyptian girls have access to free public secondary education, empowerment and gender equality are far from being their reality. In this study, we focus on the representation of women and gender stereotypes in language textbooks as part of a larger discussion on the role of education in empowering women. We specifically chose language textbooks because of languages' critical role in enhancing critical thinking skills, which are necessary for students in their personal and academic lives (Bloom 1956; Ennis 1989; Dewey 1933). Therefore, we investigate whether language textbooks in Egyptian public secondary schools encourage students to challenge the status quo by providing positive representations of women and promoting gender equality. As a mother of three young daughters in the Egyptian education system, I have taken it upon myself to embark on this journey to explore the social messages embedded in these textbooks. I believe that the outcome of this study will contribute to the body of knowledge that can help prevent the exploitation of women's rights and secure a brighter future for them.

Rationale for the study

This study was initiated in 2018 during a very turbulent time for the Ministry of Education in Egypt as it was amidst a reform to the staggering education system in Egypt by adopting several agendas and proposals. One of these proposals was the *Arabization* of the curricula in primary and preparatory education to preserve the Egyptian identity that has been susceptible to fanatic ideologies at one end of the dichotomy and Western values at the other end. English and French/German were to be introduced in the three secondary years. The proposal stirred debates about identity, and the quality of education on TV talk shows in the following weeks. Those who felt threatened by the proposal could identify *Arabization* and *Islamization* as arguably the inseparable part of a single cultural ideal that is prevalent in the Arab world. According to Ghoshal:

Arabic's highly charged sacred character increases its coercive power, making it what Benedict Anderson calls a truth language. Arabic is the language of Islam, the language chosen by God to speak to mankind, influences how a person perceives the world and expresses reality. This has a profound impact on a society's outlook (2008: 2).

According to his Excellency Prof. Shawki, *Arabization* is to be adopted in public schools, and will later be implemented in experimental¹ schools for the class of 2020-2021 as Egyptian students must master their mother tongue to protect their national identity (Ali 2018). A lawsuit by several parents was filed against the Ministry's plan to cancel foreign language education in experimental schools, while others praised the Ministry's new vision for education development. The Minister of Education's decision was later postponed till further notice due to the controversy it stirred amongst students, parents, teachers, and the community at large.

This was not the first time, however, for foreign language education to be presented as a symptom at the forefront of the causes of obliterating national culture and identity. Sayed argued that teaching foreign languages at the expense of the foreign language leads to further extreme consequences: "An Egyptian population without a powerful sense of national identity will belittle its national language as obsolete and misinterpret the teachings of its religion" (2006: 101). So, why do some Egyptians feel threatened by learning a foreign language? And what is the perception of the social messages associated with the target language?

In Egypt, foreign languages have been frequently blamed for introducing foreign concepts that are not culturally appropriate, hence we were interested in examining the social messages that foreign language books introduce in the current curricula. We have narrowed our focus to examine how women are represented in language textbooks, specifically those written in English, French, and the native language Arabic. With the country's new vision of achieving gender equality by 2030, we seek to explore how language textbooks can contribute to this national goal of women's emancipation.

Women's portrayal in language textbooks, as presented and discussed in the theoretical section, and portrayal of their roles in English as a Foreign Language (EFL)/ English as a Second Language (ESL) textbooks have been a concern for scholars since the feminist movement in the Western world during the 1970s. In fact, there have been numerous studies on the representation of gender roles in these textbooks at all levels of education. Researchers focused their inquiries on

¹ Experimental schools are affordable state schools that provide advanced language education, and are scattered all over Egypt, including 221 in the capital, 59 in Giza and 79 in Alexandria (Ali 2018).

textual presentations of female and male characters (Graham 1975; Coles 1977; Nilsen 1977; Britton and Lumpkin 1977; Arnold-Gerrity 1978; Hartman and Judd 1978). Visual presentation including illustrations, drawings and photographs, and even gender representation in children's animation movies (Bandura 1977; Davidson 1979; Downs 1981).

In the past few decades, similar studies in the Middle East and Asia turned their attention to women representation in ESL/EFL textbooks specifically with the same criteria adopted in the 1970s in the Western world (Ansary and Babaii 2003; Özdoğru 2004; Mirza 2004; Lee and Collins 2006; Hamdan 2010). This wave of enlightenment helped in eradicating glaring stereotypical representations of mothers in the kitchen and fathers as doctors. However, can we truly celebrate the elimination of gender bias in textbooks? While there are universal examples of sexist language and gender-bias messages that are easily identifiable, there are also culture-specific examples that, if left unattended to, would reinforce current prejudices and inequality. Negotiating gender equality in the orthodox communities is a dangerous walk in a minefield, yet relying on Eurocentric measures of gender equity and women empowerment makes the journey an impossible task. Hence, the rhetoric on women in Egypt is torn between secular western ideas and conservative religious teachings, leaving Egyptian women's agency susceptible to political and ideological turbulences.

Regrettably, literature on gender and woman representation in the textbook analysis is scarce in Egypt. Furthermore, the static linguistic approaches adopted do not surpass semantics and sentence level to reveal "how rhetorical frameworks for representing reality are established by various semiotic devices and how these frameworks (or Foucauldian 'regimes of truth') carry variable weight, epistemic trustworthiness, and cultural influence" (Trimbur and Press 2015: 23).

Hypothesis

We hypothesize that, despite all the textbooks under review being published and equally approved by the Egyptian Ministry of Education, the Arabic textbooks will contain more sexist content than the English and French textbooks. As will be explained in more details later, languages are viewed variedly in Egypt, where SA (Standard Arabic) is regarded as "the protector of Egypt's national identity as a Muslim country" (Bassiouny 2013: 90). Hence, we expect that English and French textbooks will present gender-balanced content in alignment with the discourse

on gender-equality and women empowerment in European countries². The Arabic textbooks, on the other hand, will present a patriarchal model that reflects Islamic traditions. It is worth clarifying, however, that exploring the true stance of Islam on sexism is beyond the focus of this research. We elect, however, Öztürk's opinion regarding the Islam-Patriarchy nexus is due to the rise of fundamentalist interpretation of the religion, rather than the religion itself:

A fundamentalist interpretation of one's own religion leads Muslims and non-Muslims alike to a greater receptivity to patriarchal values. In addition, Muslims and non-Muslims adapt to the pressure of their society to conform, which – depending on the prevalence of fundamentalism – entails egalitarian but also patriarchal values. The high level of support for patriarchal values in Muslim-majority countries also has a simple reason: religious-fundamentalist interpretations of religion are not a marginal phenomenon there, but the norm (2022: 1).

This being the general idea about Islam and patriarchy, we hypothesize that the Arabic curriculum, being the official language of the said religion, will reinforce patriarchal concepts.

²Gender equality has been an important policy goal of the Council of Europe. “Priority areas of action are defined by the Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023, and working methods include intergovernmental work within the Gender Equality Commission with representatives from the 47 member states, co-operation projects at country level and gender mainstreaming in all areas of work of the Council of Europe. Combating gender stereotypes and sexism has been a priority of the Council of Europe since 2013 and various activities have been carried out in this field, particularly in the media and education sectors.” (Council of Europe 2020).

Chapter I: Social Context and Background

1.1.Introduction to education in Egypt

1.1.1. Historical background

The education sector in Egypt is shaped by its ancient civilization. The Islamic influence on the education sector traces back to the foundation of the oldest degree-granting university, Al-*Azhar* University that was founded in AD 971³, and still is renowned as the most prestigious university in Islamic studies and Arabic learning. It is connected to the historic *Azhar* mosque that supervised academic institutions and schools adjacent to mosques in cities and villages.

The significant period of Muhammad Ali Pasha (1805-1849) marked the creation of a national education system that consisted of primary and secondary schools, and technical schools in addition to universities such as the school of Medicine. Another significant period that witnessed the first girl's education schooling was during the ruling of Ismail Pasha in the years (1863-1879). He established the school council which later became the Ministry of Education, and founded professional law, administration, engineering, and technical schools (Vatikiotis 1983).

Foreign languages – French, English, Italian, Greek, Armenian, and German were taught in missionary schools providing Western-style education to elites who could afford tuition, as explained by Barda:

Egypt is reputed to have been the first Oriental country to welcome Western culture most enthusiastically. From 1840 onwards, the Egyptian rulers encouraged the establishment of foreign language and missionary schools. By 1844, Christian schools for boys dispensed an excellent education in French and Arabic while the nuns (Order of St Vincent de Paul) undertook girls' education, mostly in French and Italian (2014: 50).

That said, education for the masses used to be religion focused in *Kutabs*,⁴ where the purpose of education was to be able to read the holy book, *Quran*, and follow Islamic teachings.

Later, French and British occupations created an education battlefield between different cultures and ideologies. For example, the French language remained widely popular within the Egyptian population, especially the elites, despite all efforts of the British to minimize its

³ AD is a global measurement of dates; it stands for *Anno Domini*, Latin for “in the year of the Lord” to refer to years after the birth of Jesus Christ.

⁴ Traditional Islamic Schools

significance during Britain's ruling of Egypt (1882-1922), although Britain did not withdraw all its troops until after the 1956 Suez Crisis (Mansfield 1971). Another example of the segregated approaches to education that led to an overall impediment of education in Egypt was Lord Cromer's⁵ expressed skepticism towards the institution of *Al Azhar's* religious teachings, which, in his view, constituted barriers to progress and generated anti-colonial propaganda. This skepticism led to tensions between Islamic and foreign education in Egypt. (Lloyd 1933). This affected the status and perception of both languages in Egypt, as will be described later in more depth, which shaped the overall education system, where secular schooling continued to be offered for foreigners and elites, while Arabic and Islamic teachings continued to be the education of the impoverished masses for decades – widening the gap between socio-economic classes of the society.

Later, President Nasser's socialist regime from (1954-1970) changed the face of education in Egypt where people were promised free access to schools and universities as a basic human right. Schools and universities were tuition free, for the first time in Egypt's history, and graduates were guaranteed employment in the public sector in an attempt to “make the system less elitist and prevent social unrest among educated youths” (Ramage 2019).

Nevertheless, several reasons resulted in the deterioration of the education system despite the promises and good intentions, namely, the Suez Crisis, Arab Israeli wars, political unrest and population growth. Egyptian students were still granted tuition-free education, however, the quality of education declined due to budget deficits and lack of funding. The education system continued to deteriorate decades after Nasser's regime due to Egypt's steady population growth. The total number of children enrolled in elementary school increased from 9.5 million in 2005 to 12.2 million in 2017, and from 6.7 million in 2009 to 8.9 million in 2015 at the secondary level, causing greater funding requirements, capacity shortages, and overcrowded classrooms among other problems. Universities and high schools continued to churn out “graduates with no future” (*Ibid.*), since they lack the required skills for employment in competitive modern economies. According to Amin (2014) in Egypt's Country Report for the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, high school and university graduates took an average of seven years to find

⁵ Evelyn Baring, 1st earl of Cromer, also known as Lord Cromer, was the Consul-General at Cairo during the British protectorate in Egypt.

profitable employment. This is manifested in the large informal economy where the majority of Egyptian graduates work odd jobs. The deterioration of the education system has led to many social problems and financial burdens on families who had to resort to private tutoring and extra education expenses to compensate for the shortage of the system, which resulted in further corruption and deterioration.

1.1.2. Egyptian education system at the present time

Following the Arab Spring and the rise of religious fanaticism and terrorist attacks in the region, the current regime in Egypt is aware of the dangers posed by the youth employment crisis and ignorance. Amongst the reforms that Egypt is currently undergoing, President Abdel Fattah El Sisi declared 2019 as “the year of education” to direct the government’s planning towards education improvement. For example, public education received an eight percent increase in the fiscal year 2018/19. While this percentage is still considered low compared to other countries, there have been other steps taken in that direction, such as the close collaboration between the Egyptian Ministry of Education and the USAID⁶ to create seven education reforms in Egypt. These include access to education, remedial reading programs, and improving general assessment skills. This \$500 million reform investment covers reforms from pre-school to secondary school (Welsh 2020). As a result, there have been significant positive changes in recent years. For example, the current number of dropouts from elementary school has decreased by 50% compared to the numbers during the 2011 revolution (UNESCO⁷ Institute of Statistics-UIS).

K-12 schools in Egypt

Egypt boasts the largest education system in the Middle East, with 50,000 public schools that provide tuition-free education for over 22 million students (UNESCO-UNEVOC⁸ 2021). The schooling system is divided into four stages: kindergarten, primary, preparatory, and secondary.

⁶ USAID, is the United States Agency of International Development.

⁷ UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It contributes to peace and security by promoting international cooperation in education, sciences, culture, communication and information.

⁸ UNESCO - UNEVOC is the International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training. It is one of UNESCO institutes and centers working in the field of education.

The Egyptian constitution stipulates that education is free and compulsory for all children between the ages of 6 and 15.

Tertiary education in Egypt is also tuition-free and is overseen by a separate ministry, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The Egyptian schooling system comprises four main stages: kindergarten, primary, preparatory, and secondary.

Kindergarten: Two years that begin at the age of four years old. Primary Education: This compulsory stage at the age of 6 years old, and consists of six academic years.

Preparatory Education: Following the primary stage, students continue three academic years to finish this level.

Secondary education in Egypt consists of two types: general and technical. Technical schools, including industrial, commercial, agricultural, and hotel & tourism schools, offer three to five years of education focused on these respective fields. Upon completion, students are awarded a certificate that enables them to either pursue university studies or start their technical careers.

The general secondary education track is divided into three academic years and culminates in a highly challenging standardized exam known as the Thanaweya Amma. Currently, there are two specializations available within the general track: literary and science. All students are required to study Arabic, English, and either French or German, as well as religion (Islamic or Christian) and citizenship education.

Core subjects in the literary track include history, philosophy, psychology, geography, and sociology. In contrast, the science stream focuses on biology, chemistry, physics, and mathematics. Both streams also offer additional elective courses, such as social studies, music, or a second foreign language.

Al-Azhar education is a separate system overseen by the Supreme Council of the Al-Azhar Institution, which operates independently from the Egyptian Ministry of Education. The schools within this system are referred to as "institutes" and offer primary, preparatory, and secondary stages that include both literary and science tracks.

Unlike the general and technical education tracks, *Al-Azhar* education emphasizes religious subjects alongside non-religious subjects, although not as intensively as the state schools. It is important to note that *Al-Azhar* education is considered a parallel system, and students who complete their education within this system receive a certificate that is not equivalent to the general or technical certificates issued by the Ministry of Education.

1.2. Setting the scene: social context

This study was conducted in Egypt, the largest country in the Middle East, with a population of 103 million (CAPMAS⁹ 2022). The research tackles the language textbooks used for teaching in state schools that is why it was essential to recruit participants from different geographic sides of the country. It is administratively divided into 26 governorates, where for centuries, most Egyptians have been living along the banks of the Nile River, and more than two-fifths of the population lives in urban areas. The population density is one of the highest in the world along the Nile, in excess of 5,000 persons per square mile (2,000 per square km) in a number of riverine governorates (Hopwood 2020). By far the largest part of Egypt's area is desert with no human settlements, leaving only 6 per cent that have high population density (Urbanet 2020).

Another salient cultural difference between Upper Egypt region and the rest of the country is the conservatism and traditionalism it is famous for and exemplified by the tradition of vendetta, *târ¹⁰*, the influential role of family ties the refusal to yield to State control¹¹. The marginalized status of women in Upper Egypt is another significant reflection of the region's religious conservative culture. Interestingly, this culture could be perceived as either positive or negative according to the individual's stance on values and ideologies. It is either considered positive if they associated with noble heritage of Egyptian culture as opposed to the "loose" urban dwellers. Or yet considered negative if perceived as ignorant, backward, and old-fashioned. In recent decades, Upper Egypt endorsed more and more the role of the tradition and moral values amongst other rural regions in the country. A contradiction that underscores the ideological differences between Egyptians towards conservatives and liberals.

Egypt is a monoethnic country, the Nubians forming the only major non-Arab local minority group (Miller 2011: 2). While the Egyptian society does not have the challenges that arise from multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies, yet the reality is far from a harmonized scenario.

⁹ CAPMAS, Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics is the official statistical agency of Egypt that collects, processes, analyzes, and disseminates statistical data Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics is the official statistical agency of Egypt that collects, processes, analyzes, and disseminates statistical data and conducts the census and conducts the census.

¹⁰ See for example Al-Ahram 15-21 Aug. 2002.

¹¹ See for example Al-Akhbâr 21/4/1994.

There lies a classical traditional dichotomy between rural, connoted with tradition and conservatism, contrary to cosmopolitan and modern urbanity. Rural areas have always been reputed with their conservatism in comparison to Cairo, the Capital, in particular. Upper Egypt specifically has always been described as the forgotten, isolated and unseen part of the country¹². By the mid-1990s, the emergence of fanatic Islamic activism in Upper Egypt and in the populous settlements of Cairo, which were inhabited by internal rural immigrants, highlighted the underlying factors that contributed to violence in Upper Egypt. These included the economic underdevelopment of the region, characterized by a multitude of causes and consequences such as the shortage of agricultural land, absence of industries, limited state investments and involvement, geographical remoteness from the capital, a dearth of employment opportunities, a high rate of internal rural migration, limited access to education, and subpar healthcare services. Another salient cultural difference between Upper Egypt region and the rest of the country is the conservatism and traditionalism it is famous for and exemplified by the tradition of vendetta, *târ*¹³, the influential role of family ties the refusal to yield to State control¹⁴.

In recent decades, the role of tradition and moral values has become increasingly important in Upper Egypt, as well as in other rural regions in the country (Miller 2004: 20). As reported in an interview with a *Sa'âidi*, [Upper Egyptian] immigrant who lives in Cairo:

Ties are stronger among us [people of Upper Egypt] than among those from the Delta [Lower Egypt] or the Cairene [residents of the Capital city, Cairo]. Our traditions form an entity and this comes from the proximity to religion [Islam]. It is semi-sacred" (Jamal, 27 years old, born in Cairo, Commercial Diploma, an-Nahya district).

It is evident from the interviewee's comments that even though he is living in the urban capital of Egypt, he still values the traditions and culture of Upper Egypt. These traditions are deeply rooted in the understanding and perception of Islam and are considered sacred, making it challenging to change or alter them. This is particularly difficult for rural women in Upper Egypt or any community in Egypt governed by traditions as some of these customs reflect gender norms that suppress women, such as the prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), despite its criminalization in Egypt in 2007 (Rasheed 2011). The persistence of such practices highlights the

¹² See for example Al-Ahrâm 10/10/1994, Al Wafd 5/5/1994, Al-Ahram Weekly 9/1996.

¹³ cf. see for example Al-Ahram 15-21 Aug. 2002.

¹⁴ cf. see for example Al-Akhbâr 21/4/1994.

challenges faced by women in marginalized communities to challenge traditional beliefs and cultural practices that perpetuate gender inequality.

Denying women their right to inheritance is another example of how conservative communities in Upper Egypt impede women's economic empowerment. This custom is known as the *radwa*, where only male cousins and siblings are eligible to inherit money. Despite the criminalization of this custom, nearly 96 % of women in the governorates of Sohag and Qena in Upper Egypt did not receive their proper inheritance following prevalent customs and traditions¹⁵. This reflects the deep-seated cultural norms and practices that perpetuate gender inequality and deny women their rights. Such practices further marginalize women and limit their economic opportunities, as inheritance is often a crucial source of financial support for women, particularly in rural areas.

While urban women may be considered more economically empowered than their rural counterparts, they still face significant challenges and are far from achieving gender equality. In Egypt, women in general face constraints that make it difficult for the state to advance towards gender equality. According to a USAID report in 2020, “Egypt ranked 134th out of the 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index” (USAID 2021). This indicates the persistence of gender inequality in Egypt, which affects women’s access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Women continue to face social and cultural norms that limit their agency, as well as legal barriers that impede their progress towards gender equality. Achieving gender equality in Egypt will require significant efforts to address these challenges and promote women's rights and empowerment at all levels of society.

1.2.1. The status of Egyptian women: The evolution of Egyptian women’s demands in modern history

The Egyptian feminist movement has come a long way since the end of the 19th century. Women were marginalized during the British occupation of Egypt due to detrimental policies pursued by Lord Cromer. According to Ahmed:

The restrictions he placed on government schools and his raising of school fees held back girls’ education as well as boys’. He also discouraged the training of women doctors. Under the British, the school for *Hakimas*¹⁶, which had given women as many years of medical training as the men received in the School of

¹⁵ See the study titled “The inheritance of women in Upper Egypt between reality and hope,” conducted in 2009.

¹⁶ The word *Hakimah* means wise or Judicious in Arabic, but also means female doctor within this context.

Medicine, was restricted to midwifery. On the local preference among women for being treated by women Cromer said, 'I am aware that in exceptional cases women like to be attended by female doctors, but I conceive that throughout the civilized world, attendance by medical men is still the rule.' (1992:153).

The feminist movement in Egypt can be traced back to the 1919 revolution, which saw women participating in demonstrations against British occupation while also making demands for women's rights. As Kamal notes in her description of the women's demands during the revolution, the process of mobilization and public protest was itself a struggle for visibility and agency in the public sphere (Kamal 2016: 5). This struggle for gender equality and women's rights continues in Egypt to this day. However, it is important to note that feminism in Egypt has evolved and developed its own distinct features over time.

First, the Egyptian feminist movement has demonstrated a commitment to responding to international feminist agendas, as evidenced by their attendance at international feminist conferences since 1923, including the Women's Congress in Rome in 1923 (*Ibid.* 2016:18). This commitment to international participation highlights the Egyptian feminists' aim to enhance women's position both domestically and internationally.

Additionally, Egyptian feminist activists have played a key role in legal reforms towards socio-cultural change in gender discrimination. During the second wave of feminism in the 1950s to 1970s, feminist activists succeeded in amending women's rights in the constitution. Despite Egypt having a secular legal system, family law continued to follow religious codes in areas such as marriage, divorce, custody, child support, and inheritance. Feminist activists shed light on the contradictions between the progressive women's rights stated in the constitution regarding engaging in the public sphere and the conservative personal status law governing women in the private sphere (Hatem 1992: 232).

Consequently, women demanded that courts certify divorce, take charge of child custody decisions, give permission for men to take second wives, provide fair compensation for divorced women, and abolish obedience verdicts. The term "obedience," or "*al-ta'a*," refers to the husband's legal right to accuse his wife of "disobedience" if she leaves home against his will, and have her forcibly brought back to the marital house, or "*bayt al-ta'a*," the obedience house. Luckily, this law was abolished in 1967 in response to the relentless efforts of feminist activists (Bier 2011:112).

Thirdly, women were able to seek more international support through NGOs as the state's grip on civil society weakened with the new Mubarak regime in 1981 after the assassination of President Sadat by Islamists. A substantial body of literature underscores the significance of

NGOs' roles in the processes of democratic transition and social integration, whether in cooperative or adversarial relationships with governments. This is evident in various regions around the world, including Central and Eastern Europe (Bernhard 1993), Latin America (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986), Southeast Asia (Kim 2000), and Africa (Bratton 1989). With this breakthrough, women were able to receive more international support through human rights and feminist organizations such as the Woman Foundation and the Alliance of Arab Women, among many others. That said, the strengthened feminist movement resulted in a series of national and international campaigns to expose the continuing gender discrimination against women despite all executed measures. Special attention was directed towards women's sexual rights in an attempt to combat honor killing, virginity tests on female detainees, female genital mutilation (FGM), and reproductive rights (Kamal 2016: 12). As Kamal states, “[t]he issue of women’s bodies was ranking among the most important human rights concerns in Egypt, and has continued to be the main component of feminist and human rights activism” (*Ibid.*: 14).

Fourthly, what remained constant throughout the journey of the Egyptian feminist movement was the rights to education, access to higher education, employment and economic independence. Thankfully, the right to education is now taken for granted by the majority of Egyptians, due to raising the age of marriage to force the girls’ guardians to keep their children enrolled in schools rather than trading them in a wedlock for financial gains. Also, the state universities tuition-free education has enabled girls to protect their right to education.

Finally, the feminist movement has tirelessly worked to enrich the political and intellectual discourse surrounding political representation, aiming to improve women's socio-economic status in society and combat gender discrimination, albeit with gradual progress. An ongoing demand for more representation in judiciary and decision-making positions has indeed shaped the fourth wave of feminism in Egypt, post-Revolution 2011 till present. In fact, the current fourth wave of Egyptian feminism has been shaped by two main features: women involvement in the constitution and combatting violence against women (*Ibid.*). Egyptian women feel an impending need to secure positions in decision-making positions in the political sphere due to the underlying fear of the rise of Islamic radicalization that threatens the stability of the region (*Concerns about Islamic extremism* 2014). The latter is what differentiates the Egyptian women’s freedom movement from any other.

1.2.2. Difference between Western and Egyptian fourth wave feminist movement

There is a consensus that the fourth wave feminist movement emerged in the first decade of the 21st century, between 2001 and 2013 (Kaplan 2003; Baumgardner 2011; Cochrane 2013; Looft 2017). In fact, the arrival of the fourth wave was previously predicted as early as 2003. Kaplan (2003) argues that “the fourth wave will be distinguished by bringing second and third wave feminists together to confront a new and devastating reality that involves us all, if not equally, then at least at once. This new reality ideally cuts across racial, ethnic and national divides” (2003: 55).

There has been a diffusion of the old and new goals of feminism that rejuvenated the movement (Munro 2013; Maclaran 2015). Yet, what is distinct about the fourth wave feminists is the reliance on technology through social media tags to promote inclusion (Chamberlain 2017; Parry, Johnson, and Wagler 2018; Shiva and Kharazmi 2019). According to Shiva and Kharazmi (2019), the following features mark the fourth wave: intersectionality (Looft 2017; Munro 2013; Shiva and Kharazmi 2019; Zimmerman 2017), empowerment (Rivers 2017), social activism (Davis 2000; Rivers 2017), and condemnation of sexual violence (Cochrane 2013; Looft 2017; Parry et al. 2018; Shiva and Kharazmi 2019). And the main key feature is the technological mobilization (Zimmerman 2017; Chamberlain 2017; Looft 2017; Charles and Wadia 2018; Parry et al. 2018; Shiva and Kharazmi 2019). Also, its technological nature resulted in “de nouvelles pratiques discursives [new discursive practices]” of cyber language (Komur 2012: 130) that generated feelings of belonging that are transferred into the offline sphere (Shiva and Kharazmi 2019) creating distinctive two concepts that shape today’s movement: empowerment and sisterhood.

Undoubtedly, the fourth-wave feminism in Egypt is largely influenced by a broader global movement, which has translated into work towards two distinctive agendas, as previously discussed: the move to increase political representation and to mitigate widespread violence against women. Specifically, in 2020, the year witnessed the birth of the Egyptian #MeToo movement that encouraged victims to share their stories. One of its outcomes, the Instagram account Assault Police, exposed the story of a male college student at Egypt’s top private university, The American University in Cairo, who raped and blackmailed fellow colleagues. The same account exposed a horrific act of affluent socialite group rape of a drugged victim that took place at one of Egypt’s luxurious hotels, known as the *Fairmont incident*. The arrest of the

assaulters gave credibility to the platforms and encouraged more women to share their stories. Despite the success of the efforts of these platforms to give women victims their voice, the two incidents highlighted the empowerment and support granted to victims of the upper-middle class.

Unfortunately, individuals in the upper and upper-middle socioeconomic strata have greater exposure to Western media and education, allowing them to align with Western standards of equality and inclusion. Regrettably, this level of exposure is not accessible to the majority of women in middle and lower socioeconomic conditions.

The Egyptian society is fragmented into multiple classes, with the majority living in traditional conservative social environments. The challenges faced by Egyptian women vary across religious fundamentalism, poverty, and exploitation, yet their level of subjection to social constraints is determined by their socioeconomic class. The prevalent custom of Female Genital Mutilation in Egypt, for example, highlights the difference in behavior towards change among socioeconomic classes. Van Rossem and Meekers explain the sharp decline in this cultural tradition that is believed to preserve women's honor and purity. According to them, "delegitimation of FGM occurs first and most pronounced in both the more modern segments of society (i.e., among those who are better educated, urban, or employed in modern sectors), as well as among the least traditional segments of Egyptian society" (2020: 3).

Likewise, groups situated at the lower end or outside the conventional status hierarchy, such as the extremely impoverished and religious minorities, are less likely to adhere to this practice (Ibid.: 1). In alignment with their findings, the vast majority of the population, who do not belong to the upper classes nor are part of marginalized groups, are governed by traditions shaped and enforced under patriarchal influence, whether it be of religious or socioeconomic nature. That said, it is clear that traditional culture that promotes shaming and silencing to protect 'honor' is what differentiates between the global fourth wave movement and the Egyptian one. Regrettably, the vast majority of the Egyptian women would not have the luxury or safe space to share their stories and seek justice like their sisters in the Upper class or in the Western world through hashtags. Indeed, the majority of Egyptian women, who do not have class mobility nor economic resources, are still struggling to acquire for basic human rights due to traditional practices like honor killing, deprivation of inheritance, and overarching strict control of their "social and sexual behavior restrictive norms on their social participation, particularly their interactions with the other

sex” (*Ibid.*). In a culture where gender segregation is deeply rooted, as explained earlier, women are blamed, rather than protected, if they negotiate mix-gender spaces.

Finally, the current fourth wave approach could only instigate urban westernized women, who belong to the upper class to attire themselves in the global popular culture, nevertheless it will leave the struggling working class behind to further widen a gap between the haves and the have-nots. It is crucial now more than ever to narrow the gap between the classes of the Egyptian society before an impending cultural clash between the Upper westernized class, and other social strata. Nevertheless, women movements and social media platforms shed light on a certain societal phenomenon and influence policy making, they do not prevent the event before it happens.

As early as 1909, in Egypt’s modern history, women fought for liberation and for citizenship rights whether with a national, Islamic reform, Western or anti-colonial agendas. In the light of the fourth wave features that shape the discourse of the feminist movement today, this research sheds light on one of the underlying reasons to eradicate objectifying women. Besides enforcing laws to combat sexual violence against women, civil society’s awareness campaigns and victim support, it is through education that one can cure the root-cause.

1.2.3. **The effect of political instability on the social status of Egyptian women**

In the past decade, African and Middle Eastern countries have had revolutions and wars that resulted in many casualties and economic losses. Most evidently, these turbulences resulted in tampering with national constitutions that led to instability and threats to the rights of the marginalized. In Egypt, specifically after the 2011 Revolution and the rapid ascent of the Muslim Brotherhood to power in 2012, women faced the threat of losing certain rights under the newly approved 2012 constitution. The draft guaranteed equality between men and women, but only if it does not contradict the rules of Islamic *shari’ah* law, “while interpretations of *shari’ah* differ, they generally limit women’s rights in family law, the penal code, matters of pensions and insurance” (Zuhur 2014 :44) As further explained by McLarney:

The Morsi government adapted the liberal language of women’s rights, drawing simultaneously on a long history of constitutional language, as well as a long history of Islamist rhetoric about women’s rights in Islam. This Islamist language has long been deployed in the service of Islamic mobilization, advocacy that has been essential to cultivating its appeal among the populace (2013 para. 3).

Many were skeptical towards this ambiguity, paradoxically, with a government-led by the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood. The new Islamic wave weakened women's status and diversified their goals, as demonstrated by Zufur:

The political struggle with the new Islamist government polarized women between those who felt they could contend with the new Freedom and Justice Party [ruling Muslim Brotherhood party] and those who were left without a strong political base; the weakened liberal parties became splintered, and a boycott by the National Salvation Front was mostly posturing without effect. Newly elected Islamist women and men also blamed the women demonstrators for "being there" [in demonstrations'] and thus encouraging, or deserving sexual attack (2014: 28).

After ousting President Morsi, the new 2013 constitution draft was more favorable to women's rights. Article 11, for example, "promises gender equality in every dimension. This had been denied in the 2012 constitution with the argument that *shari'ah* disallowed it" (*Ibid.*: 44). Kamal describes the transition from the Islamic themed constitution of 2012 to the amended version of 2014, the current working constitution:

[T]he Constitution of 2012 came as a major blow to Egyptian women, threatening to deprive them of the rights they had obtained throughout the history of Egyptian feminist activism. When the Islamist president was removed from power in July 2013 following the massive demonstrations that started on 30 June and continued till 3 July, the new road map set included a revision of the constitution. A new process of constitutional amendments leads to issuing the Constitution of 2014 that granted women rights in several of its articles (2016: 16).

This back-and-forth overturn of Islamic-secular ruling, manifested in the short-lived government of ousted President Morsi, democratically elected in June 2012 and overthrown in June 2013, outlines an underlying great threat towards women in particular and a resistance towards calls for gender equality. This resistance stands defiantly against its responsibilities under international law.

Ironically, the inattention to women's rights under the ruling of the Muslim Brotherhood party was not one of the driving forces behind the overthrow of President Morsi. The main reasons were the president's self-granted sweeping powers early on in his term and the parliament's issuance of a restrictive bill on NGOs. This law required NGOs to register with the Ministry of Solidarity and Social Justice for a permit to receive and manage foreign funding, giving the Ministry the power to refuse to register organizations (Egypt: Stop holding NGOs hostage 2012). There were also no guarantees to ensure an organization's stability, as the Ministry of Solidarity and Social Justice had "wide-ranging powers over it, including the power of dissolution" (*Ibid.*).

The final straw that led to President Morsi's ousting was the introduction of a draft law to ban peaceful demonstrations.

That being said, it was a disappointment for women in Egypt that the country's first democratically-elected government failed to acknowledge critical issues affecting women, such as marital rape and human trafficking, which have contributed to the pervasive culture of sexual harassment, one of the most pressing issues that Egyptian women face today (Bastawy 2015).

Despite the introduction of some safeguards for women in the 2014 Constitution, marital rape remains legal, and intimate partner violence is still not recognized under the law. In addition, adultery laws discriminate against women, and little or no protection exists for women from social and familial pressures and punishments doled out by families and communities.

In conclusion, Egypt's women rights advocates post Arab Spring Egypt faced many culture-specific obstacles summarized by Zuhur in (Derichs and Fennert):

Both feminist and women's rights activists are confronted with the actions and powerful narratives of opposing countermovements, which include Islamists and Salafist parties and organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood, alongside religious spokespersons, for-hire street thugs and ordinary Egyptians (2014: 28).

This brief overview about the challenges and religious counter-movements encountered by women rights' advocates in Egypt shed light on women's reality and daily challenges. So, what are these struggles, and how do they affect women's lives and agency? And finally, how are these challenges endorsed in public schools and reinforced in textbooks? There are three major phenomena that shape the lives of the majority of Egyptian women:

1. gender-based violence;
2. gender-segregation;
3. moral policing of women's bodies.

1.2.4. Sexual Violence in Egypt

Sexual harassment is a phenomenon found in many countries across the globe, however, this rising phenomenon in Egypt is worth further investigation as the country has occupied an alarming top position on the international map of sexual harassment (El Ashmawy 2017: 225). In a study done by the Thomson Reuters Foundation on Arab countries in 2013, Egypt was rated as the worst country for women to live in due to the widespread sexual harassment. Furthermore, the United Nations Population Fund ranked Egypt, following the 2011 revolution, as the second

country after war-torn Afghanistan in terms of sexual harassment. Post revolution Egypt has witnessed a “weaponized” nature of sexual harassment that will be further presented in this section as a common ground where objectification, stereotypes and fragmented women empowerment approaches intertwine.

One of the most visible shifts in women’s agency with regards to the struggle for space in the public sphere is fighting the phenomenon of sexual violence that shaped the fourth wave of feminism in Egypt. This phenomenon evolved during the 2011 Revolution where women activists and journalists were targeted by organized squads to sexually harass and gang rape them. Throughout the countless tumultuous protests and demonstrations that led to the ousting of Mubarak and later Morsi (2011- 2013), a number of vicious incidents of sexual violence against women occurred that resulted in the enhancement of punishments related to the crimes of sexual harassment, rape, and sexual assault. Specifically, Lara Logan¹⁷, a South African television reporter covering the demonstrations in February 2011, was sexually assaulted by a group of 40 men. Similarly, Caroline Sinz¹⁸, a French television reporter for Channel France 3 was sexually assaulted. Ironically, women participants in an anti-sexual violence protest were sexually assaulted by similar organized squads. Also, in the commemoration of the overthrow of President Mubarak on January 2013, NGOs revealed that number of sexual assault and rape reached 19 cases on that day (Sadek 2016: 3). Women rights NGO’s reported 101 cases of brutal sexual assault that occurred during the up rise against President Morsi from June 28 throughout July 2, 2013.

One common factor that all these attacks had in common is the lack of empathy and criminalization of the victim. Following every reported violent attack, it was common to hear the infamous question on the media “اي إلى وداها هناك؟” “What made her [the victim] go to that particular place?” Sheikh Khaled Abdullah, Salafi preacher, was the first person to publicly shame a violent harassment victim on his television program, after a photograph of a girl dragged by military soldiers – referred to as “the girl in the blue bra” – has caught the attention of the world. He screamed the infamous question, and questioned her intentions for not wearing an extra layer of clothing under her *abya*, Islamic veil dress, in clear indications of the flawed girl’s reputation and morals. Lastly, on June 9th, 2014, during a public celebration in Tahrir Square - Cairo of the

¹⁷See news article by Gordon (2020): Former CBS News reporter Lara Logan recounts Cairo gang rape and slams coverage of the assault | Daily Mail Online.

¹⁸ See news article in France 24: Female journalists sexually assaulted in Cairo unrest (france24.com).

inauguration day of President Abdel Fattah El Sisi, an Egyptian woman with her mother was stripped from all her clothes and brutally assaulted by men before she was rushed to the hospital. President Sisi' visited the victim at the hospital and apologized on behalf of all Egypt, as reported by Kirkpatrick:

Mr. Sisi's visit and apology, on his third day in office, were orchestrated to convey his determination to combat sexual violence against women. It was a far more forceful expression of personal commitment than was ever made by his predecessors, Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood (2014 para. 4).

Notwithstanding the development of mass sexual violence in political protests, the direct targeting of women is not restricted to activist women. Throughout the past decade, sexual harassment, violence and rape incidents have been a growing phenomenon in Egypt, specifically during Islamic national holidays (*Eid al Fitr*) in public places and city centers. The frequency of these incidents led The Women's Center for Legal Guidance and Awareness to form the "Anti-Harassment Operations Room" to monitor and document cases of sexual harassment and violence against women and young girls during *Eid* (Egypt's women organizations, 2019: para. 2). As broadcasted by Women's organizations in Egypt during *Eid el fitr* in 2019, for example, 19 cases of sexual harassment, both verbally and physically, were registered within three governorates: Gharbiya, Daqahlia and Alexandria on the first day of the five-day national holiday.

In an attempt to combat this phenomenon, it has become common to see women police officers scattered in Cairo and Giza streets at venues where harassments are most likely to take place due to overcrowding, such as the ticket windows of parks and cinemas, Nile Corniche and downtown Cairo (El-Behary 2018: para. 8). Notwithstanding all these efforts, the National Council of Women released in a media statement that a noticeable decline in sexual harassment as only 17 cases of sexual harassment in Cairo were reported during the *Eid* of 2018 (*Ibid.*). This number is arguably high, especially considering the media attention and the stringent security measures implemented by female police personnel, as well as the deployment of rapid intervention forces in public areas and gatherings. There is limited evidence for the accurate numbers, however, "because the victims of such violence refrain from reporting it out of fear of retaliation or shame" (Sadek 2016: 1). As explained by Kamal (2016), women are reluctant to report such incidents to the police, as sexual violence has been largely disregarded by the national media to the extent of condemning the victims.

Although *Eid* national holiday receives most of the notoriety in terms of the high rates of sexual harassment, the daily harassment of women and girls in public places is prevalent and well-

documented all over Egypt. In a 2008 study of about 1,010 women and 1,010 men in Greater Cairo, 83% of Egyptian women and 98 % of foreign women respondents reported they had been sexually harassed (Hassan, Abul Komsan, and Shoukry 2008: 16). Moreover, a study done by the UN Women in 2013 concluded that 99% of a sample of 2, 332 women from seven governorates across rural and urban contexts, including the capital, upper and lower Egypt Cairo had been sexually harassed (El-Deeb 2013: 6). Furthermore, a 2014 study carried out by HarassMap revealed that 95% of three hundred women sample in Greater Cairo experienced sexual harassment (Fahmy *et al.* 2014: 6).

We can argue that the rate of sexual assaults has increased after women negotiated their place in the political sphere during 2011 Revolution. Although incidents of sexual harassment had existed in Egypt before 2011, the change in frequency and nature of these assaults are quite alarming. Public sexual violence in Egypt arouses diverse cultural and political inquiries as questioned by Abdel Hamid and Zaki:

Despite the paucity of precise data and statistics, the emergence of new forms of violence, some of which had been terrifying in terms of their violence. In particular, the emergence of gang rape and the use of blade weapons in attacks are developments that must be examined in their own right (2014: para.9).

So, why women are now targeted more than ever before? One possible answer to this question is the prevalence of violence in the Egyptian society since January 2011 ignited by clashes between protesters and opponents or police forces. However, Zakkariya argues that targeting women sexuality in specific is to shame women who negotiate public spaces of dissent in 2011 onwards. She argues that this behavior is “a counter-revolution strategy that purposely utilizes a masculinist culture with the aim of making revolutionary women, their male guardians, and those who identify with them conscious of the limits of accessing public spaces in Egypt” (2019: 1). Additionally, it could be viewed as a systematic political tool for "intimidating and terrifying women from publicly voicing their opposition by targeting their respectability" (Tadros 2015: 1349). Clearly, Egyptian women are still under the control of deep-rooted normative standards of honor, femininity and masculinity that entails that "violation of women's body is taken as a dishonor of the entire family or community for which women, and not their aggressor(s), are held responsible" (Skalli 2013: 246). In order to protect themselves and their family from shame and scandals, Egyptian women are expected not to display their sexuality in public so as not to invite repudiation and harassment. Therefore, sexual violence exposes an underlying inherent, masculinist culture of "female shame and stigmatization" that blames female victims for their

sexual violations (*Keeping Women out* 2014: 35). It can be clearly seen that the Egyptian society did not take conscious steps to shed old perceptions of women as merely sexual objects.

Formerly, Egyptian female activists, clearly aware of the intersection between colonial and national politics of gender discrimination and patriarchy, have fought on both fronts for negotiating public space. For example, Egyptian women in Revolution 1919 fought the colonial stereotypical representation that “Oriental women, despite the veils everywhere in Cairo, conceal a deep, rich fund of female sexuality [...] peculiarly luxuriant and seemingly unbounded sexuality” (Said 1979: 188). Notwithstanding objectifying women are common colonial ways to control the colonized, is it the internal front that further oppressed women and maintained the status quo of women inferiority. This was evident in the same era, when leading entrepreneurs and intellectuals such as Talaat Harb, Ahmed Shawqi and Ahmed as-Sayyid sexualized and defamed women's movements in newspapers and cultural arenas by using the term “Westernized,” “sexually promiscuous”, and “threatening religious identity and peace of the country” (Al-Ali 2004: 34).

In the same way, Islamists such Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, warned that “woman’s danger lies particularly in her sexuality [...] social order is secured when the woman limits herself to her husband” (Mernissi 1987: 10). Hence, Egyptian women have been limited and objectified by various external and internal patriarchies. Now that the Islamic wave is forced to go underground by the current regime, a power-knowledge vacuum is created to be wisely filled by women's movements and the education sector to execute the regime’s will and intention for change.

1.2.5. Current measures to counter sexual harassment

In response to recent events, the Egyptian government has been pressured to take action and has passed a bill aimed at ensuring the anonymity of victims and witnesses in sexual assault cases (Evans 2020). The Egyptian Ministry of Interior has also established a unit within the ministry specialized in combating violence against women, including sexual harassment (Kamal 2016: 15). In addition, NGOs and the National Council of independent anti-harassment groups have advocated for an anti-sexual harassment movement that has gained credibility in recent years.

One of the first independent groups to focus on the problem of sexual violence was HarrassMap, which was established a month before the 2011 Revolution. HarrassMap encouraged

shop owners, door men, and others consistently on the streets to step in if they witness harassment assault (Langhor 2015: 132). Similarly, three other groups were founded to combat harassment during Eid. In 2012, one of these groups, *Basma* (Smile), targeted men riding metro cars reserved for women and urged them to exit. Volunteers from *Basma* and two other groups, *Didd al-Taharrush* (Against Harassment) and *Shuft Taharrush* (I Saw Harassment), later initiated *Eid* patrols on crowded streets to physically block groups of men harassing women and aid victims in filing police reports (Langohr 2015: 131).

According to Abdelhamid and Zaki, these anti-assault and harassment groups represent “an independent social movement numbering hundreds, if not thousands, of young men and women who have chosen to stand up to violence using extremely diverse methods and tools” (2014: para.5). These new post-2011 civil society and feminist movements offer optimistic demonstrations of solidarity and persistence to empower their cultural and political impact.

In the education sector, some universities, such as Ain Shams University, have launched anti-harassment units on campus to implement new policies and measures to combat this phenomenon on campus. These universities are starting to implement the guide of "policies and procedures to address sexual harassment at the university," which was prepared by the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (Salah 2017).

However, the question remains: are these efforts enough to end the dire situation of Egyptian women? Unfortunately, it seems that feminist movements and civil society will not be able to achieve a common goal due to their divided visions about women and their role in society. The division is most evident between liberal and Christian feminists, who are often accused of “making Egypt a cultural colony of America and the West” (Younis 2007: 486), and Islamic feminists, who still reach a vast audience but are accused of upholding "fundamentalism, cultural backwardness, and reactionary atavism" (Mahmood 2005: 5).

Nevertheless, it is important to remember the daily struggle of women on the streets, often overlooked by these debates. Working-class women who use public transportation, work in factories and public facilities, and suffer from normalized forms of sexual violence regularly are the most affected. The large percentage of Egyptian women’s population is caught between conflicting, class-oriented means of modernization versus fundamentalism.

In summary, while progress has been made in combating sexual harassment and assault in Egypt, the lack of a unified goal and common approach among feminist movements and civil society is hindering further progress. Additionally, the struggles of working-class women who are most affected by sexual violence are often overlooked in these debates.

1.3. Gender segregation: Egypt

The case of gender mixing is a controversial topic in Egypt and affects all classes based on their interpretation of Islamic teachings. Although patriarchy is on no account unique to Muslim-majority societies, still the anthropologists who studied the Egyptian model of gender segregation proposed by *Salafism* during the 1970's – and still affects the present public space – consider it *sui generis* due to a number of reasons. *Salafism* is a reform branch movement of Sunni Islam whose modern-day advocates claim to emulate “the pious predecessors” (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*; often refer to the first three generations of Muslims) as closely and in as many spheres of life as possible (Wagemakers 2016). First, despite President Nasser's 1962 socialist Charter for National Action endorsing gender equality and sponsoring feminism, gender mixing is not encouraged in Islam, as El-Guindi explains “Islam condemns cross-sex exposure whether by unnecessary or taboo contact or through immodesty in dress and behavior (1981: 476). In other words, usually the discourse focuses on women, in particular, rather than both genders as highlighted by Valerie Hoffman-Ladd that “the modesty and segregation of women” is as an “attempt to preserve traditional values perceived to be Islamic” (1987: 43). The anxiety over women's presence in public were not new; in fact the *salafi* attempts to comprehensively regulate women's presence in state institutions and on mass transportation was a response to the state's promotion of feminism during the Nasser period (1952-1970), and to the political competition with the Muslim Brotherhood during the 1970s. The Muslim Brotherhood and *Salafi* are Egypt's main rival islamists; the highly dense population of Egypt makes it a “key prize” for competing ideological movements, religious and secular (Rock-Singer 2016: 283).

Activists in early 20th century Egypt, such as Qâsim Amin and Huda al-Sha'râwî called for women to take part in the Egyptian public spaces, faces covered, based on Islamic modernist approach. At the same time, al-Azhar's *Fatwa* Council – Egypt's most influential Sunni opinions,

declared in 1937 that the Hanafi School did not consider veiling of any sort to be obligatory. Consequently, women acquired an increasingly prominent role in public ever since.

Starting in the 1960s, the State encouraged a feminine ideal of modesty without the veil. Sheikh Ahmad Hasan al-Baqūrī, President of al-Azhar at the time, argued that the obligation for women to veil in any form was specific to the Prophet's family and therefore not incumbent on Muslim women more broadly. Furthermore, Islam permitted women not only to expose their heads and limbs but also to travel independently and liberally outside the home. However, this call for women's independence faced a backlash from the two Islamist rivals, marking the end of consensus among them as well. There had been numerous internal divisions amongst their scholars regarding the legal status of a woman's face and the appropriate dress code, but all participants in these debates assumed individual modes to be sufficient for women in public spaces. Hence, the beginning of the 1970s marked the change in discourse from posing the question of whether women would be in public to how they would preserve their modesty as they inevitably negotiated heterosexual public space.

While individual modesty is a condition for women's engagement in public life, this does not imply that *Salafi* scholars encouraged women's participation in public institutions and prayer spaces. As explained by Shaykh Abd Allah b. Hamid, President of the High Judicial Council of Saudi Arabia in the Rabi al-Awwal/March 1976 issue of *al-Tawhīdt*, women are unfit to serve as judges or to lead men in prayer; the issue, in both cases, is that these positions would grant women undeserved authority (*wilāya*) over men (qtd. in Rocky-Singer 2016: 292). Women were permitted to negotiate public space with the accompaniment of a male chaperone (*mahram*). In other words, women faced many hurdles to engage in public life without having to force them to stay at home.

However, the rapid increase in Egypt's population during the 1970's resulted in a higher demand for education, transportation and employment. President Sadat's Open-door economic policy during this marked the high aspiration for a better quality of life through a new exposure to Western consumer culture that left Islamists with new challenges in enforcing their patriarchal control over women's modesty.

Salafis and Muslim Brotherhood sought to redefine their vision on public morality to distinguish themselves from their competitors and to lay claim to the mantle of religious authority in Egypt. Luckily, for textual and practical reasons, none of the scholars from both ideologies argued against the right of women to education. On the textual front, several hadith report

encouraging female education were widely accepted by *Salafis*. In the same way, the *Salafi* vision of Islamic motherhood required that mothers receive education to enable them to effectively raise their children, both in terms of scientific knowledge and religious upbringing.. Hence, female education remained at the core of the Salafi initiative even as female presence in public created anxiety (Rocky-Singer 2016: 296).

However, *Salafis* called women to return home to protect their chastity, while ignoring the fact that these calls were economically elitist. Their justification focused on sympathizing with women who commuted via overcrowded means of transportation, with complete disregard for the relationship between modesty and class, as there were women who could afford private means of transportation. They also called for women to be removed from educational or professional environments that might threaten their chastity or modesty, which is also a scenario that could be attained with the help of domestic servants. That gave rise to the Muslim Brotherhood to undertake “practical” solutions to facilitate women’s presence in public sphere in cooperation with the Islamic Student Movement, *al-jamaa al-Islämiyya*. This collaboration marked the birth of the phenomenon of gender segregation in Egypt’s modern history:

Together, these organizations had secured gender-segregated seating on a set number of train routes, particularly between Cairo and Alexandria, beginning in February 1978, thus protecting female students and workers of limited income who relied on public transportation. Similar challenges related to gender mixing awaited university students inside and outside the classroom, and the Brotherhood, again in cooperation with the Islamic Student Movement negotiated with the administration of Cairo University to provide separate spaces for men and women for university events hosted in the university's out- door stadium. The goal of separation was also extended to the classroom: *al-Da’wa* boasted that the Faculty of Agriculture at Cairo University now provided separate seating in lecture halls for male and female students and, in the near future, the lectures themselves were separate (*Ibid.*: 301).

Women had become a permanent presence in public spaces due to their newfound economic independence. Therefore, Salafis had to adapt to this reality in order to compete with the Muslim Brotherhood for a broader popular audience.

Clearly, the complex nature of gender mixing, or lack thereof, in Egypt after *Wahabism*, an absolutist, fundamentalist interpretation of Islam made its way to the country, still affects the public sphere today. Common advice regarding socializing and forming friendships with the opposite gender as suggested by Halim 2019; Zosuls 2011 as a means to eradicate negative attitudes towards the “other” is not one of the attainable solutions in our case.

Furthermore, the sociocultural reality of the Egyptian society, where the aim of gender segregation is to preserve piety and modesty and serves religious ideologies, explains why Western arguments in favor of single-sex education as an empowerment method are inapplicable. Most of the studies on single-sex education were done in Western communities where the empowerment claim is still considered controversial due the lack of scientific evidence to its efficacy in academic achievement (Haag 1998).

1.3.1. **How gender segregation is reflected in Egyptian public schools**

Although co-ed public schools are prevalent in Egyptian villages and cities all around Egypt, the reality of this co-education is far from being a real opportunity for both genders to learn fundamentals of friendship, co-existence and respect. First of all, single-sex public schools are quiet prevalent all over the country, and is regarded as the preferred parental choice. Egypt's staggering infrastructure and budget constraints result in scarcity of schools and overcrowded classrooms. Sometimes, funds are available but there is no land to build more schools in highly dense areas that force parents to enroll their children in the available co-ed school. In such schools, Classrooms that are initially designed to handle 25-30 students, usually end up accommodating up to 120, despite the fact that many schools operate morning and evening shifts (Abdel Samad 2020). These numbers indeed reflect the conditions of the schools' infrastructure and facilities and even toilets. Children who lack access to proper toilet facilities at school face difficulties in completing their education. Unsafe, unavailable or unsanitary toilets in the school grounds can lead to anxiety and stress, discouraging learners from attending (*The Crisis in the Classroom* 2018). The problem of overcrowded classrooms persists in primary and preparatory schools, however, it decreases in secondary school due to the low level of attendance. Secondary schools have flexible attendance rules and shorter academic days that make classrooms fairly empty.

One can argue that co-education is sometimes the family's only option due to the scarcity of public schools in some areas. The resentment towards co-education or gender mixing is manifested when it is the used to justify and explain any new turbulence in the Egyptian society. For example, co-education and gender interaction is often regarded as one of the main reasons behind the increased number of among young students at the preparatory, secondary school, and university levels, who secretly marry (*urfi* marriage), an illegal marriage where the man proposes and the women accepts, in front of two witnesses, without giving or receiving any legal rights

(Eum: 2005). According to the Public Mobilization and Statistics Authority, ratified *urfi* marriage contracts in society amounted to 149, 232 in 2017 and 16.4% of all marriage contracts, with the largest number of cases of *urfi* marriage between females in the 18-20 age group with 101,500 cases, followed by the 20-25 age group with 32, 113 cases, while the number of unratified contracts is still unknown it is clear that the number are high among young youth in public universities. Although the statistics are not accurate due the secret nature of this marriage, the numbers are sometimes exaggerated in the tabloids and national newspapers. For example, *al Wafd* newspaper claims that the number of *urfi* marriages reached 60-70% of the total number of university students, while there is no justification on how this conclusion was reached. Despite the inaccuracy of actual statistics, this phenomenon highlights a conflict that Egyptian youth encounter, which might lead to secret marriages as a "strategy to evade moral and religious scrutiny of 'illicit relationships'" (Abaza 2001: 20).

Although several religious scholars insist that it is not religiously forbidden, the practice is considered not to be in line with the social norms, and has been associated with the wife's and children's legal rights the minute conflicts appear due to lack of legal proof. Interestingly, the public discourse, namely press and TV talk show, morally condemns venues of gender mixing, and women behavior in particular. For example, an article in Al Ahram newspaper, titled "Urfi Marriage Equals Legal Prostitution," concentrated on the behavior of promiscuous women as a way to attract attention to this phenomenon. The press took the responsibility of raising the alarm about women sexuality as a national threat, "associating lustful, mostly European-looking, loose women with magnified and/or invented stories about *urfi* liaisons, thus attracting promising readership" (*Ibid.*: 71). The public discourse clearly focuses on women sexuality in the shared public place as the root cause of societal moral decay.

While there are various socioeconomic reasons that lead young youth to towards choosing *urfi* marriage, gender interaction is frequently regarded as the root cause. Jibril (2008) argues that families permitting their children to interact with the opposite gender, along with academic institutions that facilitate gender mixing, provide sufficient grounds for *urfi* marriages to take place. Interacting with the opposite sex whether at schools or universities is viewed as a fertile ground for uncontrollable consequences (Saleh 2002; Abdul Rahman et al. 2017; Ghazi 2019).

Needless to say, *urfi* marriage can wreak havoc on a girl's life if the "secret" is exposed, while men generally do not face as severe consequences. The Egyptian society is shaped by

gender-specific binary notion of honor and shame that creates a double-standard towards *urfi* marriage (Eum 2005). Arguably, the Egyptian society manifests a tradition where “the code of honor is typically associated with men, whereas the code of shame is associated with women” (*Ibid.*: 248). The discrepancy between the conviction between men and women in that case is in accordance with El-Solh and Mabro (1994) explanation of the prevalence of binary notion of honor/men and shame/women in societies where the concepts of honor and shame are central to an understanding of relations between men and women, and thus of the moral code governing society.

1.4. Policing female body in Egypt

The normalized rhetoric surrounding violence highlights how proponents of dress codes depict female immodesty as a provocative factor contributing to men's sexual misconduct. Women's sexuality is often blamed as stated by Steinberg:

Beautiful virgins were considered dangerous, both for how their presence distracted and tempted 40 men and how their own repressed sexual desire could drive them to recklessness and violence, both of which could cause *fitnah*¹⁹, or social chaos. Though this is a general term, it was often specifically applied to the chaos caused by sexual temptation or manipulation caused by women (2018: 39).

This prevalent view of women's sexuality leads to the enforcement of stricter dress code and more gender segregation on women in general, and blame the victim in specific. Women's physical appearances have always been used as evidence against them (Beerman 2011; Cummins 2014; French and Brown 2011; Hill 2016); a pragmatic argument that results in victim blaming as women are perceived to be “unsympathetic agents” (Edgar 2014).

A recent victim of misogynist extremism and normalized violence against women is Mansoura university student Nayera Ashraf, (21 years old) slaughtered in front of campus by a man she had rejected his advances. Given that the murder took place in daylight with tens of eye witnesses and the murder's confession, the prosecution was straightforward. Yet, as personal photos of Ashraf surfaced on the media, the narrative shifted to Ashraf's clothing as provocative. While some people viewed it is a gruesome crime, others blamed the victim for being sexually

¹⁹ The word “*fitna*” in Islam is derived from an Arabic verb that means to “seduce, tempt, or lure”. It is an Arabic word that describes individuals or communities giving in to the “whispers” of Satan and falling into sin.

provocative even if they sympathize with her. Professor Mabrook Attia, former dean of Islamic studies at Al-Azhar University, television presenter and social media influencer addressed women after condemning the murder: “if your life is precious to you, go out fully covered. Why? Because those who are poor and sexually deprived will see you and cut your throat, so go on and let them cut your throat”.

Furthermore, societal judgments about women’s dress were also evident in the prevalence of photoshopped photos of the late victim wearing the headscarf and fully covered to be used on mourning posters with Quran verses²⁰. The decision to cover her hair in a mourning poster, although she was not veiled when she was alive, reveals to what extent the covering of women is the only acceptable way of sharing and publicizing a woman’s photo while preserving her chastity; in other words, covering women is mandatory to negotiate public spaces.

FIGURE 1: ORIGINAL PHOTO²¹



²⁰ (Arabic: *إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ*), is a Quranic command for Muslims, mentioned in the second chapter of the Quran and meaning "Indeed we belong to Allah and indeed to him do we return." This verse is commonly recited by Muslims, at times of crisis, both as a sign of patience and an acknowledgement that God is the almighty. It is commonly used by Muslims when someone dies.

²¹ Original photo source: *Ahram Online*. Prosecution refers suspect to trial in Mansoura student murder - Courts & Law - Egypt - Ahram Online.

FIGURE 2: ALTERED PHOTO WITH HEADSCARF²²



The focus on women's modest clothing, particularly wearing the headscarf, is a consequence of victim shaming rhetoric as Edgar demonstrates, “once terminology focuses on the feminine victim, her agency is placed under the microscope, and any action within the scene is understood as agency” (2014: 154). Therefore, women are often framed simultaneously as both victim and immodest.

1.4.1. Egyptian girls’ attire in academic institutions

Any academic institution, schools in particular, have a duty to ensure students’ safety being the *in loco parentis* doctrine (DeMichell 2012: 279), and to align with the general board regulations. Dress code is a universal measure to ensure safety in schools against violence through regulating and unifying students’ dress (Workman and Freeburg 2006). Dress code enforcement in Egyptian public schools follows the provisions of Decree 113/1994, which mandates that both boys and girls in both public and private schools must wear a standard uniform:

a. Elementary level:

Apron with a color selected by educational board; trousers are allowed during winter. Female students can substitute a skirt with an appropriate length and blouse in lieu of the apron.

²² Altered photo source: صور نيرة أشرف بالحجاب - موسوعة نت (maosora.net).

b. Preparatory level (Middle School):

Boys: trousers and shirts with colors decided by educational board. A matching jacket or sweater is permitted in winter in accordance with the board of directors.

Girls: white blouse underneath an apron in the color decided by directorates. Students have the option to replace an apron with a long blouse and skirt with appropriate length. “Upon written request from the guardian, the student may wear a hair cover in a color selected by the educational Board, if does not obscure the face” (Arafa 2017: 72).

c. Secondary level (High school):

Boys: trousers and shirts with colors decided by educational board. A matching jacket or sweater is permitted in winter in accordance with the board of directors.

Girls: white shirt with a skirt of appropriate length...upon written notification from the guardian, the female students may wear a headscarf that does not obscure the face.

To further clarify the decree, the Minister of Education enacted another decree to identify its content. First, regarding female students within elementary and high schools:

- a. “Upon written request from the guardian” means that the guardian [dad] must be cognizant of the student’s will (choice) to wear hair veil, and that the choice comes from her own free will without pressure/coercion from an individual other than the custodian. The student shall not be prohibited from entering her school if she wears a hair scarf and her entry shall take place awaiting upon examination of the guardian’s awareness.
- b. “Hair Cover” means that the cover that the student selects according to her own free will may not cover the face. No examples for hair covering shall be contravene this (Arafa 2017: 73).

Although the headscarf is mentioned in the aforementioned decree as an option, it has become a de facto school uniform for many girls who choose to wear it. As early as primary school, girls are expected to cover their hair at school even if their parents do not dress her in *hijab* outside school. This norm was tackled by Dr. El Refai, Minister of Education in 2015 arguing that the veil should be banned at primary schools since Islam does not require women to cover their hair and dress modestly before puberty. This statement provoked resentment in the Egyptian streets and people accused the Minister’s unconstitutional to be interfering with the Islamic teachings and family’s personal affairs (“Egyptian Streets”). Within the same week, Egypt’s Ministry of Education spokesperson told *Ahram* Online and *Al-Ahram* newspaper that no such ban has been

implemented despite the Minister's comments, nevertheless the Minister's comment was sufficient to have repercussion in the media. In a survey done by *Al Jazeera.net* on the reactions towards the Minister's proposal to ban the veil, intellectuals and educators viewed that decision as contrary to Islamic Sharia, tyrannical, and imposed a model of secularization that clashes with Islamic religion (Badr 2015). A further explanation was provided by sheikh Osama al-Othman, a Muslim scholar, said that one of the legitimate purposes is to raise sons and daughters to obey God, and one of the school responsibilities is to prepare girls for what they are required to do legally after puberty, and to teach them the hijab early on. Notice, here in this statement, how the veil imposed on children is viewed as a school responsibility. The normalized gender-segregation coupled with female body policing practices train women through a rhetoric of "shame and guilt" to engage in "self-discipline" (Cummins 2014: 40).

In a recent incident in the governorate of El Sharqia, a thirteen-year-old girl in first grade of elementary (Middle) school was banned from entering the school for not covering her hair. Consequently, her mother, Lamia Lotfi, shared correspondences with the school teacher on Facebook in which the latter explicitly mentioned that the headscarf is essential for the girls' safety and protection since the school is co-ed. In response to the stir caused by this incident, Reda Hijazi, Deputy Minister of Education for Teachers' Affairs insisted that "the veil has nothing to do with school uniforms" (BBC Arabia 2020). Similarly, the Minister of Education, Dr. Tarek Shawki, announced that the Ministry of Education is conducting investigations to this incident. It is worth mentioning that discrimination against girls who do not wear the veil is not uncommon, and usually the Ministry seizes such opportunities to reinforce the idea that the veil is not part of the school uniform. However, the social norms direct parents and teachers towards girls' appearances and interactions with the opposite gender in an early age as primary school.

Girls' dress code is also enforced in universities despite the opposition it faces from some social activists. In September 2017, the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at Alexandria University banned female's tight-fitting clothes and ripped jeans (Farouk 2017). In an incident that highlighted the pragmatic arguments to support dress code policies was when a student at Faculty of Law at Cairo University- Egypt's biggest public center of learning- was verbally and physically assaulted by a group of her male colleagues on campus, in addition to trying to strip her clothes off before she hid in the restroom. The college student waited in the restroom till security personal escorted her to safety outside campus. Dr. Gaber Nassar, President of the Cairo University

condemned the assault saying "The girl's mistake doesn't justify [the male students'] behavior," (Cairo University Student 2014: para. 6), adding that the university enforces dress code that does not permit "unusual or inappropriate" outfits on campus. It is important to clarify that the outfit that Dr. Nassar has referred to as a *mistake* is black trousers and pink sweater, needless to mention that the student is not veiled. Hence, the lesson of the veil is taught via a system of patrol in which some nonconforming bodies are trained into submission through tactics of shaming and violence.

Henceforth, this paper sheds light on one of the many aspects that could directly affect young adolescents' perception of sharing public sphere, gender interactions and gender role expectation in their community in a critical stage. The adolescent years mark the beginning of self-exploration journey on a predetermined path by their family, socioeconomic status, and more importantly academic institutions that inculcate them with norms, values and new ideas.

3.1. Egypt's 2030 vision for women empowerment

Egypt's Vision 2030 is a comprehensive development plan that aims to transform the country into a more competitive, diversified, and knowledge-based economy by the year 2030. The vision was launched in 2016, and it focuses on three main pillars: economic, social, and environmental.

In the social sphere, the plan aims to improve access to quality education, healthcare, and housing, while also promoting social justice and gender equality. It also seeks to enhance cultural and tourism activities, and to foster a sense of national identity and social cohesion. In an unprecedented attention to Egyptian women empowerment, President El Sisi instructed government actions and legal amendments to expand women empowerment in 2017 to be implemented by 2030. The strategy involves four comprehensive pillars²³:

- women's political empowerment and leadership;
- women's economic empowerment;
- women's social empowerment;
- women's safety and protection.

²³ National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030: Vision and Pillars, 2017.

The preamble of the strategy quoted President's Abdel Fattah El Sisi's on the national strategy of women empowerment:

In the framework of the declaration of the Year of Women 2017, I decided to assign the government, all organs of the State, and the National Council for Women to regard the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 as the working document for the next years to activate the plans, programs and projects included in this strategy (National Council of Women 2017).

The strategy outlines a set of strategic interventions, if successfully implemented, would result in the required shift Egyptians aspire to ("National Strategy for the Empowerment" 2017). In spite of the current progress, the Egyptian society still faces major challenges in empowering a wide base of women. This suggests the dire need for a comprehensive and ambitious strategy that is owned and activated by all social strata and institutions (*Ibid.*: 5).

The national strategy was set as a yard stick to measure the current curricula's ability to achieve the set objectives of women's future. Amongst the various plans to ensure women's empowerment in the plan, women representation in curricula was mentioned once: "Incorporate into educational curricula topics that promote a culture of acceptance and respect to women's role as a key partner in society" (*Ibid.*: 57). In addition to strengthening women's access to their legal rights, what are the other measures undertaken to facilitate women's safe and equal integration in the public sphere? The concerns mentioned above were intriguing enough to examine women representation in school textbooks given its pivotal role in shaping students' perception of genders' roles, agency and negotiation of public sphere. How are these social realities reflected in secondary school textbooks? And what impelled us to choose secondary school textbooks for review?

Regrettably, systematic research is lacking on the effect of formal education, the role of teachers and students' relationship, curriculum content and textbooks on gender roles and gender socialization in Egypt despite the dire need for an unbiased, state sponsored perspective to counter the traditional masculine worldview in which gender separation is prominent with salient roles for the sexes (Marcus 2005); while authority and domination are granted to men (Kabasakal and Bodur 2002).

Chapter II: Contextual framework

Teaching Materials

This section tackles relevant history of research on textbooks, the influence of materials and textbooks on students; followed by reviewing the various frameworks of analyzing gender representation in textbooks. The chapter concludes with a narrowed down and previous studies on female representation in English, French and Arabic textbooks.

2.1.Origin and history of research on textbooks

The evolution of the content of textbooks has triumphed over centuries and achieved several milestones. In the nineteenth century, textbooks were considered as quasi-independent entities, producing knowledge for results in the annual examinations to allow moving up to the next school year, and this meant uniformity and rigidity (Fry 1985: 19). Later, towards the beginning of the twentieth century, official regulations controlled what should be taught to students in schools in what we know now as curriculum (*Ibid.*: 5). One of the prominent curriculum theorists and reformer in that century, renowned curriculum theorist Hilda Taba²⁴, defined curriculum as a medium where society's expectations are transmitted and “a way of preparing young people to function as productive members of our society” (*Ibid.*: 10). Significantly, textbooks have been regarded in this manner as one of the primary pillars through which nations define citizenship, shape historical narratives, and pledge a promising future in their societies. This explains why textbook content is always in the spotlight of political controversy in various countries at times when rationales for national unity and international alliances are being renegotiated (Pratt 1984; Schissler 1989). These international controversies are created when the ideas expressed in textbooks, “as key form of a nationalist narrative,” do not resonate with the newly envisioned future of the countries.

²⁴ Renowned curriculum theorist, curriculum reformer, and teacher educator in USA (1902-1967).

As early as the late 19th century in the United States and Europe, educators began subjecting textbook research to scrutiny, as they recognized the significant role these textbooks played in manipulating the masses. It all started when textbook revisions were as an endeavor to “calm down the conflicts between the powerful in Europe which led to the Great War”, that devastated and severed ties between nation states (Pingel 1998: 38). Both politicians and educators at that time claimed that textbooks promoted xenophobia and stereotypes about the ‘other,’ and for the first time, in 1932 International Committee on Intellectual Co-Operation, the responsible body within the League of Nations, passed a resolution to develop a framework for international consultation on textbooks (*Ibid.*: 9). It was not until after the Second World War, however, that international efforts were crucial to address the impact of textbook content. In 1949, specifically, the first UNESCO General Conference passed a resolution to form the Program for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Aids in Developing International Understanding (Pingel 2010: 11). Henceforth, public schools and textbooks were assigned to promote democracy and understanding (Johnsen 1993).

The pressing need to address the implications of content in textbooks after World War II led the UNESCO (1950) to produce guidelines to evaluate content of textbooks to ensure world fairness through empathy and understanding the “other” as stated in article (2.841: 19):

In primary and secondary schools, every effort should be made, both in teaching and in framing programmes of study, to avoid inculcating by word or implication the belief that, lands, peoples and customs other than one’s own are necessarily inferior, or are otherwise unworthy of understanding and sympathy.

This new approach to teach democracy, tolerance towards the ‘other’, and human rights continued to be the overarching theme of textbook content in the Western part of the world during the 1960’s onwards. In addition, social change movements usually necessitated the reevaluation of the national past portrayed in these textbooks as previously marginalized groups demand inclusion of their overlooked roles to change their narrative in pivotal ways (Hein and Selden 1998: 3). Consequently, the field of textbook ‘revisions’ evolved into set criteria and evaluation strategies that have witnessed a great progress since then (Lieven 2000; Johnsen 1993).

International textbook revisions have evolved into a scientific discipline known as textbook research, with the goal of gaining a better understanding of the connection between the teaching of history, geography, and civics and the prejudices and misconceptions that learners may hold due to their exposure to the general political culture, which is increasingly influenced by mass

media. The aim of textbook research is to provide deeper insights into the complex interrelationships between the teaching of these subjects and the societal factors that impact students' everyday experiences. For these reasons, Pingle argues that “textbook research has developed into an interdisciplinary activity, in which historians, geographers, social scientists and educationalists participate in equal measure” (1998: 43).

2.1.2. The pedagogical significance of textbooks

The debate amongst educators questioned the function of the school textbook: there are those who perceive it as a mirror of society, whereas others see it as a vector of social transformation. Sinigaglia-Amadio (2010: 48) explored this idea and highlighted a distinction that will later help in our textbooks' analysis. She stated that if a textbook is a mere reflection of the society in which it is produced, it would then find itself “naturally” reproducing stereotypes, inequalities, discriminations and other existing social flaws or dysfunctions. However, if textbooks are considered as a tool of social transformation, it should, on the contrary, provoke reflections and challenge the dominant representations. That said, textbooks are the forefront of the state's authorized teaching materials, reflecting values and signifying society's aspirations (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991; Foster and Crawford 2006; Sleeter and Grant 1991).

There is variation, however, among countries in the role of textbooks in the classroom due to differences in teaching and learning cultures and the difference between the level of rigidity of curricula that could either require teachers to strictly follow the order of the book content, or adopt a more flexible approach that allows teachers to rearrange the content and/or supplement with other material. In the latter case, students rely on textbooks mainly for afterschool assignments (Lambert 2000; Horsley and Walker 2013). Despite the use of other genres of teaching materials, educators still rely on textbooks more than any other supplementary texts in the classroom. A textbook-centered curriculum still prevails even in times of growing digitalization (Berendes 2018: 518). Following this point, one can argue that textbooks still hold the same status in students' learning journey as was described by Husbands:

The principal teaching tools we have to develop our learners' understanding and awareness are words: their words, our words and the words of actors in the past as they are presented to us in documents or as textbooks. Textbooks are probably the first body of knowledge that learners are introduced to and thus the most common text with which learners are most *au fait* (1996: 88).

Because of their omnipresence inside classrooms, students perceive textbooks to be authoritative and approved, while the public considers their subject matter as a divine source of knowledge (Apple 1993; Wade 1993; Crawford 2003; Osborne 2004; Pingel 2010; Fan and Zhu 2007). This general agreement on the importance of the role of textbooks to both educators and students necessitates researching this educational tool as a matter of urgency.

School textbooks serve as a meaning-constitutive entities to promote social norms and cultural values. Their function is to “represent to each generation of students a sanctioned version of human knowledge and culture” (Ping 2015: 78). Significantly, they are remarkable tools embedding discourses reinforced by the state to promote dominant ideologies that teach learners certain values and beliefs. In other words, textbooks are not products of unbiased knowledge but part of a larger social process and ideological product selected from prevalent ideas of elite and popular culture approved of by society (Apple 2012; Curdt-Christiansen 2017). The selection process of textbook content takes place within the context of social relationships and portray the viewpoint of a particular group. Editorial decisions entail choosing genres of texts and disciplines that influential elements in society expect students to know and embrace as official knowledge (Apple 2012: 58). It can be inferred that this governmental compilation and screening of content material results in the maintenance, propagation and strengthening of a certain dominant group’s ideology (Ibid.). Similarly, Cantoni, Chen, Yang, Yuchtman, and Zhang suggested that “norms instilled in school may be disproportionately beneficial to the seated elite, who have the ability to shape what is taught” (Ibid. 2017: 386). It is clear how textbooks are loaded with values and knowledge that eventually shape learners’ habits, desires and identities. In the same way, textbooks may not only teach learners socio-cultural values, but also how to embrace their own place in society, a particularly problematic issue for women in a patriarchal society.

Therefore, in an Egyptian textbook context, it is expected that Egyptian textbooks will also focus on promoting the “official” or “traditional” cultural aspects in the process of content selection. In this case, in the composition of textbooks, such as the topics and situations presented in the dialogues and the vocabulary and images in the pages, not to mention the themes explicitly presented, are derived from the choices that reflect the interests of the dominant class/ gender. This selective construction of textbooks is commonly found in national language textbooks as well as foreign language textbooks. As an instrument of socialization and source ideological discourse, textbooks introduce young people to an existing cultural and socio-economic order with its relations of power and domination. As explained by Schissler (1990: 81) textbooks “reflect the traditions a society has formed over decades or centuries; they contribute to developing the individual’s self-esteem.” Indeed, the importance of reviewing textbooks to uncover the hidden, underlying assumptions and stereotypes within their content cannot be overlooked (Foster and Crawford 2006). Hence, it is crucial to investigate the “underlying meaning” of the cultural messages presented through school textbooks.

2.1.3. The significance of textbooks in the digital world

The electronic revolution provided teachers, as well as students, with new possibilities for structuring their lessons and designing their own material. Students have access to myriad of sources that are designed to develop instructor-student and student-student collaboration, making it more difficult to control materials used in the classroom (Harasim 2000). Although, the digital revolution created an atmosphere of spontaneity in the education process, teaching is still, on the whole, a more or less controlled and planned activity (Pingle 1998: 52). Students’ access to information in digital resources could be random and sometimes chaotic, but real learning occurs when the student tries to build a structure, linking the material from different resources to form a consistent entity. At first, the availability of a wide range of material was expected to discredit the textbooks of their previous ultimate authority as a point of reference for valid information and interpretation (Castell et al. 1989). Nevertheless, several studies have shown that students regard the school textbook as the most trustworthy authority even more than teachers who may be influenced by their own subjective opinions (Angvik and Borries 1997). Other studies went even further to question students’ views on printed versus e-textbooks (McKiel 2008; McNeish 2012; Hoffmann and Dawson 2010), only to suggest that learners rated paper textbooks to be the best

format for extended reading, studying and for locating information. Moreover, studies showed that students learn more when studying from paper textbooks versus e-textbooks as the former allow students to manage content in whatever way they wish to study the material (McNeish 2012: 66).

Today, the surge in online learning, prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, has led universities, followed by secondary and primary schools, to swiftly adapt their traditional education models to incorporate technology-enhanced distance learning. This shift is aimed at reaching approximately 1.5 billion students who are unable to attend in-person classes ("COVID-19 Education Response," 2020). The sudden turn to electronic information and communication technologies (ICT)—internet, laptops, smartphones, and even earlier broadcast technologies like radio and TV, to deliver the curriculum highlighted the inequalities in digital capacities and access to ICT-based learning (Bell 2020; Buchbinder 2020). The impact was mostly significant in lower- and middle-income countries, where access to technology was not available for all households. Through phone calls, WhatsApp messages, and radio announcements teachers were able to salvage the school year by instructing caregivers on which pages the students should cover and when (Chabbot and Sinclair 2020: 2). As soon as the World Bank (2020) has identified as ‘coping phase’ ends, the UNSECO “is to produce enough textbooks and to distribute them to the children who still do not have them. This is not to suggest that either UNESCO or NISSEM²⁵ is entirely satisfied with the quality of existing textbooks, but to recognize how little can be done without textbooks for learners in the most vulnerable households” (*Ibid.*). This evidence suggests that the role of textbooks is unshaken in the surge of technology, and even more essential for students in the absence or availability of ICT in developing and developed countries.

2.2. The role of textbooks in Egypt

In the Middle East, with the exception of Yemen, textbooks are widely available to students and usually constitute the only reading material they possess (Boyle et al. 2014; Brombacher et al. 2012a; b; Collins and Messaoud-Galusi 2012; Messaoud-Galusi et al. 2012). Textbooks in Egypt are centrally developed and completely unified across all schools, therefore, they are critical resources in studying official state-sponsored messages directed at the majority of the Egyptian

²⁵ <https://www.nissem.org/our-story>

youth enrolled in public education - excluding poorest segments with more limited access to schooling and the richest who almost exclusively study in international schools (Sobhy 2015: 808).

Egypt was the first amongst the Arab countries to use Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) tool to assess children's reading levels in 2009, and the results were both agonizing and disappointing, showing deficit in basic learning skills – specially reading skills. The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness report for 2017–2018 ranked Egypt's quality of primary education 133rd out of 137 countries measured. Yemen, consumed by civil war, ranked only two places behind, at 135 (Johnson 2018: para 2). Later, Prof Skawki, the Minister of Education, proposed that these scores were a turning point in the government's plan; he announced that “these low scores marked the first step to reform the education system” (Selim and AbdelRahman 2020).

Egypt took a very proactive stance to address the reading deficit through huge investments from both the government and donors to provide, teacher coaching – Teachers' First training program - and instructional supervision initiatives, and school expansions (Boyle and Salah 2018: 198). Apart from the attention given to teacher training and supervision, schoolbooks went through an unprecedented overhaul since 1950's (Selim and AbdelRahman 2020). Textbooks are not only important for Egyptian students, they also serve the role of a teaching manual and provide a structured lesson content, especially for untrained or undertrained contract teachers. Contract teachers are hired for lower salaries than permanent teachers, consequently, have little to no training nor motivation to teach, given the instability and low income. As such, textbooks are essential guidebooks in the process of teaching reading, with an immense influence on the teacher the lesson, and evidently learners.

Another reason that led to the current reform plan to take place was the desperate need of the new regime to instill nationalism and eradicate violent Islamization. During the 2014–2015 school year, after the election of President Sisi in 2014, the Ministry of Education reported that it made changes to thirty textbooks and designated 1,290 books in preparation for totally revising them over the following three years. A committee was set up to revise all Arabic language textbooks, in particular, to “purify them from topics that may incite violence or extremism or point to any political or religious inclinations” (Sobhy 2015: 807). Significantly, the focus has been on secondary school textbooks through which “the regime delineates to young Egyptians how to conceive of the nation, its history and its path to renaissance and the correct behavior expected of

them” (*Ibid.*). That said, it shows the significant role of our study to investigate these secondary school textbooks.

Another essential point that highlights the current school textbook as the official guideline of knowledge for both students and teachers, is the government’s banning of printing external workbooks, except for some official collaborating private publishing companies, to preserve the form and content of the Ministry’s textbook (Hussein 2018: para.2). External workbooks had played a major role in the deterioration and decline of pre-university education during the past decades, and contributed to the existence of graduates who lack continuous learning skills because of their dependence on these external books that promote rote learning and spoon feeding. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education later uploaded some approved external books available on the Egyptian knowledge Bank²⁶, to provide more than one version of content for students besides the Ministry’s book, in addition to saving billions of pounds that parents spend to purchase these books (*Ibid.*).

In the same way, the school textbook is set to play a fundamental role in supplementing teachers' knowledge deficit after the government’s crackdown on private tutoring centers that formed a parallel black market to the formal education system. Private tutoring has been a barrier to improvement of the public education system as it encourages students to abandon the regular educational system and only attend private classes (Roushdy 2010). In fact, summaries and simplified notes prepared by the tutors to spoon feed students in preparation of standardized exams have diminished learners’ autonomy and led to the abandonment of the school textbook. As argued by Ille and Peacey private tuition is one cause, and not simply a consequence, of Egypt’s low-quality public educational system, which made it one of the main rotten roots to eradicate (2019: 105). Therefore, these attacks on corrupt social norm put the school textbook at an advantaged position in decades, making our investigation of its content crucial more than ever.

2.3. Language education policy in Egypt

Although English and French, as well as the less frequently taught German, are foreign languages taught in Egyptian national schools, we cannot assume equal language proficiency

²⁶The Egyptian Knowledge Bank (EKB), the national online library, announced on January 2016 that they offer free access to all Egyptian citizens, providing access to more than 92 million people

amongst Egyptian graduates. This suggests that the foreign language policy does not give these languages equal weight. Language ideologies serve the interest of dominant groups, and maintain social power (Dyers and Abongdia 2010; Woolard 2010). Thus, it is essential to understand the underlying education policies and attitudes towards the languages discussed in this research as conceptual tool to provide further insight into language resources based on Tannenbaum and Cohen's assertion that,

Language education policy (LEP) is thus viewed as a key factor in socialization—it develops the language competence of young people but may also brand other languages as dangerous and even come to view them as taboo. As in other domains of language policy, both top-down decisions and bottom-up LEP actions deriving from language practices or beliefs contribute to the actual repertoire of languages taught and used in various contexts and for different audiences (2018: 320).

Hence, when analyzing women representation in language textbooks it is necessary to understand the underlying language policy, and learners' attitudes towards these languages. Understanding attitudes towards languages is important to our research due to its effect on endorsing or rejecting the social messages embedded in them.

2.4. Representation of English, Arabic and French languages in the Egyptian discourse community:

The intricate socio-political reality in Egypt puts it in a constant conflict between two forces: Islam and secularism. First, the Islamization process that started after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1924 is indeed still fantasized by the Islamist Egyptians; while the latter is the secular thought manifested in modernization that started after the Nasser revolution in 1952. In this research, we do not pose a specific judgment on Islamization, be it good or bad, since we are aware of the ambiguity of the term given that “Islamism in Egypt is more diversified in terms of its sociology and ideology than is usually assumed” (Hoigilt 2010: 1). In this section, however, we focus on the broad Islamic wave, within the Egyptian context, that calls for application of Islamic teaching in state institutions and public places in dress code, gender segregation and women agency to negotiate the public sphere.

That said, we are compelled to examine the representation of the languages of the textbooks used in this study to consider the socio-psychological disposition of language users and the sociolinguistic environment in which these languages are in active interaction. The representation

of a given language is manipulated through various channels such as the media, prestige or economic power associated to it. As argued by Castelloti and Moore (2002: 10):

Many studies of representations of languages and language learning illustrate the crucial role played by learners' images of those languages, the people who speak them and the countries in which they are spoken (inter alia, see Zarate 1993; Candelier and Hermann-Brennecke 1993; Cain and De Pietro, 1997; Matthey ed. 1997b; Berger and Miller 1998; Paganini 1998).

The highly stereotyped images of languages may have the power to either enhance or to inhibit acquiring the culture and social messages associated with it. Hence, we find it relevant to our research to understand attitudes towards Arabic, English and French languages within the Egyptian context before we embark on examining women status embedded within the textbooks used in teaching these languages.

The dominant language is Arabic, with different varieties, hence, learning foreign languages comes with its own challenges and language conflict. Literature on language conflict in the Middle East is mostly presented with a European lens that is accustomed to examining other multilingual settings. such as the social conflict in Quebec between the Anglophone and Francophone linguistic groups (Groff 2016; Magnan 2012; Pilote, Magnan, and Groff 2011; Vieux-Fort and Pilote 2010, 2013). Another example is the focus on the interplay of code switching, culture and identity formation in regions with language and dialect diaspora like the Alsace region in the French-German borders (Gardner-Chloros 1991; Dennis 2003; Filhon 2010; Jian 2015). As for the Middle East region the focus is mainly on conflict that arises between speech communities at a state of war. The renowned work of Suleiman (2004), *A war of words: Language and conflict in the Middle East* examines identity and language variation in speech communities at a state of war or political conflict and displacement such as Israel and Palestine and tribes in Lybia, which present interesting insights about identity negotiation in multilingual settings. Throughout his work, Suleiman argues that linguistic conflicts are hardly about language alone, but rather a proxy for other existing conflicts between speech communities (2004: 55). He focuses on the larger social and political conflicts that maintain and perpetuate linguistic conflicts such as struggles over resources or territories, political or tensions between modernity and tradition.

In Egypt, on the other hand, since Arabic is the only language in the speech community, there has been extensive local research on Egyptian Arabic variation style (Mejdel 2006) with specific focus on indexes and performances of stigmatized rural dialects, code-switching, leveling

and register (Bassiouney 2011; 2018; Woidich 1996) and markers of Egyptian identity post 2011 Revolution (Agameya 2020). Furthermore, due to the political instability in the Middle East and North African region post the events of 9/11 and up till the most recent Arabic Spring in 2011, there has been an unprecedented increase in Arab immigration to European countries and North America that directed research on Arab-speaking communities in the diaspora such as (Albirini 2016; Abu Haidar 2012) towards linguistic trends, with specific scrutiny on code switching, language maintenance and erosion.

In the following section, we will examine the status of foreign and native languages in the Egyptian discourse community from a different angle. The background information about each of the aforementioned languages helps to elucidate language attitudes as abstract and psychological variables. It also underscores their impact on identity formation, prestige, social organization, values, and beliefs. By language attitude we will adopt the same definition proposed by Dragojevic et al. since he argues that a language's historical background and ideology play a pivotal role in developing attitude towards it:

Language attitudes are not only a product of present times, but also a reflection of complex histories of domination and subordination that, in some cases, can be traced back hundreds of years. As such, language attitudes represent glimpse into the past as much as into the present, and in order to fully grasp the complex and intricate nature of languages' social meanings, we must first understand the histories, relationships, and ideologies of the people who speak them (2013: 20).

Hence, we will briefly explore language history and attitudes towards them as prerequisite for exploring gender messages embedded in their textbooks.

2.4.1. Arabic language

All official paper work, government business and citizen-related certificates are in Arabic language. In addition, court trials and parliamentary sessions are all held in Arabic (Schaub 2000: 234).

Egyptian students study Modern Standard Arabic – a simplified form of the Class Arabic – the language of the Muslim Holy book *Quran* – from kindergarten to secondary years. Students in Primary level must attend five periods every week²⁷. Similarly, in the Preparatory level, Arabic

²⁷ According to the Egyptian Ministry of Education, period is two classes with the equivalence of 90 minutes per day.

is taught four and a half periods per week. In the Secondary level, students are given five lessons per week²⁸.

First, the Arabic language is one of the dense subjects that require special attention and effort from students and teachers alike. To be proficient in Standard Arabic, it requires years of formal schooling. It is also one of the core subjects at school and is as challenging as any foreign language. Modern Standard Arabic is the official state language as per constitutional law, yet it is not used in daily communication. Like the rest of the Arab countries, Egypt is a diglossic community, in which two varieties co-exist with different functions in addition to the different dialects. As Ferguson (1959) labels these varieties: “High” and “Low” varieties; High is the Standard Arabic, while the Low is the Egyptian Colloquial Arabic – the lingua franca in the Middle East due to cinema industry that flourished in the late 1930s. There is a distinct difference between High and Low varieties that makes the Arabic language subject challenging for most students. These differences exist between the varieties on the lexical, morphological, and structural levels. The following example demonstrates this difference:

Egyptian Colloquial Arabic

<i>illi:</i>	<i>ʕamaluh</i>	<i>il rayes</i>	<i>fi</i>	<i>taman ta:ʃar</i>	<i>shahr</i>
rel	“do”-3msg-pr3msg det-	“president”	“in”	eighteen	month (sg)

<i>ma-addi-f</i>	<i>ʕamaluh</i>	<i>fi</i>	<i>xamsi:n sana</i>
Neg-“one”-neg	“do”-3msg-pr3msg	“in”	fifty year (sg)

“What the president did in eighteen months, no one had achieved in fifty years”

Standard Arabic:

<i>ma: faʕala-hu</i>	<i>ʕlraʕys</i>	<i>fi:</i>	<i>θ ama:niyata</i>	<i>ʕa fara</i>
rel	“do”-3msg-pr3msg det-	“in”	eight(f)	“ten”(m)

<i>yawman lam</i>	<i>yaf ʕ al-hu</i>	<i>aʕad</i>	<i>xila:la</i>	<i>xamsi:n sanah</i>
“day”-acc neg	3msg-“do”-juss-pr3msg	“one”	“during”	“fifty” “year”

²⁸ The duration of a lesson is 30 minutes.

The difference between the two styles is evident in *ma`addif ṣamaluh* and *lam yafṣ al-hu a`ad* in the second half of the sentence. It highlights how Standard Arabic and Egyptian Colloquial Arabic use different lexical choices while *ṣamala* is also used in Standard Arabic, it is construed in a much narrower sense as “to work,” whereas in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic it means “to do” in a more general sense. Although, the two varieties use the negation, the technique is yet different. As shown in this example of the Egyptian Colloquial variety, the negated verb is bracketed by *ma . . . ḥ*, whereas Standard Arabic has various negation schemes, including the pattern (*lam* + imperfect) for actions that happened and ended in the past. Another salient difference between both varieties is the use of numbers; Standard Arabic adopts a highly complex numeral system. Specifically, when numbers between twelve and nineteen are used with a masculine noun, a feminine marker is added to “ones”, while “tens” are masculine. This example demonstrates the simplified style of using numbers in the Egyptian Colloquial Arabic in comparison to the standard variety. Lastly, another dominant feature of Egyptian Colloquial that results in salient phonological difference between the two varieties is the replacement of the sound q with ʔ as shown in the second part of the example.

There are a number of situations in which Standard Arabic is used and other situations in which the colloquial variety is used. Standard Arabic is commonly used in delivering sermons, lectures, political speeches, news broadcasts, as well as written rather than spoken contexts. Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, on the other hand, is appropriate in informal and intimate contexts, and non-print media.

Since Arabic is the language of the Quran, it is automatically associated with the realm of the divine, power and legitimacy. In fact, there is also the romantic belief among speakers of Arabic, specifically Muslims, in the sophistication and superiority of their language. In the same vein, Standard Arabic speakers are proud of their affiliation with the divine language recognized by them as the Words of God, and perhaps this has been the driving force for Standard Arabic survival till this present day. In describing the “literary miracle” of the Quran, “[i]ts linguistic superiority, style, clarity of message, strength of argument, quality of rhetoric, and the human inability to match even its shortest chapter till the end of time grant it an exquisite uniqueness” (Meraj 2016: 322). Furthermore, the eagerness of newly Muslim converts to learn Standard Arabic to pray and read the Quran despite the availability of translated versions is yet another proof of the

sacred status of the language. *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* summarizes the traditional Muslim position clearly by Glassé:

Muslims consider the *Koran* to be Holy Scripture only in the original Arabic of its revelation. The *Koran*, while it may be translated, is only ritually valid in Arabic. This is connected with the notion of Arabic as a “sacred Arabic.” Language itself is sacred, because of its miraculous power to communicate and to externalize thought (1989: 46).

Thus, Classical Arabic and the simplified Standard Arabic Language embody sacredness as demonstrated by Glassé. Notwithstanding that Christianity is the largest religious group in Egypt, and indeed Standard Arabic is used in Church sermons as the Coptic Bible is translated in Standard Arabic, one can expect that Standard Arabic does not have the same divine index as it has for Muslims. This was confirmed in an empirical study in Greece by Gogonas (2011) that second generation Egyptian Copts were not proficient in Arabic in comparison to Muslim Egyptians in the same speech community. According to Bassiouney the distinction between the Copts and Muslim Egyptian attitudes towards language is evident in immigration contexts, as mosques provide Arabic language lessons in Sunday Schools, whereas churches focus mainly on facilitating integration of the newcomers (2020: 111). Hence, Standard Arabic is essential to Muslim Arabs, who form the predominant majority of Egyptians. While Latin was once the sacred language of Christendom, the replacement by European vernacular resulted in its extinction as explained by Benedict Anderson, “beneath the decline of sacred communities, languages and lineages, a fundamental change was place in modes of apprehending the world, which, more than anything else, made it possible to ‘think’ the nation” (1999: 22).

Standard Arabic language also carries a unifying and nationalist index as it is perceived to play a pivotal role in the construction of Arab ethnic identity. To identify oneself as Arab is not related to religious ties as there are Christian and Jewish Arabs in addition to different Islamic sects, such as Sunnis and Shiites. The Arab’s perception of Arab nation is complicated and the dialogues are ongoing. However, the diverse economies, culture and history of the Arab world puts Arabic language on the pedestal of nationalism today. According to Hourani, in theorizing the link between Arabic language and nationalism, al-Husri was not impressed with European nationalist ideas when it came to “defining a nation as any group which wills to be a nation” (2007: 313). As opposed to European ideas about national identity, al-Husri argued that a nation is an entity with an objective basis which boils down to language: “[T]he Arab nation consists of all

who speak Arabic as their mother-tongue, no more, not less” (*Ibid.*). Hence, any individual who speaks Arabic as a mother-tongue is an Arab and a member of the Arab nation.

Note that Arabization was a reaction to preserve the ethnic identity during times of Western colonization and globalization in recent years. National unity is always advocated by the linguistic unity and that is best demonstrated in a pan-Arab song that was released in 1998, *The Arabian Dream*, in which 23 Arab artists collaborated to discuss themes of Arab unity and solidarity. One of the verses addressed all Arabs by explicitly defining them as those who could pronounce the letter sound Dād (ض) (lit. من اي مكان في الارض ناطق بلسان الضاد وبأعلى الصوت والنبض بنقول الوحدة ميلاد: (ض) (lit. From anywhere on Earth, where a tongue utters the Dhad, and with the loudest voice and pulse, we say unity is birth²⁹). Arabic is often referred to as لغة الضاد (lughat aḍ-ḍād), which translates to "the language of the ḍād." This distinction highlights the significance of the Arabic language in the context of national identity, as the pronunciation of the ḍād letter is considered one of the most challenging aspects for non-native Arabic speakers.

Indeed, Standard Arabic is threatened by foreign languages in the Arab world. An example of this threat is evident in an Abdel Moneim’s (2007) report in the Egyptian newspaper, *Al Ahrām Online*, on the Arab League’s conference on the future of the Standard Arabic:

ISESCO Secretary-General Abdel Aziz Al-Twigri spoke of “language pollution,” the condition whereby the influence of foreign languages— those of economically predominant countries— corrupts Arabic, especially among children. One study released at the conference found that the language of advertising and the commercial world has a corrupting effect— with the use of colloquial and foreign words written in Arabic script. Another, carried out on Libyan children, found that dialect and foreign expressions were far preferable among them than SA. This can undermine the language in use for 15 centuries and leave Arabs exposed to “cultural invasion”; it is a mistake to let dialect prevail at the expense of the Arabic tongue.

It's notable that Abdel Moneim describes any colloquial language as a dialect and views it as a corrupted version of the pure Standard Arabic. Indeed, this quote sheds light on the conflict at hand given that the “corrupt dialect” referred to is the spoken language in all Arab countries. Standard Arabic is always referred to as threatened by Colloquial variants, multilingualism, bilingualism namely French-Arabic in the *Maghreb* (West) and English-Arabic in the *Mashreq* (East), despite the fact that English is not as prevalent in the Eastern Arab countries as French is in the *Maghreb*. Benkharafa views this threat of bilingualism as a “competition of foreign languages trying to displace it [Standard Arabic]” (2013: 201).

²⁹ Our translation.

In Egypt, specifically, the Colloquial variety has had negative connotation despite being the lingua franca in the Middle East. In 1960s, the Nobel Laureate Naguib Mahfouz connoted Egyptian Colloquial Arabic to “poverty and disease” that go hand-in-hand with other obstacles to “progress” (Dawwarah: 1965). In the same vein, Anwar Chejn, a renowned Arabic historian summarized intellectuals’ perception of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic in the following terms:

[V]ulgar, deficient, devoid of any linguistic wealth for expressing thought... [the dialects] lack any literary tradition to speak of...they suffer from the major defect of not portraying the past in its glory, and are inadequate for the political, social and cultural needs of present-day Arab society” (1969: 164).

To conclude this section, it is evident how perceptions and attitudes are essential for understanding indexes in our case; as the language of Islam, the official national discourse, and the language of the Coptic Bible. Standard Arabic is impregnated with divinity, legitimacy and authority. It is the unifying tool in a nation so ethnically, religiously and historically diverse with differences that had been purposefully exaggerated by colonial forces. Hence, this dominant index of nationality and purity of Standard Arabic puts it at a pedestal. While formal education is still the main resource of Standard Arabic acquisition, the scrutiny of the interaction between learners’ identity and the messages concerning representation, inclusion and stereotypes in the curricula is a pressing need.

2.4.2. English language:

‘Mubarak the People Have Spoken. Take Your Regime and Get Out!’ read one of the banners carried by Egyptians during the 2011 Revolution. The enormous number of banners in English in gathering venues in Cairo and other governorates, posts on social networks, and the countless fluent English interviews done by Egyptians and broadcasted by international news demonstrate the spread of English in Egyptian lives. Ironically, this prevalence of English language has proved to be divisive and one of the main reasons that led to the 2011 revolution. The country’s weak economy and high unemployment rates framed English as elitist. “Those who can afford it will be able to learn it and get the better jobs. It’s a human-rights, an equity issue” (Wingate 2015).

Hence, Egyptians’ attitudes towards English lends itself to a larger discussion on the Egyptian accessibility to a better life, and the effect on identity at the crossroad between Islamist

sympathies and Westernization. We refer to Westernization, here in terms of adopting Western values mainly transmitted through the dominant Western popular culture.

So how did English succeed to spread in Egypt, and what makes it an economic empowerment in an Arab country like Egypt? What are its positive and negative indices?

Although one could claim that English was introduced to Egypt during the British colonization (1882-1922) with an extended military domination that lasted till 1936, yet Lord Cromer's, General Consul, English education policy did not lead to the spread of English amongst Egyptians. The obvious difference between the bilingualism of other British colonies and Egypt could be explained by the change of the British Empire's policy on teaching English language to the colonizers after the Indian mutiny of 1857. In dissecting the causes of the Mutiny in India Rao focused on modern education as the main that altered the colony's attitudes towards the colonizers:

[T]he spread of English education among the lower classes and the poor and also encouragement of girls' education were responsible for the revolt of 1857. This was followed in letter and spirit by the imperialist historians J.W. Kaye and G.W. Malleson, who were the first to write on the revolt. They argued that it was English education in the form of teaching "Bacon and Milton" that shook the very foundation of "Mahomedanism" and "Brahmanism." They termed the revolt essentially "a religious war," and "a clash of civilizations" (2016: 29).

Note here that the focus is mainly on the effect of introducing a modern education through missionary schools to the masses of underprivileged that reinforced their inferiority and bitterness that led to a revolt against the Empire. It is no wonder that in Egypt, the British developed an education system that respects the order of the class-based society and the sacredness of its religion, hence, educating children of very small elite in English or French to produce the precise number of graduates needed for bureaucratic positions and government administration. At the same time, there was an influx in the number of *Kuttab*, previously offering Coptic and Muslim education through remote memorization of scripts, to provide Western secular education to the masses in Arabic (Langohr 2005). On the other hand, higher education was only offered to the elites and European students who had completed their Western education in missionary schools (Reid 1977).

Thus two direct outcomes related to language indexes could be inferred from this early introduction to English and other foreign languages in Egypt. First, secular Arabic education for the masses created a religious education vacuum that was filled by the rise of the Muslim

Brotherhood as a source of religious knowledge and nationalism. Consequently, enforcing the role of Arabic language as pure, divine, and nationalist but unprivileged. Secondly, English acquired its earliest indexes as an elitist language, alien, but opens doors to prestigious occupations and prosperity.

In recent history, English continued to hold a high status amongst other languages. Some views like Holborow's (1999: 53) regard English situation in Egypt a result of the national state-builders', in the post-colonial era, adherence to the "linguistic inheritance" of the previous colonizers. Even if this argument is valid, indeed the English language held its prestigious index, yet was not prevalent in the 1950's-60's during President Nasser's deteriorating relationship with the West, "as a product of decolonizing period" (Podeh 1996: 159), that led to the nationalism of missionary schools in favor of Arabic language education to build the nation's sense of Pan-Arabism.

The status of English took a different turn, however, during the adoption of President Sadat's Open Door policy in the 1970s to connect Egypt to the Western world and the modernization pressure. The Open Door policy fostered the perception of English as an economic incentive as described by Abouelhassan and Meyer "in the 1970s, a beginning secretary in a government position made £E70 a month, while an English speaking secretary in a foreign company could start as high as £E350" (2016: 151). The sought-after economic benefits tied to English led to what Imhoof (1977: 3) described as "a kind of national hysteria".

The then new prevalence of English language centers and English private schools in the country that escalated the accessibility to learning English, went hand in hand with President Mubarak's strategy to privatize financially struggling state institutions in the 1990's that made English a requirement for career advancement and landing on a prestigious job with a promising career path.

More importantly, learning English was deemed necessary with the boom in tourism after Mubarak in the late 1990s had shifted Egypt's tourism map from just "the monumental sites" in Upper Egypt and Giza to other "recreational sites" and resorts in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea that required high level of staff interaction with tourists (Richter and Steiner 2008). Tourism alone is enough reason for Egyptians to pursue foreign language education as it is a crucial resource for Egypt's economy beyond what is officially documented in national income statistics. As reported by The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies in 2000, that only 30 to 40% of tourism

income is documented through paid taxes on hotel accommodations and recreational centers, whereas the remaining undocumented bulk goes directly to individuals in transportation, street vendors, or even hustlers in touristic sites. Miraculously, these workers are able to carry out an entire conversation in English with tourists, despite not having formal English language instruction, which highlights the necessity of English to officially or unofficially take part in this financially rewarding sector.

Elkhatib (1984), Mahrouse (1992) and Zaher (1995) disclose that secondary level students receive mandatory 450 hours of English education in Egyptian public school, where students can choose an additional second foreign language, typically French, and, in some cases, German if it is offered.

In the recent changes to the English language education policy, as part of an effort to reduce the gap between public and private education systems, the Ministry of Education introduced English as a compulsory foreign language for primary education starting from the academic year 2018/19. This means that learners in the public education schools are introduced to the English language at a young age while still studying other subject matters like science and math and history in Arabic. This recent radical change in the introduction of English showcases the government's endorsement of the English language as a means of improving the overall quality of education outcomes in the country.

2.4.3. French Language

The French influence is evident in Egypt today as a considerable part of the Egyptian population learns, speaks and works in various Egyptian academic, diplomatic and artistic institutions. In fact, the influence of French language is evident across the Eastern and Western Arab countries. While French was introduced through colonization of the Western Arab countries, Maghreb, the prevalence of French on the Eastern side has a different story. As asserted by Wright (2006: 36), French was established in the 19th century as a prestige lingua franca used in economic, commercial and industrial domains. French language has also been linked in the Eastern Arab speech communities to the Christians since France had become the protector of Christians in the Middle East during the Ottoman rule. Hence, by the mid-1900s, French language had become

“well rooted among the urban elites in many places of the Ottoman Empire” and particularly among the non-Muslim minorities (Aslanov 2008: 243).

In the case of Egypt, specifically, the French language began to make its presence felt during the Napoleonic military campaigns in Egypt (1798–1801), when many French scientists, artists and missionaries strongly shaped Egyptian industries, arts and jurisdiction:

En juillet 1798, 400 navires, 34,000 soldats et 167 scientifiques, parmi eux des ingénieurs, des artistes, des botanistes, des zoologistes, des géomètres et des économistes français, ont débarqué au port d’Alexandrie. La plupart de ces scientifiques sont restés en Égypte et leur travail a abouti à la publication de “Description de l’Égypte³⁰» en 22 volumes, l’ouvrage le plus autoritaire en Égyptologie (Habashy : *Les Français et la langue française en Égypte* : para2).

Despite the short time of Napoleon’s expedition, the French technocrat left behind were endorsed by Muhammad Ali Pasha, Egypt’s ruler and modernizer in 1805, to establish a local elite calibers capable of understanding and transmitting Western knowledge and savoir-faire (Barda 2014: 50). With the influx of foreign nationalities to Egypt, French became the *lingua franca* and the official language of the mixed courts established in 1875, where two foreign judges and one Egyptian judge headed the courts.

During the British occupation of Egypt (1882 - 1956), the French status was not shaken due to the prevalence of French technical institutes and prestigious schools, in addition to the French control over the sugar refinery industry and the banking sector (Beinin 1998). More importantly, endorsing the French language was a significant means to combat the British occupation by the elite class. Prominent leading anti-British colonization nationalists like Mostafa Kamel, and Saad Zaghloul obtained their university degrees in France, hence French language was associated with the anti-British occupation movement. National newspapers were also printed in French language as a clear mark of allegiance to France, which sheds lights on the anti-colonization role of the French language as explained by Chiha:

Et c’est justement la presse qui met le mieux en évidence la portée de l’influence française en Égypte ; en plus des journaux économiques, dont la création fut jugée nécessaire vu le développement des projets égyptiens bénéficiant du soutien de la France, (comme *Le Nil*, 1866, *Le Bosphore Égyptien*, 1881, *La Réforme*, 1894, *La Bourse Égyptienne*, 1899), des revues comme *La Revue du Caire*, fondée en 1838, témoignent de la vigueur d’une vie intellectuelle en français (2004: 70).

³⁰ *Description de l’Égypte* was a series of publications by the French government (1809-22), appearing first in 1809, which aimed to comprehensively compile all known aspects of ancient and modern Egypt as well as its natural history.

Thus, French language had a nationalistic mark in addition to being the language of modernism, and prestige. This endorsement of French language was most evident in the education sector, where several prestigious Catholic schools were opened in Egypt's major cities to welcome Christian and non-Christian, Egyptian and foreign students.

Today, the French language is not as prevalent in the Egyptian discourse community as English, however, in the field of education, the French language private schools are still in high demand despite the economic advantage attributed to English. As for higher education, French departments continue to offer masters and doctoral level education and scholarships by the French government.

French language was limited to 3 hours per week education in public secondary school as a foreign language, which did not equip learners with the required proficiency. Due to its previous status as prestigious, elitist and a mark of anti-English cultural invasion, President Abdel Fattah El Sisi modified the current French education policy through resolution No. 79 of 2021 approving the partnership agreement between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the French Development Agency for the implementation of the technical cooperation project to support the teaching of French as a foreign language in Egyptian government schools (El Gallai 2021). Through the implementation of this protocol, French will become a mandatory second language in public schools. Therefore, the language will be introduced in the first year of the preparatory level, with proficiency levels escalating through to the secondary level, where it will continue to be a mandatory language. In summary, French language has been deeply rooted in the Egyptian culture. It has several attributes within the Egyptian discourse community ranging from being a favorable language of the Christian minority and a prestigious language that distinguishes oneself from the prevalent English learners.

To conclude, we briefly discussed language education policies and how they are promoted, overtly or covertly, across the Egyptian society. Our briefing highlighted the macro level of governmental planning to understand how these languages are taught in accordance with societal ideologies. We found it necessary to underscore representations of foreign and native language within the Egyptian society before we situate women representation in the said languages' textbooks.

2.5. The significance of language textbooks

In the previous sections, we introduced the pedagogical significance of textbooks in education as an influential material on learners in general and on Egyptian learners, in particular, due to the current educational reforms and Egypt's vision for 2030. It is noteworthy, however, that the literature of textbook analysis focuses mainly on history, geography, social studies and civics schoolbooks in research studies carried out since the 1970s, and particularly since the contribution of Simone Rignault and Philippe Richert (1997). The choice of subjects was backed by the widely believed that these subjects promote education towards democracy, human rights and international understanding, and significantly intercultural awareness (Schissler 1990; Marsden 2001; Graves 2001; Vanhulle 2009; Tezcan and Murgul 2019). Over the last few decades, however, textbook research literature highlighted the role of language textbooks in contributing to what learners know and how they think about "others".

Recently, language textbooks serve a greater purpose than merely providing grammar rules and reading passages from different genres, as they offer lesson plans, suggested assignments, and group activities ideas in and outside the classroom. The Arabic language textbook in secondary years, for instance, is saturated "with discourses of nationalism and citizenship readings, poems, classic novels and recurrent religious themes in grammar exercises" (Sobhy 2015: 808), which reflect the patriotic and Islamic messages the Arabic language is connoted with. In the Arabic textbook for second secondary year (2017-2018), the chapters are studied with Islamic teachings to reinforce the content. In Chapter 1, titled "Logical Reasoning," the lesson emphasizes the crucial role of logical reasoning within Islamic civilization. The preamble recounts an incident involving Ali Ibn Abi Taleb and a fortune teller during his journey to a military expedition with his troops. The objective of the story is to learn how the Islamic Caliph scolded the fortune teller and relied on reasoning to win the war, (Shalabi *et al.* 2017: 4). Another example, out of many others, is chapter 3. This chapter is about Speech analysis, so the sample speech in the book is Prophet Muhammad's final sermon before his death, known as, The Farewell Sermon. Patriotism and Islamic teachings are commonly demonstrated in the themes of the chapters. In the third secondary Arabic language textbook, for the academic year (2017-2018), there are six reading texts:

- Text 1: The will to change
- Text 2: The Arabs' contribution to word civilization

- Text 3: Abu Rayhan Al Bayouni
- Text 4: Jerusalem is an Arab Islamic city
- Text 5: Science in Islam
- Text 6: Humane values (Abdel Raouf *et al.* 2017 : iii)

We can notice from the titles of the reading texts, half of the themes are either related to Islamic ethics or pan-Pan Arabian patriotism. Even in the texts with neutral titles, like for instance, text 1, includes examples on the collective benefit of being a hard working citizen (*Ibid.*: 4).

Secondly, foreign language textbooks are key elements in most language programs as they usually provide much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that takes place in classrooms. Furthermore, in the Egyptian context, textbooks play a role of teacher trainer in the case of inexperienced teachers as they include lesson plans, and application suggestions. It can be argued that if it were not for the extensive use of language textbooks, much of language teaching would not have occurred, especially with the decline of private tutoring centers.

More importantly, the role of languages at school plays a vital role in students' critical thinking and identity formation. Although the institution of schooling fosters the ideals of criticality, imagination, sociability, empathy, morality, and ethics, it is languages that play the most important pursuit of this goal. Drawing on John Dixon's theory on personal growth in 1967, Ellis explained that English curricula in schools provide space for youth to learn about sexuality, to develop a sense of their identity as sexual beings and to understand the concepts of social justice and equality (2009: 52). Significantly, critical reading and writing allow students to develop personal growth and foster understanding about sexuality and identity.

As for learners, the textbook may provide the major exposure they have to the language apart from input provided by the teacher. To elaborate, print or non-print materials for language learning, usually offer a diverse range of representations of the world in addition to imagined situations of communication and other forms of interaction in the foreign language. Language textbooks have evolved in recent years with diversified content as Risager suggests:

[Language textbooks] usually offer some representations of the everyday life of various groups in society, food and drink, festivals, portraits of people, examples of the use of social media and IT, issues related to social and political conditions, climate and the environment, issues of migration, as well as examples of short stories, songs and videos (2020: 1).

To elaborate, the content of these books includes scenarios that are usually illustrated by visual elements in multimodal texts, like for instance, photos of interlocutors, images of places, monuments and famous characters. Considering this intercultural input, it can be concluded that language textbooks today offer inputs on citizenship, intercultural communication while at the same time scaffolding learners' communicative skills and language goals. Students are often bombarded with gender roles and representations in scenarios and communication activities that are eventually internalized and normalized. Therefore, readings in language textbooks should stimulate rich thoughts on various categories of identity to question one's position within or against them. Considering the language and cultural input, it can be concluded that language textbooks play dual role by informing the teaching-learning process, guide teachers and students into seeing the world, and how values and attitudes are conveyed through language.

2.6. Justification of the specified age group

After demonstrating the important influence of textbooks on learners, we focused on secondary school textbooks since secondary school is a critical stage, where teenagers start exploring their roles in the society based on their gender among other categories. This age group is of a particular significance in Egypt and the Middle East at large. This is evident in the focus on the youth in political and academic discourse the Middle East due to several reasons elaborated by Sukarieh:

(1) a demographic "bulge" that has made the current generation of youth in the Arab world the large in history, with youth comprising 60-70% of the population in most Arab countries; (2) an increased demand for higher level skills, which are usually acquired during youth, as Arab countries move from manufacturing, resource and agricultural to "knowledge" based economies; (3) a growing threat to international peace and security by this large mass of youth, unable to find employment due to their lack of higher order skills, and easy prey for recruiters from Islamic fundamentalist groups (2012: 425).

With this being the overarching concept, we have chosen to concentrate on the textbooks that adolescents are exposed to, with a specific emphasis on the analysis of gender roles. There are several reasons for this particular focus in our research. First, sometimes secondary level education is the final stage in their education before they embark on labor careers or get married off – primarily girls (Robic 2019: 91), which foregrounds the role of textbooks as an essential and final state-sponsored literary discourse accessible to students.

Secondly, in this critical age, adolescents embark on a new phase of self-exploration that alters their worldview and future aspirations in terms of careers and relationships. After years of

exposure to gender stereotypes, adolescents reach a stage that Hill and Lynch (1983) coined as gender intensification period, in which they adopt more gender stereotypes of beliefs and behaviors, therefore. Hence, exposure to counter-stereotypical representations in discourse could result in positive outcomes that would affect their following university or vocational phase.

In fact, there are myriad of theories of gender that focus on the effect of society and environment on gender development, ranging from ones focusing solely on biological basis, such as the “true gender self” model (Ehrensaft 2012), to the biopsychosocial model (Zucker 2012), cognitive theories and the gender schema theory that underpin the effect of environmental and cognitive factors on gender-typing from an information-processing perspective. Yet, the concept of gender identity construction is beyond the scope of this research, so we opted for Erikson’s more encompassing model of identity development during adolescence to justify the choice of this specific age group.

Erikson’s defines identity as “a subjective sense of an invigorating sameness and continuity” (1968: 19) that enables one to have a coherent sense of self, forged by one’s own standards distinct from others. Erikson labeled this psychological stage in-between childhood security and adulthood autonomy as the mind of the moratorium³¹. It concludes the outcome of the identity task for teenagers and young adults as the development of fidelity, which is achieved from balancing identity and identity confusion: “fidelity is the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of the inevitable contradictions of value systems” (Erikson, Erikson, and Kivnick 1986: 35).

The emphasis on this surrounding “value systems” is the challenge that young adults face in what Erikson calls “identity crisis”. What causes a “crisis” is the fact that “all samenesses and continuities relied on earlier are more or less questioned again” and one embarks on the “search for a new sense of continuity and sameness” (Erikson 1958: 261).

Moreover, Erikson asserted that the mind of the adolescent is “ideological,” and that the societal form supporting and upholding this stage is the ideological worldview that a society presents to its youth for its endorsement or repudiation. That being said, it is evident that

³¹ A mind of the *moratorium*, is a psychosocial stage between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult” (Erikson 1958: 262–263).

adolescents during this phase are more susceptible to the representations of gender roles found in school textbooks, as explained by Jodelet:

Kroger and Marcia (2011) further social representations that construct their realities as explained in the construction of everyday reality, in the behavior and communications which evolve from it and in the way of life and means of expressions of the groups within which these representations are forged (1991: 8).

In addition to Erikson's proposition that adolescents in this phase are active explorers of ideological and vocational aspirations for the future, this also implies an active exploration of ideological beliefs and, “to be followed (ideally) by agential choice, by a narrowing of focus—a commitment—to value positions and occupational goals that reflect both the emerging adult’s agency and society’s prevailing opportunities and constraints” (quoted in Mc Adams 2013: 278).

Therefore, in the scope of our research, we can argue that young adults at this age after having been exposed to gender stereotypes throughout their lives, embark on a pivotal phase of identity development that further endorses or rejects stereotypes and sexism in their culture. Hence, the research is set to examine the ideological messages in textbooks concerning gender-normative stereotypes that could have devalued the contribution of women in society. Their exposure to these messages will either fossilize current sexist concepts or modify the emerging adults’ perception of women to that will eventually contribute in shaping their career choices and social relationships in the years to come.

2.6.1. Adolescents within the Egyptian context as a focus of analysis

In fact, very limited studies in developing countries have focused on adolescents; those who have done are concerned with risk-taking behaviors as in trauma in armed conflicts, child drug abuse and unprotected sex rather than developmental processes.³² Gender role development in adolescents and gender socialization in developing countries is scant and focuses mainly on the role of the media, family and peers (Mensch 2003: 9). Adolescence in the Arab world and within the Egyptian context differs from the Western description of adolescence as it is less likely to be characterized by rebellion behavior or social distancing from parents (Davis and Davis 1989). This could be due to that fact that Egyptian youth typically live at home with their parents until they get

³² See, for example, Thompson and Morris 1994; Dimitry 2011; Biltagy 2014; Bakhoum 2014.

married and depend on their financial support as young adults. However, there is a salient difference between the way boys and girls behave during this age as per the freedom they are granted.

Egyptian girls are expected to undergo an abrupt end to the relative freedom they have previously had as children (Ibrahim and Wassef 2000). Once puberty occurs, “girls are expected to display increasing modesty and to withdraw from some of the public spaces to which they had access as children” (Mensch et al. 2003: 10). On the other hand, boys experience an increase in mobility as they are expected to participate in work outside the home and engage in community-related activities (Ibid.). By the time students reach late adolescence, their activity profile reflects patterns on the Egyptian society: Boys have more outside of home engagements, while girls are more at home. Consequently, work roles are segregated as boys are more likely to participate in paid labor, while girls take part in domestic work within the household (Mensch 2000).

This early separation, along with segregated education and previously discussed religious and traditional barriers between the two sexes sheds light on the situation of young women in Egypt. Situated between the contradictions of Egyptian traditions, Islamic reform, and Westernization, this research provides an important lens through which we can examine the relationship between gender representation in education and women empowerment in the society. While others call for anti-harassment policies and women economic support, the role of this study targets a more holistic approach through education to reinforce concepts of understanding the other, tolerance, acceptance and respect to uplift the overall well-fare of the society. However, the current reality of the Egyptian gender-segregated society promotes an elevated sense of “we” and “them” that requires intervention from various institutions in the country. As this study proposes that women representation in textbooks, as suggested by theories of social representation, is essential to enhance women’s agency and means to bridge gap between the out-group and in-group, as hypothesized in Social Identity Theory. Consequently, positive representation would provide gender knowledge, eradicate stereotypes, and objectification to enhance and promote respecting the “other”.

Chapter III: Theoretical framework

Introduction

In this section, we will provide the theoretical background of our study that guides our investigation towards answering the research questions. In order to review women's representation in textbooks' content, we need to provide a clear definition of the concept of representation. Secondly, we have to understand how this representation is transmitted across the study subjects, rather than our own personal interpretation. In accordance with Breakwell's (1993) suggestion for studying social representations (SRs), a full examination and understanding of inter-group power relations is necessary. She proposed a set of considerations to examine when analyzing SRs that we find relevant to this specific research and adopted as a guide in choosing the theoretical framework for our study.

First, Breakwell recommends analyzing power differentials and existing hierarchies within groups in relation to representation. Second, she suggests examining the history of the relationship between groups and the use of representation over time. Third, it is essential to discover the distribution of a representation within the group under investigation. An important step that should not be overlooked to understand the impact of the representation, as explained by Breakwell, that "only by developing sophisticated indices of the diffusion and degree of acceptance of the representation across the subordinate group is it possible to fully test assertions about the effects of power" (1993: 4).

Therefore, we will start by discussing the theory of representations, then explore its intersection with Social Identity Theory (SIT) to highlight the intertwined relationship between group dynamics, power and social representations.

3.1. First part: Social representations as a basis of our study

To examine woman representation in the textbooks under review, we need to first identify the meaning of representations, and how they manifest themselves in content. Secondly, in this section we will investigate how social representations (SRs) are formed and circulated in a social milieu. By underpinning the meaning of SRs and the underlying social and psychological factors

that create them, we will be able to fathom their effect on society. Only then, would we relate the findings to the SRs in textbooks, their effect on learners and the adequate measures to alter them, if needed, to create more positive inspiring replacements.

In Moscovici's essay *The phenomenon of representations*, the author advised anyone who wants to understand a certain representation to investigate "from which it is born" (1984: 13). Originally created in France, it later gained success in Europe, Latin America, and French-speaking Canada. Its success was not as popular in the United States, due to two main reasons: the US's adoption of individualistic and experimental cognitive social psychology, contrary to the nature of theories of social representations (Wachelke 2015: 295). Secondly, the theory developed by Moscovici (1961) was elaborated in French, followed by studies by Herzlich (1969) and Jodelet (1989/1991). Its founding father's basic concepts and theoretical foundation of social representation has been unavailable in the English language which made it inaccessible to Anglo-Saxon social psychologists for a long time (Voelklein and Howarth 2005: 426).

Representations are mental concepts or systems that establish the means for individuals to categorize themselves and others within their social world in any given culture. They allow communication between individuals to understand their reality by making the unfamiliar familiar. The shared values, customs, traditions in a social context create dynamic and stable representations that form our own life and our perception of reality. When investigating a certain phenomenon in a given society, it is wise to examine its representation and how it is perceived by subjects, thus creating a framework for perceiving the object in question.

Therefore, students and teachers are not devoid of representations concerning women status, role and expectations in their society pertaining the information they are exposed to in their education systems. Focusing on the pivotal role of textbook contents in the education system as a nucleus of gender representation in the education system, allows us to fathom its effects, and consequently establish a set of recommendations based on our coherent view of the matter.

The theoretical framework is divided into two interrelated sections to justify the relevance of the concept of SRs to our study: the first section includes a conceptual introduction for the study, while the second part will narrow down the scope of our investigation. The first section provides the historical and theoretical evolution of the concept of representation throughout different time periods in its original field, the social psychology, followed by a focus on this concept within the field of education. Consequently, building a foundation of dense literature to inform our study. In

the second section, we will tend to questions regarding the role of this notion in textbook content and its effect on students' perception of the role of women in society. Hence, this section is a top-bottom design starting from the general concept of social representations to then focus on this core of the study, that of the representation of women in the language textbooks in secondary education in public schools in Egypt.

3.1.1. Social representation in the field of social psychology

3.1.2. Historical background

Social representation is a marginal discipline of social psychology that emerged in the second half of the 20th century and has been ever since further developed by scientists from various areas around the globe. The field of social psychology began when scientists attempted to systematically and formally measure the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of human beings (Kruglanski and Stroebe 2011). One of the earliest social psychology experiments on group behavior were conducted before 1900 (Triplet 1898), and the first social psychology manuals were published in 1908 (McDougall 1908, 2003; Ross 1908/1974). Social psychology post World-War II was fueled by researchers' desire to understand pressing issues that had shaped this era, such as conflict and conformity. Solomon Asch's (1952) classic research demonstrated the tendency of subjects to conform when under the pressure of unanimous majority. Similarly, research on obedience by Stanley Milgram (1974) investigated the effect of conformity pressures in social groups and how people in authority enforce obedience upon their followers to the extent that it could lead to inflicting harm on others. The second half of the 1950s witnessed a growing interest in psychological sub disciplines of personality, social psychology and human motivation.

The revived interest during this period of time in human mind as a focus of scientific inquiry was facilitated by influences from linguistics, computer science and neuroscience, which paved the way for a cognitive psychology revolution (Miller 2003). For instance, Chomsky, one of the pioneers of cognitive psychology, argued for the need to reintegrate mental functioning into its scope to offer valuable insights into understanding human behavior. This intellectual revolution was the overarching theme of some influential theories in this era that highlighted the role of cognitive processes on social interactions between individuals. It is during this time that Heider

(1958) published his book *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relationships* that introduced the theory of attribution which suggests that “people frequently make attributions about others and about themselves [...] to arrange their worlds, including their thoughts, so as to achieve harmony and balance” (Harvey and Webb 1993: 14). In his theory, Heider (1958) views people as naïve social perceivers who use information to arrive at causal explanations for events. “It examines what information is gathered and how it is combined to form a causal judgment” (Fisk and Taylor 1991: 23). In other words, attributions refer to people’s explicit and implicit understandings of the causes of events and of responsibility for the outcomes of events. Heider argued that people had the ability to instantaneously make causal inferences according to their perception of the environment. Later, his emphasis on basic perceptual processes were explored and further developed by other attribution theorists such as Kelley (1967, 1973).

The examples briefly mentioned in this section provide us with a glimpse on the prevalent cognitive approach to social psychology that was endorsed by North America during that time, and the growing interest in understanding conformity and intergroup relations effect on individuals. Meanwhile in France, Moscovici’s contribution to Social Representation is remarkable. It is worth noting that he views social psychology as “an anthropology of modern culture,” which makes it useful science for other sciences and for culture in general (Moscovici 1981: 411). According to him, social psychology should not be considered a branch of psychology as it would diminish it into a minor science, rather than view it as a major discipline that bridges culture and nature, and between social and psychic phenomena.

Given its integrative characteristic, Moscovici (1984) proposed that the social dimension of social psychology ought to be regarded as a triangle connecting three instances of phenomena: the individual subject; the social subject; and the social object. Therefore, upon examining a socio-psychological phenomenon, it is essential to bear in mind that these three vertexes should always be taken into account, since both determine and are determined by each other. On the other hand, Doise (1982) specifies multiple levels of analysis for research explaining a phenomenon in social psychology (Wachelke 2016: 174). In 1978, he proposed a method to clarify the work of experimental social psychology in the face of critique to social psychology that according to him targeted only few types of research and rarely presented systematic analysis of a whole set of studies. Here is a summation of the four levels of analysis that he had proposed:

- The first level of analysis deals with the intra-individual process, where the subjects' mechanism that they utilize to organize their perception and evaluation of their surrounding social environment is the focus of analysis.
- The second level of analysis focuses on the inter-individual processes while they take place in a certain situation. However, the various positions which subjects can occupy outside the situation are not taken into account.
- Thirdly, the positional level in which attitudes and behaviors of individuals according to their position in society are explicitly introduced.
- Finally, the fourth level of analysis appeals to individuals' and groups' ideologies that they carry with them to the experimental situations, such as systems of beliefs, norms, and representations.

That said, these levels overlap in many studies and form an interconnection that Doise labels as “articulation” that put research in a different perspective than the North American approaches which had usually explained various areas of research (namely social influence and intergroup relations) from only one level of analysis. Doise's articulation clearly demonstrated an enriched approach by taking all other levels of explanation into consideration. He argued that the four-level analysis manifests “a more general way of conceptualizing relationships between psychology and sociology and for surpassing this dichotomy which, since Wundt, has called into question the very possibility of an experimental social psychology” (Doise 1980: 214). Clearly, the integration of the social context into the multi-level analysis suggests a focus on the symbolic dimension of cognitive factors to make meaning of situation; hence, the representations we make of them, are determined both by our history, our experience, but also by the social and ideological system in which we are embedded, and by the nature of our links with that social system (Abric 1991: 188).

The interest in psychic function and expressions that go beyond the individual to encompass a collective level was not new; in fact, Wundt (1836) had an interest in the language process and argued that each Volk [tribe or folk] has its own language, customs and myths that alters its perception of the world (Greenwood 2009). Later, it was coined by Steinthal and Lazarus as *Volkerpsychologie*. Despite its outdated status, it played an important role in understanding

nations' perceptions and stereotypes in Europe in the 19th century. It was a form understanding psychology grounded in social community, which is considered a forerunner of social psychology as we know it today.

Sociology was indeed central to Durkheim's perspective on the relationship between the individual and society. However, this emphasis on the collective and the desire to establish sociology as an autonomous field led to misguided accusations that he denied the importance of both the individual and psychology. These accusations arose due to his prioritization of sociology over psychology and individualism, as highlighted by Zamponi (2014: 44). Durkheim refuted previous philosophies that fused individuals into societies as they proved the failure of separating the whole from the part (*Ibid.*: 52). Throughout the 1890s, he has used the term "representation" more frequently in his work as a scientific concept, when he concluded that social phenomena "are made up of representations" and representations are to be regarded as social facts (Durkheim 1895: 97). Durkheim views these mental concepts as realities that surpass symbolism to create physical realities "[...] which are collective in origin (as all concepts really are) take on in our eyes, even when their objet is not a real one, such a strength that it appears to be real. This is why concepts acquire the vividness and force of action of sensations" (1955/1983: 101-102).

In his famous article of 1898 on *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, he argued that collective representations were independent from individual minds as they had a life of their own that could not be determined by relying on an explanatory understanding centered on the individual. Moreover, Durkheim argued that ideas, like any other social fact, force or rather impose themselves upon us. As further elaborated by Némédi, Durkheim asserted that collective representations were not individual's thoughts, nevertheless, he could not dismiss the idea "that representations should be, in some sense, the thoughts of *someone*" (1995: 50). Nevertheless, to him collective representations could not be gauged by relying on the facts of the individual psychology, but rather by complex facts like those that govern social interactions.

We can notice here that the concept of representation has been tackled by Durkheim's collective representation and Volkerpsychologie, yet from two different angles: sociological in the former and psychological in the latter. While Durkheim focus was on religion in traditional societies, Wundt was more interested in the study of language. For Wundt collective representations are "those mental products which are created by a community of human life and

are, therefore, inexplicable in terms merely of individual consciousness, since they presuppose the reciprocal action of the many” (1912/1916: 3).

Lévy Bruhl (1927) also suggested the idea of a collective soul that influences the masses’ actions, beliefs and decisions. Piaget’s comprehension of structure and originality of his method “enabled me, [Moscovici], to grasp more intuitively what is behind ‘common sense’ and, thereby, a social representation” (Moscovici 2010: 21).

Moscovici revitalized Durkheim’s notion of collective representation to further develop a social representation theory. However, he perceived Durkheim’s emphasis on society as a *sui generis* construct and superior to any particularity, which diminishes the reality of the opposition between individuals and society, hence he attributed a more balanced explanation of social representation to Freud (1908-1922). As Hare explains:

For Freud, sociology was applied psychology. In common with Le Bon, Freud took the characteristic situation of the person transformed into a member of a crowd to be the loss of conscious personality, the guiding of thoughts and emotions into a single direction by means of suggestion and contagion (2016: 220).

Hence, Moscovici attributes the origin of representations to psychoanalysis and specifically to Freud’s first formulations where he introduced the concepts of repression and libido, a concept that Moscovici finds to be fundamental in psychoanalysis like “what universal gravitational theory to the Newtonian system” (1984: 57). To him, Freud’s work highlight how representations pass from the conscious to the unconscious level, thus the complexity of accessing them. The concept of social representations was influenced by the rich history of sociology, psychology and anthropology. As mentioned here, Durkheim’s (1898) collective representation had a major effect on theorizing the social representation. Moscovici, on the other hand, changed Durkheim’s terminology from collective to social representations to highlight his revitalization of Durkheim’s theorizing of knowledge of namely myth and religion as homogenous and “total”, while articulating the heterogeneous nature of modern society. As Durkheim asserts “it seems to be an aberration, in any case, to consider representations as homogenous and shared as such by a whole society. What we wished to emphasize by giving up the word collective was this plurality of representations and their diversity within a group” (1988: 219).

The shift from Durkheim’s collective to representations is also evident in Lévy-Bruhl’s interest in understanding how the representations were formed “in a field of perception that preceded the separation between the individual and the collective” (Keck 2008: 164). Moscovici

(1988) asserted that studying representation from the perspective of individual psychology is impossible, aligning with Lévy-Bruhl's belief that "social facts, like the institutions that they reflect, have their own laws, laws that the analysis of individuals as individuals can never reveal" (1951: 14). Lévy-Bruhl opposed cognitive homogeneity, and tackled Durkheim's paradox of rational collective representation by asserting that the social representations that are perceived as rational in one culture might not be considered in the same sense, or according to the same logic, rational in another culture. To him it is impossible to convert superior forms of thought, chosen by one culture into universal laws of the human mind" (Moscovici 1998: 417).

To further elaborate his point that cultural forms of thought cannot be universalized, Moscovici stated that that Lévy-Bruhl's conception of collective representation in primitive culture into three themes:

- Representations are unaffected by experience since they come from higher authority of power.
- All individuals are sensitive to contradictions, yet depends on the type of representation.
- Culture has semantic fluidity and richness to cater to the reproduction and changing of images and situations.

In order to further understand the distinction between Durkheim and Lévy-Bruhl's views of representation, Moscovici provided a crude, yet clarifying, comparison between Piaget and Vygotsky, where Piaget's continuity hypothesis follows Durkheim's rationalism and Vygotsky's Discontinuity hypothesis is indebted to Lévy-Bruhl. Durkheim's rationalism is based on his claim that SRs, including myths and religion, irrespective of which culture they belong to, are rational (Moscovici 1998: 415). In opposition to this claim, Lévy Bruhl, despite the criticism he received, asserted that scientific thought does not replace primitive thought. According to his theory, scientific representations eventually transform into common-sense knowledge rather than being entirely eradicated by them.

This brief historical overview of the evolution of social representations highlights how Social Representation Theory positions itself in social psychology with the contents of common sense and local knowledge (Jodelet 1993; Wagner 1997). The importance of SRs lies in their ability to establish means for individuals to communicate by categorizing and placing themselves and the other within their social world and culture. This was accurately described by Moscovici:

[...] a social representation is “a particular form of knowledge whose function is the elaboration of behaviors and communication between individuals. It is an organized corpus of knowledge and one of the psychic activities thanks to which humans make physical and social reality intelligible, integrate into a group or in a daily relationship of exchange, and free the powers of their imagination. (1971: 17-18)

Thus SRs enable communication between individuals within a social environment through providing them with “shared social exchange code which names and classifies various aspects of the world and their personal or group history without ambiguity” (quoted in Herzlich and Graham 1973: preface, xiii). Thus, SRT seeks to explain “the processes through which knowledge is generated, transformed and projected into the social world” (Duveen 2000: 2).

Representations are useful in order to describe, code and explain reality (Oswald 2013: 67).

There are four main functions of SRs:

1. Knowing function: facilitates mutual understanding and communication. SRs enable us to understand and explain reality. This representational framework disseminates and transforms knowledge that holds common sense, to allow communication;
2. Orientation function: SRs guide behavior and practices by defining a situation and its objective, and creating a system of anticipations and expectations that guide behaviors of social subjects;
3. Legitimation or justification function: allows social subjects to justify their stance and posteriori;
- 4- identity functions: defining identity as a social process that determines and establishes group identity and specificity (Jodelet 1989; Abric 1994, 15-17; Banchs 2000).

To summarize this section, we can end with Moscovici description of SRs as “a systems of values, ideas and practices with a two-fold function; first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orientate themselves in their material and social world and to master it; secondly, to enable communication to take place amongst members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history” (Moscovici 1973: xvii). So what are the conditions for the emergence of social representations? How are they transformed?

3.1.3. Dynamicity of social representations

SRs are dynamic entities with autonomy that play a pivotal role in the configuration of both cognition and the behavior or subjects in groups. As Moscovici and Hewstone explain:

Here and there we find a tendency to consider that social representations are the inner reflection of something external, the surface and ephemeral layer of something deeper and more permanent. While everything points to see in them a constitutive factor of social reality, just as invisible particles and fields are a constitutive factor of physical reality (1986: 710).

The concept of dynamicity in Moscovici's SR puts Durkheim's collective representations at the opposite pole of the continuum and manifests the salient difference between them. Representations are not created haphazardly; Moscovici argues that social representations emerge in specific conditions in contemporary societies that are shaped by their dynamism and their massifying force. The first condition for a representation to emerge is to have an existing object, as Jodelet clearly asserts that there is no representation without an object (1989, 1991: 37). The appearance of a new object that is not previously mastered by the group results in initiating conversations around it, in order to relate it to pre-existing knowledge to provide meaning to it. These discussions result in both generating representations to compensate the lack of knowledge, and interactions amongst people.

Furthermore, the importance of the object to the individual and social group is essential to gain interest that leads to focalization in order to understand it. Consequently, this focalization mobilizes the interest of the social group in trying to incorporate it into the group imagery and practices. Moscovici explained the mobilization process by asserting that, "spontaneously, an individual or a group grants a specific attention to some very particular areas of the surrounding environment and distance themselves from other areas of the same environment. The distance, the degree of implication in relation to the social object necessarily varies" (1979: 178).

It is clear that in addition to the existence of an object, there should also be a subject that forms engagements in social communication through a network of social interactions with other subjects as described by Moscovici (1984): Ego-Alter-Ego triangulation model. This is one of the fundamental changes in SRT in relation to Durkheim's conceptions that viewed representations as products of society as a whole. Moscovici, on the other hand, asserts that representations are products of the social groups that form the society. He narrowed down on social communication in specific that cause the emergence of representations. That's in accordance with Wagner's view of SRs' nature:

[a] social representation is a collective phenomenon pertaining to a community which is co-constructed by individuals in their daily talk and action. [...] Instead of imagining representations within minds it is better to imagine them across minds, resembling a canopy being woven by people's concerted talk and actions [...].

In summary, a social representation is the ensemble of thoughts and feelings being expressed in verbal and overt behavior of actors which constitutes an object for a social group (1999: 96).

Consequently, there are two outcomes created as a form of including the subject in the formation of SRs,

- The fact that in a given social context there are variant SRs of the same object.
- Through communication and accompanying processes of influence, normalization and conformity, subjects' beliefs can be the object of consensus at the same time as collective beliefs can be imposed on the subjects.

We can understand here that the process of re-production of objects of knowledge implies a subjectification generated from the interactions between the subjects and the object itself. When re-introducing reality in order to understand it, its disarticulation is facilitated, causing its transformation into something different. This results in a new quality that separates the representation from the object. As explained by Jodelet, "in the representation we have the concrete mental content of an act of thought that symbolically restores something absent, which approaches something far away. An important feature that guarantees representation is its ability to fuse perceptual and concept and its character of image" (1986: 476).

This is how every SR has a meaning of its own that was created during the process of subjectification and later fed back by its own existence, to be used by a community of subjects. The subjectivity in SRT implies that individuals are not in isolation, but rather active social actors who are:

- shaped by their position within the social structure;
- their identities are defined by insertion in social and cultural groups,

The representation, in turn is dynamicized and given value through the relations of the social groups within the community, which manifests how Moscovici (1979) provides individuals an active role in the origin and persistence of their own social representations. According to Moscovici SR is:

A particular form of knowledge whose function is the elaboration of behaviors and communication between individuals. It is an organized corpus of knowledge and one of the psychic activities thanks to which humans make physical and social reality intelligible, integrate into a group or in a daily relationship of exchange, and free the powers of their imagination (1979: 17-18).

Similarly, Doise asserts that representations "are generative principles of taking positions that are linked to specific insertions in a set of social relations and that organize the symbolic

processes involved in those relations” (Ibáñez: 1988: 34). This dynamic process entailing relations and daily interactions of the subjects with the object of knowledge, their previous experiences, and the characteristics of the context are essential elements for the understanding of the emergence and consolidation of social representations. In other words, that the representations “serve to orientate individuals themselves in the social and material context, to dominate it” (Moscovici: 1979: 18).

Moreover, it is essential to understand that SRs have the ability to both stabilize and destabilize the collective equilibrium within society as they take various forms. We can see this in the roles of SRs in prejudice, tolerance prescriptions, imperatives, prohibitions, and many other forms of goals-oriented ways of intervention into the ongoing person-society relations. The contradictory nature of these roles result in uniting the opposites within the same whole, as Moscovici summarizes its nature:

Our society is an institution which inhibits what it stimulates. It both tempers and excites aggressive, epistemic, and sexual tendencies, increases or reduces the chances of satisfying them according to class distinctions, and invents prohibitions together with the means of transgressing them. Its sole purpose, to date, is self-preservation, and it opposes change by means of laws and regulations. It functions on the basic assumption that it is unique, has nothing to learn, and cannot be improved. Hence its unambiguous dismissal of all that is foreign to it. Even its presumed artificiality, which might be considered a shortcoming, is taken, on the contrary, for a further sign of superiority, since it is an attribute of mankind (1976: 149).

We can understand from this previous section that SRs facilitate communication and mutual understanding between individuals and social groups, yet, they also result in “a product of discourse: it is through communication that representations emerge in the collective consciousness and are reproduced” (quoted in Szwed 2011: 49).

This interaction between subjects and objects results in the birth of SRs and their persistence over time, since they are continually conveyed by individuals in a specific social group that make them susceptible to transformations. According to Moscovici, there are three necessary conditions for the emergence of social representations:

- a group of individuals must be confronted with a complex or unfamiliar object
- the practical or appropriation of that object must have genuine social implications on that social group (1961: 2004).

To face the complex and make the unknown familiar, people resort to a symbolic coping response called “anchoring,” where the group attribute existing worldviews to allow the new phenomenon to be communicated and talked about (Wagner *et al.* 1999: 97). Next, these socially

represented knowledge attains their specific form from abstract to concrete in a mechanism called “objectification” (Moscovici 1984: 38). It is through this stage that the phenomenon is weaved into the social group’s common sense. Furthermore, in order for a group to develop this objectification mechanism, they have to be relatively closed in communication and share some similarities. Wagner et al., summarizes the effect of the characteristic of the social groups on the objectification as follows:

Objectification depends upon the characteristics of the social unit where a social representation is elaborated. The specific social conditions of a certain group favor specific kinds of tropes to be used for objectification by which an unfamiliar phenomenon is represented and made intelligible. Such differences in social conditions between groups may be sociostructural, historical, cultural or subcultural, intergenerational or differences in school level. Differences in living conditions of groups delimit the space of experiences of their members, which in turn delimits the world of images, metaphors and tropes available for objectification (1999: 100).

It is clear that the resulting figurative speech and meanings in a specific social group do not necessarily represent truth or correctness, but rather mirror their perception of the world, their level of exposure and the negotiated consensus of the group members (Moscovici 1988; Wagner, Elejabarrieta and Lahnsteiner 1995; Wagner 1996). This is point in particular, will guide our research in associating the perception of the status and role of women in the Egyptian society with certain groups’ characteristics. In other words, we will identify how women are represented differently in foreign language and Arabic textbooks despite being taught to the same student body.

Moscovici (1990) summarizes these two mechanisms as a creation of resemblance to understand the new phenomenon. This creation of resemblance does not necessarily mean a presupposed existing resemblance, therefore, making the unfamiliar and the familiar different from what they really are and resulting in a new perception for both the former and the latter. Finally, Moscovici’s description of the emergence of SRs seems to be quite relevant to demonstrate their complexity of emergence and transformations since “no doubt, the tendency to familiarize constitutes a resistance to what is new, unknown or extraordinary. But it is precisely this resistance that compels people to make a cognitive effort, nourishes social polemics and ultimately changes what is well-known or usual (1990: 385).

As shown above, TSR is firmly rooted in communication and interaction, it employs a sociological framework that distances itself from traditional experimentations and conceptions of social cognition, which are at variance with the general theory. Furthermore, TSR adopts different

analytical perspectives as opposed to limited body of knowledge. Quenza (2005: 79) distinguished four main trends:

- an approach targeting social groups' activities to construct meanings and to make meaning of objects and events in their world (e.g. Moscovici 1961; Herzlich 1973; Jodelet 1989);
- a perspective focused on inter-group relations ((e.g. Di Giacomo 1980; Doise 1988);
- an approach centered on discursive analysis (e.g. Billig 1988; Harré 1998);
- the commonly used and influential structural approach centered on cognitive activity (e.g. Abric 1984a; Flament 1994a; Moliner 1994; Vergès 1994).

The relevance of SR to our study is clear as we navigate the representations in the school textbooks under review. School textbooks are manifestations of a social discourse since they “can provide important insights into the nature and meaning of a culture and the social and political discourses in which it is engaged” (Provenzo et al. 2011: vii). By examining discourse, we will unravel the exchange of thoughts, collection of information and dissemination of ideas, images and beliefs in the form of SRs. Consequently, understanding the shared models of reality of our object, status of Egyptian women, in our context.

3.1.4. Social Representations organizing structure

SRs emerge as a result of cognitive processes as the previously mentioned processes of anchoring and objectification. Yet, how do representations evolve and further transform themselves? In order to understand this process, we need to examine the internal structure of SRs. So, how are the internal structures organized and what are the principles governing these structures?

Also, what is the relation between SRs' internal structure and their inconclusive nature: dynamic and normative?

Abric's structural approach to SRs provides us with an explanation of their organizing and organized structure. Abric attributed our understanding of the structured sets of one's knowledge about one's environment to the works of the social cognition pioneers (Heider: 1946; Asch: 1946; Rosenberg and Hovland 1960; Festinger 1957). The work of Heider (1958), for instance, suggested unitary cores to explain attribution phenomena. Similarly, the work of Asch (1946) on the hierarchical structure of the elements involved in the perception of personality traits. In the specific

framework of the theory of social representations, the concept of centrality comes from the idea of a figurative core that is attributed to Moscovici (1961).

Indeed, Abric (1994) was the first to introduce the concept of centrality and hierarchy in the internal organization of representation. Later, Moscovici integrated the idea of structure into his theory by incorporating the notion of dimensional representation and the concepts of figurative schemata. Abric's Central Core Theory (1976, 1987, 1994a), also known as the Central Nucleus Theory is a structural theory of SRs on the premise that they are organized in a complementary dual system: center core and peripheral elements. The peripheral elements can be described as Moliner puts it "prescriptions which tell individuals what to do and say in situations which are processed through that representation" (1995: 25). This definition complements Abric's hypothesis that the peripheral system is more flexible compared to the core but serves as a shield against changes. Flament (1989: 210) characterizes it as a "car bumper" to emphasize its defensive function in preserving the significance of the representation. According to Abric, the peripheral elements have the following functions:

- are determined by the immediate context characteristics
- regulate and adapt to limitations and characteristics of the central system to the concrete situation which the group is facing
- allow individual modulation of the representation (1993: 77).

Contrasting with the peripheral system, the central system is the central core of the representation and is more stable and concrete. A central element can be an opinion, a belief, or an attitude about the object represented. Due to its organizing and meaning-bearing functions, a central element appears to be an irrefutable, non-negotiable belief (Moscovici 1992). Furthermore, Moliner (1989, 1993) asserts that if an object contradicts to some extent with the central elements of a representation, it will be perceived by the social group as an object to that representation. He pinpointed that when this refutation phenomenon occurs, the central elements of a given representation will be clearly identified. Abric (1993) delineates the central elements as having the following characteristics:

- reflects and determines the sociological, historical and ideological conditions of the social and the existing system of norms adopted by the social group;
- mirrors the collective memory of the group,

- its consensual function is manifested in the homogeneity of the social group to ensure the continuity and stability of the representation;
- stable and coherent which makes it unsusceptible to change.

That said, the core reflects the collective memory, reinforces the homogeneity and consensus of the social group, while the peripheral permit some individual divergences. Dissecting the internal organization of SRs is necessary to comprehend their evolution process and their transformations throughout their dynamic journeys. Flament introduced the concept of reversibility of the situation in light of the difference between the core and peripheral systems. The notion of reversibility is essential in understanding the relation between the organization of the representations and their transformation process.

Flament's notion of reversibility suggests that transformations depend on social actors' perception of SRs as reversible or irreversible. In the former situation, the social actors' contradictory practices will result in superficial transformation in the SRs peripheral system, while the core system remains unaffected. On the other hand, if perception is irreversible, the resulting contradictory practices will cause transformations in three types:

- Resisting information: where the contradictory practices could be negotiated, rationalized and justified in the peripheral system to further protect the representation.
- Progressive transformation: the core smoothly transforms into a new core due to the progressive integration of the new practices to form a new representation.
- Brutal transformation: in this type, the peripheral system cannot protect the representation from the direct challenges. In this irreversible situation, the representation will transform due to the direct changes in the core.

To summarize, there is an intertwined relationship between the representations' structure as Moliner asserts that "there is a systematic and indestructible link between the central elements of representation and the object represented" (1995: 28). One can picture the representation's core as the stable element that cements the meaning, which also illustrates, specifies or justifies this meaning in order to adapt the representation's core to its actual context (Abirc 2001). Meanwhile, the peripheral system carries on the operational aspects of the representation through managing tensions and potential conflicts between the cognition and the social environment. This interaction between the peripheral and core system is a "fundamental element in the actualization, evolution, and transformation of representation" (Abirc 1993: 78).

For changes to occur, Moliner (2015) discloses that the central core will only get affected or modified through social practices and communication. Flament adds that impact on the central core is very difficult to achieve in the short term, yet social practices are the most likely to cause this effect; “despite our efforts, we have so far failed to find any trace of a modification of a social representation under the influence of ideological discourse; only social practices seem to have such an effect” (quoted in Arbic 2001: 50). Nevertheless, the peripheral elements would be affected by the discourse, consequently leading to progressive changes in the SRs.

Understanding the organizing structure of SRs unravels how exposure to ideological discourse in academic books aimed to regulate social interaction could alter students’ and teachers’ perception of the role of women in the society. Furthermore, the internal structure of SRs guided our research in identifying the permeable peripheral elements of the representation, before soliciting the core while collecting the representations. Also, it provided an insight into the reasons of transformations or cementing that are yet to occur to these representations.

3.1.5. Social representations: a type of knowledge

In the previous section we highlighted the nature of SRs as a reflection of common sense, or in other words, a form of ordinary knowledge created as a result of the interaction within the triad of the individual subject; the social subject; and the social object. What is the relation to our study and what is the role of the ordinary knowledge and what is the purpose of its emergence? What is meant by the qualifier “social” and how does it affect common sense knowledge? The answers to the questions will further tie the concept to our study and provide a synthesis of what has been discussed earlier.

3.1.6. Nature of social aspect in representation

SRs are social and cultural entities, rather than symbolic products of isolated individuals, hence they are deeply rooted in social life as a result of everyday communicative practices. This does not mean that social actors are empty vessels waiting to be filled with representations. As Rose *et al.* explain “there is a tension between a commonly shared historical background and the diverse everyday interaction of individuals who can construct and construe, invent and transform” (1995: 3). Hence, SRs highlight the power of social reality and the agency of the social subjects at

the same time. Rose et al (1995) make a distinction between two fundamental levels in social practice that highlights the dual nature of the SRs:

- The level of the underlying ground-rules for the formation of social representations facilitates comprehension, is situated within institutional settings, draws upon the weight of history, and possesses a consensual dimension;
 - The level of immediate social interaction includes argumentation and/or disagreement.
- Of course, this difference between the two levels would not have been evident, should we consider SRs as static “mental entities” replicated in individuals’ cognition.

As argued by Moscovici, “in the process of formation of a representation there is always both conflict and cooperation” (1989: 377). The cooperation provides social subjects with a commonality to facilitate and construct social realities (Wagner, et al 2000), whereas the conflict provides a venue for competition. The social aspect, manifested in cooperation and conflict, is the essence of distinction between social representations from Durkheim’s (1898) notions of ‘collective’ and ‘individual’ representations.

This distinction is reflected in the very structure of the SRs, where the central core represents the concrete and invariable character, while the peripheral elements allow the transformation and evolution of the representation as a result of social interaction.

Consequently, representation has a vital role in the management of social relations, in terms of the behavior and communication. According to Jodelet (1989) a social representation is “a form of socially developed and shared knowledge, with practical implications, which contributes to the construction of a common reality for a social group” (quoted in Castelloti and Moore 2002: 7). Therefore, SRs express and structure both the identity and social conditions of the social agents who reproduce and change them.

3.1.7. Social Representations’ categorization function

Indeed, another crucial aspect linked to social representations (SRs) is their identifying function, as they enable individuals to connect with one another within the same social group that shares common representations. This is a direct outcome of their anchoring function as a result of classification and naming as described by Moscovici: “By classifying what is unclassified and a naming process, a method of establishing relations between categories and labels” (1984: 30).

That said, SR evidently play a role in the identity construction. So, what are the tools with which one identifies with a specific group? Both concepts of categorization and self-categorization carried out in groups' comparisons allow individuals to distinguish their group membership in social groups (Tajfel 1972). According to Tajfel, "categorization is a process of bringing together social objects or events in groups which are equivalent with regard to an individual's actions, intentions, attitudes, and systems of beliefs" (1974: 69). This concept lends itself to adding Social Identity Theory, SIT, as a supplementary theory within our theoretical framework to further understand the representations and their acceptance within groups.

Yet, it is important to differentiate between groups, which exist well and truly in the social environment, and categories that are "mental constructions" (Corneille 1997), that exist "in the head of the subject" (de la Haye 1998: 28). Yet, arguably categorization is far more real and crucial for people in social anchoring (Lorenzi-Cioldi 1988; Corneille 1997). Consequently, in any given society or culture where categorizations are emphasized, people will automatically define themselves based on these social categories in order to make sense of their status in the society and their surroundings (Turner, Sachdev, and Hogg 1983). This being the general idea, it will affect one's social identity as Jodelet explains:

[...] we may refer to modern societies, recently marked by globalization processes and the influence of the media; of public spheres; of cultural fields and of the resources they offer for the interpretation of the everyday life; or of social fields and of these structures of social relationships that determine feelings of social belongingness and mental structures. Here, common sense is perceived as a homogenous reality whose distinct characteristics are related to the management of everyday life and to group identity (2013: 3).

This overlaps with Abrie's view (1987: 71) "*le propre d'une représentation est de produire un système de catégorisation*" [the main characteristic of a representation is to produce a system of categorization³³]. Moliner and Vidal (2003: 165) highlighted the similarity between social categorization and representation as socio-cognitive processes that lead to the construction of cognitive structures to understand a certain object, and to order the environment. That said, SRs function as identity markers, which following Tajfel's theory of social identity (e.g. 1978), may be used to identify with a membership group, and to identify and discriminate an out-group.

³³ Our translation.

This process of categorization, as it is coined in social identity theories (Turner et al. 1987); or identification as preferred by identity theorists (McCall and Simons 1978) is what leads to identity formation.

It is worth noting that the similarity between social identity theory and identity theory is that both perspectives emphasize that the formation of identity occurs through interaction with an already structured world. In social identity theory, a social identity is a person's awareness of belonging to a social category or group (Hogg and Abrams 1988). Likewise, this sense of belonging to a social group is known as self-categorization in identity theory, where identity is formed in a structured culture by determinant symbols and positions that lead people within this culture to recognize one another as occupants of these positions. Burke and Tully (1977) and Thoits (1986) highlighted the connection between the self-categorization and the expectation associated with that position (role) and its function in the society. In general, theorists from both traditions, the identity theorists and social identity theorists, assert that individuals perceive themselves in terms of meanings imparted by a structured society (McCall and Simmons 1978; Stryker 1980; Turner et al. 1987).

To summarize, the process of social categorization concerns, of course, only social groups. While the process of social representation may concern many different objects. At the same time, in certain cases, the social representation of an object includes a system of social categorization (Jodelet 1989)

As shown in this section, the heterogeneous definitions previously presented, highlight that although SRs originated in the field of social psychology, they do not necessarily take on different meanings in women representation in textbooks. However, they are not always mentioned as "representation", but rather in different variations that we will explain like stereotypes, prejudice, and mental image. Furthermore, we will shed light on the representation in the field of education and more specifically in language materials used in secondary education.

3.1.8. Gender representation as a form of Social Representations

Now that we situated SRs in the field of social psychology, it is now time to anchor the notion of representation as it is understood in the field of language-gender didactics. In this research we rely on SRT to provide adequate conceptual tools to analyze the dynamic status of

women in the contemporary Egyptian society as portrayed in the secondary school academic curricula. Myriad of linguistics and language teaching studies incorporate subjects' attitudes and representations of, for example, gender roles and their status in a given community. There is indeed an intersection between SRs and gendered readings of the social world. With that in mind, it was necessary to explore SRs as a prerequisite to understand gender representations in this particular topic.

As defined by Moscovici, social representations are a "system of values, ideas, and practices that establish a consensual order among phenomena," and "to enable communication to take place among the members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange" (Duveen and Lloyd 1993: 91). In other words, SRs mirrors commonsense understanding of the gender roles in the society that is reflected in everyday knowledge.

The development of SRs evolves from practice to reflective knowledge, which is in accordance with Vygotsky's formula that development yield from the interpersonal to the intrapersonal: "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (inter-psychological), and then inside the child's (intra-psychological)" (1978: 57).

Moscovici however, doubted Vygotsky's notion of internalization stating that it is "too good to be true" (1990: 179). According to Moscovici, Vygotsky's perception of the relationship between social practices and individual functioning is too direct without any reference to a mediating structure between the inter-psychological and intra-psychological. Duveen echoes Moscovici's concerns regarding Vygotsky's formula, highlighting its evident undermining of the role of social identities as the structures mediating between the inter-psychological and the intra-psychological. He underpinned the variations that emerge between individuals in relation to the collective meanings that the formula failed to acknowledge, assuming that "every individual acquires the same understanding from a single set of social practices" (1996: 3).

We should note here that the development of social gender identities we refer to, is not the individual's way of negotiation to the question of placing themselves in the world of gender, but rather, to their adoption of marked positions within the social representation of gender. That said, in the course of constructing gender roles, children draw upon the social representations surrounding them, and in doing so, also locate themselves in a particular position within this collective system of meaning. As Duveen clarifies, "the social marking of people (themselves and

others), of material culture and of space provides the scaffolding which enables children to sustain an organized gender identity” (1996: 2).

That said, we find it useful to connect Moscovici’s theory with concepts from the sociology of knowledge and to identify features of SRs that facilitate analysis of content and linguistic structures. Kruse *et al.* drew a similarity between Moscovici’s systems of beliefs to familiarize the unknown and Schutz’s “common stock of knowledge”:

A common stock of knowledge may be shared and evaluated by all members of a language community in the same way and/or may be socially distributed, i.e. represented differently in different social groups. Distinctive features of this common stock of knowledge are that it is ‘taken for granted’, that it serves as a common interpretive schema as well as a means of communication (1988: 243).

Given that social representations (SRs) can be adopted to identify socially controversial concepts or may be in a process of change, it is pertinent to consider the highly controversial and sometimes even dangerous concept of gender as a relevant domain for studying SRs. Despite the disagreements on the definition of gender and the multiple definitions found in the literature, we opt to follow the approach of Archer and Lloyd (1975; 1985), which incorporates both biological and social dimensions to explain the development of men and women. This approach underscores the significance of social representation in shaping gender role interpretations and expectations. Amâncio delineates that common knowledge has consistently defined male and female as "two opposite, mutually exclusive categories differing in body, mind, and social location" (1996: 999). The binary approach to view males and females, backed up by evidence of sex differences, resulted in social differences that separated them into two entities. As Amâncio further explains:

Concepts such as public versus private spheres, productive versus domestic work, normal versus pathological sexual development, and rationality versus irrationality paralleled the duality of the male and the female sex and were also supposed to explain their differences (1996: 999).

By underpinning SRs of gender roles in discourse we will be able to understand their designated statuses within a given community as Bonardi and Roussiau have proposed: “analyzing a social representation means attempting to understand and explain the nature of the social bonds between individuals, the social practices they engage in, and relationships within and between groups” (1999: 25).

3.1.9. Overlap between SRs and Social Identity Theory, SIT

This view is in accordance with Duveen and Lloyd's (1990) suggestion that the SRs of gender carry with them essential obligations that affect individuals' construction of social identity. In other words, SRs affect social identity and group dynamics. Indeed, the concept of social representations (SRs) underscores the interactive factor that makes it imperative not to overlook the interpretive repertoire of social groups, as emphasized by Potter and Wetherell (1987). In accordance with A. Manuti and Mininni, "the "interpretative repertoires", as well as (or, better, more than) social representations show that what social groups know about reality is the temporary result of their encounters and negotiations" (2010: 339).

According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), the separation of groups, based on gender in our case, and the absence of knowledge about the "other" gender, when coupled with identification with a gender category, can lead to a corresponding increase in gender bias. A good example is young children's favoritism for their own gender in choosing friends over others (Martin and Ruble 2010). In addition to rating their own gender more positively than the opposite gender. These patterns were proven in myriad of studies across multiple nations (e.g., US, Canada, Wales, and Italy) (Martinez and Zosuls 2020: 8). Halim et al. (2017) proposed, in consistency with other studies (Egan and Perry 2001; Susskind and Hodges 2007), that starting at a very young age, children develop biased gender attitudes towards their own in-group, however, an increase in gender knowledge, as opposed to gender stereotypes, resulted in less biased gender attitudes. This observation is a cornerstone in our study as it sheds light on the importance of fair gender representation and eradication of stereotypes due to their impact on learners' self-concept and inter-relations as SIT suggests.

3.2. Second Part: Social Identity Theory, SIT

The choice of a social psychology theory for this study is based on its dynamic, interactional, and social perspectives, as opposed to an asocial and static approach. Social Identity Theory, SIT, is a supplementary theory adopted in this research within the theoretical framework to study women's representation in academic textbooks on students' perceptions on these representations through examining their acceptance in an already gender-segregated social context

that fosters gender salience. This chapter will dissect SIT to understand gender relations through the theory's lens. A review of previous research using SIT to study gender relations is reviewed. First, the basic principles of SIT are introduced; second, research in each area is briefly described, and then the effect on women as a minority group. The principles of SIT include social categorizations, group identification; social comparisons between groups; beliefs about the intergroup situation; gender self-esteem; and social change beliefs.

3.2.1. An introduction to Social Identity Theory

The term Social Identity describes aspects of a person's self-concept based upon their membership in a specific group together with their "emotional, evaluative and other psychological correlates" (Turner and Oakes 1986: 240). SIT is one of the few social psychological theories that addresses status relations between different groups in society and individual responses to low status group membership. The anti-individualistic nature of this theory enables it to elucidate large-scale commonalities in social behavior, to derive social conflict and stability from individuals' roles as group members, to establish connections between the social structure and cognitive-evaluative representations of social structure and ideological belief systems, and in general, to assume a dynamic interaction between psychological processes and the social context (Tajfel 1979: 183).

Social identity theory, SIT, as a social psychological theory was first introduced by Tajfel (1978) and further developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) in Europe during the seventies to focus on the interplay between personal and social identities (Tajfel 1974; 1975; Tajfel and Turner 1979). The fundamental hypothesis posits that individuals are motivated to attain positive social identity through comparing in-groups favorably with out-groups. The said psychologists developed SIT out of avant garde series of studies, commonly referred to as the minimal group studies that examined the minimal conditions resulting in discrimination amongst individuals in favor of the in-group, where there is a high sense of belonging, and against the out-group. In these experiments, the subjects were divided into meaningless and arbitrary groups to evaluate how subjects in one group would give scoring points to the opposite group. It was found that members of the in-groups maximized the relative gain for their members, as opposed to the out-group, even if that resulted in awarding a lower numbers of scoring points to the in-group. Therefore, it was concluded that these minimal group studies highlighted the subjects' behavior towards

categorization into groups that lead them to perceive themselves and others in terms of group membership instead of separate individuals.

This conclusion was a groundbreaking deviation from prevalent reductionist views at that time, when most theoretical concepts were developed during the critical time period preceding the Second World War to dissect intergroup relations in complex social phenomena that painted this era, namely stereotypes, discrimination, and prejudice (Valentim 2010: 585). This tragic time of fear, hostility and instability witnessed the birth of some psychoanalytic approaches like the Theory of Frustration - Aggression (Dollard et al. 1939) along with the development of the Theory of Authoritarian Personality (Adorno *et al.* 1950). These two theories have marked the scientific field as well as common sense until the present day. Later on, other theories than these individualistic paradigms, namely Sherif's Realistic Conflict Theory were based on functional relations between groups. Sherif and his associates carried out field experiments in the United States of America on groups of teenage boys in natural scenarios with limited resources (Sherif 1954; 1958; 1961). Situations were also devised whereby one group gained at the expense of the other. Situations were also devised whereby one group gained at the expense of the other. Sherif observed that when two groups are in a negative interdependence situation, where only one party is allowed to win, antagonism and hostility marked the relations between them, whereas fostered solidarity within each group and favoritism of the in-group. On the other hand, when groups support each other to attain a common goal, friction and hostility are reduced, harmony between groups' relations is fostered, and even the other groups' representations are favorable (Valentim 2010: 587).

SIT, on the contrary, explains how group membership can affect the individual's identity and focuses on the "group in the individual" (Hogg and Abrams 1988: 3). The remarkable difference here is that SIT's main concern is the unequal status relations between groups being "originally developed to account for phenomena such as discrimination against, hostility towards or persecution of members of out-groups" (Emler and Hopkins 1990: 113). SIT makes specific and testable predictions about the effect of low group status on its members, in addition to the reactions of high status groups to threats, hence making it particularly suitable for explaining power relations between genders in a Middle-Eastern context and the effect of women representation in education textbooks on women self-esteem and aspiration.

Ng (1980) argued that power has no all-inclusive definition in social psychology, however, given the present focus on power differentials between groups in a given society, Jones's definition of power is applicable as it refers to "the degree of control that one group has over its own fate and that of the out-group" (1972: 117). Regarding group status, it refers to the relative position of groups based on various dimensions of comparison, including educational achievement, occupational status, or speech style (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). While the theory was originally concerned with group conflicts, like for example, ethnic discrimination, or status at the workplace (Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1990; Branscombe 1998; Spears 2011), as the theory has developed researchers have developed approaches to natural groups such as gender (Hogg and Turner 1987), ethnicity and prejudice (Finchilescu and de La Rey 1991), political affiliation (Amburgey and Kelly 1988) and attributes to the Gulf War (Heskin and Power 1994).

Tajfel was not claiming that social identities were necessarily more important than other aspects of self and identity that were so prominent in the rest of psychology, but his point was that they might become important in "intergroup contexts" which can vary from the more mundane scenarios to the more consequential (an extreme case being intergroup conflicts such as wars).

Prior to Tajfel's concepts, myriad of theories on the concept have provided us with a deeper understanding of identity formation and the factors shaping it. Stet and Burke (2000) examined the self through the lens of the identity theory and the social identity theory, only to find an overlap between the two theories rather than differences that provides the literature with a full picture of the subject's identity rather than a pixel. In Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory, the self is reflexive in the sense that it can present itself as an object that can be categorized, classified, or named in particular ways in relation to other social classifications or categories. This process of categorization as it is called in social identity theories (Turner *et al.* 1987); or identification as preferred by identity theorists (McCall and Simons 1978) is what lead to identity formation. Firstly, the commonality between Social Identity Theory and Identity Theory lies in the fact that both theories assert that the formation of identity is influenced by interactions with an already structured world. Likewise, this sense of belonging to a social group is known as self-categorization in identity theory, where identity is formed in a structured culture by determinant symbols and positions that lead people within this culture to recognize one another as occupants of these positions. Burke and Tully (1977) and Thoits (1986) highlighted the connection between the self-categorization and the expectation associated with that position (role) and its function in

the society. In recent research, it is suggested that these expectations are the main factors in shaping the behavior (Burke 1991). In general, theorists from both traditions, the identity theorists and social identity theorists, recognized that individuals perceive themselves in terms of meanings imparted by a structured society (McCall and Simmons 1978; Stryker 1980; Turner *et al.* 1987).

Consequently, researchers have adopted varied methods of measuring key aspects of SIT such as group stability and status legitimacy in empirical research which makes results comparison across studies unattainable. In addition to the qualitative differences in the perceptions of key aspects like stability and legitimacy “when they reflect continuous life experiences, in contrast to a state induced for an experimental session” (Finchilescu and de la Rey 1991: 230). Although some SIT research that focused on responding to social injustice relied on laboratory experiments like Ellemers, Wilke and Van Knippenberg (1993) research on the effects of group boundary permeability behavior on advantaged and disadvantaged groups. Other SIT studies focused on measuring and observing factors, rather than the using the original Tajfelian methods of staging and controlling lab conditions.

This being the general idea, social identity theory, as proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), is constructed upon three mental processes of evaluation of “us” or “them”, “in-group” and “out-group”. These take place in a particular order: a. social categorization; b. social identification; c. social comparison.

3.2.1.1 Social Categorization

Social categorization refers to the way one’s mind clusters together individuals who share common characteristics to form an organization of the surrounding social world. People need social categorization for mental functioning to make sense of the complex environment surrounding them. Throughout the process of organizing people into a specific category, one automatically magnifies what characteristics they have in common at the expense of their individualistic differences. Moreover, one also emphasizes the difference between this group and other groups. In turn, this results in forming judgments about members belonging to a specific group without enough information about them as individuals. According to Tajfel, “categorization is a process of bringing together social objects or events in groups which are equivalent with regard to an individual’s actions, intentions, attitudes, and systems of beliefs” (1974: 69). Children develop preferences in the surrounding complex social environment they are exposed to, because

an individual constructs their own "web of social affiliations by applying principles of order and simplification that reduce the complexity of crisscrossing human categorization" (Tajfel 1970: 98).

Although the initial purpose of Tajfel's minimal group experiments (Tajfel *et al.* 1971) was to prove that categorization and similarity between members triggered competition between groups, it was later argued by Tajfel and Billing (1973) that solely categorization, rather than similarities between members, that triggered intergroup competition. Tajfel and Billing (1973) experiment was designed to eliminate any sense of similarity between the members, where the subjects were grouped randomly by numbers. This experiment aimed to demonstrate that group members in earlier Tajfel experiments were not minimally grouped. Instead, they were divided based on their tendencies to underestimate or overestimate, as well as their artistic interests in the second round, thereby creating a perceived similarity among group members (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, and Flament, 1971). These results indicate some odd side-effects of our modes of socialization and education. Moreover, these findings "point to the possibility that discriminatory intergroup behavior cannot be fully understood if it is considered solely in terms of an 'objective' conflict of interests or in terms of deep-seated motives that it may serve" (Tajfel, *et al.* 1971: 176).

In a larger context, sociocultural factors can also determine group roles; this includes how the media, parents and the education system portray and promote particular ways of dividing people. For example, if parents warn their children about mixing with other peers of other races, or the media portrays a certain race distinctively, then race becomes a critical tool to divide up the world (Bar-Tal 1996; Schaller 1998). Moreover, different categorizations are emphasized by cultures and how they make salient in-group and out-group distinctions (Han and Park 1995; Lee and Ottati 1995). Motivational factors are also key determinants of categorization in a given society. The in-group, or people with more power, will most likely maintain the status quo by categorizing others in a way that justifies their superior positions (Jost and Banaji 1994; Operario and Fiske 1998; Pratto *et al.* 1997).

Hence, "social construction" of reality combines with the fear or hostility inherent in many of the intergroup categorizations to which we are regenerating result in a "generic norm" of behavior or attitude towards out-groups. When we are in any given situation where a form of intergroup categorization appears directly relevant, we are likely to act in a manner that discriminates against the out-group and favors the in-group (Tajfel 1970: 99).

3.2.1.2.Social identification

Social identification's definition has become somewhat ambiguous as various approaches have been used to define the concept (Jackson and Smith 1999). Some consider in-group identification as the personal significance perceived by the individual (Tajfel, 1981). It is also seen as the importance of in-group membership to an individual's sense of self (Luhtanen and Crocker, 1992). In-group identification also has been described as the sense of pride in group membership (Smith and Tyler 1997). Tajfel (1978) defined the group by arguing that individuals are considered a group when they perceive themselves as such, and when they are consensually categorized by the society as a group. As a result, categorization becomes self-referent, which leads to acquiring group norms that become engrained in the member's own behavior. Ultimately, social categorization shapes the individual's place and status in the society.

Lastly, individuals constantly categorize themselves in order to determine the in-groups' and out-groups' worth and compare their value. Hence, social identity is formed throughout categorization, group evaluation and the value of the group membership. A positive social identity results in a positive self-esteem, in contrast, a negative social identity causes ongoing competition or cognitive strategies to create more positive image for the in-group.

3.2.1.3. Social comparison

This is the final stage and the most critical in understanding the roots of prejudices, "because once two groups identify themselves as rivals, they are forced to compete in order for the members to maintain their self-esteem" (McLeod 2019: para. 13). If the low status group affects the individual's identity negatively, the members might seek to leave the group if the group boundaries allow social mobility. The permeability or impermeability of these boundaries can be influenced by external factors such as laws and social sanctions (Finchilescu and de la Rey, 1991: 225). Therefore, members of high status groups reflect high in-group favoritism, as opposed to low status out-group members who reflect low group favoritism even out-group favoritism.

It is clear that aligning membership with groups and categorizing others is natural and adaptive. Furthermore, real differences between groups contribute to perceived differences. However, associating a whole group of people with certain traits is a form of stereotype. The term stereotype can be traced back to a number of researches (Allport 1954). From a social psychology

standpoint, stereotyping is created through two related processes: first is categorizing others in groups, and secondly is labeling ourselves as the in-group while others in the out-group. These two processes are not only basic cognitive operations, but also sociocultural and motivational factors (Brehm *et al.* 1999: 130). One of the fundamental consequences of stereotyping groups is the distortion of people's perceptions and interpretations of the behaviors of group members. Perceivers usually see members of stereotyped groups more homogeneous than they are in reality (Dunning and Sherman 1997; Kunda *et al.* 1997). In the case of negative stereotypes, Claude Steele emphasized that "members of these groups can fear being reduced to that stereotype" (1997: 614). According to Steele, the term stereotype threat hangs like a threat in the air while the individuals whose identity and self-esteem are invested in domains relevant to the stereotype, like for example, the intellectual performance of stereotyped individuals. Steele (1997) highlighted how stereotyping can impede academic achievement for African Americans in schools and of women in science and mathematics majors. Steele and his colleagues conducted a series of studies on the effect of stereotypes on academic achievement, and it was found that it can affect students' performance in two ways: first, the academic performance can be negatively affected by cognitive and emotional reactions to stereotype threats. Secondly, if this stereotype is chronic, students might resort to disidentifying from that domain and replace it with social success or particular non-academic talent to protect their self-esteem and identity.

To recapitulate, in social identity theory the group membership is a real, true and vital part of the individual. Therefore, competition and hostility between groups is the result of competing identities.

3.2.1.4. Group dynamics

In the review of male-female relations literature, Ashmore and Del Boca (1986) highlighted the urgency to view the interaction dynamics of males and females, not as mere individuals, but rather as group members using intergroup relation approach (Hacker 1951; Lips 1981). A plethora of studies noted that power differentials between males and females as group members do exist and are represented differently according to their stability and legitimacy in the intergroup structure (Archer and Lloyd 1985; Deaux 1985; Ellyson and Dovidio 1985; Del Boca and Ashmore 1986).

The usage of SIT as a framework to analyze the interaction of men and women in a given society is much needed to compliment other existing approaches that rather deal with them as individuals, where the main essence of intergroup relations is the difference of power and status (Deaux and Major 1987; Eagly 1987; Ellyson and Dovidio 1985; Hogg and Abrams 1988; Hare-Mustin 1991; Taylor and Moghaddam 1994; Unger 1979). According to SIT, individuals strive for a positively valued sense of social identity; the theory argues that individuals seek membership in groups that positively add to their Social Identity and consequently their self-esteem. Although Tajfel and Turner theorize two extremes of social behavior, or what they call intergroup and interpersonal relationships, at the opposite sides of a continuum:

At one extreme (which most probably is found in its pure form only rarely in real life) is the interaction between two or more individuals that is fully determined by their interpersonal relationships and individual characteristics, and not at all affected by various social groups or categories to which they respectively belong. The other extreme consists of interactions between two or more individuals (or groups of individuals) that are fully determined by their respective memberships in various social groups or categories, and not at all affected by the interindividual personal relationships between the people involved (1979: 277).

On the contrary, Abrams argues that individuals can experience intergroup and interpersonal aspects of relations simultaneously. In the context of gender relations, one can argue that “one of the clearest criteria for distinctive group membership (sex) can also be the basis of the most intimate human relationship” (1989: 64). Similarly, Skevington and Baker suggest that interpersonal and intergroup gender relations should be perceived as “existing simultaneously, dynamically interacting to transform each other” (1989: 199). They criticized most SIT theorists for failing to consider the differences in their subjects’ social identities as males and females.

Williams and Giles (1978) were the first ever to apply SIT framework to gender relations with a focus on women as a social group. Similarly, Hogg and Abrams (1988) provided gender relations as an example of intergroup conflict from a SIT perspective. Prior to their studies, SIT laboratory based research was criticized by Williams (1984) for using only male subjects or a mixed gender in-group and out-group without considering gender as a possible factor in minimal group effects. Although these studies reviewed gender relations from a theoretical perspective rather than an empirical angle, they highlighted the similarity between women and other low-status social groups. The correlation between women status and minority groups should not be overlooked in other social identity experiments. Furthermore, Condor highlighted some shortcomings in the application of SIT on gender research. Condor began her argument by

explaining SIT as a “dynamic theory which recognized the flexibility and context-dependence of human action” (1989: 286). She further explains that the issue of flexibility, however, wasn’t followed through in “real-life” empirical research (*Ibid.*: 288). Although, SIT is suitable to explain gender relations in terms of intergroup conflict in a given society, yet few SIT research focused on gender as a type of conflict.

Other criticisms on SIT research on gender relations is their approach to women. It is argued that SIT does not consider differences between men and women subjects. Williams (1984) criticized most psychologists’ interests that lie in the social and personal implications of being born male or female, claiming that this distinction attributes little importance to the fact that this defines membership of unequal social categories. Such critique questions the validity of SIT to explain inter-gender relations since Tajfel’s *et al.* minimal experiments were conducted on male subjects (1971: 311). Moreover, she argues that the basic principles of comparison that form the foundation of SIT, differentiation and distinctiveness, are more characteristic of males’ behavior rather than that of females’, which she labels as agentic social identity. In other words, men strive for favorable social comparisons and group distinctiveness given “their primary concerns with achievement, completion and success” (Bourhis 1992: 182).

Williams (1984) also highlights in her criticism of SIT how the theory neglects variant forms of intergroup interaction which might undermine the potency of intergroup discrimination. According to Williams, these communal processes, such as interpersonal attachments within and between group cooperation, are more prominent in females’ characteristics than males’. Men, on the other hand, “tend to engage in social identification processes more so than do women” (Parker and Shotter 2017: 198). This difference, consequently, contributes to women’s social position and helps maintain their unequal power relations between them and men. This agentic versus communal explanation of the difference between males and females’ behavior has been criticized, however, due to its reliance of disposition as internalized factors that affect genders’ behaviors. Scholars, such as Breakwell (1979) questioned the validity of the dispositional approach to explain gender differences in intergroup behavior. He argues that differences in intergroup behavior is not caused by the difference in sexes, but are rather situationally determined by virtue of the status and the power position occupied by both genders within the social structure. Later, Bourhis (1992) refused William (1984) stance on the dispositional approach to men and women difference in behavior through study to test women’s nature to engage in communal processes as previously

claimed. Interestingly, Bourhis found that men similarly engaged in communal processes when they belong to a lower status group in empirical studies. Moreover, it was established that:

Subordinate groups in unstable intergroup structures do discriminate, especially in circumstances where such behaviors empower disadvantaged groups by improving their power position in the intergroup structure. This pattern of discrimination was obtained with both male and female subordinate and powerless group members, thus providing support for the sociocultural rather than the dispositional explanation of gender group behavior in unstable power structures (Bourhis 1993: 200).

Hence, relative status positions cause difference, not mere dispositional or gender- related attitudes.

3.2.2. Gender and Social Categorization

Considering the influence of categorization on shaping social identity and accentuating differences between groups from a Social Identity Theory (SIT) perspective, it can be assumed that the categorization of men and women is a prevalent gender distinction in societies. According to Williams, “it is uncontentious to state that sex is a basis for social differentiation and stratification” (1984: 311). Moreover, Ashmore and Del Boca (1986) view relations between females and males to be similar to those between other groups in society (e.g., blacks and whites, labor and management), where men's and women's one-on-one personal relationships, are just one type of female-male relations. In fact, their intergroup relations framework assumes that sex/gender is a major societal system for social categorization (Ashmore *et al.* 1995: 756). Their heuristic model specifies that the nature of intergroup interdependence, in other words, how women and men relate to one another—as groups, in roles, in relationships, and as individuals is what shapes intergroup perceptions (including stereotypes) and attitudes (including prejudice). Furthermore, according to them the societal power and prestige are differently allocated to social categories; males are the dominant group because they possess a clear advantage in terms of political and economic “clout”, based on males’ status in the American government and economy versus that of females. As for interdependence, they consider the sexes are cooperatively interdependent through intimate relationships, and also competitively interdependent in terms of social status, occupations, or even interpersonal harm doing, i.e. ill-treatment. According to Ashmore (1995) guiding intergroup relations approach, the sexes relate to each other at four different, yet interconnected levels: first, as individual men and women; secondly, in interpersonal

relationships; thirdly, in culturally-defined roles; and fourthly as significant social categories within society. At the first level of individuality, lies the concern of evaluative beliefs about how the sexes are perceived (i.e., what personal attributes individuals are inferred to possess because of their gender group membership). This leads to notions of the superordinate social categories male and female (aka gender stereotypes). Like for example, women are more emotional than men, and by implication men are better than women. Secondly, the more inclusive level of interpersonal relationships is defined by the sexes as a dyadic unit. This more inclusive level of interpersonal relationships, emphasizes four main themes related to attitude objects: (1) Deference (interpersonal chivalry and etiquette); (2) Power (male dominance vs. gender equality); (3) Sexuality (e.g., sex initiates); (4) Harm doing (e.g., male heterosexual violence) (*Ibid.*: 757).

Thirdly, their analysis emphasized how men and women relate to each other as occupants of culturally or socially-defined roles, where the gender of the occupant makes a significant difference in terms of how this particular role is experienced and performed; for example, spouse (husband – wife); parent (mother – father), and worker or employee. The critical aspect of these roles definition is that they “constrain the behavior of individuals via societally prescribed (*shoulds*)” (*Ibid.*: 757). Therefore, attitude objects in this category are yet another step away from the individual to the collective, where individual women and men relationships are not the focus; rather, the significance is the gender-related social roles. Lastly, the most inclusive level of analysis concerns attitudes about women and men in the society. In this category, evaluative beliefs are the key players about the gender status quo, in which the social categories men and women interrelate in the “traditional” ways. In addition to the societal institutions and policies that support existing patterns of interaction. However, one can argue that Ashmore and Del Boca’s identified group qualities are not always shared by genders, for example, not all females and males are interdependent, neither all females and males view themselves as members of these groups respectively. Lastly, not all females and males are treated the same way.

Despite these individual differences, one can argue that token situations may result in an increased feeling of common fate when the same sex is lumped together. For instance, in Liu and Wong’s (2018) longitudinal study on high school students and into their college years on single-sex schooling, which is one the most common forms of institutionalized gender segregation, it was found that high school graduates of single-sex schools were more gender salient, more anxious about mixed-gender situations and had fewer other-gender friends. Later on, these graduates of

single-sex schools were still more anxious about mixed-gender interactions and had fewer other-gender friends. This polarization has important implications for in-group and out-group categorization from a SIT perspective, where the similarities between the groups is exaggerated as well as the differences between them.

Social categorization summary

In a nut shell, the concept of social categorization was first developed by Tajfel and Wilkes in their work in information processing, classification and quantitative judgment. Their studies showed how individuals categorize themselves and others by magnifying both differences and similarities between groups which leads to stereotyping. “The evidence is very clear that the classification increases its predicted effects on judgment as a function of repeated experience during the same experimental session” (Tajfel and Wilkes 1963: 113).

Despite the controversy over the concept of categorization, gender has been commonly used as a form of categorization, which ties this theory to our study. Lastly, the ripple effect of token situations is the emphasis on group membership awareness which is the basis of social identity, and the exaggeration of in-group similarities and differences between groups.

3.2.3. Social identity

The self-concept is an overarching idea we have about who we are—physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and in terms of any other aspects that make up who we are. From social psychology and sociological perspective, the investigation is geared towards the self-development within the context of the individual’s social milieu. In this light, the self-concept “is reflexive in that it can take itself as an object and can categorize, classify, or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications” (Stets and Burke 2000: 224). According to Tajfel (1974), social identity is dynamic as people hold more than one identity at the time according to the situation. Different self -categorizations may be salient depending on the situation, ranging from highly idiosyncratic aspects of self, such as personality, intelligence and personal experience (“personal identity”) to perceptions one’s self as a member of a social category such as gender, and in that case it would be the social identity (Abrams and Brown 1989: 311).

The formation of the self is directly related to group identification (Hogg 2007; Hogg and Abrams 1993). According to studies in the literature of social psychology, specifically studies in Uncertainty-theory, uncertainty about oneself and the surrounding milieu can be an aversive experience, in order to relieve it and maintain a coherent sense of self, people seek out groups as a means of depersonalization (Abrams and Hogg 2001; Hewstone *et al.* 2002) In this particular context, “depersonalization describes a process in which group members apply a group prototype to themselves, because group prototypes offer prescriptive norms regarding judgments, behavior, and attitudes” (Clarkson *et al.* 2017: 139). Therefore, this theory argues that belonging to a group will help members make sense of oneself and the world through following common guidelines adopted by other members. One can see environmentalists support recycling, and Europeans like soccer, while Americans like American football as varied examples of depersonalization that allows members to accept group norms.

Brown, Condor, Mathews, Wade and Williams (1986) highlighted three major aspects of group identification:

- awareness of group membership;
- evaluation of that group;
- evaluation of the emotions associated with this membership.

Naturally, individuals constantly strive for a positive social identity. From a SIT perspective, social identities are most influential when individuals consider membership in a particular group to be central to their self-concept and they feel strong emotional ties to the group (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1979).

In other words, individuals gain their positive or negative social identities based on their membership in high or low valued groups. In turn, these positive or negative evaluations are a result of categorizations and group comparisons.

In summary, social identity is related to the group membership that shapes the self-concept. Social identity is formed and shaped by the awareness of the group membership, how one evaluates this membership to be positive or negative, and the perception of the group.

3.2.3.1 The relationships between identification, differentiation and self-esteem

Myriad of studies, in the field of social psychology, has been done to understand social identification and group processes (Brewer 1979; 1991; Brown 1984a, 1984b, 2000; Deaux 2000; Hogg and Abrams 1988; Tajfel 1972, 1982; Tajfel, Flament, Billig and Bundy, 1971; Tajfel and Turner, 1979, 1986; Turner 1978, 1987). These diverse studies are characterized by their varied research foci, ranging from exploring of how social identity is formed and its construction (Brewer 1979; Brewer and Gardner 1996; DeVos and Romanucci-Ross 1995; Hirschfeld 2001; Hogg and Abrams 1988; Tajfel et al. 1971; Turner 1978, 1987) to studies that explain the relationship between social identity and intergroup processes, like prejudice and intergroup perceptions (Brewer 1999, 2000; Gaertner, et al. 1993; Hewstone 1996; Jetten, et al. 1997; Miller and Brewer 1986; Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner, Brown, and Tajfel 1979). SIT emphasizes the intricate relationship between identifying with a group, differentiation and the effect on individuals' self-esteem. The theory holds that a members' high identification with a group will positively affect their self-esteem and maximize the intergroup differentiation. The quest for a positive self-esteem is a fundamental assumption in SIT, as "individuals strive to maintain or enhance their self-esteem, they strive for a positive self-concept" (Tajfel and Turner 1979: 40). That is why identification with a highly valued group will enhance the self-esteem, in contrast to membership in a negatively valued one.

3.2.3.2 Gender Identity and self-concept

Research and theory in social psychology reflect a sustained interest in understanding how the self is formed in relation to one's group memberships (Brewer and Gardner 1996).

In the same light, gender is described as "the part of the self-concept that derives from membership category" (Gurin and Markus 1989: 153). Gender is also described the sense in which people recognize their membership in one of the two gender groups" (Duveen and Lloyd 1986: 222). Hence, "le genre n'est pas construite et préalable au sujet, mais une variable évolutive, en construction et fluctuante"³⁴ (Barthelmebs and Komur-Thilloy 2016: 10).

From a SIT perspective, Abrams defined gender identity as "a basic phenomenological sense of one's maleness or femaleness - which cannot be measured against the yardstick of social

³⁴ [Gender is not constructed and prior to the subject, but an evolving variable, under construction and fluctuating], our translation.

consensus (for example, global sex stereotype), biology (sex) or distributional data (psychometrics). It is essentially a matter of social comparison in specific context” (1989: 59), which brings to the equation specific cultural contexts that differ from one setting to another. Gurin and Townsend (1986) studied the properties of gender identity and its relation to gender consciousness.

According to this argument, a person’s gender identity is shaped by how they perceive their gender’s status in the society, consequently affecting the self-concept that is formed by individuals’ membership in a specific group. Hence, we can argue that SRs about women in general, being positive or negative, will affect the individual women’s self-concept.

3.2.3.3. Gender self-esteem

As emphasized by SIT, if the in-group has low status, a variety of strategies are possible to achieve a more positive social identity. Williams and Giles (1978) were the first to apply this theoretical framework to women as a social group from a SIT perspective. They drew similarities between women and other low-status groups, where the former’s social identity is negative due to the comparison to their counterparts, men, in the society. They argued, therefore, that this explains the inheritance of women’s internalized dominant ideology that their gender is affiliated with negative value. Hence, it is assumed that women will be motivated to adopt a positive social identity by following strategies, whereby choice of such strategies is dependent on beliefs about the stability and legitimacy of their current status relations.

Thus, Tajfel and Turner (1986) argue that the crucial factor is whether “cognitive alternatives” to the present status hierarchy are available; this theme is reminiscent of research on the positive effect of cognitive alternatives on disadvantaged members’ self-esteem when “the possibility of a brighter group future directs minority group members to look beyond the adversity they are facing now (Zhang *et al.* 2012: 5). This point is directly related to the effect of positive counter-stereotypes in textbooks that could provide cognitive alternative to improve the overall low group status of women.

3.2.4. Limitations of the theory

The intertwined relationship between differentiation, self-esteem and identification has received common criticism in many studies that examined these processes in a dynamic “real-life” intergroup setting. Kelly tested the SIT assumption in a political context there should be a positive relationship between the strength of an individual's identification with a political party and the extent to which he or she differentiates between the in-group and various political out-groups. Her findings showed that in-group identification and perceived material conflict were consistent predictors of intergroup differentiation (1988: 319). On the other hand, other studies’ results were inconsistent with SIT claims; Skevington tests within a field situation of nursing, where high and low status trainee nursing groups were undergoing social change in status relations through a merger. She reported that the high status group of registered nurses modeled the expected SIT pattern between differentiation and identification, however, the low status group of enrolled nurses showed less intergroup differentiation for the sake of enhancing their group’s perception (1981: 55). Similarly, Brown and Williams study done on workers in a bakery setting, revealed that the relationship between group identification and intergroup differentiation was not consistently positive but varied between subgroup and between attitude dimensions (1984: 563). In fact, SIT relationship between identification and differentiation and in-group favoritism has been criticized for its inconsistent results in dynamic settings rather than experimental static one (Brown 1995; Hinkle and Brown 1990; Taylor and Moghaddam 1994). In the theory’s defense, Turner (1999) argued that SIT does not draw a direct link between identification and in-group bias, nor between identification and differentiation. However, it proposes mediating factors such as salience of identity, the structure of the intergroup relations, the relevance of the comparison dimension and the relevance of the out-group. Moreover, according to SIT differentiation is not the only path to positive distinctiveness, yet, there are other strategies are: individual mobility (i.e., physical or psychological dissociation from the low-status group), social creativity (i.e., changing the terms of intergroup comparison so that the in-group is viewed more positively), and social competition (i.e., challenging the status quo and attempting to change the position of the in-group). Nevertheless, most researches focused too narrowly on one or two aspects of the SIT theory and they were conducted with various methods to measure differentiation, which in turn resulted in inconsistent results.

Furthermore, one of the criticisms to categorization based on gender was first proposed by Breakwell (1987), in her own analysis of social identity for women, was the mistake of assuming

that womanhood is perceived by all women in the same way, although a distinction between external and internal criteria for group membership. She explained that internal criteria are the personal opinions of individuals, whereas the external criteria are the collective standards and norms set by the entire group. People have opinions about how well they mirror the group they belong to, for instance, they can see themselves as not meeting up to the external criteria of the group standards for membership. This concept is of particular importance to the effect of women representations and its effect on their self-evaluation of how well they fit this representation, as gender stereotypes are pervasive, and carry relatively well-defined prescriptions for typical male and female behavior (Fiske and Stevens 1993). Furthermore, Breakwell (1987) emphasized that there is no consensus on the external criteria for womanhood that usually emerge from social norms and are found in stereotypes. Similarly, both Young (1994) and Nicholson (1994) agree that grouping women in one mold compromises their different identities. SIT consider identities as dynamic and interacting with each other, hence, which is why salience is an important concept in SIT (Tajfel and Turner 1979).

Gurin and Townsend (1986) argued that gender identity is shaped by members' awareness of their membership and how they perceive their group. In the extensive research on sex and gender, many approaches considered women and men as members of social categories (Deaux 1984; Deaux and Major 1987; Sherif 1982). Despite its apparent instinctive difference, since most people rather easily categorize themselves and others as either male or female, there are several features that makes gender an important social categorization. Moreover, gender is directly linked to deeply rooted power and status disparities, with men often considered to have advantages in terms of social, political, and economic outcomes. Although the members of both sexes interact with each other, there is in an underlying intergroup element manifested in gender relations (Abrams 1989; Ashmore and DelBoca 1986; Hogg and Abrams 1988; Sherif 1982; Williams 1984; Williams and Giles 1978). To further clarify the status of women, there have been similarities between sexism and racism, where women are considered a disadvantaged group like marginalized minority racial groups. In her comparison of Black Americans and women as a minority group, Reid (1988: 512) claimed that "many professional women and black men will admit that it is difficult for them to analyze their black and/or female experiences without the traditional perspectives they have adopted from their professors. They cannot easily develop theoretical frameworks that do not use terms and assumptions previously defined by white men."

Condor highlighted some shortcomings in the application of SIT on gender research. Condor began her argument by explaining SIT as a “dynamic theory which recognized the flexibility and context-dependence of human action” (1989: 286). The author further explains that the issue of flexibility, however, wasn’t followed through in “real-life” empirical research (*Ibid.*: 288).

Other criticisms on SIT research on gender relations is their approach to women. It is argued that SIT does not consider differences between men and women subjects. Williams (1984) had previously pointed the use of mixed gender in-group and out-group without considering gender as a possible factor in minimal group effects. Moreover, Tajfel’s *et al.* minimal experiments were conducted on male subjects only (1971: 311). Williams (1984) criticized most psychologists’ interests that lie in the social and personal implications of being born male or female, claiming that this distinction attributes little importance to the fact that this defines membership of unequal social categories.

Moreover, she argues that the basic principles of comparison that form the foundation of SIT, differentiation and distinctiveness, are more characteristic of males’ behavior rather than that of females’, which she labels as agentic social identity. In other words, men strive for favorable social comparisons and group distinctiveness given “their primary concerns with achievement, completion and success” (Bourhis 1992: 182).

Summary

Hence, this second part allows us to probe further into the theoretical grounding of our study. It is indeed now relevant for us to link the concept of representation to portraying women in language textbooks and how it impacts learners and teachers’ perception of women status, role expectations and man-woman interaction in the society from a SIT perspective. The previous chapters highlighted the role of textbooks in the learning process in Egypt; how learning Arabic, English and French languages are influenced by SR, and the impact of SR on the perception of self and other. Most importantly, we explained the impact of women SR on women’s self-worth and role expectation in the society. First, we start by asking what the manifestation of women representation in textbooks are. And what is the impact of sexist language in our context of language material on learners? To answer these questions, first we examine the evolution of

awareness of sexist language in textbook materials that started during the 1970s in the Western world, and cross examine it with the MENA region. Then, we examine the different analytical frameworks to evaluate textbooks content to identify sexism and gender bias. In our case examining sexist language in textbooks will help us identify its impact on women representation to learners.

3.3. Related concepts to distinguish:

3.3.1. Stereotypes and prejudices

A plethora of research on stereotypes and prejudice have developed a substantial understanding of their influence – as social expectations – on behavior (Brown 2011; Dovidio, et al. 2010; Fiske 1998; Hamilton and Sherman 1994; Major and O'Brien 2005; Major, et al. 2003; Messick and Mackie 1989; Nelson 2002; Schneider 2004). Definitions of Stereotypes and prejudice definitions have transformed over time, while stereotype definition has been more problematic.

The term stereotype was first coined by the French printer Didot to describe a printing process to facilitate reproduction in 1798. It was not until 1922 that the term caught the attention of social scientists after Lippmann's introduction of the term as a social concept that conveys "pictures in our heads." According to Lippmann stereotypes are cognitive structures that help individuals to process information about their environment, and described as "the perfect stereotype. Its hallmark is that it precedes the use of reason; is a form of perception, impose a certain character on the data of our senses before the data reach the intelligence." (1998: 98).

Lippmann argued that stereotypes were "defensive" functions adopted by individuals as an identity or personality trait and further anticipated the sociocultural orientation by:

- proposing that stereotypes rationalize existing social arrangements
- referring to society as the source of many of our individual "picture in the head" that shape the perception of reality (Ashmore and Boca 1981: 3)

It was not until Katz and Braly's new perception of stereotypes, as a set of adjectives attributed to a certain group that resulted in ground breaking realization of the parallel between the set of stereotypical adjectives attributed to certain groups and "the popular stereotype to be found in newspaper and magazines" (1933: 285). Their observation of this connection in addition to the

consensual nature of stereotypical adjectives amongst subjects underpinned stereotypes as a sociocultural or group level phenomenon. So what are the similarities between prejudice and stereotypes?

The oversimplification, inaccuracy and overgeneralization attributed to stereotypes make them linked to prejudice. It was, Katz and Braly's (1935) that equated stereotypes with prejudices, a link that was later further established by Allport linking attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices by asserting that "*Attitudes, Prejudices and Stereotypes*. Attitudes which result in gross oversimplification of experience and in prejudgments are of great importance in social psychology [...] they are commonly called biases, prejudices or stereotypes. The latter term is less normative, and therefore on the whole to be preferred" (1935: 809).

Another similarity is the negative connotation in both concepts. Prejudice is "negative attitude toward a group or toward members of the group" (Stangor 2015: 4). While stereotypes can be positive, they are primarily negative. As the literature suggests, people tend to generate many more negative than positive stereotypes when asked to do so, and even expressing positive stereotypes can have negative consequences as it implies endorsing negative stereotypes too (Czopp 2008; Kay *et al.* 2013).

Moreover, prejudice is found to be similar to automatic stereotypic associations in modern prejudice research due to its "unintentional" nature (e.g., Crandall and Eshleman 2003; Fazio, et al. 1995; Banaji and Greenwald 1995).

Finally, Stangor (2015: 4) asserts, stereotypes "represent the traits" that characterizes social categories, which contribute to the formation of social knowledge. In other words, stereotypes exist in various forms such as cognitive structures, or schemas (Cox *et al.* 2012), prototypes (Brewer, Dull and Lui 1981), and exemplars (Bodenhausen, et al. 1995; Smith and Zárate 1992). However, this does not imply that these beliefs are rigid; they are rather fluid and transform across social context (Oakes et al. 1994; Smith and Zárate 1990, 1992). We can notice here how stereotypes function like SRs. If prejudice could be a form of stereotype; stereotype could also be a form of SRs. However, Boyer explains the difference by asserting that:

La structure du stéréotype ne ferait plus un partage fonctionnel entre noyau central et système périphérique (comme si le noyau avait absorbé le système périphérique) : pour une efficacité maximale, elle serait réduite à un ensemble figé (et donc forcément limité) de traits, totalement solidaires et donc, en définitive, selon des degrés divers, aléatoires en discours [the structure of the stereotype would no longer make a functional sharing between central core and peripheral system (as if the kernel had absorbed the peripheral system): for

maximum efficiency, it would be reduced to a fixed (and therefore necessarily limited) set of traits, totally solidary and therefore, ultimately, to varying degrees, random in discourse] (2008: 103).

Moliner (2003) asserts that stereotypes can be viewed as simplified schema of the category, while the core must be understood as the very basis of the social representation. That said, if there can be "non-stereotyped" categories (de la Haye 1998: 33), there cannot be social representations without core (Abric 1987: 68).

In summary, TSR asserts that common knowledge is created through objectification, which refers to how individuals transform abstractions and the unknown into real and familiar concepts, and the anchoring of these cognitive operations in symbolic systems. The social categorization process and stereotype result in the development of categories that "serve to systematize and order the social environment [...] and play a role in the orientation for the action and the actualization of values" (Tajfel 1972: 293). Social categorization by all group members, function as social stereotypes that permits and even justifies prejudice towards them (Tajfel 1981).

3.3.2. Gender stereotypes

A plethora of research on gender stereotypes indicate that they are an instance of social representations. According to Pires and Amâncio, "although men in general and women in general are pure abstractions, most people have a rather precise idea of what is a women or a man" (1996: 1000).

Becker and Sibley (2016: 316) assert that gender stereotypes are the foundation of sexist beliefs, confirming the importance of taking them into account in our women representation in textbooks context. Sexism can be defined as, "the individual's beliefs and behaviors and organizational practices that either harm individuals based upon their gender or contribute to the maintenance of gender inequality in the society at large" (Swim and Hyers 2009).

Gender stereotypes exist in all cultures (Williams and Best 1986). Like any other stereotype, they are overinflated perceptions about individuals who belong to a certain gender category and their expected role in the society. Although both genders are susceptible to sexism, it is arguably women who are more subjected to it due to the deeply embedded gender inequalities in the world's political, social and economic systems ("Sexism and misogyny' heightened" 2021).

Similar to other forms of stereotypes, gender stereotypes can be positive in tone (Eagly and Mladinic 1989). Following this rationale, Glick and Fiske (1996) distinguished two types of sexist beliefs and behaviors as a result of gender stereotypes:

- Hostile/ old-fashioned sexism: clearly communicates antipathy towards women. It is recognized as discriminatory (e.g., Barreto and Ellemers 2005) and has become less and less accepted in Western societies (e.g., Twenge 1997).
- Modern/ neo sexism: perceived as a socially acceptable way of expressing prejudice and are usually not identified as gender discrimination (Barreto and Ellemers 2005).

This distinction between types of stereotypes sheds light on the covert sexism embedded in everyday discourse that bombards us with hidden agendas to reinforce the status quo and makes real women empowering goals impossible to attain.

To conclude, we argue that the gender stereotypes, like any other form of stereotypes, make it possible to categorize what little or nothing is known, so it does not appear unjustified. This means that usually students are already imbued with certain gender stereotypes from their immediate social backgrounds. However, if the common knowledge and stereotypes are endorsed by the choice of linguistic items by textbook-producers that construct or reproduce conservative gendered discourses (Sunderland 2004); this will result in naturalizing and legitimizing gender beliefs regarding both genders, reinforce the power imbalance and maintain the social status quo (Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Fairclough 2001; VanDijk 2008; Wodak 2012).

3.4. Third Part: Representation of women as a focus of analysis

How can we identify favoritism manifested in in-group and out-group structures in a society? In this case, SRs are useful in presenting a complementing inductive aspect to social categorization and group dynamics (Tajfel 1972). In the same vein, St. Claire contends that SRS provide “a mechanism whereby social identifications that are disadvantageous to women may evolve within a community through social psychological processes, with little or no reference to objective reality - a triumph, in other words, of mind over matter (1989: 140). The study of SRs is adopted in this research for their empirical strategies to identify the content of women’s roles, since Moscovici (1981, 1984) argues that it is possible to decipher a given representation by observing and describing natural conversation and documentary evidence.

Throughout SRs literature, Moscovici argued that social representations manifest themselves in communication and speech (Moscovici 1961, 1981, 1982; Farr and Moscovici 1984). He studied social representations with respect to the distribution of certain contents of an issue amongst members of a linguistic community.

However, we are not interested in conversation analysis or linguistic practices of male and female students in the Egyptian classrooms, nor in their perception of their own linguistic practice or that of each other. What interests us is how the academic curricula address women's role and the man-woman relationships that constitute what Kruse *et al.* (1998: 244) calls "supra-individual existence." The textbooks' content, the 'objective culture' created by individuals 'authors', "may serve as external memories of a common stock of knowledge, potentially accessible for all members of a society." This echoes the opinions of theorists as early as Marx (1859-1904) who contended that material culture, such as school textbooks, have a direct effect on social roles.

In the same vein, Crabb and Bielawski asserted that social representations of material culture and gender "are shared classification systems which link the world of human-made things with gender categories" (1994: 70). This informational influence (Turner 1982; Turner *et al.* 1987) will not only affect men's perception of women, but also determines women's psychological mechanism to conform to the represented relevant role. What we witness here is the effect of categorization on the self and group dynamics, where cognitive biases serve to enhance this conformity.

In other words, a salient social identity will guide behavior in a situationally appropriate manner, for example, as a woman becomes a 'mother,' she will conform to her beliefs about motherhood that exist in the surrounding social context. As referent informational influence suggests, representations of women usually become their reality through a social psychological process, highlighting the link between normative expectations and the internalization process within the individual's self-concepts. As St. Claire further explains:

According to referent informational influence it follows that a salient social identification, 'woman', should lead to the self-assignment of critical characteristics like less intelligent, more submissive and dependent (whereas self-categorization as a man should lead to self-assignment of characteristics such as competence and assertiveness). Clearly, such self-assignments are expected to have a detrimental effect on women's self-evaluations and performance across a wide range of roles and such effects are defined as [H]andicap (1989: 146).

It is clear how the automatic perceptual effects of social /gender categorization apply to self and in-group as well as out-group, cognitive biases serve to enhance this conformity. While

SRs play a pivotal role in social gender identity formation as demonstrated previously, St. Claire, argues that women are more adversely affected:

Just as representations of the male category defines individuals, and not only men, men also tend to think about themselves as singular, distinctive individuals. On the contrary, the symbolic resources available to women to construct their sense of self are much more limited and strongly laden by the meaning of being a woman. As a result, women's self-identity is more dependent on their own gender stereotype than men's self-identity is. (1989).

To summarize this part, SRs in a social discourse could result in a rampant perception of women. Social discourse manifested in school textbooks carry myriad of SRs that reflect the society's perception of gender roles and status and further reinforces these categorizations. The results of fossilized stereotypes and prejudices affects individuals' self-perception and their intra-group dynamics according to SIT.

3.5. Women representation and textbook research

Several branches of linguistics and language teaching specifically reference the concept of representation. A plethora of studies have focused on subjects' attitudes and representations of, for example, languages and their nature, status or function (Lafontaine 1986; Matthey 1997). In language teaching in particular, learning has distinct results: learners do simply acquire language knowledge, but must also develop a range of communicative and socially interactive skills. Castelloti argues that this specific emphasis:

[...] gives social, economic, ideological or emotional factors an even greater influence; the very heterogeneity of the concept of representation makes it a useful way of acknowledging the multiple sources and references (psychological, emotional, social, cognitive...) connected with the language learning and teaching process (2002: 9).

For that purpose, we found it useful to connect Moscovici's theory with concepts from the textbook research to specify elements of social representations that may lend themselves to detailed analytical procedures on the levels both of content and of linguistic structure.

3.5.1. Women representation in textbooks: A historical review

As explained earlier textbooks are crucial tools in the education process, which could guide teachers, present the subject matter, and propagate ideologies of the school and society. In addition to developing learner's subject-specific skill, textbooks, more importantly, provide a hidden curriculum that shapes the worldview, expectations and values of the society. School books, as essential parts of enacted curricula, are essential for inclusion (Fuchs and Bock 2018). Inclusion is attained when the textbook employs inclusive language, represents diverse identities and integrates human rights ("A guide for ensuring inclusion" 2017).

Although the social representation has been scrutinized long ago, gender representation, in particular, has been in the spotlight in the past decades due to the connection of symbolic representations in textbooks with the real power relations that are often portrayed as natural and unquestionable. In fact, the domain of language and education are widely considered subfields of the study of language, gender and sexuality due to the intertwined nature of their relation (Menard-Warwick, Mori and William 2017).

Beginning in the 1970s, the women's movement denounced inequality in academic institutions when men as breadwinners and women as homemakers were the prevalent ideal in Europe and North America. The second wave marked the collaboration of the French and American women through working closely together and exchanging important works namely Simon De Beauvoir that influenced the American feminist movement. The author of *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for the Feminist Revolution*, Schulamith Firestone, dedicated *The Dialectic* to Simone de Beauvoir. Also, Kate Millet, author of *Sexual Politics* acknowledged that "I owe a great debt to The Second Sex. I couldn't have written *Sexual Politics* without it" (Robinson 2010: 19). These feminist efforts had repercussions in many parts of the world and caused a number of countries to revise their education policies and school curricula.

In light of the feminist enlightenment, education scholars around the world advocated for gender equality in education. In Britain, for example, the movement focused on equal access to education opportunities appropriate to post-war generation (Sisterhood and After Research Team 2013). While in France there was a shift from the emphasis on theories and the tendency to treat girls schooling merely in the context of developments in male schooling to a more focus on the institutional structure and dynamics (Harrigan 1998: 598). Françoise Mayeur was one of the pioneers in situating education from childhood to adulthood in a social, economic, and cultural context and included the effect of gender on individuals' educational experience. Her work

attributed considerable pedagogical innovation to girls' education that led the construction of a modern alternative to classical education (*Ibid.*). Similarly, in the United States there was an emphasis on the necessity of gender equality with the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 to protect students from discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs that receive federal financial assistance, and the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA), enacted in 1974 (Madigan 2009: 11).

This era witnessed the earliest content analysis of women images in 30 school textbooks in a study done by activist Majorie U'Ren in 1971 in one of the biggest states in the United States of America, the state of California. In the same decade, professional educators contributed to the literature of women representation in school material, e.g., Trecker's study of history high school textbooks, which unraveled an absence of influential women throughout their content. Likewise, a study done by Weitzman et al. (1971) on children books selected as winners of the Caldecott Medal for distinguished picture book, noted that women were absent from book titles, major roles and pictures. From then on, literature on women representation in school textbooks expanded quickly (Hahn *et al.* 1985).

To summarize the early literature on gender representation in textbooks, the findings concluded that

- both genders were different subcultures to be a mimicking behavior by school learners (Bandura 2003; Foroutan 2012; Litosseliti 2006),
- legitimate knowledge did not include the voices of groups who have not been in powerful position throughout history, for example, women, or people of color (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991).

Hence, portraying history as a series of white males' accomplishments while imposing a sense of inferiority on others not meeting these criteria.

The outcome of this earlier research was a series of policies and guidelines adopted by various developed and developing countries to promote gender equality in school textbooks. One of the earliest results of these studies was the United Nation's adoption of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) in 1979 to promote girls' access to education and combat prejudice against them. The CEDAW is considered as women's bill of rights consisting of a preamble and thirty articles to end discrimination against women in all forms. The report clearly states that "Any stereotyping concept of the roles of men and women at all levels

and in all forms of education [...] should be eliminated [...] in particular by revision of textbooks and school programmes, and the adoption of teaching methods (1979: 7).

Equally important was the international's community commitment to advance women's rights by adopting the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action held in 1995 that passed recommendations for gender parity in school curricula and textbooks:

Curricula and teaching materials remain gender-biased to a large degree and are rarely sensitive to the specific needs of girls and women. This reinforces traditional female and male roles that deny women opportunities for full and equal partnership in society. Lack of gender awareness by educators at all levels strengthens existing inequities between males and females by reinforcing discriminatory tendencies and undermining girls' self-esteem ("Fourth World Conference on Women", 1995: 45).

Recently, the Global Education Monitor Report 2020 acknowledges the progress that has been done over the span of 25 years in which 180 million girls have enrolled in primary and secondary school and girls' learning outcomes have improved. Nevertheless, in the section on the advances in gender sensitive curricula, it is clearly mentioned that "countries still produce textbooks with gender-based stereotypes and limited references to women and girls" (*Ibid.*: 3).

3.5.2. Gender representation in textbooks in the MENA region

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, countries are challenged by similar problems despite their variant ranking across the parity scale. UNESCO's Institute of Statistics identifies two main reasons that impede gender equality in education in the MENA region: cultural factors; political and institutional factors. The former factor entails socioeconomic conditions that affect society's perception of girls' education or women's expected role in society. Conversely, the latter is rooted in education policies, stereotypes in curricula and textbooks, the availability of sanitation facilities, and safety at school. One can argue that these two factors cause a chicken-and-egg situation where stereotypes in enacted curricula reinforce gender roles and perception in the society. At the same time, changing curricula and teachers' attitude require a fundamental change in the mentality and culture of policy makers and parents.

A limited number of studies investigated representation of gender equality in school textbooks in Arab countries. The prevalence of political unrests and sectorial conflicts that result in wars in some countries, the region's goals have been directed towards political stability and economic recovery. There has been a recent surge of studies on post-conflict reconstruction in

war-torn cities in the Middle East and North Africa region rather than being limited to re-establishing pre-conflict conditions (Steinø *et al.* 2020; Stohl, *et al.* 2017; Hallaj 2017). However, studies directed towards rebuilding human agency and civil society in affected regions are scarce. In fact, the basic human rights of having access to education is still fought for in some of the Middle East and North African countries. Another pressing challenge is providing education to displaced children in war zones. According to United Nations Refugees Agency 2019 report, 31% of refugee children are enrolled in secondary school, 27 per cent for girls, highlighting the dire situation of secondary education access even prior to coronavirus crisis.

Unfortunately, due to the heightened focus on other agendas, less attention has been given to research on textbook integrity and inclusion. Because the region, and Egypt in specific, currently face various challenges after two recent revolutions and political unrests, one might question the relevance to this research to the current state. Yet, political and economic stability will never be attained when the public discourse is tainted with underlying gender hierarchy that impedes development. Élisabeth Ratheberg (1994), in an article on gender and development, asserted that,

La perspective genre et développement conduit non seulement à l'élaboration des stratégies d'interventions et d'actions positives assurant une meilleure intégration des femmes aux initiatives de développement en cours, mais elle entraîne inévitablement un réexamen fondamental des structures et institutions sociales. [the gender and development perspective not only leads to the development of intervention and positive action strategies ensuring better integration of women into development initiatives. underway, but it inevitably involves a fundamental re-examination of social structures and institutions] (Cited in Labourie-Racapé 2004: 117).

Myriad of studies in predominantly Muslim countries, namely Iran and Pakistan, examined the hidden gender role messages of textbooks. The evidence suggests that textbooks are tainted with gender stereotypes, patriarchy, and a presence of extremist Islamic ideology (Alrabaa 1985; Shafiq and Ross 2010; Amini and Birjandi 2012; Ullah and Skelton 2013; Bağ and Bayyurt 2015). In Arab countries, however, there is scarcity in the research on hidden curricula and textbook evaluation. Recently, in line with the fourth Sustainable Development Goal that calls for “inclusive and quality education for all and to promote lifelong learning,” (United Nations 2015) some studies focused on inclusion in textbooks. One of these studies concluded that the representation of female-to-male characters in Tunisian textbooks was as low as 30% in 2007 (Perasso, 2017). A disappointingly alarming statistic given that Tunisia marks the forefront of women’s rights in the MENA region because of the progressive status of Tunisian women.

Another recent study by Wafa (2021) investigated the stereotypes in Arabic language textbooks in Primary years in Egypt. The outcome is female characters were mostly associated with derogative role, while males were represented in more dominant roles. As Wafa suggests, this gender bias curricula conditions girls to traditional roles in the society and limits their employment choices (2021: 374). Based on the findings, the author posits that female career choices later in life are affected by gender representation in school textbooks in the primary stage. It is worth mentioning that the majority of research on gender representation focuses on the primary year's textbooks. A phenomenon that creates a scarcity in the studies on teens in secondary years, who ought to be prepared for the workplace.

There was a recent collaboration in Lebanon³⁵ between the Ministry of Education and the Lebanese NGO ABAAD³⁶ to promote women's inclusion in the country's public school curriculum. According to Ghamloush, a program manager at ABAAD, textbooks currently used in Lebanese public schools reinforce gender inequality. She focused mainly on the negative role of textbooks that according to her "...substantiate a stereotypical image of both men and women and their relevant social roles," (Altman 2019). In spite of the NGO's proactivity in promoting gender equality, one can notice here, there has not been scientific research in the country to evaluate gender inequality in these books or to provide credible guidelines for more inclusive and gender sensitive criteria curricula.

On the other hand, Dahlan³⁷ (2015) in Palestine³⁸ promotes that the absence of female lawyers, writers, and other professions in school textbooks conforms to reality and is consistent with the Palestinian traditions. According to Dahlan, the Palestinian society prefers its daughters to participate in agricultural work as a sign of holding on to the land in the face of occupation. Throughout the study, the author highlights the absence of women in various roles compared to men, yet he justifies this representation to conform to more essential role of Palestinian women as

³⁵ Lebanon is one of the lowest ranked countries in Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum in the Middle East and North Africa region (2018)

³⁶ ABAAD is a resource Center for Gender Equality. It is a UN accredited organization that aims to achieve gender equality as an essential condition to sustainable social and economic development in the MENA region- Middle East and North Africa.

³⁷ Published in the Egyptian Ain Shams University Journal of Scientific Research in Education investigated the image of women in Arabic elementary textbooks highlighting the discrepancy in the appearance of men and women images.

³⁸ In the Occupied Palestinian Territories: "poverty and strongly gendered social roles have increased the burden of women's household responsibilities; after the deaths or imprisonment of their male relatives, women have been obliged to take on additional roles as heads of households; women's rates of participation in politics and in the labor market remain very low, despite their extremely high levels of education" (Khan 2009).

a mother, farmer and homemaker serving as a stabilizing factor in a war zone. The author's argument cannot be generalized in other countries, where combat is not the main challenge and women are expected to participate in various social roles in their communities. Moreover, the study is also limited to Arabic language books in the first primary grade, without a justification for choosing this specific age group or corpus to investigate.

The studies mentioned above, despite their scarcity, suggest a growing interest in Arab countries towards examining school textbooks with a gender lens. Beforehand, gender parity in Arab countries was and is currently measured by equal access to education with a recent emphasis on STEM programs. Girls are encouraged to perform on par with boys in advance science and math courses in secondary school and higher education. The 2021 UNESCO Science report shows the percentage of female graduates by discipline using 2018 data: agriculture 49.4%; engineering 20.9%; health & welfare 56%; natural sciences 64.2%; ICT 36.8%; which suggests that 50% of STEM graduates in Egypt are women. On the other hand, these results are not reflected in the Egyptian market as percentage of women is lower than men in STEM careers. It could be argued that gender bias, not academic performance, prevents women from entering and progressing in STEM careers. One could argue that this is the same scenarios in all Arab countries where gender equality has been achieved according to the SDG tracker. In fact, gender gap analysis demonstrates how “qualified women [are graduating] out of the education system, [yet] many industries are to hire, retain and promote them” (WEF 2018: V). Women often find themselves in a gendered institutional culture with glass ceiling and few female role models (Howe-Walsh & Sarah Turnbull 2016). These patterns of gender disparity are evident in universities in both developing and developed countries (Burkinshaw and White 2017; Howe-Walsh and Turnbull 2016; Manfredi 2017; Shepherd 2017; Winchester and Browning 2015) and the corporate sector (World Economic Forum [WEF] 2017). That said, it is clear that the access to education is not a sufficient measure of gender equality in a given society. The pattern we see here unravels a paradox within the education system that grants access to education and opens doors to girls, yet reinforces a gender gap in a society that has deeply-rooted traditions about gender roles and expectations. This present study, therefore, hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of gender equality through examining the effect of women representation in textbooks on shaping gender identity of teenagers in a society shaped by gender segregation.

3.5.3. Woman representation in language textbooks as a focus of analysis

In this section we highlight our rationale to choose language textbooks as the corpora adopted in this research. Language textbooks, as opposed to other subject matters, are constant subjects in the Egyptian school system from elementary to secondary levels. Furthermore, language provides a reflection of social culture; it mirrors our background, our social standing and mental inclinations (Trudgill 2000). It is the medium through which the manners, morals, and mythology of a society are passed on to the next generation (Augustina 2006: 1). In fact, both language and education are important subdomains in the study of gender and sexuality (Menard-Warwick, Mori, and Williams 2017).

The rise of female liberation movements during the 1970s opened doors to research on language and communication using a gender lens that promoted further questions and equity demands. Ever since the publishing of Lakoff's (1975) book *Language and Women's Place* there has been an increasing interest in the relationship between language and women status. Some scholars investigated the root causes of miscommunication between males and females, such as Lakoff, West Thome, Henle and Bolinger, D. Bolinger (*Aspects of Language*, 1968; *Language the Loaded Weapon*, 1980) and M. Schulz (*The Semantic Derogation of woman*, 1975) sheds light on issues of gender discrimination. Whereas, other works dissected the characteristics of female's language: R. Brend (*Male-Female Intonation Patterns in American English*, 1975) and E. Baird (*Difference in Group Communication: A Review of Relevant Research*, 1976). The study of gender and language, therefore, became a multi-disciplinary subject involving sociology, ethnography, feminism, politics and psychology.

Throughout the past 50 years, the major models on gender studies developed different theories that conceptualized the intricate relationship between language and gender through: deficit, dominance, difference, politeness and constructionism. Despite the different approaches of analysis, the underlying message echoes Kramsch and Thorne's explanation, since it refers to the relationship of language 'creating' socially shared realities or cultures – even if they are only temporary, according to whom, “language is used not just as a tool for the exchange of information, but as a symbolic system with the power to create and shape symbolic realities, such as values, perceptions, identities through discourse” (2002: 83).

In the same way, Julia T. Wood states that language “both reflects and reinforces cultural views and values, including those about gender” (2007: 114). Language is a means of social control over our lives and constructs cultural identity, particularly relating to gender as words or labels, shape and guide our world view. Therefore, the contents of native language textbooks reflect, project, portray and reinforce our gendered social culture, while foreign language textbooks will have the same effect on learners’ perception of the target culture. Subsequently, language textbooks will not only shape learners’ perception of their present culture, but will also shape their future by affecting their understanding their role in the society. The sexist perception of the world is what maintains the status of quo of gender parity despite the country’s efforts to bridge the gap. Many studies concluded that as long as the words we use carry with them sexist perceptions of the world, and we learn to use these words as we learn about our world and our expected roles in that world, we participate in the continuation of language as a means of social control over our lives (Doyle and Paludi 1991: 213).

Consequently, many English as a foreign language (TEFL) materials bloomed in the 1970’s and early into the 1990’s, together with analytical frameworks (Mustapha and Mills 2015; Risager 2018; Myers 1992; Whyld 1983; U’ren 1971). Some of this research focused on textbooks of English as a first language (e.g. Gupta and Yin 1990); other work focused on French language (e.g. Cincotta 1978; Hingley 1982; Schmitz 1975). The majority of work, however, focused on EFL/ESL textbooks (e.g. Bruce 1986; Chouliaraki 1994; Gaff 1982; Hartman and Judd 1978; Gisnet 1988; Hill 1980; Naish 1979; Porreca 1984; Pugsley 1992; Rees-Parnell 1976; Stern 1976; Freudenstein 1978).

Regrettably, in previous and current education materials, female omission or underrepresentation still persists in EFL books (Lee and Gahrouei 2020; Benattabou 2020; Lestariyana *et al.* 2020). It is worth noting that the effects positive counter-stereotype is still not thoroughly discussed in literature, specifically in the Middle East and North Africa regions.

3.5.4. The role of counter-stereotypes in textbooks

The role of a counter stereotype is to simply reverse the role of a stereotype. According to Pedulla (2014), the main purpose to provide counter-stereotypical information with positive associations between a perceiver and the negatively stereotyped individual or group.

Consequently, this positive association diminishes the link between the negative stereotype and prejudicial attitudes (*Ibid.*). Counter-stereotypical content in education literature has mainly investigated the association between STEM and female learners, by showing a model illustrating that women can be equally good at mathematics (Marx and Roman 2002). Results have commonly supported the direct positive results on female students' performance.

Furthermore, as proposed by Cvencek and Meltzoff (2012), young learners often resort to media representation for career inspirations, which are usually gender stereotypes. Their immediate realities usually present gender stereotyped models, hence the gendered choices cycle is not interrupted. Therefore, Steinke (1997), regards counter-stereotypical models of women scientists as a necessary first step in combating norms and customs barriers to girls and young women's interest and participation in science. Likewise, Drury *et al.* (2011), argued that even including famous female scientists, as a form of counter-stereotypes, is essential for young female learners to associate their career aspirations with STEM fields.

In addition to setting gender-sensitive criteria and recommendations to publishers and textbook authors, the inclusion of counter-stereotypes has been perceived as one effective tool to remedy the damage that has been done to gender representation in textbooks throughout the years that had resulted in some women's which results in gender congruent aspirations and behavior. It is proven that there has been correlation between gender differences in aspirations and abilities and gender stereotypes that students were subjected to over time (Spencer *et al.* 1999; Quinn and Spencer 2001; Davies *et al.* 2005; Good *et al.* 2012). Therefore, adopting counter stereotypical models to direct women's aspirations towards domains, where they have been underrepresented and negatively stereotyped, has gained attention in adolescence and adulthood literature (Olsson and Martiny 2018).

For that reason, including counter-stereotypical representation in school textbooks have been considered an effective tool to include girls in STEM careers based on myriad of studies that have shown students exposed to descriptions or portrayals of non-traditional women changed their stereotypes about women, at least temporarily (Savenye 1990; Dasgupta and Asgari 2004; Rosenberg-Kima *et al.* 2008).

On the contrary, another study that examined the effects of images associated with mathematic task on test performance, on perception of the task and self-assessment proved to be problematic for girls (C. Morin Messabel *et al.* 2017). In this case, girls were experiencing what

Rudman and Phelan (2010) term as “upward comparison”; an intimidation that makes girls threatened rather than inspired. However, the study did not provide recommendations on how to make the pictures more inspiring and relatable at the same time. Similarly, Morin-Messabel *et al.* argue that gender stereotypes in textbooks could have positive effects on female learners as their results “demonstrate that girls who disbelieved the stereotype became more committed to their subject choices” (2017: 11). This leaves us with two extreme results of including counter-stereotypical models in the school textbooks without real understanding of the intimidating factors for female learners.

However, in a cross-cultural study done by Shenouda and Danovitch (2013: 247) on Egyptian and American children to test the after effect of exposure to counterstereotypical professions, Egyptian children were then asked if they would rather be a nurse or a mechanic when they grow up. The results revealed that boys in the stereotypical condition chose mechanic (92%) significantly more often than boys in the counterstereotypical condition (46%). The same effect was shown in girls’ choice for nursing profession in the stereotypical condition (93%) than in the counterstereotypical condition (47%) (*Ibid.*). The findings unraveled Egyptian children’s existing stereotypes for these two professions and their willingness to conform to these roles. However, when they are exposed to counterstereotypical representation of gendered characters, both boys and girls become less likely to conform to gender-tied careers.

3.5.5. Different frameworks to evaluate women representation in textbooks

Beforehand, the main criteria of books evaluation were omission, stereotyping and linguistic bias. In a study on sexism in ESL/EFL (English as a second language/English as a foreign language) textbooks proposed by Hartman and Judd (1978) and Porreca (1984) underlined sentences like “Boys become men. Girls become housewives” (Alt and Kirkland 1973, cited in Hartman and Judd 1978). Others carry misogynist messages by marginalizing women’s profession by adding “a title to differentiate its referent from the norm—a male” (Porecca 1978: 717), as demonstrated in this sentence: “A T.V. host is interviewing a famous woman author who is eighty-five years old” (*Ibid.*). The focus in such studies was on linguistic bias, which shed light on the importance of gender sensitive language and had positive repercussions that make the above mentioned sentences almost non-existent in current textbooks.

Yet, research on sexism in language textbooks was mostly anecdotal rather than systematic in this early period. In what is considered the first attempt to provide clear guidelines for foreign language professionals, Nuessel (1977) defined categories of sexism to evaluate and correct textbooks. Hence, foreign language educators had a resource guide for materials. According to Graci, the scarcity of clarity and explicitly of methodologies made these studies nonreplicable (1989: 479). Later, drawing from previous research on children's books, Schmitz (1984) proposed omission; isolation; superficiality, cultural inaccuracy and stereotyping to linguistic bias in gender representation in foreign language textbooks evaluations. Omission explains the tendency to eliminate women and minority groups from taking leading roles in dialogues or illustrations. Similarly, isolation refers to providing information about women in a way that seem excluded from the main topic or chapter to portray the idea that women characters or issues are excluded from the main stream of the target culture. As for superficiality, Schmitz pointed out that women's struggles are often presented in a superficial manner devoid of real context. She went on to provide this example, "in 1920, women were given the right to vote" to demonstrate how statements like provides students with superficial view of complex social issues (1984: 7). Cultural inaccuracy is another criterion to consider when analyzing the hidden message of the EFL/ESL textbook about the target culture. Hence, EFL/ESL textbooks should provide a more inclusive portrayal of the target culture, rather than focusing on one perspective – that of the middle-class White male (*Ibid.*). Also, she pointed out that stereotyping is a form of providing simplistic or distorted image about women and minority groups. Sex stereotyping, in specific is identified as "behavioral opposites: active/passive, independent/dependent, strong/weak" (*Ibid.*).

As for linguistic bias, Schmitz focused on vocabulary, grammar and usage of language. The idea of male firstness in grammatical paradigms as explained by Schmitz reinforces a gender hierarchy, as the male pronoun is continuously introduced in the first position and the female form a second within the same sentence. Schmitz proposed three solutions to remedial measures to sex-bias textbooks: 1) educators' awareness; 2) school board review of then-used materials; and 3) letters to authors and publishers expressing discontent (1982: 128).

Furthermore, within the same framework of content analysis as a means to measure sexism in school textbooks, informal categories such as exclusion, subordination, distortion, and degradation have been suggested (Nuessel 1977: 22). Hellinger (1980) further explained in a study on 131 texts from 3 ELT widely used in German secondary schools, exclusion refers to the

quantitative ratio of female and male referents in the textbooks, where the latter are significantly higher. She further expanded three diverse criteria to provide evidence for the category of exclusion (a) reference of the stories' titles; (b) participation of women in the stories' events; (c) the proportion of female and male speakers in the stories. She asserts that exclusion is not sufficient to detect gender bias, as women are usually over-represented in EFL textbooks, yet due to "limitations of the linguistic options available for the verbalization of simple activities, predominantly linked with the home and the family" (*Ibid.*: 268). While subordination refers to portraying men's power and prestige at a higher level than that of women, Hellinger (1980) identified two criteria to assess subordination in the textbooks: (a) the way in which women are introduced in the texts, and (b) the kind of information provided on their educational background and professional status (*Ibid.*: 270). Because distortion could be redundant with evidence of subordination and exclusion, especially the proportion of female speakers (passivity), and the type of jobs available for women (intellectual modesty); Hellinger identified distortion by examining selected collocational properties of predicates with female headcounts highlighting many of the verbs occurring with female agents show certain semantic similarities to traditional stereotypical female behavior patterns.

Another addition to the then prevalent discussion of sexism in textbooks evaluation was evident in a study done on German textbooks as a foreign language when Clausen (1982) criticized the procedure used by publishers to choose authors as few female authors were selected in comparison to males. Finally, it was Porreca that provided an explicit quantitative data that made her methodology replicable. She counted: 1) male to female occurrences in both text and illustrations; 2) instances of male/female firstness in examples, exercises or sentences; 3) portrayal of occupational roles of both genders; 4) nouns designating males or females (for example, woman/man); 5) number of masculine generic constructions; and 6) adjectives used with female and male characters to "document the stereotyped images of females and males with concrete data" (*Ibid.*: 712). Her findings clearly proved that there was sexism in all ESL materials five years after Hartman and Judd study (1984: 718).

As shown from previous discussion, this part of literature was shaped by content analyses studies that raised awareness towards sexism and bias in language textbooks and provided recommendation to publishers and educators to improve the image of women in textbooks. Overwhelmingly, the analysis in these studies highlighted consistent findings concerning the

representation of men and women in the foreign language textbooks. Language textbooks portray women as passive, dependent, generally weak, and physically attractive, while men are depicted as active, independent, and strong. These studies played a crucial role in sounding the alarm and raising awareness of the image of gender depicted to learners at academic institutions. However, the majority of studies lacked clarity of methodologies on how to identify and assess sexism, hence there was a consensus on the need of standardized and objective analysis. The findings, however, had a ripple effect that led governments to establish policies and guidelines to advance gender neutrality in school textbooks. UN organizations such as The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Population Funds, and United Nations Children's Fund adopted strategies to combat gender bias, with a focus on textbooks content development explicitly mentions: "any stereotyping concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education [...] should be eliminated [...] in particular by revision of textbooks and school programs, and the adoption of teaching methods" (UN convention 1979: 7).

It is clear that these early studies unraveled many manifestations of sexism and, justly, condemned them. A plethora of studies on EFL/ESL and language education textbooks in the 1970's and 1980's found evidence of gender bias in three main categories: exclusion, subordination, distortion, and degradation. Subsequently, later studies in the 1990's resulted in a myriad of proposed evaluation criteria including Sunderland (1994), Benjamin Rifkin (1998), Fang (2000) and Lu and Chuang (2006), Sadker, Sadker, and Zittleman (2009).

However, what they heavily relied on discourse or content analysis with disregard to the narrow scope analysis. For instance, Mills (1995: 14-15) states that content analysis is essentially static and does not allow for different interpretations; it may be valuable, but needs to be done alongside a more dynamic and essentially wider discourse analysis. Hence, studies became more sophisticated and incorporated linguistic analysis that overcame the limitations of previous content analysis studies. Carroll and Kowitz, for instance, scrutinized frequencies of variant types of pronouns in ESL textbooks commonly used in the 1980's using concordance techniques as frequency counts, collocation and Key Word in Context (KWIC). They concluded that "male pronouns are more common than female pronouns, ranging from 2.55 – 3.85 to 1" (1994: 69). In the same way, they examined adjectives collocated with men and women in the same series, highlighting women association with beautiful and pretty whereas adjectives such as "strong", "poor" and "rich" were collocation of men. This collocation analysis technique tabulates

occurrences of all words with a specified distance from identified search words. Adopting another analysis technique like KWIC concordances guaranteed detection of subtle gender stereotyping as the findings revealed when the key word “work” was in a column, with context on either side, it was presented as a masculine verb due to its occurrence with adverbials such as “he works in an office”, “land” or “shop”. At the same time, the few instances of occurrence with a “she” was followed by “as a secretary.”

The concordance technology was also adopted by Jasmani *et al.* (2011) to conduct a quantitative analysis of different types of verbs found in six Malaysian English secondary school textbooks. The findings showed gender stereotyping and gender imbalance in relation to the verbs used. For instance, action verbs associated with males included “said”, “told”, “know”, “made”, “wants”, “came” and “go”, and those associated with females included “think”, “tell”, “bought”, “show”, “care”, “buy” and “got”. This technique was found to be efficient in detecting subtle gender stereotyping. Yang’s (2012) adopted the same collocation technique to study gendered nouns (e.g., he, she, man, woman, girl, boy) in primary textbooks in Hong Kong proving that females were no longer associated to delicacy and weakness, but rather were portrayed as engaged in a wide range of jobs and outdoor activities.

As opposed to monolithic whole studies, some scholars looked at specific aspects of the textbooks highlighting direct effects of specific linguistic feature in a more serious attempt to link literary scholarship to language pedagogy. Poulou, for example, scrutinized another linguistic aspect of sexism in foreign language textbooks by questioning whether there were gender differences in mixed-sex dialogues in terms of the amount of speech (number of utterances and number of words), number of initiation utterances and final utterances, and language functions (1997: 68). Moreover, she shed light on the effect of associating expressive language, characterized by a preoccupation with feelings, to women speakers and presented it as an obstacle to learn the pragmatic aspect of the target language. Her findings manifested great amount of expressive language uttered by women in one of the books. Another finding was that in both books where the participants had a personal relationship role (non-experts), women tended to ask for information and make requests, while men’s role was portrayed as giving information and performing all the other types of directives. She also tackled the implication of these findings on female learners as it could be offensive to and reflect a stereotypical view about them as being “emotional, weak, less intellectual and less well-informed than men” (*Ibid.*: 69). The portrayal of

females requesting information and service to men when both were non-experts, assigns to each of the sexes the image of dependence and self-sufficiency respectively.

Similarly, Jones *et al.* narrowed down their focus to analyze dialogues in English language textbooks that were commonly used at the time for their considerable potential value in providing different types of language learning opportunities. This was one of the few studies that shed light on interactions between men and women in dialogues that intended to be spoken by learners. They opted for spoken dialogues in particular as they actively promote this verbal practice in female and male language learners through the learners' own discourse practices. Frequent gender imbalances in dialogue roles may develop learners' predisposition to assume certain gender nature of verbal behavior of native speakers of the second or foreign language, and they may accordingly continue to imitate it in class most likely to the disadvantage of the female learners. They concluded that the three books presented a balance not only in the number of female and male characters but also in their social and occupational roles. Clearly, their findings showed the progress made and raised consciousness of authors and publishers of language teaching materials to present a fairly gender balanced social roles, language use and gender (1997: 474).

Despite the gender equality awareness amongst school textbooks' publishers that resulted in eliminating glaring stereotypes in textbooks, myriad of studies focused on stereotypical pictorial representations of women that unraveled persisting bias; "*les constats des différentes études mettent en évidence une permanence des représentations stéréotypées des femmes dans les manuels au travers des images.* [The findings of these studies highlight a permanence of the stereotyped representation of women in the manuals through images³⁹]" (Lignon 2012: 5).

A recent study at Al Balqa Applied University in Jordan, Al Kayed *et al.* investigated International English language textbooks focused on women's and men's social and domestic roles, the visibility of women and men, women's and men's activities, women's and men's semantic roles, and pictorial representation. The results suggested a balanced visibility of male and female, yet both men and women were sometimes associated with stereotypical roles. However, using Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the authors concluded that the gender representation in these language textbooks mirrors the Jordanian community. Al Kayed et al state that "the books portray the actual stereotypical image of both genders as they are really presented in Jordanian

³⁹ Our translation.

society,” (2020: 25). However, they did not provide any recommendations regarding this cultural sexism in the curriculum or the society at large. The authors further added that “in Jordan, jobs that require physical strength, such as electricians, builders, painters, mechanics, etc. are exclusive associated with men” (*Ibid.*). It is clear that the authors solely focused on high-status versus low-status occupations and passed a judgment of equality when females were portrayed as engineers and doctors in the textbooks. However, one can argue here that associating solely men to occupations that require physical strength imbeds underlying physical traits associated to masculinity and femininity. We can see here a clear example of gender stereotype related to the virility and strength of man and its inverse, the fragility and femininity of women. While one could argue that the representation of women occupation is positive, the covert message here is that vocational jobs are not designed for women. This observation is in accordance with Wafa’s opinion regarding the covert and overt messages directed towards Arab school students throughout their schooling years: “[v]ocational work is not desirable for women; work life will conflict with family life” (2021: 378). To that end, textbooks should provide an array of gender-neutral occupations to direct learners towards pursuing their desired professions. Otherwise, gendered occupations in textbooks will continue to reinforce cultural schemas for interpreting employment world, “as they can influence attitudes, career aspirations, and the vocational decision process of young people, especially the adolescence” (Ramaci 2017:109).

3.6. Gaps in literature

Throughout our clear observation of literature, we argue that the efficacy of counter-stereotypes has not been thoroughly investigated in the literature of gender representations in textbooks. Counter-stereotyping statements or pictures are not widely discussed in the literature as a criterion to combat gender misrepresentation in textbooks and to fully understand its implication on students’ self-perception and career choices. In a study done by Sinigaglia-Amadio (2010) on 29 textbooks from various disciplines, counter-stereotypical statement/picture was an evaluative criterion to combat discrimination in textbooks and was found to be largely absent. Similarly, Lignon *et al.* used counter stereotype as an evaluation criterion in measuring pictorial representation of gender in school textbooks that was found to be lacking gender equality (2012:15).

Regrettably, there is no evidence of similar studies in the MENA region or Egyptian context, in specific, despite its importance in understanding culture specific implications of subjection to counterstereotypes on female and male students. Furthermore, the existing literature on counter-stereotypes is to highlight their effect on female's education performance or career aspirations, yet there is a scarcity in literature on the effect of learners' understanding of gender roles. Nor there are criteria for using counter-stereotypes that are relatable and encouraging rather than intimidating and rather alienating students.

Furthermore, there has been an abundance of gender and language studies that fueled research on gender representation in EFL/ESL textbooks in the Western world ever since the 1970s. Frameworks of evaluation underwent several changes overtime and affected to a great extent the guidelines of authors and publishers, yet one cannot claim that gender equality in textbooks has been attained, especially in the Middle East. The evaluative framework, hence, needs to be revisited since content and linguistic analyses of gender in language textbooks have declined in application since the 1990s; in accordance with the increased awareness the text itself is not sufficient to be the focus of the study. Hence, we adopted a didactic approach in this study in order to take other factors into consideration. While it is impossible to take all factors into consideration, "but the framework is totally different when the process is looked at as a whole as against the alternative approach, where the focus rests on some particular component and the totality is not even discussed" (Kansanen 1999: 107). Therefore, the adoption of didactic approach to examine the effect of women representation provided a platform to investigate underlying socio-political values and norms that go beyond the text. This study, therefore, presents an unprecedented inclusive model that takes into consideration, the texts, images, and role of teachers and learners' perceptions of representations to avoid one-dimensional results.

In accordance with Sunderland's (2000) views that a focus on gendered texts alone could be misguided, this research incorporates teachers' views and perception of gender related issues from the text. The textbook is just "one medium in a chain of media"; therefore, it should not be analyzed as an isolated medium of education. As Sunderland suggests "[a] text is arguably as good or as bad as the treatment it receives from the teacher who is using it; in particular, a text riddled with gender bias can be rescued and that bias put to good effect, pedagogic and otherwise" (2000: 155). Moreover, learners' gender awareness and perception towards gender aspects in the textbooks is also incorporated in the study so as to understand what Sunderland (2001) calls

learners' "uptake" of a given gendered text to create a three-dimensional approach to understanding gender bias in language curricula.

Moreover, many researchers necessitated more gender investigations in non-Anglo settings and in languages other than English (Warwick *et al.* 2017; Mustapha and Mills 2015; Niehaus 2018), to provide another culture-specific perspectives to further expand current theories of gender representations. The growing interest in gender disparity in the Middle East, where the status of women widely varies, has led to the recent scrutiny of school curricula for overt and covert sexism. Despite the scarcity of research on language and gender in education in Arab countries, it can be seen that EFL textbooks have been the chosen texts for the available gender representation studies, whereas Arabic textbooks have not been as common without a clear justification for this avoidance. Hence, in this study we analyze a sought after gender representation analysis.

Lastly, there is a scarcity of studies in Arab countries, specifically in Egypt, to cross examine gender representation across mandatory language textbooks: Arabic, English, and French. Since, the pivotal role of language textbooks has already been proven to influence learners' gender awareness and interpretation of the surrounding and target culture, it can be argued that our study aims to fill a gap in the literature in that regard as well and provide a comparison of woman representation across the three languages in the secondary school curricula

Chapter IV: Research Methodology

Introduction

Throughout this chapter, we will dissect the didactic research structure and justify the methodological choices undertaken in different stages of the investigation. This section provides a rationale for the choices of the adequate paradigm according to the nature of the study. First, we will highlight the objectives of the study, in order to lay the foundations of my reflection on the applied linguistics paradigm at hand. The starting point of this research was to investigate how both learners and educators are affected by women representation across secondary language textbooks in order to shed light on the endorsed sociocultural messages of the language textbooks of the textbooks under review in this geographic context in particular.

The different theories discussed in Chapter 3 (Moscovici 1984, 1988; Tajfel and Turner 1989) explained the intertwined relation between gender representation in discourse and the effect of deductive learning on identity development, and perception of self and other. Hence, unraveling the multi-layered nature of this investigation that sits at an intersection of concepts from applied linguistics, identity and language pedagogy.

Furthermore, we will identify the pragmatic approach adopted for modeling and analyzing the epistemologies of women representation in secondary language textbooks both as content and perception. Quantitative assessment of texts and pictures in textbooks is adopted to reveal gender-bias themes and patterns. The methodology in this research is guided by Fleckenstein's reconceptualization of epistemology to embrace both imagistic and linguistic representations to "increase the explanatory power of our theories of meaning" (1996: 915).

Then, we will dissect the successive stages of data collection by presenting the preferred methods for each of them, while highlighting the ethics and biases linked to each methodological approach. Finally, we will end with a reflection on the techniques retained for the processing and analyzing of our data.

4.1 Research aim and objectives

This study is proposed as an extension to the existing literature on gender representation mentioned in chapter 2 with the contribution of presenting an actual cause /effect triangular

relationship manifested in learners, educators and materials from a didactic point of view. This research also, has a generalizable edge, not because of the sample size only, but because of its formative nature – learners and educators take the role of the researcher and confront the problem themselves - leaving us with a clearer insight about an adequate action plan and pedagogical recommendations.

First, the study goes beyond how women are merely portrayed in English textbooks at the sentence level and utterances but rather examines how the woman character is represented in plots of reading passages, and pictures. While other studies shed lights on firstness and visibility of females along with comparative professions between gender, the scope of this research encompasses other essential forms of representation that are relevant to the Egyptian culture and the obstacles Egyptian women face in their everyday life.

Secondly, we examine how women are differently represented across the three language textbooks - Arabic, English, and French - to unravel how each language shapes the cultural and social perception of women.

While myriad of studies focused on children textbooks to reveal gender stereotypes and the effect on women career aspirations, we were concerned with the effect of women representation in terms of sharing the public sphere and the gender roles that hinders women's equality regardless of career advancements. The empirical data from this study is used to demonstrate the level of students and teachers' actual gender-awareness as a necessary yard-stick to measure the textbooks roles in instigating change. Hence, bridging gaps between society, research and education policies-represented by state schools to shed light on women status in Egypt, and to assess the current gender-sensitive measures applied to textbooks to empower women and promote gender equality awareness amongst new generations. Hence, the findings of this study are reusable for decision makers, and for initial and continuous teacher trainings to be fit to play the roles in mitigating gender stereotypes. Within this work, we tried to answer the following research questions:

- How are women represented across Egyptian public secondary language textbooks: English, Arabic, and French?
- How learners perceive the current gender representations in language textbooks?

4.1.1. Epistemology of practice

In this section, we will identify our epistemological positioning by explaining the approaches undertaken to conduct the study. First, we will explain our rationale for using quantitative methodological approach, and why it was necessary for our exploratory study. Then, we will present the framework of our research and review its validity criteria and limitations.

4.2. A Rationale of the exploratory sequential design

In this study, we relied on alternating data collection in a sequential approach where “the quantitative (or qualitative) data is collected first, and the results inform the second (quantitative or qualitative) form of data collection” (Creswell 2006: 116). We opted for this approach since the objectives of this study are to first analyze the representation of women across language textbooks’ content in the Secondary education, then to investigate the effect of this representation on both learners and educators, it was deemed necessary to adopt a sequential explanatory in which the quantitative data is first collected through content-analysis, then questionnaires were designed to further investigate themes arose from content analysis to explore the extent of their acceptance amongst learners and educators.

4.3. Introduction to Corpus

There is a total of 4 public secondary schools’ language textbooks reviewed in this research. The 4 textbooks taught in the Egyptian public schools, throughout the secondary education are: 2 Arabic textbooks (one used in each academic term): *The Arabic Language* [اللغة العربية]; *The Arabic Language*, *هيا للإبداع* [*Let’s Get Creative*]; English textbook, *Hello*, and French textbook, *Club @dos plus* 3. These language textbooks are mandatory across all public secondary schools; therefore, we did not have to make any choices in the selection process.

4.3.1. English textbooks: *Hello! English for Secondary School*,

Third secondary year - Egypt ENG1

This textbook is written and designed by Simon Haines and Don Dallas and published by a joint venture publishing company that is responsible of English language textbooks in Egypt: The Egyptian International Published Company-Longman under the supervision of the Ministry

of Education. It is the third in a three stage standard-based communicative English course for students in the secondary stage. As mentioned in the textbook, it reviews and builds on the language and skills which students have learnt in the primary and preparatory stages. The authors add that it also introduced students to essential new areas of vocabulary and continues to develop their language skills. The book is designed for adult students who are fundamentally functional in the four skill areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. The textbook is divided into 18 units on various topics, such as employment, travels, technology and nature. Each unit is divided into five sections: Listening; Language focus; Reading; Critical Thinking, and Communication in approximately five pages.

First section is a Listening section composed of five main questions. Two warm up questions followed by three listening exercises where the teacher plays a CD in class.

Second part is Language Focus, which highlights grammar rules from the listening part and includes five questions that reinforces a specific grammar feature such as reported speech, relative clauses, modal verbs, etc.

Third section is a Reading text followed by five questions. First question focuses on vocabulary, second and third questions are skim and scan exercises. The fourth and fifth exercises are comprehension part in various form: work in pairs, multiple choice, discussion questions.

Fourth section is composed of three Critical Thinking follow up questions on the previous reading topic. Fifth and last section is Communication section which is intended to further learners' speaking skills. This section is divided into two questions that involve working in pairs and question for discussions.

4.3.2. French textbook, *Club @dos plus 3* Third secondary year- Egypt – FRA1

This book is written by Gaelle Delannoy and edited by Aurélie Combriat and Katia Coppola, and the illustrations are done by Alex Orbe, Jesus Escudero Cuadrado and Zoográfico. The publishing company is Dar El Nashr Horizons under the supervision of the Egyptian Ministry of Education. The textbook is introduced as a French language method for suitable for teenagers all over the world. Also, it is abiding by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CERF) with an emphasis on communication skills. It offers four thematic units, special grammar and lexicon sections, individual and group projects in each unit and an overview of French and Egyptian cultures.

A broad range of current topics are presented in the text, grouped under four themed chapters: Sports; food; Exploration; Travel.

4.3.3. Arabic textbook

The Arabic Language: Towards creativity [هيا للإبداع... اللغة العربية]
First Secondary year – Egypt
ARA1

Unlike the second and foreign language curricula, the Arabic curriculum throughout the secondary years is divided in two separate books for the first and second term respectively. Hence, we will refer to them in study by ARA1 and ARA2.

They are both written by 4 authors: Prof. Mohamed Hamasa Abdel Latif, Prof Fawzi Saad Eissa, Prof. Sami Mahmoud Abdallah and Dr. Hassan Lotfy Saleh. It has 6 editors: Prof. Fathy Younes, Prof. Fawzy Eissa, Prof. Maaty Nasr, Prof. Marwan El Seman, Dr. Ahmed El Said Shalaby, and Dr. Ismaeil Mohamed Abdel Maaty. The book is approved by the Center for the Development of Curricula and Educational Materials. It opens with an introduction explaining the objectives of the Ministry of Education in ameliorating the oral and written skills of secondary students' language proficiency.

However, this introduction is preceded by a preamble stating the importance of the Arabic language is due to its sacred status as the language of the Holy book, *Quran*, a means of communication and emphasized on its role as

اللغة العربية...كونها لغة القرآن الكريم، وناقلة للتراث الإنساني، وأهم وسيلة من وسائل الاتصال بين الأفراد والجماعات، وأبرز تتحقق الهوية المصرية العربية...وغرس قيم حب الوطن والإعتزاز به فى نفوسهم، وتعميق القيم الأصيلة والمبادئ سمة من سما النبيلة

[Arabic language [...] being the language of the Holy Quran, a carrier of human heritage, the most important means of communication between individuals and groups, the most prominent feature of achieving Egyptian Arab identity [...] instilling the values of patriotism and pride in them, deepening the inherent values and noble principles]⁴⁰.

It is clear from this section that the authors shed light on the sacred status of Arabic language discussed in Chapter 2 and further attempt to instill “noble” principles throughout the

⁴⁰ Our translation.

textbook, which compels us to scrutinize the content of this book that aims at affecting learners' identities and characters.

In the introduction, the authors, Professor Hamasa et al. declare abiding by the Ministry's standards towards the Arabic language as it is introduced as an inclusive source that provides an integrated approach of Arabic language to encompass modern and authentic cultural content, while representing learner's reality and taking into account their linguistic and mental competence. In addition to taking into consideration their rural and urban backgrounds. Hence, the authors claim that each lesson offers modern objectives and concepts that ought to be taught. They emphasized that reading texts are the core of each lesson, with pre and post exercises.

To conclude, the authors state that the textbook seeks to activate Egypt's national project that aims to provide quality education to all learners with a national identity that is inseparable from global trends. In addition to developing youth's sense of citizenship and tolerance, combatting violence, and understanding the foundations of freedom and justice to create a new Egyptian for a new Egyptian society.

The first-term textbook is divided into three chapters: Arabian values; Tolerance and peace; Science and morals. Each unit is subdivided into three lessons with various exercises relevant to the chapter theme.

4.3.4. Arabic textbook, The Arabic Language: Towards creativity [هيا للإبداع... اللغة العربية] – Second Secondary year –Egypt ARA2

This textbook is written by the same authors and editors of other Arabic language textbook ARA1 for first year secondary. The textbook is divided into three chapters: Nation Building; work and Progress; Revolution and Freedom. Each unit is subdivided into three reading lessons and a variety of exercises.

TABLE 1: TEXTBOOKS USED IN THE STUDY

Textbook	Author	Grade	Published and taught in	Total Chapters	Number of pages	Book Code
Arabic textbook, <i>The Arabic Language</i> [هيا للإبداع]	Prof. Mohamed Hamasa Abdel Latif et al.	First secondary First term	Egypt	3	57	ARA1
Arabic textbook, <i>The Arabic Language</i> [هيا للإبداع]	Same authors	First secondary second term	Egypt	3	84	ARA2
English textbooks, <i>Hello! English for Secondary School,</i>	Simon Haines and Don Dallas	Third secondary	Egypt	18	136	ENG1
French textbook, <i>Club @dos plus 3</i>	Gaelle Delannoy*	Third secondary	Egypt	4	124	FRA1

Note

* indicates female authors

4.4. Analytical framework

The adopted analytical framework in this study consists of two main steps:

- 1) content analysis of textbooks under review;
- 2) questionnaires:
 - a. Secondary school students
 - b. Secondary school language teachers

4.4.1. First Part: Content Analysis

Content analysis is adopted in this study to quantitatively count and analyze the representation of women throughout the textbooks under review. Content analysis has varied in its definitions with varying meanings. Babbie's (2010: G2), for example, broadly labeled as "the study of recorded human communications," while in this research we adopt Neuendorf's:

Content analysis is a summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method, including attention to objectivity/intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing. It is not limited as to the types of messages that may be analyzed, nor as to the types of variables that might be measured (2011:10).

Another reason to support adopting content analysis approach in this research is its ability to provide the researchers with an optimal level of authenticity. In comparison to other methodologies, the data collected using a content analysis is not created by the researcher and is non-interactive; hence, the inherent level of authenticity (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006).

Analyzing content takes place at two distinctive levels (Erdener and Dunn 1990; Holsti 1969; Woodrum 1984). In the first level, the manifest text is determined and displayed in textual statistics. The Second level reveals the deeper meaning of the latent content where several patterns are interpreted by the researcher.

Through this understanding of content analysis, we followed a conceptual approach to understand what the text is about, considering content from a gender representation perspective. This is carried out by systematically reducing school textbooks' content, including texts and pictures, into manageable categories as recommended by Beach *et al.* "[...] considering content from a particular theoretical perspective, such as socio-historical, gender, cultural, or thematic

studies” (2009: 130). Furthermore, these categories are later analyzed to make inferences about the content that would unravel the real meaning of the themes presented to learners.

This being the general idea, to conduct a conceptual content analysis, we went through the following steps in order:

1. Selection of textbooks
2. decide on the level of analysis: characters in text and pictures
3. Decide the number of concepts to be coded. However, further codes were added through the coding process.
4. Codes were counted for frequency, not existence, so that codes were counted each time they appear in the text or pictures. To insure consistency among reviewed concepts were collected through a level implication. For example, “playing tennis” or “swimming” vs. “let’s go to the swimming pool” was coded as “sports activity”. These word segments may not merit separate categories, due to the implicit meaning of “sports activity”.
5. Setting rules for coherent coding texts and pictures to preserve consistency and organization in accordance.
6. Choosing a coding system. All themes were coded manually across the textbooks under review and noted in excel tables to be processed at a later stage.
7. Analyzing results. Unnecessary or irrelevant data were determined, so that general patterns were identified.
8. Drawing conclusions and generalizations.

Since the textbooks under review have content design variations, we opted to unify the content being examined, hence opted for reading passages and pictures maintain a constant criteria applicable to all three books. The rationale for this approach is grounded by the fact that learners usually recall images from texts (Apple 1986), and also because of the de facto favoritism given to texts in teaching at the expense of integrating other resources (Marker and Mehlinger 1992; Ross 2001). Hence, data collection was carried out after reading the whole books and consulting the consulting *Introduction to the Pupil’s Book* to identify the textbook content structure and mark reading passages in class material, and related pictures.

This being the general idea, we will provide a more thorough explanation in the following section that justifies the selection of reading passages and pictures are of great relevance to our research within the Egyptian context.

4.4.1.1. Rationale for examining reading passages

Choosing reading passages for analysis, as opposed to the listening and speaking sections, is to reflect actual language learning that takes place in Egyptian education. It is essential to highlight the parts of the textbooks that receive most attention by teachers and students alike. As explained earlier, there are several obstacles in the Egyptian secondary education that impede teachers from adopting a holistic communicative approach in language education: the classes are overcrowded so the chances of applying role plays, presentations or group discussions are very few. Hence, reading texts are prioritized, as part of rote learning, over other meaningful learning approaches. Textbooks include reading sections and exercises sections, hence, we distinguished between these, even when the exercises supplemented the course material. That is due to the difference in their pedagogical significance: the reading text is most likely to be covered in class or assigned as homework, whereas the exercises could be overlooked due to the reasons mentioned earlier.

Furthermore, the Egyptian education system is dominated by the use of standardized examinations to select students for access to further educational opportunities (Hargreaves 2001), hence directing the learning and teaching towards studying and teaching for the exam. The third year in secondary education in particular ends with a high stakes school-leaving summative assessments that determine which university or academic program students can join. In foreign and native language subjects, speaking and listening skills are not measured, hence, exercises on these two skills are usually ignored throughout the academic year.

We ought to clarify here that both teachers and students are stressed throughout the secondary years for one reason, “Egyptian schools take pride in having a high percentage of students passing the *thanawiya amma* [third year general] test. Schools are rewarded when one of their students is among the highest-scoring test takers on this exam nationwide (Gebril and Brown 2014: 26). Consequently, the learning process revolves around studying for the test, hence, the focus is on reading comprehension skills, memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules.

Another reason for the overemphasis on reading passages and rote learning is the lack of facilities in the public Egyptian secondary education system. For example, “many schools have poor infrastructure with around 1 in 5 school buildings unfit for use, lacking functional water and sanitation facilities. Based on TIMMS 2015 and PIRLS 2016 results” (Hayman 2017: para 2).

Consequently, the absence of language laboratories or audio players to practice listening and speaking, increase the pedagogical emphasis on reading texts.

Given the importance of the reading section in the curriculum, all reading passages were read thoroughly, while scrutinizing language content according to the developed criteria: chapter titles, women visibility, occupations and personality traits attributed to both genders, pictorial representations, and the nature of interaction between genders were recorded in grids.

4.4.1.2. Rationale for examining visual representations

Humans transmitted information through drawing pictures and symbols since the dawn of history; the evidence can be seen on the drawings on the walls of pre-historic caves or in Egyptian temples and tombs (Domin 2007: 1). Visuals still shape today's world, in fact, we are surrounded by photos and visuals embedding various messages that are easy to interpret no matter what language we speak. Educators advocated for the inclusion of visual aids in teaching as early as J.A.Comenius, the father of modern education, who asserted that:

[...] tout ce qu'on peut faire apprendre ne doit pas seulement être raconté pour que les oreilles le reçoivent mais aussi dépend pour qu'il soit imprimé dans l'imagination par l'intermédiaire des yeux [everything that can be taught must not only be told so that the ears receive it but also depends on it to be printed in the imagination through the eyes]⁴¹ (1952: 112).

While storybooks are designed for youngsters, textbooks include visuals designed to all levels of education to aid students with different levels of competence to facilitate comprehension. As highlighted by Ardon: “l'image se contente de donner à voir ce que l'on ne peut pas voir en réalité” [The image is satisfactory to provide what one cannot see in reality]⁴² (2002: 49). Likewise, Evan, Watson and Willows noted that “illustrations or images should be able to serve as valuable teaching tools, bringing to the eye what otherwise can only be imagined” (1978: 86).

The image is thus a privileged means of making learners discover aspects of reality with which they do not have direct contact. In accordance with this view, Canning – Wilson, (1999: 4) assert that “pictures can bring the outside world into the classroom”; hence provide a social setting inside the classroom relating to the real world.

⁴¹ Our translation.

⁴² Our translation.

This particular characteristic of visual representations is what makes it relevant to the scope of our research for its ability to forge a perception of women in a gender segregated society. It is through images, among other means, that students are exposed to depiction of women's roles in the society and their relationships with men without necessarily having direct contact. Moreover, images could have a lasting effect on learners in the way they construct knowledge about the real world. According to Canning-Wilson:

Research has shown that people prefer illustrations that are colored, contain a story, related to previous experiences and that can be associated with places, objects, persons, events or animals for which they are familiar. In addition, research has also demonstrated that if a visual stimulus is suddenly terminated that it remains available in the conscious system only for about a second in detail (1999: 4).

Their ability to provide situational context results in immense benefit in foreign language education, in specific, as they carry equal meaning for English native and non-native speakers (Basal *et al.* 2016). In the literature of EFL teaching, visual materials are widely perceived as an essential tool to promote language teaching in classrooms (Guo, N. S. and Feng, D. 2015; Tahir, *et al.* 2020). Consequently, this sociocultural representation characteristic of images present in foreign language textbooks can affect learners' perception of the target language and culture (Mendoza and Reese 2001; Tahririan and Sadri 2013).

Pictorial images also cater to various to distinct intelligences within the classrooms, such as the visuals, kinesthetic or the struggling readers who could understand the story behind it. Therefore, the presence of pictures and illustrations is pivotal in language textbooks as they offer a universal language, and "engages our low performing students in ways that words alone will never accomplish" (Olshansky 2008: 11). Similarly, Moghtadi argues that "visuals are hugely influential and create a more immediate impact on the viewer than a piece of text could ever do" (2012: 2).

According to Brugeilles and Cromer pictures in textbooks usually exist in three possible forms (2009: 25):

- Either the text or the picture is redundant: they provide the same information;
- Both text and picture are not relevant to each other;
- Both text and picture provide different messages.

Therefore, upon gathering data from the textbooks under review, the origin of characters whether in texts and pictures will be analyzed separately in “text” and “illustration” section for the sake of clarity and precision. If characters have dual presence in text and illustration.

Nevertheless, we need to also acknowledge the vast literature that contrasts the aforementioned positive stance on the role of images in learning. It is contended that that visuals rather form a cognitive barrier and instructional obstacles for learners with different cognitive capabilities (Ollerenshaw, Aidman, and Kidd 1997; Weidenmann 1989). Likewise, Sweller *et al.* underpinned the importance of synchronizing the text with the visual representation as “Without such integrated alignments, learning is likely to be inhibited” (2011: 128). Due to the “increase in the load on working memory resulting in an extraneous cognitive load due to the format of the information” (*Ibid.*: 113). Furthermore, one cannot assume that all pictorial images have a distinctive pedagogical effect on learners (Thomas 2001). Also, Boling *et al.* added that the intended meanings of visual images in textbooks are not always interpreted as the designer has intended it to since, “learners do, indeed, use a fluid, active, and inter-related mix of strategies to decide what an image is supposed to mean to them in the context of a learning activity” (2004: 47). Yet, within the context of our research, we find it necessary to include textbook images within our analysis of women representation, whether they are decorative or pedagogically useful.

Visual aids inside the classroom are essential in facilitating comprehension and promoting learners’ engagement. Ideally, teachers will have access to visual aids and school props to use in classrooms whenever they are available, yet within the Egyptian context, budget constraints and overcrowded classrooms usually leave teachers with no resources other than the textbook and the teachers’ book. Consequently, in the case of this research context, we argue that photos in textbooks are the sole source of visual aids students are exposed to, hence making it necessary to scrutinize. Pictorial images form connection between learners and the material by making the lesson more simplified and interesting and sometimes relatable.

Egyptian students, in particular, as mentioned in Chapter 1 have several reading challenges that could inversely affect their learning. Recent studies on Egyptian ESL students entering higher education showed that they face reading challenges that impede their development of critical skills required for college level courses (Zaki 2014; Ismail 2015; Dakhail 2016; Abu Zeid 2017; Amer 2017; Bedeer 2017; Badawy 2018; Hanafy 2018; El-Sayed 2019;). That said, one can conclude

that images in school textbooks are not overlooked by Egyptian students, but are rather considered as a necessary visual aid in understanding the associated texts.

For that reason, it was necessary to analyze the pictorial images that students are exposed to across the textbooks under review despite the absence of visuals in the Arabic book and novel. Analysis of visuals in English and French textbooks were carried out since “images are entirely within the realm of ideology, as means – always – for the emergence of ideological positions” (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 13). Hence, whether they were decorative or pedagogically useful, and despite the absence of images in the Arabic textbooks, we decided to review the photos in the English and French textbooks for their indispensable role in facilitating reading comprehension.

4.5 Characters as focus of analysis

In our quest to analyze women representation in school textbooks, we must observe the feminine and the masculine as cultural and social constructs present in the content, while revealing power dynamic to notice difference between males and females. In this section, we present the required steps to unravel the differences of sex representations and their distinctive attributes.

4.5.1. Characters in text

So what do we look for in a reading passage and pictures? And what are the tools required to explore the portrayal of women in textbooks? Upon examining any language textbooks, one can notice an abundance of characters, either fictional or real figures, to make the content more interesting and relevant to readers. Characters play an essential role in each story and provide learners with a relatable experience, in accordance with Reuter’s view that they allow actions, take them on, are subjected to them, link them together and give them meaning. We opted for focusing on characters situated in texts and pictures for their ability to indicate visibility or exclusion, and promote or demote stereotypes through their depicted social role or personality attributes. According to Reuters, “les personnages du roman n’existent pas dans notre univers et ne sont constructibles qu’en relation avec l’énoncé du texte...”). Elle invite – encore et toujours – à analyser univers, histoire et protagonistes, engendrés par les récits, au travers des signes linguistiques qui les constituent” (2016: 12). Hence, the characters designed throughout the textbooks indicate ideologies and power dynamics presented to learners.

In accordance with Brugeilles and Cromer, there are two types of characters in textbooks:

- Individual character representing an individual (for example: Peter, father, teacher, daughter...etc.).
- Collective character who may (or may not) be of different ages and sexes (for example: friends, students, family...etc.).

While examining individual characters might unravel portrayal of gender attributes, examining collective characters has another distinct role that is relevant to the scope of our research. As suggested by Brugeilles and Cromer, “[...] it also emphasizes the idea of sociability network, social group, even institution, as opposed to expressing individuality. It provides evidence of the character’s social inclusion, sometimes of shared socialization, and of sociability” (2009: 28).

However, before, examining characters we need to acknowledge the variations of their significance; not all characters have the same impact upon readers as they vary in their pedagogical functions throughout the textbook. As underpinned by Brugeilles and Cromer, Characters’ pedagogical function is divided as follows:

- Ordinary: occasionally appear to support the text in order to make it more attractive.

The following types have more significance and impact upon learners;

- Learning icon characters: could be human figures, animals or abstracts and are linked to a process of identification (appear in pictures only)
- Pilot characters: are recurring and accompany learners throughout the textbooks for guidance or reassurance. They have clear identity, name and a social role to identity to become familiar to the students. (appear in texts and photos)
- Substitute characters: reflect the student body or teachers and may vary throughout the textbooks. They directly interact with students for encouragement and support (in pictures only)
- Cultural references: are famous figures linked to historical contexts (may appear in text and pictures), (2009: 30).

To summarize, examining characters in the textbooks under review will provide us with a clear idea about the pedagogic significance of the characters presented, their role and attributes. Later, examining women figures, amongst these characters, will shed light on their representation in terms of their status, social role, personality attributes, future aspirations regarding career and sociability. Finally, it will highlight the position expected of women within the public sphere.

4.5.2. Characters in illustrations

The other section in our two-pronged approach to analyzing characters in textbooks focuses on characters who appear in pictures, whether they are ordinary, and substitute or pilot characters as explained above. The shift to pictures has gained wide recognition in English textbooks' analysis (Hurst 2014; Mitsikopoulou 2015; Romney 2012; Taylor-Mendes 2009), resulting in a shift away from rigorous grammatical and semantic content analysis to reveal gender-bias patterns (Giaschi 2000).

In order to discern how visual bias in the books, we also focused on characters in pictures and how they are portrayed. Given the variation of the picture and text link, characters are placed in two different sections throughout the data collection. In other words, characters will have various significances according to their type. Hence, they are documented accordingly into three sub-groups:

- Individual characters
- Collective characters (more than 4 people)
- Occupations depicted by characters

Similar to the variations between characters within the textual context, the same could be inferred from pictures. Individual or collective characters in pictures refer to whether characters are portrayed sharing same activity or acting out separately. The characters are considered collective when they exceed four individual characters as it become difficult to attend to each individual separately. Collective characters are groups of characters whose examination reveal patterns regarding frequency, visibility, indicate social inclusion and sharing public sphere. This distinction between individual and collective characters facilitates finding character-related information that serves the quest of the study.

4.6. Criteria of assessing characters in texts and pictures

A coding scheme was employed in this research in accordance with our view of content analysis as “the systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessarily from an author’s or user’s perspective” (Krippendorff 2004). In order to situate the social representation of the characters and their distinctive characteristics in the textbooks under review, we adopted a categories based on Brugeilles and Cromer’s (2009) criteria for individual and

collective characters in both pictures and in texts. Tables 4 and 5 demonstrate the detailed categories of characters' characteristics in both texts and pictures.

TABLE 2 : CODING SCHEME 1

The social characteristics of characters in pictures	
Sex	<p>For individual characters: Male /Female</p> <p>Collective characters: male characters only/female characters only/males dominate/ females dominate/ neither dominate/most characters ungendered</p>
Age	<p>For individual characters: adult/ adolescent/ child/unspecified</p> <p>collective characters: child characters only/adult characters only/adolescent characters only/child characters dominate/adolescent characters dominate/ adult characters dominate/ impossible to determine dominance</p>
Actions	Broad categories: Sports activity/leisure activity/ educational activity...etc.
Character's role	Pilot /Substitute/ ordinary
Character identified in text?	Yes/no. if yes: forename/surname/status/bond/ungendered name/generic name that indicates sex/generic noun

TABLE 3: CODING SCHEME 3

The social characteristics of characters in text	
Sex	Male/female/ungendered/Male collective/Female collective/ Ungendered collective/Grammatical masculine plural/Unspecified
Age	Child/ adult/ adolescent/ unspecified
Identified	Yes/no
If yes, type of identification	Forename/courtesy title/kinship bond/other bond/status

Character's role	Actor/ extra/ identifying character
actions	Broad categories: Sports activity/leisure activity/ educational activity...etc.
attributes	Objects/ possessions associated with the character(s)
Pilot character?	Yes/ no

As shown in the tables above, this approach of systematic coding and quantification of the characters in written and visual content help us in interpreting the referential illusion that each character represent.

4.6.1. Identifying characters' profiles in texts and illustrations:

By noticing sex and age of the characters, we lay out a global category of the character before we analyze how their attributes, actions and so forth. Later we further narrow down the analysis unto women representation within the context of the other characters presented in the textbooks.

4.6.1.1. Sex

Determining gender of characters in pictures and texts in the textbook is necessary to observe visibility and gender roles throughout the books. In coding characters in texts, we recorded sex as shown in table 1:

- Male/female;
- Unspecified;
- Male collective;
- Female collective;
- Ungendered collective;
- Grammatical masculine plural;

We use the code Unspecified if it is impossible to determine the gender ascribed to the character. It is important to note here that throughout the data collection part, gender is never

determined through deduction or intuition in order to avoid bias. In English texts, for example, a character can be identified through:

- The use of proper noun; forename, courtesy title (Mr, Mrs...etc); kinship bond (mother, father, daughter...etc.);

The use of a plural or of a generic term: the children, the family, the soldiers...etc. while observing the use of a gendered common noun or a pronoun preceding the character to determine gender: “*He* is a good doctor”.

As for Arabic and French languages, where the adjective agrees with the noun, we can clearly locate an indication of the character’s sex. In the case of French, there are some words that are generic feminine nouns that do not refer to females, such as *la classe* which does not necessarily refer to a class of female students.

In the case of plurality, we use the coding to describe the gender of collective individuals: (Male collective=*boys* /Female collective= *girls*/ Ungendered collective= *people*).

There are instances in Arabic and French where the plural refers to both genders, for example:

- *travailleurs* which refers to *travailleur et travailleuse*.

- [المسافرون تتضمن المسافرون و المسافرات] masculine plural form of Travelers refers to male and female travellers.

Hence, this form of plurality was separately coded as grammatical masculine plural for an accurate contextual gender determination.

In the case of coding characters’ sex in pictures, we differentiate between individual characters and collective characters as shown in *Table 5*. For individual characters, we code the characters as Male, Female or unspecified. As for collective characters, that are more than 4 characters, we code the sex according to its dominance in the picture to unravel general patterns of gender inclusion and interactions:

- male characters only;
- female characters only;
- /males dominate;
- females dominate;
- neither dominate;
- most characters ungendered

In summary, sex of characters is determined in both texts and illustrations as demonstrated above as a first step in data collection process, age is another aspect that contributes to the profile of characters in the textbooks under review.

4.6.1.2. Age

Ageism has been analyzed from several angles in other studies where the focus was on age stereotyping among other things. Several studies demonstrated the absence of adults from textbooks entirely or their marginalization in stereotypical roles when they do appear (Robinson 1994; Reese 1998; Holmes 2007). However, this is beyond the scope of this research so age is observed solely as an aspect of character's profile to examine their relatability to learners. Relatability is to "enable a person to feel that they can relate to someone or something" (Oxford dictionary 2022). The concept of relatability within the educational context adopted in this study is in accordance with Reynolds's assertion that "relatability refers to the ability of the participant, reader or viewer, to relate to the experiences or personality to the character in the book. In other words, it is the through shared experiences that the reader can connect to a character, they perceive themselves to share similarities on some level" (2010: 27).

Age is therefore under observation in the textbooks under review to examine the presence of teenage characters whom are relatable to the learners.

To code individual characters in both pictures and text, there are four categories:

- Adult
- Child
- Adolescent
- Age unspecified

As for the groups of characters in pictures, we implemented the concept of dominance applied in the sex category in order to highlight the majority of age present within the groups. Hence, seven codes are used in this section:

- Child characters only
- Adolescent characters only
- Adult characters only
- Child characters dominate

- Adolescent characters dominate
- Adult characters dominate
- None dominate to refer to a balanced presence of age groups
- Impossible to determine dominance to refer to the presence of unidentified age

After completing this step, the prevalent type of characters will be clear to us before we start further analysis. Next, we will use other codes to further elaborate the characters' occupation, social identity and nature of relationships between the characters. Apart from the quantitative aspect, some findings will be discerned through qualitative analysis to unravel women's occupations, status and position in the public and private sphere.

4.7. Second Part – questionnaires

As we have already explained above, one part of our research project is based on a quantitative approach. According to O'Leary, one of the benefits of the adopted quantitative approach in this study is to allow us to stay away from our object of study and the society we are part of in order to maintain a scientific objectivity (2017: 134). Primary data is collected through surveys; two online questionnaires are distributed across Egypt's governorates⁴³ to current secondary education students enrolled in state schools and secondary state schools teachers of languages: Arabic, English and French. Both questionnaires were distributed throughout the year 2020 between March and December.

As a resident in Cairo, the capital and largest city in the Arab world, the most challenging part was reaching subjects in other governorates throughout the country; as it is essential to include subjects from various geographic regions of the country to enrich our data and provide realistic analysis that could be generalized to the Egyptian population. My initial plan was to visit state schools in major governorates: Cairo, Alexandria, and Aswan in Upper Egypt to meet the administration and explain the purpose of the study; however, school and universities were closed by a presidential decree on March 14th, due to the increase of Corona virus cases increase ("COVID-19 Alert: Egypt closes Schools and Universities from March 15, 2020). Schools

⁴³ In terms of local administration, Egypt is divided into 29 governorates that are administered by a local governor. Some of Egypt's governorates are very densely populated, like Cairo, while others have small populations and large areas like New Valley or South Sinai. <https://www.thoughtco.com/governorates-of-egypt-1434577>

reopened in the new academic year – September 2020- June 2021 with a new hybrid education system of attendance that combines online and in-person attendance, however, secondary education remained online and visitors were not granted access to school premises. Consequently, we had to rely on online questionnaires to reach students and teachers in different governorates, which provided me with a wider range of sampling from various areas to generalize findings back to that population.

4.7.1. Students' questionnaire

The learners' questionnaire was the first to distribute via Google document over the span of two months: January to March, 2020. The students' questionnaire is designed to test the acceptance of representations analyzed in the textbook, in order to confirm their meaning and avoid the researcher's bias interpretation. In accordance with Breakwell (1993) recommendation in studying Social representations, it was essential to design the questionnaire with the support of concepts from Social Identity Theory that address power relations between different groups (in-group vs. out-group). Social Identity Theory emphasizes the effects of contact as a key moderator of intergroup attitudes – in our context males and females. When combined with concepts from Social Representations, the questionnaire elicits how women are represented within a society that places men and women in an in-group and out-group respectively. As explained in Chapter 3, Social Identity Theory as proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) is constructed upon three mental processes of evaluation of “us” or “them”, “in-group” and “out-group”. Interestingly, very little attention has been given to representation of women in a given society from a SIT perspective, however, in this study we examine women representation in academic language curricula, as a form of contact that plays a crucial role in intergroup attitudes in a gender segregated society.

4.7.2. Piloting and modification

Designing the questionnaire went through multiple phases, each requiring editing and changing concepts until we achieved the optimum final version. Prior to adopting Social Identity Theory as the backbone of the questionnaire, we had attempted to deploy a set of scales to illicit

students' perception of women representation in the language textbooks. Writing a well-focused questionnaire required several attempts. Several drafts were written; one version, for example, was designed to measure four concepts:

1. Relationship between languages and religions
2. Language teachers and gender awareness
3. Students' perception of language status in Egypt
4. Perception of female representation in language textbooks.

However, the concepts were unfocused and despite the narrowing down, the questionnaire was comprised of 80 close-ended questions that proved to be challenging for the respondents to finish. Furthermore, the concepts were not well related to the hypothesis although the intention was to link Islamic culture to the perception of women, which resulted in a fall in the bias trap. One of the concepts specifically focused on the relationship between students' perception of the relation between language and religion – in the Egyptian context: Islam and Christianity as a variable to perception of female representation. However, some questions were with socially desirable response “there is no problem with a Christian being an Arabic teacher in secondary school” Nevertheless, through this phase we were able to generate enough statements to select from the ones that we would finally use in the final version of the questionnaire.

4.7.3. Students' questionnaire final version

Having emphasized the importance of intra and inter-group process in shaping social representations in chapter 2, the final version of the questionnaire is providing us with cross section of the groups who promulgate the social representations and afford it a venue in which to be used.

This questionnaire was finalized and distributed in March 2020; it is composed of 22 questions that measure the following concepts:

1. The current status of women in their families.
2. Students' perception of traditional gender-roles.
3. Students' awareness of gender-bias in the Egyptian society.
4. Students' views on appropriate women's attire.
5. Students' perception of the importance of positive gender representation in current textbooks.

The questionnaire begins with an introduction that explains the purpose of the research, and a consent preamble. Also, anonymity is stated to promote self-disclosure and confidentiality of the respondents, in addition to the estimated time required to fill-out the questionnaire.

4.7.3.1.1. Respondents' general profile:

The first section of the questionnaire from question 1 to 4 has close-ended questions with *Yes, No, I don't know* or set options to choose from as they do not measure attitudes or beliefs, but rather elicit background information about the respondents.

1. What is your gender?
2. Which governorate do you live in?
3. What is the school system you are enrolled in? (public/ Islamic/ experimental)
4. What type is your school? (Segregated / co-ed)

This part of the questionnaire is composed of three questions to collect basic information about the respondents' gender and the schools they are enrolled in. The participants were not required to specify their age since the secondary school students' cohort is 15 -17. First question required gender specification, where we adopt the definition of gender as "the part of the self-concept that derives from membership category" (Gurin and Markus 1989:153). The choices provided were male or female as opposed to other more inclusive questionnaires that provide "other" as third option to allow more space for gender identification. However, given the context of the survey, it was essential to abide by the conservative religious norms of the Egyptian culture that only recognizes these two gender dichotomies (Henry H. 2020: 174). Therefore, male or female were the only two options provided for the participants to choose from. It was necessary to inquire about the gender in this study as it will help us determine whether the gender is an indicator of one of measured attitudes or perceptions.

In the second question, the participants mention the governorate they reside in to ensure a geographic variation of the sample in order to have a generalized finding. The third question requires the respondents to choose the type of school they go to and provides a range of options: public, experimental, Islamic in addition to "other" option with a space to specify the type of state school. This question allows us to detect the respondents' socioeconomic status to eliminate

disparities that could affect the results. The fourth question is about whether their schools are for boys only, girls only or co-ed. Specifying the type of school is a variable that could affect the inner/outer group attitude and perception of the opposite gender as suggested by Social Identity Theory.

4.7.3.2. The status of women in the students' families

In this section, we unravel students' current realities that could indicate their perception of women's role in the society. We start by examining the role of the women in their households and to what extent are their families adhering to traditional gender-roles.

5. Is your mother the main breadwinner of the family?

6. Is your mother or (the women in your house) responsible for daily household chores?

4.7.3.3. Students' perception of traditional gender-roles.

Starting question 7 the survey is based on a Likert scale to measure respondents' attitudes via 5- point phrasal responses: *strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree*. Despite the ongoing arguments on using even or odd numbered scales, we opted for the use of neutral point option to provide an option of indecision or neutrality, rather than forcing the respondents to commit to a certain position (Brown 2011: 10). Giving responders a neutral mid-point option may reduce the chance of response bias, or feel forced to have an opinion if they do not have one (Fernandez and Randall 1991).

In order to test the prevalence of social representations in the target community, we need to discover the convictions of learners regarding women's roles and responsibilities. Hence, questions 7 and 8 inquire about the responsibilities of domestic chores of females in their families, because according to Social Identity Theory, members of the out-group might activate attributes that are stereotypically associated with sex-role categories that could eventually become basis of self –judgment. Moreover, these concepts associated with these attributes could also affect the interpretation of other person's behavior and as well as judgments of these persons (Swan and

Wyer 1997:1266). Therefore, questions 7 to 14 provide us with an insight on inter-groups relationship (men and women) in terms of existing hierarchies and role division.

7. Women should be in charge of household chores even if they work.
8. The responsibilities of a man do not include domestic chores
9. I think marriage is more important for women than having a successful career path

This being the general idea, questions 8-9 are designed to examine students' views of women's responsibilities and conceptualizations of success (Afiouni and Karam 2013). The goal here is to assess to what extent are students' views are aligned with the traditional representation of women's aspirations. Metcalfe (2006), asserted that many working women in Middle Eastern societies are expected to quit their jobs after marriage, since achieving a work-life balance with a successful career, and a family is almost unattainable (Hutchings *et al.* 2012; Mehdizadeh 2011; Bianchi and Milkie 2010) as the socio-cultural norms (Metcalfe 2007; Omair 2008) dictates what is to be most suitable for women.

4.7.3.4. Students' perception of gender bias in the Egyptian society

10. Egyptian families encourage girls on an equal footing to attend scientific universities like boys
11. Do you think that girls must struggle to be equal to boys in all areas of life
12. I feel angry because there is a difference in judging the behavior of boys and girls if they do the same things.

13. Women must revolt against their current situation in Egyptian society

14. I think that women in Egypt are oppressed and men are responsible for this

The purpose of questions 10-14 is to determine if students (male and female) acknowledge a gender-bias in the society and to what extent they perceive women a subordinate group. Measuring the students' awareness of women's status in the society and their attitude towards social competition, provide us with an understanding of their perception of the women's status quo as a comparative variable to the textbook representations. Furthermore, assessing the subjects' perception of existing power hierarchies is pertinent to the representations (Breakwell 1993: 3).

4.7.3.5. Students' perception of gender segregation

Questions 15 and 16 measure the participants' attitude towards social mobility within the academic context between the two groups through inquiring about their opinion regarding co-education and how they perceive their parents', or guardians', opinions regarding co-education as well.

15. My parents will force me to drop out of school if the high school is coeducational.

16. Unmixed separation gives me the safety to study without being distracted by the opposite sex

4.7.3.6. Students' views on appropriate women's attire

17. Is the hijab (headscarf) mandatory in your school? (Girls Only)

18. Do you think the cover photo of the previous English book is a better representation of Egyptian girls in high school than the cover of the current book?

19. Do you consider pictures of girls in the textbook in short clothes that fit into our Egyptian culture?

Question 17 in this section is whether the veil – or the headscarf- is mandatory at the respondent’s school to assess the institution’s level of strictness to the Islamic dress code of female students. The Ministry does not enforce a certain dress code for students, however, in 1994, the Egyptian government revised school uniform legislation to forbid girls under the age of 12 from covering their hair at academic institutions. Nevertheless, the law had serious repercussions, divisive debates and accusations that the decision was un-Islamic. The Supreme Court ruled the ban unconstitutional in 1996 leaving this matter in the hands of school administrations (Arafa 2017). Questions 18 and 19 examine students’ views on the hijab as a mandatory attire for Egyptian women. The purpose of these two questions is to determine to what extent is the head scarf an established representation that is difficult to challenge.

4.7.3.7. Students’ perception of the importance of positive gender representation in current textbooks

20. Do you think the curriculum should teach students the role of men and women in society?

21. Does the display of pictures of Egyptian women scientists in textbooks encourage girls to specialize in science?

22. Do you think portraying examples of contemporary Egyptian women in the textbook will empower girls in our society?

In this section the students’ awareness of women’s’ representation in language textbook is measured in 3 questions. Question 20 measures students’ perception of the role of school textbooks with regards to gender equality. While questions 21 and 22 focus on students’ opinions regarding the role of textbooks in encouraging women to study science and in their overall empowerment. This section will unravel how students perceive the role of textbooks, which will help us identify the impact of social representations in these textbooks.

4.8. Teachers' questionnaire

Teachers' questionnaire consists of 32 questions divided into 6 themes and 1 open-ended question at the end to illicit teacher's recommendations to improve women's representation in language textbooks.

1. Teacher's perception of gender segregation
2. Teachers' perception of appropriate women attire
3. Teachers' perception of gender equality issues
4. Teachers' perception of student-teacher interpersonal relations
5. Teachers' perception of their influence on students
6. Teachers' perception of the impact of textbook representation on students

The purpose of first 3 themes (Teacher's perception of gender segregation/ ...appropriate women attire/ ...necessity of gender equality) is to measure the extent of alignment between teachers' perception of social representations of women in the textbooks under review. The other 3 themes (Teachers' perception of student-teacher interpersonal relations/ ...their influence on students/ ...impact of textbooks representation on students) would help us understand the extent of the teachers' contribution in providing counter-stereotypes to SRs present in the textbooks. In accordance with Sunderland *et al.* (1997), teachers contribute in perpetuating gender (in)equality as they may manipulate gendered roles present in the texts. Similarly, Bonkowski (1995) argued that language teachers might even subvert textbook authors' intentions, interpreting those intentions through their own models of gender perception (Alderson *et al.* 1997: 12). Yet, the effect of teachers' views on gender is scarcely mentioned in research on gender representation in textbooks. Although this part might not be relevant to our immediate investigation on SRs in textbooks, yet we find it necessary step that will guide our pedagogical recommendations.

4.8.1. Design properties

The first section of the questionnaire, from question 1 to 8, has close-ended questions with predetermined options to choose from to elicit background information about the respondents.

4.8.1.1. Respondents' profile

1. What is your gender?

2. What age group do you belong to?
3. What kind of school do you work for?
4. What type of school do you work for?
5. What governorate do you work in?
6. Please specify the subject you are teaching now
7. Do you teach religious education besides language classes?
8. If yes, please select the religion you are teaching

In this section, the first two questions provide demographic information of teachers. The third and fourth questions sort the types of schools' systems (experimental/ public/ Islamic) and (Girls only/ Boys only/ Co-ed).

Since it is common for language teachers to teach religion besides their main subject, we found question 7 relevant to the questionnaire.

4.8.1.2. Teacher's perception of gender segregation

Starting question 9, the answers are based on a Likert scale to measure respondents' attitudes via 5 point phrasal responses: *strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.*

9. Do you think that not mixing in high schools is better to promote chastity and respect between the sexes?

Despite the fact that gender-segregation is normalized in Egypt, it was necessary to understand if it is represented as a necessity.

4.8.1.3. Teachers' perception of appropriate women attire

10. Are the pictures of girls wearing shorts in the textbook compatible with our Egyptian culture?

11. Is it better for women to appear in hijab in secondary textbooks?
12. Does the presence of images of foreign students in foreign language books encourage Egyptian students to imitate behaviors that do not fit with our Egyptian culture?

Three different questions are designed to measure teachers' views on appropriate women's attire represented in the textbooks under review with attached pictures.

4.8.1.4. Teachers' perception of gender equality concepts

13. Is a woman responsible for all household chores even if she has a job?
14. To what extent do you agree that a girl's obedience and politeness are more important than her academic achievements?
15. It is best to remind students that cooking and household chores are their main responsibilities.
16. Do you think it is the nature of girls to outperform boys in learning languages?
17. Do you think that it is in the nature of boys to surpass girls in science and mathematics?
18. Do you think that equal proportions between girls and boys in enrollment in education are a sign of gender equality in Egyptian society?

Questions 13 and 14 are measuring teachers' perception of traditional gender-roles represented in the textbooks. As for questions 16, 17 and 18, they are designed to assess teachers' perception of features of gender equality within the Egyptian context. Their answers will be compared to similar representations in the textbooks for further insight.

4.8.1.5. Teachers' perception of student-teacher interpersonal relations

19. What is the average number of students in the classes in which you study?
20. Do students respect language teachers?
21. Do you feel appreciated and appreciated by your pupils?
22. Do students reveal their personal problems with you?

Questions 19-27 explore the type of relationships students have with their teachers. This section will help us to understand teachers' ability of playing active role in empowering female students.

4.8.1.6. Teachers' perception of their influence on students

23. Do you think the school environment shapes the identity of students?
24. To what extent do you agree that the empowerment of girls is the role of the family, not the role of the school?
25. How many times have you encouraged students to reflect on gender equality and gender issues in Egyptian society?
26. To what extent do you agree that the teacher should not address the issues of the equality of Egyptian women unless the curriculum requires this?
27. Do you address the women agency in society only when it is appropriate for the content of the lesson?

This section underscores teachers' perception of the importance of women representation in textbooks and their effect on students. By exploring this area, we will understand the teachers' initiatives in going beyond the text to tackle gender –equality and women empowerment issues.

4.8.1.7. Teachers' perception of the impact of textbook representation on students

28. Do you think that the presence of models of Egyptian women scientists in language books encourages girls to specialize in science?

29. Do you think including successful and contemporary Egyptian female role models in textbooks enhance girls' confidence in their abilities?

30. To what extent do you agree that the curriculum you teach focuses on male accomplishments throughout history?

31. To what extent do you agree that the curriculum you study is based on masculine heroism throughout history?

Finally, questions 28 to 32 are designed to explore teachers' understanding of the importance of representations. Their answers will supplement their views in the previous section.

32. What would you like to modify in the portrayal of gender roles in your curriculum?

Finally, the answers to this open-ended question will be analyzed using the software Nvivo to explore themes or patterns to further structure the pedagogic implications section in our study.

4.8.2. Sampling

The target group in this study is divided into two sub-groups: teachers and students to assess to what extent the women representations in the textbooks are accepted. The sample

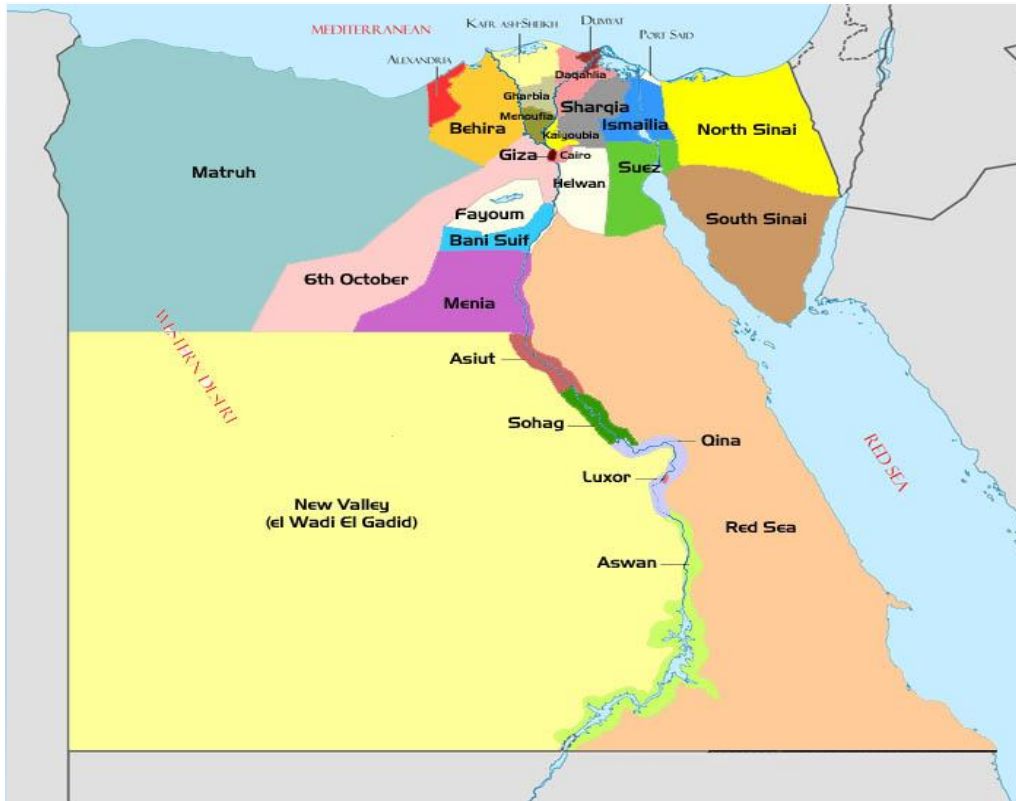
includes 464 secondary school students and 225 secondary school language teachers: Arabic, English and French.

4.8.2.1. Sampling procedure

A large number of participants was recruited to minimize sampling error (Creswell 2017: 145). Since the questionnaires were distributed online, we relied on personal connections or gatekeepers, like for instance, teachers who agreed to answer the questionnaire and forward them to their students. Consequently, we gained access to participants who would forward the questionnaire to their peers creating a chain-referral sampling.

This sample-technique, however, did not compromise the characteristic of the recruited subjects as the criteria of the eligible participants were mentioned in the questionnaires as a prerequisite to start the questions. Hence, we ensured a realistic representation of the target population and reached participants in 14 governorates of the 26 in Egypt as shown in Figure 2. As noted by Ramage et al. Egypt has a challenging urban division, “the arid country consists almost entirely of desert 97% of the population live in the Nile Valley and Delta, which make up only 5 % of Egypt’s territory” (2019). Although we did not recruit subjects from each governorate, yet we were successful in including a sample from several Northern and Southern governorates.

FIGURE 3: MAP OF EGYPT'S GOVERNORATES



Adapted from “Egypt to create 5 new governorates to push decentralization,” 2012, *Ahram Online*.

a. students sample

The subjects are current secondary school students (366) females, and (98) males who are enrolled in public schools. Their age ranges between (15) to (17) years old, and they reside in different governorates all over Egypt. Students were recruited from (14) governorates across Egypt: Cairo, Alexandria, Fayoum, Bani Suif, Daqahlia, Dumyat, Giza, Kalubiya, Menia, North Sinai, Sharqia, Red Sea, Qina, and Ismailia.

3) Secondary school language teachers sample

All teachers recruited for this study are currently working in public secondary school with a total of (225) teachers. Arabic teachers (61), English teachers (41), and French teachers (117)

who reside in (21) governates: Giza, Sharqiya, Cairo, Fayoum, Qina, Daqahlia, Kafr AlSheikh, Menoufeya, Behira, Alexandria, Qalubiya, Luxor, Ismailia, Dumyat, Asiut, Sohag, Bani Suif, Menia, Aswan, Gharbia, and New Valley (El Wadi El Gadid).

4.8.3. **Ethics**

The underlying argument of many research ethics committees and guidelines is the idea that ethical conduct can be standardized and risk can be predicted; however, these presumptions are inaccurate and intricate due to the disregard of the everyday decision-making in the unpredictable moments in the thick of conducting research (Mauthner 2012; Markham 2015; Markham and Buchanan 2015). An approach that reimagines ethical decision-making as a conscious process that facilitates enacting beneficence, justice, and respect for persons on a case-by-case basis is rather more realistic than a universal, a contextual ethical norm to ensure research integrity (Markham and Buchanan 2015: 8). These arguments proved their accuracy during the pandemic due to the global changes that affected conducting studies and experiments that required human interaction. In this specific situation, data collection relied on online platforms that resulted in different ethical challenges than those of the on-ground or face-to-face experiments.

This study required measures adopted from internet research ethics as we faced the same challenges in internet-based research namely: “the absence of a researcher, uncertainty regarding adequate informed consent and debriefing, and potential loss of participant anonymity or confidentiality” (Nosek *et al.* 2002: 2). The lack of face-to face interaction with the participants, however, contributed with valuable benefit in our study as it removed the coercion factor resulting from an unbalanced power between the researcher and the students. In terms of participants’ treatment, internet-based questionnaires created a safe space for students to respond with their own will.

Furthermore, consent is one of the positive outcomes of our online interaction with subjects as it ensured voluntary participation. According to Denscombe and Aubrook (1992: 127), ethical standard practice for research should rely on voluntary responses to research questions because of two explicit advantages. Firstly, willing co-operation with the researcher is one obvious outcome that suggests the responses will be given in a spirit of honest co-operation in good faith. In turn, this provided the right setting to elicit authentic and truthful answers Secondly, the voluntary response assures the idea of consent on the part of the respondent to being part of the research. It

entails some explicit agreement to participate in the research, a participation which can be discontinued at any point if the respondent so wishes. This reassured my position, as a researcher, on the ethical question of the use of students and teachers to voluntarily supply information that will go on the record for research purpose.

Since the student body sample consists of secondary level students, we believe sending the questionnaires via online links had better ethical gains as, according to Denscombe and Aubrook “in the school context, there exists a form of institutional coercion in the sense that the context is inscribed by differential power relations” (1992: 128). Nevertheless, consent of the teachers was mandatory before contacting the students where the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was stressed to the subjects that completing the questionnaires was a voluntary exercise.
- ii. The questionnaires were anonymous and did not allow individual students/teachers to be identified. The information collected could not be traced back to an individual student.
- iii. Assurances of confidentiality were provided. Neither individuals nor schools would be mentioned.

Moreover, we took into consideration that a meaningful consent has to be “informed” (*Ibid.*: 127). The teachers and students were given clear instructions of the academic purpose of the research, the nature of their contribution to the data and the form in which the information will be to provide them with enough information to judge whether they wish to participate. Debriefing, however, was one of the main challenges we faced due to the lack of physical interaction, so my e-mail address was provided along with the instructions should there be questions or concerns about the study. Also, my phone number was provided for texting, which was more concise and instantaneous for the subjects.

Lastly, privacy was handled differently as an internet research compared to standard traditional paradigms. The students and teachers’ questionnaires did not require identifying personal information from participants, hence guaranteeing anonymity even more effectively than standard face-to-face research. In other words, IP address is the only unit of information that could be used to track a participant; however, IP address trace machines not individuals. Additionally, according to Nosek *et al.* “most internet service providers use floating IP addresses, which identify a particular machine only for the course of a single session. For users who connect to the Internet

through such providers, the IP address will change each time they log on” (2002 165). The answered questionnaires were stored in my personal Google Drive that according to Google’s Drive terms of Service, cannot be turned into a public one, nor could the data be used for commercial purposes, and will be destroyed once the forms are deleted (Google Drive Help 2020).

Nevertheless, the issue of privacy should be defined based on the subjects’ expectations and by taking into account the participants expectation of who their audiences are, instead of just relying on their technical settings or some preconceived ideas about the internet (Nissenbaum 2004; McKee and Porter 2009; Nissenbaum 2010; Warrell and Jacobsen 2014). The subjects in this study did not provide any personal information, nor were they concerned about the content of their answers as long as they did not mention the schools’ name, which they were granted. Additionally, google forms were used as the questionnaire tool due its popularity amongst student and educators in Egypt as opposed to other survey tools. Therefore, using a familiar tool was an important factor to build trust within an online culture who have localized standards of trustworthiness (Tiidenberg 2020).

Chapter V. Data Processing

Introduction

In our pursuit of analyzing women representation across the language textbooks under review, we are compelled to start with a general scope regarding the characters presented in these books. Who are these characters inhabiting the textbooks under review? How are they portrayed and what is their contribution in the textbook? Also, what is their pedagogical significance to learners? Answering these questions will allow us to underpin the overall role of all characters regardless of their gender. Later, we narrow down our focus to female characters and their attributes.

5.1. Textbooks' profiles

In this section, we present textbooks' identification profiles to show gender of authors, the visibility of women in chapters' titles before we proceed to character analysis.

5.1.1. Textbooks' authors

TABLE 4: TEXTBOOKS' AUTHORS

Textbook	Author
Arabic textbook, <i>The Arabic Language</i> [هيا للإبداع] Term 1	Prof. Mohamed Hamasa Abdel Latif <i>et al.</i>
Arabic textbook, <i>The Arabic Language</i> [هيا للإبداع]	Same authors

Term 2	
English textbooks, Hello! English for Secondary School,	Simon Haines and Don Dallas
French textbook, <i>Club @dos plus 3</i>	Gaelle Delannoy

As seen in the table above, the English (ENG1) and Arabic textbooks (ARA1), (ARA2) are written solely by male authors. The French textbook (FRA1), on the other hand, is written by a female author. After examining sexism and gender stereotyping in each textbook, it will be clear if the authors' gender is a factor in determining a gender-balanced content.

5.1.2. Women visibility in chapters' titles

The first step in examining how the authors positioned women in the textbooks under review is to examine the chapter's theme. Are the themes ungendered or gendered? The answer to this question will reveal the first glimpse of women's visibility in the content and what topics are they associated with.

TABLE 5: WOMEN VISIBILITY IN CHAPTERS' TITLES IN ENG1

Chapter	Title	Is gender detected in title?	If yes, specify
1	Reach for the stars	No	
2	Anthony Hope: The Prisoner of Zenda	Yes	Male
3	Energy	No	

4	Writers and Stories	No	
5	Agatha Christie: No or M?	Yes	Female
6	The importance of trees	No	
7	Building and Engineering	No	
8	Robert Lois Stevenson: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde	Yes	Male
9	The power of nature	No	
10	Science and Scientists	No	
11	Alexandre Dumas: The Count of Monte Cristo	Yes	Male
12	Festivals and folk music	No	
13	Women in history	Yes	Female
14	Graham Greene: Travels with my aunt	Yes	Male/ Female
15	The future of books	No	
16	Finding work	No	
17	John Steinbeck: The Pearl	Yes	Male
18	Lifelong learning	No.	

The data reveals well-balanced gender visibility in book chapters. First of all, gender is visible in 50% of the total number of chapters, which is an adequate balance. In fact, female figures are visible = 50%, and like male figures are also visible = 50%.

TABLE 6: WOMEN VISIBILITY IN CHAPTERS' TITLES IN FRA1

Chapter	Title	Is gender detected in title?	If yes, specify
1	Le club des sportifs [The sports club]	No	
2	Le club des gourmands [The gourmet club]	No	

3	Le club des explorateurs [The explorers' club]	No	Male
4	Le club de voyageurs [The travellers' club]	No	Male

The titles of the four chapters in FRA1 do not demonstrate gender bias. While *explorateurs* in chapter 3 is a masculine noun. Similarly, the noun *voyageurs* in Chapter 4, is a masculine form yet they both refer to male and female. For example, *voyageurs* in this context means “*Personne qui fait un trajet en empruntant un moyen de transport en commun* [Person making a journey by public transport]⁴⁴” (Larousse 2022). Therefore, we can argue that these titles are gender inclusive despite their masculine form.

TABLE 7: WOMEN VISIBILITY IN CHAPTERS' TITLES IN ARA1

Chapter	Title	Is gender detected in title?	If yes, specify
1	مكارم الأخلاق و حاتم الطائي [High morals and Hatim Al Tai]	Yes	Male
2	شباب تسامى للعلا (شعر) للسموأل [Sublime youth (Poem by Samaw'al)]	Yes	Male
3	قيم الحياة الزوجية (نثر) لأمامة بنت الحارس [The values of marriage (Prose by Emama bint Al Hareth)]	Yes	Female
4	قيم اجتماعية (قراءة) شوقي ضيف [Social values (Reading by Shawqi Day)]	Yes	Male
5	العفو المأمول (شعر) كعب بن زهير	Yes	Male

⁴⁴ Our translation.

	[Hoped for amnesty (Poem by ka'ab ibn Zuheir)		
6	من أجل حياة كريمة (نص قرآني) [For a dignified life (Quranic text)]	No	
7	تكنولوجيا المعلومات (قراءة) د. نبيل علي [Information technology (Reading by Dr. Nabil Ali)]	Yes	Male
8	ابدأ بنفسك (شعر) أبو الأسود الدؤلي [Start with yourself (Poem by Abul Aswad Al Duwali)]	Yes	Male
9	آداب صناعة الكتاب (نثر) عبد الحميد بن يحيى الكاتب [The ethics of the writing industry (Prose by Andel Hamid bin Yahya Al Katib)]	Yes	Male

As shown in the table, 33, 89% of the chapter titles are gendered; dominance of male titles = 78%, while females were only visible = 11% of the total number of chapters. The one time there is female presence in the chapter, the title is *The Values of the Marriage*, which represents women to kinship roles only. Furthermore, chapter seven's title should have included a female figure, Dr. Nadia Hijazai, since she is the co-author of the renowned book from which the text is taken. However, her name is omitted.

TABLE 8: WOMEN VISIBILITY IN CHAPTERS' TITLES IN ARA2

Chapter	Title	Is gender detected in title?	If yes, specify
1	العمل التطوعي (قراءة) [The volunteer work (Reading)]	No	
2	البيت وطن (شعر) ابن الرومي	Yes	Male

	A house is a home (Poem by Ibn Al Rumi)]		
3	مصر مطلع البدر (نثر) العماد الأصفهاني [Egypt is the beginning of all moons (Prose by Al Asfahani)]	Yes	Male
4	وصية إلى ولدي (قراءة) المنفلوطي [A commandment for my son (Reading) Al Manfelouti]	Yes	Male
5	مصر تتحدث عن نفسها (شعر) حافظ إبراهيم [Egypt speaks for itself (Poem by Hafez Ibrahim)]	Yes	Male
6	حرية الذين يعلمون (قراءة) د. زكي نجيب محمود [Freedom of those who know (Reading – Dr. Zaki Naguib Mahmoud)]	Yes	Male
7	بإسم الشهداء (شعر) فاروق شوشة [In the name of the martyrs (Poem by Farouk Shousha)]	Yes	Male
8	من سمات الشخصية المصرية د. سليمان حزين [The features of the Egyptian character – Dr.Suleiman Hazin)]	Yes	Male

Only one chapter out of the eight chapter is ungendered. Moreover, none of the chapters in ARA2 have a female themed title or author, on the other hand seven out of these chapters are male themed titles.

5.2. Number of characters in textbooks

Upon examining the content of the four language textbooks, we found a great many characters that we divided into collective and individual characters: 281 collective and individual characters in reading texts and 751 collective and individual characters in pictures. The number of characters varied considerably from one textbook to another.

The English language textbook, ENG1 has the highest number of characters in texts that make 30.59 % of the total characters in our data, while the French language textbook, FRA1 has the lowest percentage = 7.47%. Also, ENG1 has the highest number of characters in pictures which is 40.08% of the total number of characters under review, while the two Arabic language textbooks ARA1 and ARA2 scored an equal low percentage that constitutes 13.98% in each book.

TABLE 9: TOTAL OF INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE CHARACTERS IN TEXT

	Total	%
ARA1	79	28.11
ARA2	81	28.83
ENG1	100	35.59
FRA1	21	7.47
Total no. of characters	281	

TABLE 12: DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP CHARACTERS IN TEXT, BY TEXTBOOK

	Total numbers	%	Average number of characters per lesson
ENG1	100	35.58	4.16
ARA1	79	28.11	19.75
ARA2	81	28.82	20.25
FRA1	21	7.47	5.25
Total	281	100	-

5.2.1. Individual characters and collective characters

Across the textbooks under review, we counted 281 individual characters and collective characters in the reading texts, with 470 individual characters and collective characters in pictures. Overall, individual characters contributed with 49.47 % of the total number of characters in texts, whereas they were dominant in pictures across the textbooks forming 91.70% of the total number of characters in pictures. This noticeable dominance of individual characters compels us to scrutinize how the portrayal of women amongst these characters.

TABLE 10: PROPORTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS AND COLLECTIVE CHARACTERS IN TEXTS, BY TEXTBOOK (%)

	ENG1	FRA1	ARA1	ARA2
Individual characters	51.00	71.43	41.77	49.38
Collective characters	49.00	28.57	58.23	50.61
Total	100	100	100	100
Total number	100	21	79	81

TABLE 11: PROPORTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE CHARACTERS IN PICTURES, BY TEXTBOOK (%)

	ENG1	FRA1	ARA1	ARA2
Individual characters	96.02	93.15	76.92	58.33

Collective characters	3.98	6.85	23.08	41.66
Total	100	100	100	100
Total number	201	219	26	24

Table 11 demonstrates the significant higher presence of individual characters in pictures across the textbooks under review in comparison to collective characters. Despite the prevalence of individual characters in pictures and texts, examining other types of characters is also essential as they reveal group dynamics and sharing public space. Also, collective characters unravel underlying gender dominance and women frequency. Similarly, individual characters are analyzed for the significant role they play in direct representation to the learners.

5.3. Gender and age of characters

After outlining the types of existing characters and grouping them into individual and collective with their respective significance and dominance, now we ought to further examine these characters. Who are these characters and how old are they? As a preliminary step to identifying characters we start by identifying their age and sex.

5.3.1. Age

TABLE 12: AGE OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN TEXTS, BY TEXTBOOK (%)

	ENG1	FRA1	ARA1	ARA2
Child	1.96	0	0	10.26
Adult	88.24	20	75.76	69.23
adolescent	0.00	80.00	6.06	0.00
unspecified	9.80	0.00	18.18	20.51
Total	100	100	100	100

Total numbers	51	15	33	39
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Across the textbooks, there is a significance dominance of adults with 72.6% making it the majority of characters portrayed in texts. The remaining ages vary in percentages yet within the same range: unspecified 13.7%, 10% adolescents and 3.6% child. We should note here, as shown in table 5, FRA1 has the highest percentage of adolescent characters of 80.0% of the over characters present in that book. On the other hand, ENG1 has the highest number of adult characters in 88.24% of the total amount of characters present in that book.

TABLE 13: AGE OF COLLECTIVE CHARACTERS IN TEXT, BY TEXTBOOK (%)

	ENG	FRA1	ARA1	ARA2
Adult	42.86	16.67	34.78	51.22
Adolescents	6.12	50	8.70	7.32
Child	6.12	16.67	8.70	4.88
Unspecified	44.90	16.67	47.83	36.59
Total	100	100	100	100
Total numbers	49	6	46	41

There is a salient difference between the percentage of unspecified collective individuals in pictures and texts. In text, the age of collective characters in texts is mostly unspecified or adults: 42.25 %, and the adults form 41.55%. Adolescent collective characters are only 9.15% followed by children at 7.04%.

To summarize, both individual and collective characters are present in each chapter throughout the textbooks. The age of characters varied across the textbooks, nevertheless, adolescents form the majority of individual characters in pictures, while adults form the majority of individual characters in texts. Children and individuals with unspecified age do not contribute to high percentages.

As for the collective characters, adults are in the majority of pictures in the textbooks, whereas the majority of group characters in texts are either unspecified age or also adults. Having established the dominance of adults and adolescents in individual characters, on one hand, adult and unspecified age group characters on the other hand, we need to specify their gender to underpin the dominant type of characters across the textbooks.

5.3.2. Gender

In the texts that were analyzed, we identified and quantified the frequency of individual characters and organized them into tables based on their gender categorization, which includes male, female, and unspecified or ungendered characters. This methodology allowed us to gain insights into the representation of gender in the texts and identify any potential biases or patterns.

Characters such as "son" and "man" in Chapter 11 (ENG1 69) were classified as male and recorded in the corresponding column of our table. Other characters were identified by their first or last name, such as "Henry" in Chapter 14 (ENG1 88).

Similarly, characters such as "wife" in Chapter 17 (ENG1: 49) were categorized as female and recorded in the corresponding column of our table. Characters with specified names, such as "Julie" in Chapter 2 (FRA1: 49), were also classified as female.

Finally, there were characters who were ungendered, such as "beggar" and "family member" in Chapter 1 (ARA1:4). We recorded these characters in the ungendered category of our table.

TABLE 14: GENDER OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN TEXT, BY TEXTBOOK (%)

	ENG1	FRA1	ARA1	ARA2
Male	54.90	46.67	60.61	90
Female	27.45	53.33	24.24	0
Ungendered	17.65	0	15.15	10
Total	100	100	100	100

Total numbers	51	15	33	40
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Upon examining the texts across the textbooks under review, we find that male individual characters (65.24%) are more dominant than female (21.58%) and ungendered characters (12.95%). Similarly, individual male characters (58.24%) were also dominant across the pictures in comparison to female (38.9 %) and ungendered characters (2.8%).

ARA1 and ARA2 show the highest gender imbalance in their texts as the dominance of male characters is 60.61% and 90% respectively, whereas the presence of female is only 24.24 % and 0%. ENG1 also demonstrated Male dominance with 54.50 % versus 27.45% for females. Evidently, FRA1 is the most gender balanced textbook, where individual female characters are even more prevalent than males: 3.3% versus 46.67%.

In addition to individual characters, we also applied the same procedure to collective characters in the texts. We identified and categorized groups of characters based on their gender. We recorded the frequency of these collective characters in the corresponding gender columns of our table. This allowed us to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the gender representation in the texts and identify any potential biases or patterns within groups of characters.

TABLE 15: GENDER OF COLLECTIVE CHARACTERS IN TEXT, BY TEXTBOOK (%)

	ENG1	FRA1	ARA1	ARA2
Male collective	0	16.67	21.74	19.51
Female collective	4.08	0	4.35	2.44
Ungendered collective	95.92	83.33	63.04	51.22
Grammatical Masculine plural that includes F (M/F)	0	0	10.87	26.83
Total	100	100	100	100
Total numbers	49	1	46	41

The presence of collective female characters in texts is not as rare as it is in pictures, despite the low percentage. In ENG1, for example, the majority of plurals are ungendered collectives, whereas the females contribute with 4.08% and 0% males. AR1 and ARA2 display low percentages of collective female appearance 4.35% and 2.44% respectively, whereas the percentages of ungendered collective are high 63.04% and 51.22% respectively. The dominance of male characters in text is due to the existence of collective male characters (21.74% - 19.51%) in addition to grammatical masculine plural that includes Females (10.87% - 26.83%). Finally, FRA1 did not demonstrate the highest number of female presence like in the previous scenarios, in fact, it had 0% female collective and 16.67% for male collective, while 83.33% of ungendered collective.

Words referring to unspecified gender, such as “*les français* [the French]” in FRA1, Chapter 2 (34) were counted and recorded as ungendered collective characters, while masculine forms, such as *Amis* [friends] that referred to a group of male characters in Chapter 2, FRA1 (23) were recorded in male collective characters column. Similarly, words referring to female collective characters, such as “*الفتيات* [girls]” in ARA1, Chapter 2 (10) were also counted and recorded in the designated column.

In the case of words that refer are in the masculine plural form, yet refer to female characters were counted and recorded in the Grammatical Masculine plural that includes F (M/F) column “*مكرهون*..[Forced people]” in ARA1, Chapter 2 (31) is an example of words that end with the masculine plural marker (ون), yet it refers to men and women. In that case these types of words were recorded and included in the designated column.

This preliminary section of analysis unraveled several findings that could be summarized as follows: the low frequency of females relative to high frequency of males. Moreover, in French and Arabic language textbooks, the use of the grammatical masculine plural that includes females was relative, highlighting the scarcity of feminine plurals in the texts. Furthermore, the use of adults and adolescents was more prevalent compared to the presence of children, which is aligned with the norm of other secondary level textbooks.

Finally, the four textbooks varied in their gender-imbalance where the two Arabic textbooks, ARA1 and ARA2 had the highest rate, followed by ENG1 then FRA1 at the bottom making it the most balanced in terms of the gender frequency and age relatability aspects.

5.4. Characters in text

5.4.1. Characters' profile: Gender and age

In this section we combine two variables, age and sex, in order to discern the stereotypical favored characters provided by authors of these textbooks. Those characters are selected by authors to transmit knowledge to learners and to engage students' interest in the text. So what are the effective criteria of characters that the authors chose to present influential characters to learners? What are the favored repetitive character criteria in each Egyptian secondary textbook?

TABLE 16: DISTRIBUTION OF CHARACTERS MENTIONED IN TEXTS, BY SEX AND AGE (%)

Individual Male Characters	%	Collective Male Characters	%
Adults	51.02	Adults	0
Children	2.04	Children	2.22
Adolescent	0	Adolescent	0
Age unspecified	0	Age unspecified	0
Individual Female Characters		Collective Female Characters	
Adults	26.53	Adults	0
Children	0	Children	0
Adolescent	0	Adolescent	2.22
Age unspecified	0	Age unspecified	0
Individual Ungendered Characters		Collective ungendered Characters	
Adults	8.16	Adults	46.67
Children	0	Children	4.44
Adolescents	0	Adolescents	2.22
Age Unspecified	12.24	Age Unspecified	42.22
Total	100	Total	100
Total number	49		45

The favored individual character in textbook ENG1 is the male adult character, accounting for 51.02% of all individual characters in the textbook. In contrast, individual female adult characters represent only 26.53%, which is half the number of male adult characters. As for collective characters, ungendered adult characters are 46.67%, and the ungendered characters with unspecified age constitute 42.22%. None of the collective characters included adult females or adult males. Finally, adolescents form 2.22% of collective characters with unspecified age, and an equal percent of 2.22% in collective female characters.

TABLE 17: DISTRIBUTION OF CHARACTERS MENTIONED IN TEXTS, BY SEX AND AGE (%).

Individual Male Characters	%	Collective Male Characters	%
Adults	6.67	Adults	0
Children	0	Children	0
Adolescent	40.0	Adolescents	0
Age unspecified	0	Age Unspecified	0
Individual Female Characters		Collective Female Characters	
Adults	13.33	Adults	0
Children	0	Children	0
Adolescent	40.0	Adolescents	0
Age unspecified	0	Age Unspecified	0
Individual Ungendered Characters		Collective Ungendered Characters	
Adults	0	Adults	100.0
Children	0	Children	0
Adolescents	0	Adolescent	0
Age Unspecified	0	Age Unspecified	0
Total	100	Total	100
Total number	15	Total Number	1

FRA1 presents female figures in two different forms: individual female adults= 13.33% and individual female adolescents = 40.0% of all total individual characters. Individual adult male characters, on the other hand, are only 6.67%, yet adolescent male figures are the same as the female adolescent characters = 40%.

Meanwhile, ungendered collective adults are the only type of collective characters available in the textbook. Clearly, FRA1 favors representations of ungendered groups of people over male and female representations. Furthermore, while adolescent is the common type of individual characters, adults are the only type of collective characters. Similar to ENG1, there are no child characters, which is in accordance with the education level of learners.

TABLE 18: ARA1 DISTRIBUTION OF CHARACTERS MENTIONED IN TEXTS, BY SEX AND AGE (%)

Individual Male Characters	%	Collective Male Characters	%
Adults	47.22	Adults	11.63
Children	0	Children	2.33
Adolescent	2.78	Adolescents	0
Age unspecified	5.56	Age Unspecified	5.41
Individual Female Characters		Collective Female Characters	
Adults	19.44	Adults	6.98
Children	0	Children	0
Adolescent	0	Adolescents	0
Age unspecified	0	Age Unspecified	0
Individual Ungendered Characters		Collective Ungendered Characters	
Adults	2.78	Adults	18.6
Children	0	Children	4.65
Adolescents	0	Adolescent	9.3
Age Unspecified	8.33	Age Unspecified	37.21
Masculine Grammatical Form that Includes F (M/F)		Masculine Plural that Includes F (M/F)	
Adults	5.56	Adults	0
Children	0	Children	0
Adolescent	2.78	Adolescents	0
Age Unspecified	5.56	Age Unspecified	0
Total	100	Total	100
Total number	36	Total Number	43

In ARA1, individual adult male characters = 47.22%, while individual adult female characters=19.44%. This means that adult males are more than double the number of adult females throughout the textbook. Moreover, Individual adolescents were only scarcely present in masculine grammatical form that includes Females = 2.78.

Furthermore, ungendered adult characters are the common type of collective characters in the book: 18.6%. Also, collective male adult characters are almost double the number of female adult collective characters = 11.63% - 6.9%.

TABLE 19: ARA2 -DISTRIBUTION OF CHARACTERS MENTIONED IN TEXTS, BY SEX AND AGE (%).

Individual Male Characters	%	Collective Male Characters	%
Adults	67.5	Adults	21.95
Children	10.0	Children	0
Adolescent	0	Adolescents	0
Age unspecified	12.5	Age Unspecified	0
Individual Female Characters		Collective Female Characters	
Adults	0	Adults	2.44
Children	0	Children	0
Adolescent	0	Adolescents	0
Age unspecified	0	Age Unspecified	0
Individual Ungendered Characters		Collective Ungendered Characters	
Adults	0	Adults	12.2
Children	0	Children	0
Adolescents	0	Adolescent	4.88
Age Unspecified	10.0	Age Unspecified	29.27
M Grammatical Form that Includes F (M/F)		Masculine Plural that Includes F (M/F)	
Adults	0	Adults	9.76
Children	0	Children	4.88
Adolescent	0	Adolescents	2.44
Age Unspecified	0	Age Unspecified	12.2
Total	100	Total	100
Total number	40	Total Number	41

In ARA2, individual male characters are the only type of characters represented in different ages; adult= 67.5% child=10%, age unspecified= 12.5%, yet adolescents = 0%. The discrepancy between the presence of male and female individual characters is obvious: 67.5% - 0%.

Similarly, collective male adult characters outnumber female adult characters: 21.95 % - 2.44%. While collective ungendered characters with unspecified age have the highest presence amongst collective characters = 29.27%. As for adolescent collective characters, they exist as ungendered characters = 4.88%, and in masculine plural form that includes feminine = 2.44%.

To conclude, combining the two variables: age and sex, revealed a pattern of common individual and collective characters across the textbooks under review. The frequency of occurrence of male adult individual characters in ENG1, ARA1 and ARA2 left female adult individual characters under represented and even non-existent in ARA2. In contrast FRA1, has the highest frequency of female adult figures that is double the number of male figures.

The frequency of adolescent individual males and females is scarce in ENG1, FRA1. In fact, FRA1 has equally number of male and female adolescent individuals, which makes it the most gender and relatable age balanced.

As for collective characters, we found that ungendered adults are the most prevalent in English and French textbooks. In ENG1, for instance, none of the collective characters included adult females or adult males, similarly, ungendered collective adults are the only type of collective characters available in FRA1. Whereas, in the two Arabic textbooks, collective male adult characters are almost double the number of female adult collective characters. Also, ungendered collective characters with unspecified is the prevalent type of collective characters.

From the mentioned above, it is clear that individual/collective female adult figures, individual/collective female adolescent figures, individual/collective female figures with unspecified age in texts are underrepresented in ENG1, almost scarce in ARA1 and AR2, making FRA1 the most gender-balanced textbook in terms of female frequency.

5.4.2. Pedagogic significance of characters

What is the pedagogic importance attributed to each individual male and female character throughout the textbooks?

To answer this question, we observed the data while using the following two axes to understand the position of females in the content under review:

- I. The role assigned to the characters by the authors: actor – identifying character – extra.
- II. The pedagogical function assigned to male and female characters that have different weights and impact on the learners throughout the content: learning icon characters – pilot characters – substitute characters – cultural references.

5.4.2.1. Roles assigned to characters by authors

The characters present in the texts across the textbooks were identified as actors, identifying actors and extras. First, an actor, is the doer of an action or who possess something. Secondly, an identifying character does not play part in the situation, but aids in identifying the actor within the context. Thirdly, an extra, is a character that does not take a specific action, but is involved in the situation of the actor.

TABLE 20: THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN ENG1 TEXTS BY GENDER AND AGE

	Adult		Adolescent		Child	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Actor	45%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Identifying Character	10%	7%	0%	0%	2%	0%
Extra	7%	10%	0%	0%	2%	0%
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

In ENG1, 45% of the actor roles are given to male characters, where they are portrayed as main doers of interaction or possessors of something relevant to the main idea of the plot.

We can see in ENG1, Chapter 17 (109), the male character, the diver, is the main actor throughout the events of the story, and possess a treasure that is essential in the plot. His wife, on the other hand, has a secondary role, where she gives advice to the main male character, “[...] tries to persuade Kino to throw it away” (*Ibid.*). On the other hand, female main actors are only 17%.

Also, female characters are represented less frequently (7%) than males (10%) in the identifying characters category. Even in the child age category, only male children are represented as identifying characters and extras. Lastly, females are given extra roles more than men: 10% - 7%.

It is clear that despite the presence of female individual characters, the majority of males are given actor roles and exceed females in the other roles as well.

TABLE 21: THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN FRA1 TEXTS BY GENDER AND AGE

	Adult		Adolescent		Child	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Actor	0%	6%	24%	35%	0%	0%
Identifying Character	0%	6%	6%	6%	0%	0%
Extra	6%	6%	6%	6%	0%	0%
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

The authors of FRA1 gave individual adult female figures actor role= 6%, while none to males. The female adult figures also had actor roles, while males were not represented= 6% - 0%.

In the category of adolescence, it is noteworthy that females have been found to hold a greater proportion of actor roles compared to their male counterparts, with a distribution of 35% and 24%, respectively. This trend is exemplified in FRA, Chapter 1, where the main protagonist, “Charlotte”, drives the plot through her interactions with her teammates at the gym, while her male friend “Marion” serves as a peripheral, identifying male character. Marion's limited involvement in the plot is primarily relegated to making inquiries such as “*Salut, Charlotte est là?*” and “*Tu n’es pas prête?*” (p. 9), thus underscoring his role in identifying the actor’s actions.

Our data further highlights that adolescent identifying characters are evenly distributed between males and females throughout the texts, with both genders constituting 6% of such roles. Additionally, we observed that extra roles are also equally distributed between male and female adult and adolescent characters, accounting for 6% each.

TABLE 22: THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN ARA1 TEXTS BY GENDER AND AGE

	Adult			Adolescent			Child		
	Male	M/F	Female	Male	M/F	Female	Male	M/F	Female
Actor	54%	0	16%	3%	3%	0	0	0	0

Identifying character	8%	0	11%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Extra	0	5%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

In the adult age category, male characters are overwhelmingly given more actor roles than females = 54% - 16%. While females are given more identifying characters than males within the same adult age category = 11 % - 8%.

Male characters that portrayed by the authors as active agents in the story, were counted and recorded under the designated column. For instance, in Chapter 2, the main protagonist is a male poet who is rejected by a female character due to the perceived weakness of his tribe. The rest of the rest of the chapter centers on the poet's reaction to this rejection. “فردته بحجة ضعف قبيلته” [She rejected him on the pretext of his weak tribe and their small number]” (p.10). Hence, the female character in this context, serves primarily as an identifying character.

All the extra roles were given to (MF) masculine form that includes feminine= 5%. For instance, the word “كهل [old people]” (Chapter 2: 11), the masculine plural form here refers to males and females.

Finally, the relative small number of adolescent characters, were given equal roles as actors = 3% - 3%. For instance, Chapter 3, the text focuses on the significance of technology in the country's economy. It highlights the society's responsibility in providing opportunities for the “youth” “أن يفسحوا الطريق أمام شبابنا” (p. 56). Characters that do not participate in the events, “youth” are counted and recorded in the designated column.

TABLE 23: THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN ARA2 TEXTS BY GENDER AND AGE

	Adult			Adolescent			Child		
	Male	M/F	Female	Male	M/F	Female	Male	M/F	Female
Actor	59%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%

Identifying character	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%
Extra	8%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Actor roles are given solely to male characters in the adult category = 59% - 0%. Likewise, identifying actors are only portrayed as males in the adult category = 21% and 3% in the child age category. In Chapter 3, for instance, the plot centers "Imad Al-Dine", the protagonist, and "Salah Al-Dine" does not do action, but rather his presence underscores the actions taken by "Imad Al-Dine" *كان عماد الدين يكتب لصلاح الدين وظل يلزمه في الشام و رحل معه ذات إلى الديار المصرية* [Imad Al-Din used to write for "Salah Al-Din" and used to accompany him to the Levant, and travelled with him to the Egyptian territories]" (p. 18). Hence, characters were counted and recorded according to their categorization.

In terms of extra adult roles, male adult characters outnumbered female adult characters by more than double, with 8% compared to 3%. Interestingly, only male characters were present in the additional child category, with 3% compared to 0% for female characters. For example, in Chapter 3, a male child was mentioned: "لدي ولد وحيد في السابعة من عمره" [I have a seven-year-old son]" (p. 55).

5.4.2.2. Famous characters

Famous characters carry a pedagogic weight due to their authentic personification of success in different domains. They are the celebrated personalities the authors chose to include in the textbook to present people's accomplishments whether to one's own country or to mankind in general. Highlighting the contributions of famous female characters could influence girls' career aspirations and life choices. Additionally, and more importantly, it highlights women's role in history and gives woman a platform for more accomplishments. Hence, who are the famous characters the authors chose to educate the learners about? What is the gender of these characters? Did the authors consciously include women that present role models for young learners? Did the authors manage to present women figures that are worth of respect and appreciation for their

astounding contributions throughout history? In this section, we present answers through the data from three of the textbooks under review: ENG, ARA1 and AR2. On the other hand, FRA1 does not include any famous characters.

TABLE 24: POSITION OF WOMEN AMONGST FAMOUS CHARACTERS IN ENG1

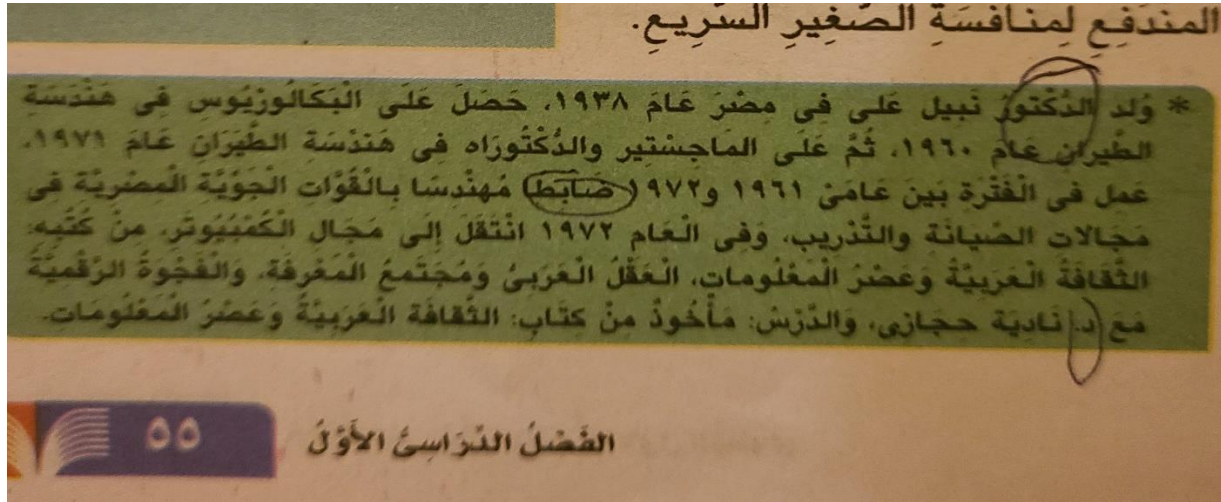
Character no.	Male	Profession	Female	profession
1	Anthony Hope	Writer	Agatha Christie	Writer
2	Yahia Haqqi	Writer	Fawzia Fahim	Scientist
3	Robert Louis Stevenson	Writer	Florence Nightingale	Nurse
4	Van Helmot	Scientist	Aisha Abdel Rahman	Writer
5	Isaac Newton	Scientist	Queen Victoria	Queen
6	William Harvey	Scientist	Amy Johnson	Pilot
7	Gregor Mendel	Scientist	Marie Curie	Scientist
8	Alexander Fleming	Scientist	Karimat El Sayed	Scientist
9	Nicolaus Copernicus	Scientist		
10	Moustafa Mosharafa	Scientist		
11	Ibn Al-Nafis	Scientist		
12	Alexandre Dumas	Writer		
13	Graham Greene	Writer		
14	John Steinbeck	Writer		
15	Johnathan Swift	Writer		
16	Guy de Maupassant	Writer		
17	William Golding	Writer		
18	Rider Haggard	Writer		
19	Herman Melville	Writer		
20	Charles Dickens	Writer		
21	Michael Crichton	Writer		
22	Ptah	Ancient Egyptian god		
23	Amun-Re	Ancient Egyptian god		
24	Ramses II	King		

In ENG1, famous male characters are overwhelmingly more than females: 75% males versus 25% females. As shown in *Table 24*, cultural references in ENG1 are organized based on their gender and their professions. The data show women references are not limited to literary or traditional professions, however, their historic contribution is mostly in the scientific domain = 65%.

TABLE 25: POSITION OF WOMEN AMONGST FAMOUS CHARACTERS IN ARA1

Character no.	Male	Profession	Female	profession
1	Hatim Al Tai	poet	Mawia bint Hjr	Hatim Al Tai's ex-wife
2	Samaw'al Bin Adiyah Al-azdi	poet	Nawara bint Thormola	Hatim Al Tai's wife
3	Amr ibn Hojr	Prince	Um Eyas	Prince's fiancée
4	Ka'b bin Zuheir	poet	Emama bint Al Hareth	Fiancée's mother
5	Abul Qassem Al Shabi	poet	Nadia Hijazi	Technology Academic
6	Nabil Ali	Technology - Academic		
7	Abul Aswad Al Dowali	Linguist/Prince		
8	Ibn Hajr Al Asqalani	Jurist		
9	Ali ibn Abi Taleb	caliphate		
10	Prophet Muhammad	Religious leader		
11	Amr ibn Abi Rabi'a	poet		
12	Gamil ibn Moamer	Poet		
13	Kathir Ezza	Poet		
14	Qais ibn Al Molouh	poet		
15	Jarir	poet		
16	Al-Farazdaq	Poet		
17	Al Akhtal	Poet		
18	Abdel Hamid Moula	Writer		
19	Ibn Amid	Writer		
20	Marwan bin Muhammad	Caliphate		
21	Salim	Writer		
22	Hisham Bin Abdel Malek	Caliphate		

ARA1 shows male bias in cultural references; male figures =82%, while female figures=18% of the total cultural references. Interestingly, the famous female figures mentioned in the texts, were introduced solely by their kinship relations (fiancée, wife, and mother) to male figures. Furthermore, the single female reference mentioned from the present time, in the science filed, is only mentioned by name and professional title “Dr.” without further details about her contributions in this domain as shown in the excerpt below.



[Doctor Nabil Ali was born in Egypt in 1938. He received a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering in 1960, then a master's degree and a doctorate in aerospace engineering in 1971, and worked between 1961 and 1972 as an engineer officer in the Egyptian Air Force in the departments of maintenance and training. In 1972, he later moved to Computer Science. His books include: Arab Culture and the Age of Information. The Arab Mind, Knowledge Society and the Digital Gap with Dr. Nadia Hajazi. The lesson is taken from the book Arabic Culture and the Age of Information⁴⁵.]

The remarkable difference in the introduction of the male celebrated personality, Doctor Nabil Ali and the female celebrated personality, Dr. Nadia Hijazi.

TABLE 26: POSITION OF WOMEN AMONGST FAMOUS CHARACTERS IN ARA2

Character no.	Male	Profession	Female	profession
1	Ibn Al Rumi	poet	Al Khansaa	Poet
2	Emad Al Dine	Writer	Aisha Al Taymoureya	Poet

⁴⁵ Our translation.

3	Salahuddine	Ruler		
4	Mostafa Lotfi El Manfloty	Writer		
5	Mohamed Hafiz Ibrahim	Poet		
6	Adly Yakan	Egypt's prime minister (1921 and 1922)		
7	Ahmed Shawqi	Poet		
8	Al Barudi	Poet		
9	Ismael Sabri	Writer		
10	Mohamed Abdel Moteleb	Writer - Academic		
11	Ahmed Muharm	Poet		
12	Reda Al Shabibi	Poet-academic		
13	Abdel Mohsen El kazmi	Poet		
14	Al Rusafi	Academic – Poet		
15	Al Zahawi	Poet-Philosopher		
16	Shakib Arselan	Politician-Writer		
17	El Aqqad	Poet		
18	Zaki Naguib Mahmoud	Philosopher – Writer		
19	Farouk Shousha	Poet		
20	Suleiman Hazin	Writer- Egypt's Minister of Culture 1965		

In accordance with the findings in ARA1, ARA2 also demonstrates male dominance in celebrated historical figures throughout the textbook: Male figures = 91%, while female figures represent only = 9%.

In conclusion, female famous characters or cultural figures are underrepresented in comparison to their male counterparts.

5.4.2.3. Nouns

Nouns used to identify male and female characters in the four textbooks are tallied and discussed.

TABLE 27: NOUNS REFERRING TO MALES AND FEMALES IN ENG1

Nouns	M	%	F	%
Profession	18	78%	5	22%
Forename	12	60%	8	40%
Surname	13	62%	8	38%
kinship bond	3	21%	11	79%
generic name that indicates gender	6	75%	2	25%
generic name that does not indicate gender				
courtesy title	5	83%	1	17%

After examining the nouns used by authors to refer to both genders in ENG1, we found that male characters were mostly identified by their professions 78%, whereas women were identified by their professions 22%.

Despite the noticeable difference in frequency percentages, the authors did not associate women with more traditional occupations than men. Women's occupations included a range of professions such as pilot, Human Resources specialist, lawyer, scientist, and doctor. Similarly, the occupations associated with male characters included pilot, teacher, politician, astronaut, and diplomat. This suggests that while there is a difference in how male and female characters are identified, there is no inherent bias towards associating women with certain types of occupations.

At the same time, women were mostly introduced by their kinship bond =79% of occurrences, whereas men = 21%. For instance, in Chapter 11, a female character was referred to as “his fiancée Mercedes” (68). Also, in Chapter 14, the female character is identified as “his aunt Augusta” (88).

Another salient difference in the numbers between males and females is demonstrated in the use of courtesy titles like Mr. Dr. as males have 83% identification occurrences as opposed to Mrs. and Miss for females 17%.

When it comes to the use of forenames and surnames, male characters were referred to by their forenames, such as (Kino, Caderousse, Ali), more frequently = 60% compared to females = 40% who were less commonly identified by their forenames (Valentine, Mercedes, Juana, Tuppence). Likewise, identification by surname for males is 62%, whereas for females = 38%.

TABLE 28: NOUNS REFERRING TO MALES AND FEMALES IN FRA1

Nouns	M	%	F	%
Profession	0	0%	1	100%
Forename	6	50%	6	50%
Surname	0	0%	0	0%
kinship bond	2	50%	2	50%
generic name that indicates gender	0	0%	0	0%
courtesy title	0	0%	0	0%

As for FRA1, 100% of the adult female characters are identified by their occupations, such as in Chapter 2, “*La Vendéuse*” (p. 9). While occurrences of professions with male characters is 0%. Moreover, kinship bonds were used equally (50% - 50%) to identify male and female characters. For instance, in Chapter 1, a male character is referred to in the text as “*Son frère s’appelle Richard* [her brother’s name is Richard]” (p. 9). Similarly, a female character is referred to as sister in Chapter 3: “*Au parc, Jeanne et sa soeur Laure rencontrent Bruno* [At the park,

Jeanne and her sister Laure met Bruno]” (p. 40). Likewise, forename was attributed to males and females equally, such as “Manu et Agnes”, “Julie et Cyril”, while surname was not used with either gender.

TABLE 29: NOUNS REFERRING TO MALES AND FEMALES IN ARA1

Nouns	M	%	F	%	M grammatical form that includes F	%
Occupation	9	90%	1	10%	0	0
Forename	3	100%	0	0%	0	0
Surname	3	43%	4	57%	0	0
kinship bond	3	50%	3	50%	0	0
generic name that indicates gender	2	33%	3	50%	1	17%
courtesy title		0%	0	0%	0	

In ARA1, occupations were overwhelmingly used to refer to male characters = 90%, such as “poet”, “professor”, “officer”, and “ruler”.

Kinship bonds were equally used throughout the textbook to identify female and male characters. In Chapter 1, for example, a male character is referred to by “أبَا عَدَّ” [The father of Ad’ei]” (4). Females, likewise, were equally referred to by kinship status =50%, such as “وَأَخَذَ حَاتِمٌ وَيُنصِحُ زَوْجَتَهُ نَوَارٌ” [Hatim began to advise his wife] (*Ibid.*)

The use of generic names that indicates females was 50%, such as “لِمَرْأَةٍ” [woman]” (Chapter 4 :30). On the other hand, generic names that indicates male gender were less frequent = 33%: “التَّاجِرُ” [the merchant]”, “الغَنِيُّ” [the rich]”, “الفَقِيرُ” [the poor]”.

TABLE 30: NOUNS REFERRING TO MALES AND FEMALES IN ARA2

Noun	M	%	F	%	M grammatical form that identifies F	%
Occupation	16	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Forename	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Surname	8	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Kinship bond	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Generic name that indicates gender		0%	0	0%	0	0%
Courtesy title	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%

In this particular textbook, ARA2, the absence of female individual characters results in 100% use of occupation to identify male characters, such as “شاعر [poet]”, “القائد [leader]”, “كاتب [writer]”.

Also, forename is solely used with male characters, similarly surnames are used to identify male characters. As for courtesy titles, it is also used only with male characters. Clearly, ARA2 textbook demonstrate gender bias in terms of identified characters.

5.4.2.4. Portrayal of women in Occupations

In this section we will describe findings on masculine and feminine gender roles manifested in the occupations attributed to them respectively.

TABLE 31: OCCUPATIONS ATTRIBUTED TO GENDERS IN ENG1

count	Male	count	Female
4	Doctor	2	Doctor
3	Lawyer	1	Lawyer
8	Writer	1	Writer
2	King	1	Queen

1	Secret agent	1	Secret agent
5	Teacher	1	Teacher
1	Public speaker	1	Professor
1	Secretary	1	Nurse
1	Ship owner	2	Pilot
1	Diver	1	writer
3	Diplomat	2	Nurse
1	Postman	3	Scientist
2	Journalist		
2	Sailor		
2	Politician		
1	Astronaut		
1	Clerk		
2	Prisoner		
2	Poet		

As demonstrated in *Table 31*, male characters are given more occupation options than their female counterparts. Secondly, some occupations that are attributed to both males and females are dominated by males, for example, the presence of 8 male writers versus 1 female writer, yet this could be due to the numerical unbalance between male and female characters.

TABLE 32: OCCUPATIONS ATTRIBUTED TO GENDER IN FRA1

Count	Male	Count	Female
3	Coach	1	Coach
2	Referee	1	Referee
1	goal keeper	1	Shopkeeper
1	Teacher	1	Coach
1	Chef		
1	Dentist		
5	Shopkeeper		
2	Baker		
1	Pharmacist		

Since the majority of individual characters are adolescents in FRA, the presence of occupations was scarce.

TABLE 33: OCCUPATIONS ATTRIBUTED TO GENDERS IN ARA1

Count	Male	Count	Female
-------	------	-------	--------

4	Poet	1	Doctor
2	Knight		
2	Chief		
	Manager		
	Engineer		
	Doctor		
2	Army general		
	Police officer		
	Scientist		
	Teacher		
4	Writer		

This table demonstrates the salient discrepancy between male and female occupations. While the only occupation given to a female character is a “doctor” – “a prestigious job” (Jin *et al.* 2013: 119) the lack of variation sends a clear message women are out of the professional representation.

TABLE 34: OCCUPATIONS ATTRIBUTED TO GENDERS IN ARA2

Count	Male	Count	Female
5	Writer	1	Poet
2	Militant		
5	Poet		
	School principle		
	Chief		
	Teacher		
	Manager		
	Doctor		
	Farmer		
	Land owner		
	Teacher		

Likewise, ARA2 presents male predominance due to the abundance of occupations options for males, on one hand, while the absence of women representation on the other hand.

To summarize, the professions listed in the *Table 33* and *Table 34* reflect the deficit positioning of women across the two textbooks, in accordance with the overall low visibility of women.

5.5. Characters in illustrations

5.5.1. Characters on textbooks' covers

First, we start examining the characters on the cover pages of the books since they represent the first contact with learners. Ideally, the cover page design mirrors the content of the textbook through a meaningful title or a display of recognizable characters. In other words, if the cover page display pilot characters, for example, who reappear throughout the content, there would be a high probability of students noticing the book cover and recalling its design since distinctive items are often recalled more accurately than common items (McDaniel and Einstein 1986). Similarly, Hargis *et al.* suggest that highest-performing students who are assigned textbooks that explain contextualize their cover photographs: “[...] tend to remember them more accurately when given an unexpected question about the design. Further, names of textbook authors are remembered with relatively high accuracy, even if students do not expect to be tested on this information (2018: 45)”.

Hence, the text and illustrations on textbooks cover page are examined for the presence of gendered characters that could become quite noticeable by learners.

The textbooks at hand include characters in pictures on their covers, with the exception of the two Arabic textbooks ARA1 and ARA2. ENG1 has as total of 4 pictures of 6 characters; 2 of which are a male and female pilot characters that reappear in various lessons throughout the book. As for the other pictures they are of ordinary characters.

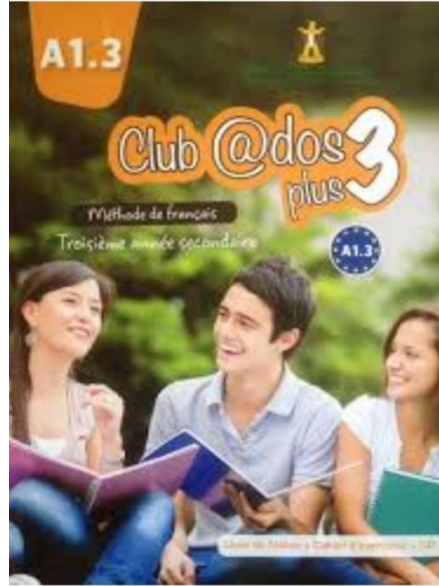


TABLE 35: FRA1 COVER ILLUSTRATION, INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER

Illustration Scene	Sex	Age
Outdoor social activity	F	adolescent
	M	adolescent
	F	adolescent
Total no. of characters	3	

The French textbook FRA1 cover page displays a picture of 3 adolescents in a garden, coded and referred to in the table above as outdoor activity. 2 of these characters are females and 2 are males. FRA1 cover illustration demonstrates an amicable interaction between two adolescent females and an adolescent male. Girls are shown in a state of laughter while interacting with a male friend or colleague. The action carried out by the two female figures, laughing in public with a male interlocutor, is a counter-stereotype by social Egyptian conservative standards. Laughing with a man (who is not a brother/father or husband) is frowned upon as it contradicts Islamic and cultural legitimate conversation controls between sexes. Additionally, positioning the female

characters in an outdoor setting reflects sharing public sphere. Besides the positive female frequency – two girls and 1 boy- FRA1 textbook cover provides counter-stereotypes to three social taboos: women attire, sharing public sphere and gender interaction and transactional processes.

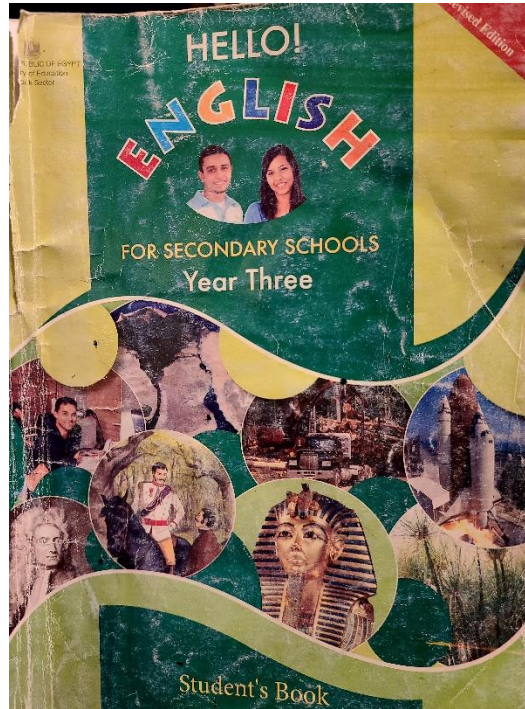


TABLE 36: ENGI COVER ILLUSRATION, INDIVIUDAL CHARACTER

Illustration Scene	Sex	Age
Illustration scene 1		
At work	M	Adult
At work	M	adult
Illustration scene 2		
Outdoor social activity	M	Adult
Outdoor social activity	M	adult
Illustration scene 3		
Pilot character	M	Adolescent

Illustration scene 4		
Pilot character	F	Adolescent

The data shows that the visibility of females is scarce on the textbook cover of ENG1. The one female character present is an adolescent pilot character. Furthermore, no interaction takes place with the other adolescent male pilot character in the frame next to her. While, the girl is shown without a headscarf – like in previous editions, clearly there is no interaction with the opposite gender. As for the rest of the characters on the cover, they are all males.

To conclude, the French textbook’s cover, FRA1, provide clear counter-stereotypical messages compared to the cover illustrations of the other textbooks. The current English textbook, ENG1, in comparison to previous secondary level English textbook covers has presented a counter-stereotypical image of unveiled adolescent girl on the cover – as opposed to previously showing veiled female figures – yet, there is an evidence of absence of interaction between the sexes on the cover.

5.5.2. Frequency of illustrated Characters in textbooks

TABLE 37: TOTAL OF INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE CHARACTERS IN PICTURES

	Total	%
ENG1	201	42.58
FRA1	219	46.39
ARA1	26	5.50
ARA2	26	5.50
Total no. of characters	472	

As demonstrated above, there is not a significant pattern in the differences between the foreign language textbooks, and the variation of number of characters clearly depend on the

authors' pedagogic choices. Both Arabic language textbooks have a significant overall low percentage of pictures compared to the other two books.

TABLE 38: DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP CHARACTERS IN PICTURES, BY TEXTBOOK

	Individual characters	Collective characters	Total
ENG1	193	8	201
FRA1	204	15	219
ARA1	20	6	26
ARA2	16	8	24

Upon examining the characters in the four textbooks, we observed that individual characters have a more significant presence than collective characters in all four textbooks.

TABLE 39: AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHARACTERS PER LESSON, BY TEXTBOOK (%)

	Total numbers	Average number of characters per lesson
ENG1	201	11.16
FRA1	219	54.75
ARA1	26	2.88
ARA2	24	2.66
Total	482	-

This table highlights the salient difference the Arabic and the foreign language textbooks' use of characters in pictures. As demonstrated above, FRA1 has the highest number of characters in pictures in each lesson =54.75, followed by ENG1 =11.33, while ARA1 and ARA2 have low presence of characters in lessons. To conclude, FRA1 has the highest number of character pictures compared to the rest of the textbooks under review.

5.5.3. Gender and age of characters

5.5.3.1. Age

After outlining the total number of characters in pictures and grouping them into individual and collective with their respective significance and dominance, now we ought to further examine these characters. Who are these characters and how old are they? As a preliminary step to identifying characters we start by identifying their age and sex.

TABLE 40: AGE OF COLLECTIVE CHARACTERS IN PICTURES, BY TEXTBOOK EXISTING (%)

Age	ENG1	FRA1	ARA1	ARA2
child characters only	0	0	0	0
adult characters only	12.5	33.33	50	90
adolescent characters only	75	20	16.67	0
child characters dominate	0	0	33.33	0
adult characters dominate	0	0	0	10
adolescent characters dominate	0	20	0	0
neither dominate	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100
Total numbers	8	15	6	8

While collective characters do not play an essential role in representation like that of the individual characters, it is through examining collective characters that we could understand the represented group dynamics to the learners. So, who are these group and how are they formed? What type of interaction is taking place in these groups? And what does it signify?

Note here that the majority of groups of characters in pictures in the textbooks are adults, where photos including adult characters only are 41.15% and pictures of dominating adult characters 5.13%. Adolescents also were contributed with 25.64% in adolescent characters only, and 7.69% in dominance of adolescent characters. Presence of different ages where no specific age dominates makes 10.26% while pictures where child characters dominate is only 5.13%. Interestingly, ARA1 has the highest percentage of children presence in group presence 33.33% of its total collective pictures. ENG1, on the other hand, has the highest percentage of adult characters only in pictures: 75%.

TABLE 41: AGE OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN PICTURES, BY TEXTBOOK (%)

	ENG1	FRA1	ARA1	ARA2
child	5.70	3.43	0.00	18.75
adolescent	46.63	65.20	30.00	0
adult	47.67	25	70.00	81.25
unspecified	0.00	6.37	0.00	0
Total	100	100	100	100
Total numbers	193	204	20	16

The frequency of individual adolescents dominated in pictures: 53.13% followed by adults with 39.98% of the total individual characters represented in the textbooks. Children contributed only with 4.9% and unspecified age 3.02%. As shown in table 6, ARA1 and ARA2 had the highest percentage of adult individual characters: 70 % and 78.57% respectively, while FRA1 had the highest number of adolescent representation: 65.20%. In accordance with the relatability concept, the four textbooks include adolescent and adult characters for secondary school learners, whereas children and individuals with unspecified age are less frequent.

5.5.3.2. Gender

Observing the gender of characters in pictures underpins authors' conscious or unconscious favoritism to the prevalent gender and reveals the gender roles attributed to each sex. As for overall gender visibility, examining the gender of individual and collective characters in the textbooks,

we found that male characters in individual and collective characters were more prevalent than female and ungendered characters.

FIGURE 4: GENDER DOMINANCE IN COLLECTIVE CHARACTERS IN THE TEXTBOOKS UNDER REVIEW, (%)

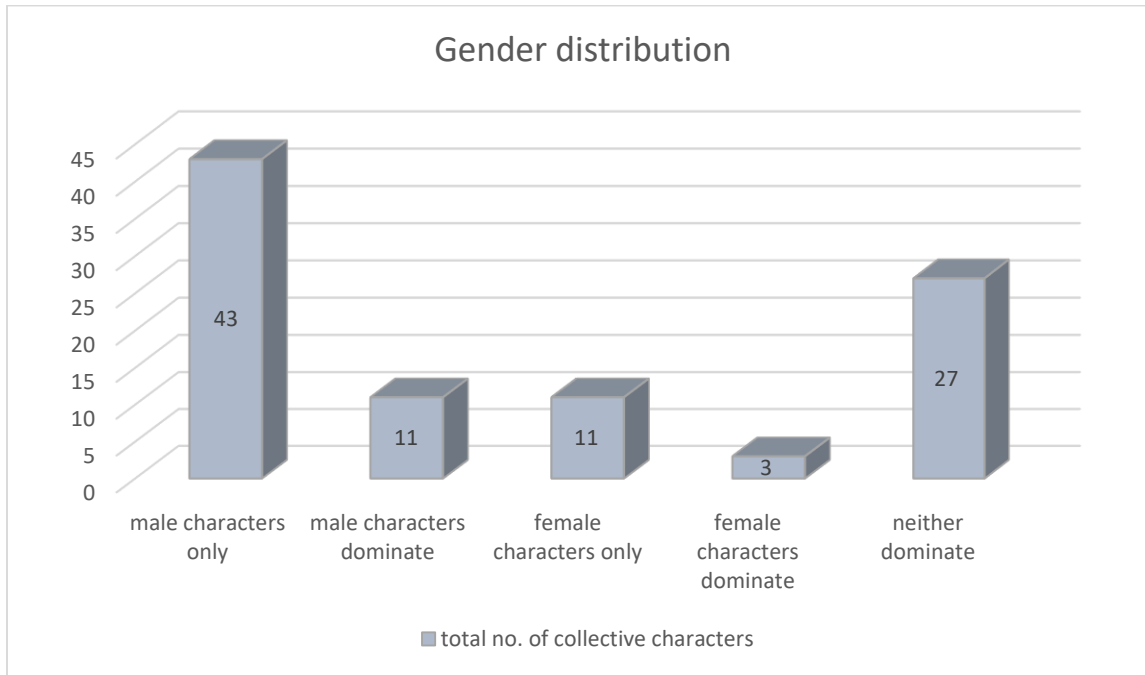
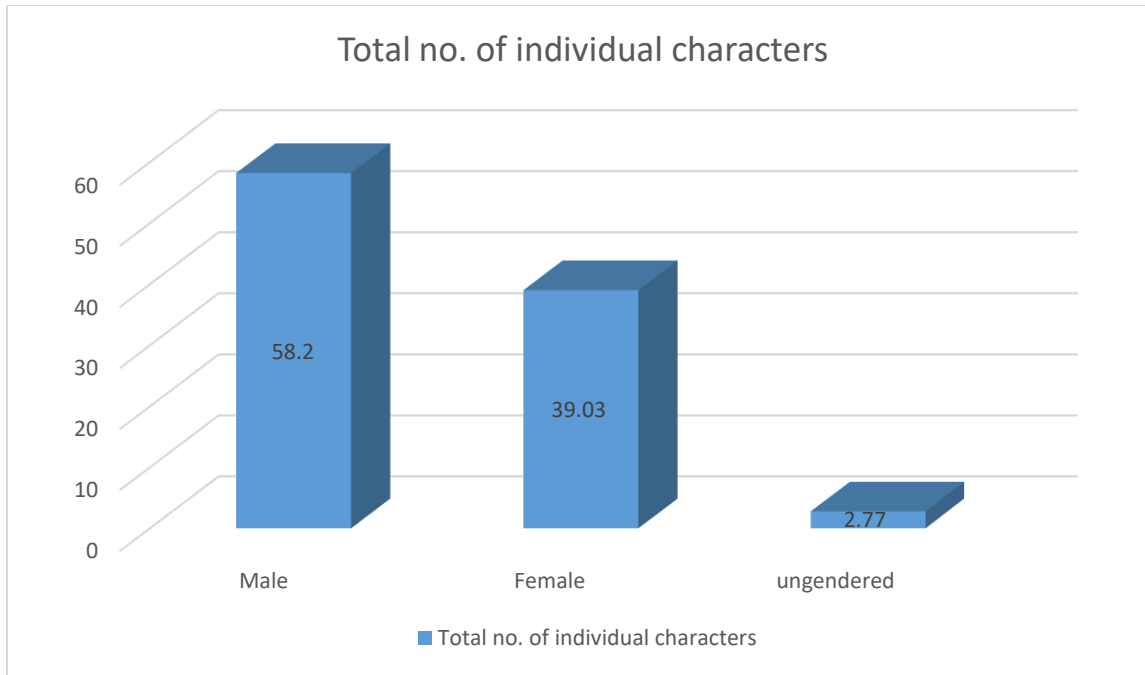


Figure 4 illustrates the dominance of male categories (male characters only; males dominate) in the pictures across the textbooks in comparison to female categories (female characters only; females dominate).

FIGURE 5: GENDER DOMINANCE IN INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN THE TEXTBOOKS UNDER REVIEW, (%).



The discrepancy between male and female characters is evident in individual characters, where male = 58 %, females = 39%, while ungendered characters make up only = 3% of the total number of individual characters.

In conclusion, male categories in collective characters and male individual characters are more visible in our corpus. The following section demonstrates the variation amongst textbooks in terms of gender visibility to unravel hidden patterns.

TABLE 42: GENDER OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN PICTURES, BY TEXTBOOK (%)

	ENG1	FRA1	ARA1	ARA2
Male	63.73	49.51	80	75.00
Female	35.23	45.59	20	25.00
ungendered	1.04	4.90	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

Total numbers	193	204	20	16
---------------	-----	-----	----	----

Similar to the characters in text, FRA1 has the most gender balanced individual characters with a male 49.51% vs. female 45.59%. On the other hand, ENG1 has significant male dominance in individual male characters in pictures 63.73% which is double the percent of female individual characters 35.23%. Lastly, both Arabic textbooks demonstrate a remarkable predominance of male figures: ARA1 (80%) and ARA2 (75%).

TABLE 43: GENDER OF COLLECTIVE CHARACTERS IN PICTURES, BY TEXTBOOK (%)

	ENG1	FRA1	ARA1	ARA2
male characters only	62.5	33.33	50	40
female characters only	25	13.33	0	0
males dominate	0	0	33.33	40
females dominate	0	13.33	0	0
neither dominate	12.5	40	16.67	20
most characters ungendered	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100
Total numbers	8	15	6	8

Amongst the four textbooks, the gender balance in pictures of group of people was established in FRA1 equal percentage of male and female dominance 13.33% and 13.33% or pictures where neither gender dominate: 40%. However, the two Arabic textbooks ARA1 and AR2 had significant male dominance in their group pictures with 50% and 40% respectively of pictures

with males only. It is noteworthy, to notice here that both of these textbooks had 0% groups of girls or women in the illustration. They had however, some pictures of groups of people where no specific sex dominates the other: ARA1 (16.67%) and ARA2 (20%).

Who are these characters the authors decided to include in the textbooks? How are they represented by the authors? What roles do they play?

In this section, we focused on the pedagogic significance of character in picture: one way to determine this is through explore the authors' choices of famous characters? Who are they and what do they represent? Moreover, how are the pilot, substitute and extra characters gendered in the pictures?

Role of characters in pictures

The first step in identifying the position of characters in the pedagogic system of the textbooks, they were distributed below across three categories: pilot, ordinary and substitutes. Substitute characters of students or teachers have a high pedagogic significance than random ordinary characters. So, what is the chosen gender for each type of character? And how did the authors position the female characters in terms of pedagogic significance?

TABLE 44: THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN ENG1 PICTURES BY GENDER, (%)

	Male	Female	unidentified
Ordinary	42	20	1
Pilot	0	0	0
Substitute	21	16	0
Total	100	100	100

ENG1 did not include pilot characters, so the highest pedagogic function is on substitute characters. As shown in the table above, male substitute characters = 21% are more than females = 16%. Furthermore, there is a male dominance of ordinary characters throughout the book.

TABLE 45: THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN FRA1 PICTURES BY GENDER, (%)

	Male	Female	unidentified
Ordinary	42	36	5
Pilot	5	9	0
Substitute	1	0	0
Total	100	100	100

In FRA1, male ordinary characters are more than female, whereas female pilot characters are more than males. Lastly, there was only one male substitute characters, which has the highest pedagogical weight, while none in the female category. Nevertheless, the numerical majority is in ordinary characters.

TABLE 46: THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN ARA1 PICTURES BY GENDER, (%)

	Male	Female	unidentified
Ordinary	16	4	0
Pilot	0	0	0
Substitute	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100

In ARA1, there is predominance of male ordinary characters, where male characters = 16 and females = 4. The textbook, does not include other types of characters and relies solely on ordinary.

TABLE 47: THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN ARA2 PICTURES BY GENDER, (%)

	Male	Female	unidentified
--	------	--------	--------------

Ordinary	9	3	0
Pilot	0	0	0
Substitute	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100

Similar to ARA1, the book does not include variety of character types; ordinary characters are the only type of characters used by the authors. The majority of ordinary characters are males = 9, whereas females= 3.

5.5.4. Famous characters in pictures

The other type of characters that determines the pedagogical weight of characters, is the inclusion of famous characters or role models. This section seeks to probe gender agendas pertaining to the use of famous characters' images in the widely-used textbooks. The pedagogical significance stems from the essential role of the immediacy of the images that draws learners' attention to show case the contributions of this figure.

TABLE 48: VISIBILITY OF WOMEN AMONGST FAMOUS CHARACTERS IN ENG1

Character no.	Male	Profession	Female	Profession
1	Anthony Hope	Writer	Florence Nightingale	nurse
2	Yahia Haqqi	Writer	Aisha Abdel Rahman	Scientist
3	Robert Louis Stevenson	writer	Queen Victoria	Queen
4	Van Helmot	scientist	Amy Johnson	Pilot
5	Isaac Newton	Scientist	Marie Curie	Scientist
6	William Harvey	scientist	Karimat El Sayed	Scientist
7	Gregor Mendel	Scientist		
8	Alexander Fleming	scientist		
9	Nicolaus Copernicus	scientist		

10	Alexandre Dumas	Writer		
11	Graham Greene	writer		
12	John Steinbeck	writer		

Pictures of famous women in ENG1, as in *Figures 6* and *7* represent 50% of the total number of famous characters.

FIGURE 6: QUEEN VICTORIA



FIGURE 7: AMY JOHNS



Upon close examination, these famous women had various contributions, like for example, science and leadership and other male dominant professions.

TABLE 49: VISIBILITY OF WOMEN AMONGST FAMOUS CHARACTERS IN ARA1

Character no.	Male	Profession	Female	Profession
1	Hatim Al Tai	Leader	Um Eyas	Prince's fiancée
2	Samaw'al Bin Adiyah Al-azdi	Loet	Emama bint Al Hareth	Fiancée's mother
3	Ka'ab ibn Zuheir	Poet		

While the overall number of pictures of famous characters is low, it is clear that the authors decided to include pictures of famous women confined to traditional kinship roles (fiancée; mother).

TABLE 50: VISIBILITY OF WOMEN AMONGST FAMOUS CHARACTERS IN ARA2

Character no.	Male	Profession	Female	Profession
1	Ibn Al Rumi	Poet	0	
2	Salahuddine	Ruler	0	
3	Ahmed Shawqi	Poet	0	
4	Hafez Ibrahim	Poet	0	

ARA2 includes a total of four famous literary characters; none of them is female. While there are several lessons that the authors could have incorporated famous historical and contemporary female characters to highlight their contributions, yet they chose not to.

In summary, male famous characters in illustrations in the three textbooks are predominant. That being the general observation, it is clear that famous characters in pictures and illustrations are marginalized and invisible.

5.5.5. Actions taken by characters in pictures

5.5.6.1. Actions taken by individual characters

Actions of individual characters in pictures are recorded and coded in tables. The following tables demonstrate the types of actions carried out by characters to shed light on the pattern of actions attributed to women in the textbooks under review.

TABLE 51: ACTIONS TAKEN BY INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN PICTURES IN ENG1, (%)

	Male			Female		
	Adult	Adolescent	Child	Adult	Adolescent	Child
Educational activity	5	66	33	17	71	60
Family activity	2	0	0	10	0	40
House /Traditional chores	0	0	0	3	0	0
Outdoor activity	16	14	0	7	2	0
Social Activity	0	18	0	7	18	0
Work Activity	64	0	0	55	0	0
Leisure Activity	5	2	50	0	9	0
Sports Activity	0	13	0	0	0	0
Combat Activity	5	1	0	0	0	0
Indoor Activity	3	0	17	0	0	0
Total number	61	56	6	29	34	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

In ENG1, the majority of actions carried out by adult males are within the work activity category= 64% (*Figures 8 and 9*) which is more than by adult women by 9%.

FIGURE 8: ADULT MALE IN WORK ACTIVITY

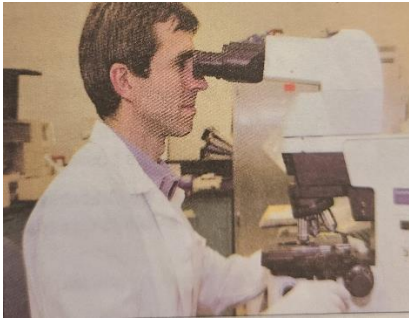
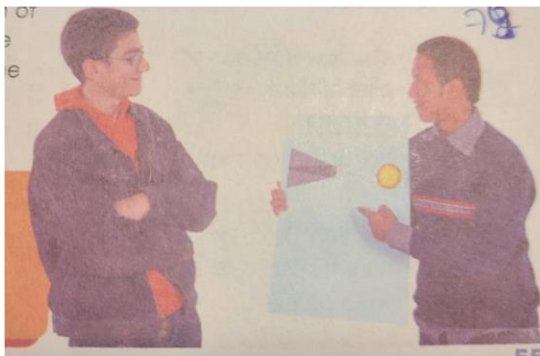


FIGURE 9: ADULT MALES IN WORK ACTIVITY



Simultaneously, the participation of men in family activities accounts for only 2%, while adult females engage in such activities at a rate of 10%. As for adolescent males, the majority of their actions (*Figure 10*) are coded as educational activities 66%. Furthermore, leisure activity was exclusively carried out by adult males= 5%, combat activities= 3% and indoor activities= 3%.

FIGURE 10: ADOLESCENT MALE CHARACTERS IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY



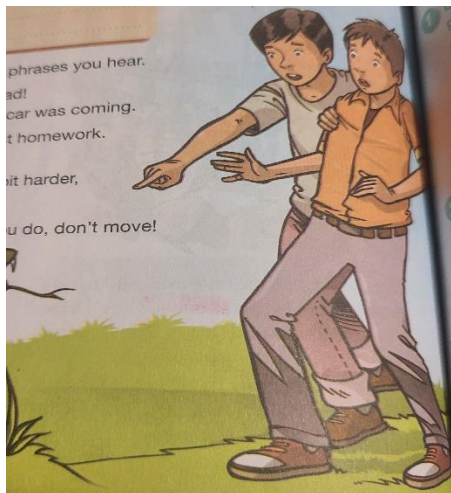
As for adolescent male characters, the majority of their actions were coded as educational activity = 66%, which is less than adolescent female characters= 71%. As for outdoor activities,

adolescent male characters were present more frequently than females (14% - 2%) as shown in *Figures 11 and 12*.

FIGURE 11: ADOLESCENT MALE CHARACTERS IN OUTDOOR ACTIVITY



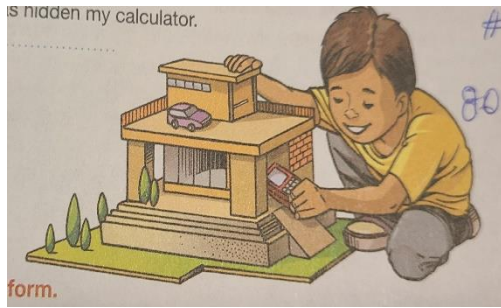
FIGURE 12: ADOLESCENT MALE CHARACTERS IN OUTDOOR ACTIVITY



This gap indicates the difference between representing girls and boys in the public sphere. Lastly, adolescent girls' actions coded as social activity is equal to adolescent males' social activity = 18%.

Individual female child is mostly portrayed engaged in educational activity = 60%, which is double the percentage of male child's educational activities = 33%. Furthermore, female children are also depicted in family situations = 40%, whereas none of the male children are in family situations, but rather play independently as in *Figure 13*.

FIGURE 13: MALE CHILD PLAYING INDEPENDENTLY



The majority of male child characters are portrayed in leisure activities= 50%. On the other hand, none of the female children performed leisure activities. Also, adolescent males are the only characters performing sports activity= 13%, whereas females did not engage in any sports related actions.

TABLE 52: ACTIONS TAKEN BY INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN PICTURES IN FRA1, (%)

	Male			Female		
	Adult	Adolescent	Child	Adult	Adolescent	Child
Educational activity	0	5	0	0	4	0
Family activity	6	3	20	8	1	0
House/ Traditional Chores	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outdoor activity	29	17	0	46	10	0
Social Activity	23	17	20	17	15	100
Work Activity	10	0	0	13	4	0
Leisure Activity	16	8	0	13	13	0
Sports Activity	16	49	60	0	48	0
Indoor Activity	0	2	0	0	3	0
Combat Activity	0	0	0	0	0	0
None	0	0	0	4	0	0
Total number	31	65	5	24	67	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

In FRA1, we notice the gap between the characters is not significant to demonstrate gender bias in the textbook. For example, educational activities are carried out by male=5% and female=

4% of the total number of adolescent characters. Similarly, leisure and indoor activities are equally carried out by males and females.

There are some categories, however, where the authors applied counter-stereotypical representations in females' favor; for example, most of social activities are carried out by female adult and adolescent characters. Social activities indicate interactions done in public settings with friends or other random characters, hence, females are given agency to share public sphere and negotiate with interlocutors, as shown in *Figures 14* and *15*.

FIGURE 14: ADOLESCENT FEMALE CHARACTERS IN SOCIAL OUTDOOR ACTIVITY



FIGURE 15: ADOLESCENT FEMALE CHARACTERS IN SOCIAL ACTIVITY

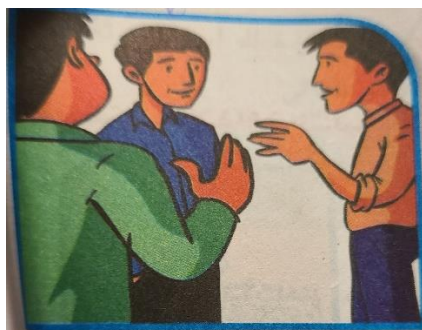


TABLE 53: ACTIONS TAKEN BY INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN PICTURES IN ARA1, (%)

	Male			Female		
	Adult	Adolescent	Child	Adult	Adolescent	Child
Educational activity	0	100	0	0	0	0
Family activity	0	0	0	75	0	0
House /Traditional chores	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outdoor activity	10	0	0	0	0	0
Social Activity	30	0	0	0	0	0
Work Activity	40	0	0	0	0	0
Leisure Activity	0	0	0	0	0	0
Combat Activity	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indoor Activity	0	0	0	0	0	0
None	20	0	0	25	0	0
Total number	10	6	0	4	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

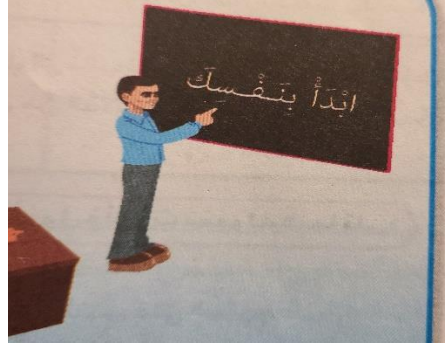
In ARA1, male adolescents are the sole representatives of educational activities with zero female contribution. 30% of the male characters took part in social activities that included outdoor activities with acquaintances and hosting gatherings at home, as shown in *Figure 16*, whereas women were not represented in this area at all.

FIGURE 16: ADULT MALES IN SOCIAL ACTIVITY



Furthermore, 40% of adult male characters are engaged in work activities, as opposed to 0% of females, as displayed in Figure

FIGURE 17: ADULT MALE CHARACTER IN WORK ACTIVITY



Also, outdoor activities are only limited to males, whereas female were not represented in any outdoor settings. Moreover, 75% of female characters in ARA1 are engaged in family settings and interactions (*Figure 18*), while the remaining 25% are portrayed in a static position without any specific action.

FIGURE 18: FEMALE CHARACTERS IN FAMILY ACTIVITY



TABLE 54: ACTIONS TAKEN BY INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN PICTURES IN ARA2, (%)

	Male			Female		
	Adult	Adolescent	Child	Adult	Adolescent	Child
Educational activity	0	0		0	0	0
Family activity	29	0	100	33	0	100
House /Traditional chores	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outdoor activity	14	0	0	0	0	0
Social Activity	57	0	0		0	0
Work Activity	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leisure Activity	0	0	0	0	0	0
Combat Activity	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indoor Activity	0	0	0	0	0	0
None	0	0	0	67	0	0
Total number	7	0	2	3	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

In ARA2, the majority of individual male characters (57%) are portrayed in social activities, whereas females are not visible in this area. In the family activity category, males are equally represented as females: 29% vs. 33%. Similarly, female and male children were equally represented in family activities, as shown in *Figure 19*.

FIGURE 19: INDIVIDUAL MALE AND FEMALE CHILD CHARACTERS



Males' actions are also associated with outdoor activities (29%), whereas females are not represented in this category (0%). Lastly, 67% of female characters are portrayed in static roles that do not indicate actions nor agency.

5.5.6.2. Actions of Collective Characters

TABLE 55: ACTIONS CARRIED OUT BY COLLECTIVE CHARACTER IN ENG1, (%)

	Education activity	Work activity	Outdoor activity	Sports activity	Family activity	Social activity
Male characters only	44	11	0	0	0	0
Male dominance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female characters only	22	0	0	0	0	0
Female dominance	0	11	0	0	0	0
Neither dominate	0	0	11	0	0	0

Actions carried out by collective characters in ENG1 highlights the authors' choices in attributing certain actions to gender. We can infer from the table above that the majority of education activities are performed by male characters= 44%. Females also are represented in education activities, yet a lower percentage than that of male characters = 22%. Furthermore, males and females are equally represented in work activities by 11%. Lastly, actions taking place in outdoor activities are associated with mixed groups (without a specific gender dominance).

TABLE 56: ACTIONS CARRIED OUT BY COLLECTIVE CHARACTER IN FRA1, (%).

	Education activity	Work activity	Outdoor activity	Sports activity	Family activity	Social activity
Male characters only	0	0	7	27	0	0
Male dominance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female characters only	0	0	0	13	0	0
Female dominance	7	0	0	7	0	0
Neither dominate	0	0	33	7	0	0

Pictures of groups in FRA1 presented female groups in education activities 7%, whereas male dominant groups were not. As for sports activities, female and male groups had similar presence in sports related activities = 20%. – 27%. Moreover, male groups, on the other hand, engaged in outdoor activities = 7% and sports activity= 27%. Outdoor activities are either associated with males =7% or ungendered groups (neither dominate) =33%. Female groups, on the other hand, did not carry out activities outdoor = 0%. Lastly, while female groups are positively represented in sporty activities, their other actions are limited to education.

TABLE 57: ACTIONS CARRIED OUT BY COLLECTIVE CHARACTER IN ARA1, (%)

	Education activity	Work activity	Outdoor activity	Sports activity	Social activity	Family activity
Male characters only	17	0	0	0	33	0
Male dominance	0	17	0	0	17	0
Female characters only	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female dominance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neither dominate	0	0	0	0	0	17

Upon examining the groups represented in ARA1, we found that there is absence of female dominant groups throughout the book. Male dominant groups, on the other hand, were mostly attributed to social activities = 50%, education = 17%, and work activities= 17%. Family activities are associated with ungendered groups (neither dominant) = 17%.

TABLE 58: ACTIONS CARRIED OUT BY COLLECTIVE CHARACTER IN ARA2, (%)

	Education activity	Work activity	Outdoor activity	Sports activity	Social activity	Family activity
Male characters only	0	25	13	0	0	0
Male dominance	0	13	25	0	0	0
Female characters only	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female dominance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neither dominate	0	25	0	0	0	0

Similar to ARA1, female groups do not perform actions throughout the book. Male groups, however, are associated with work activities = 38% as shown in *Figure 20*.

FIGURE 20: COLLECTIVE MALE CHARACTERS IN WORK ACTIVITY



As for male characters in outdoor activities = 38%, while women = 0%.

FIGURE 21: MALES ONLY IN SOCIAL ACTIVITY



Lastly, ungendered groups (where neither gender dominates) are associated with work activities, as displayed in *Figure 22*.

FIGURE 22: NEITHER GENDER DOMINATE IN WORK ACTIVITY



5.5.6. Women's attire

In order to count the type of clothes the authors chose for the female characters in the textbooks, we manually counted all the visible female individual and collective characters who appeared at full length (not the head and shoulders).

TABLE 59: WOMEN'S ATTIRE IN ENG1, (%)

Head scarf	Modest attire	Contemporary fashion	Work attire	Sports attire	Total
1%	77%	6%	15%	0	79

In ENG1, we can observe how the majority of women are shown in modest attire that cover their entire bodies except for the hands, face and hair as shown in *Figures 23* and *24*.

FIGURE 23: WOMEN IN MODEST ATTIRE



FIGURE 24: WOMEN IN MODEST ATTIRE



While, contemporary fashion that reveals the arms or legs (*Figure 25*) was only 6%.

FIGURE 25: CONTEMPORARY ATTIRE



As for female characters with a headscarf only comprised 1% of the total number of women in pictures. Lastly, work uniform is 15% of the total number of women as shown in *Figures 26* and 27.

FIGURE 26: WOMEN IN UNIFORM



FIGURE 27: WOMEN IN UNIFORM



TABLE 60: WOMEN'S ATTIRE IN FRA1, (%)

Head scarf	Modest attire	Contemporary fashion	Work attire	Sports attire	Total
0	23	51	1	25	91

The table above shows that half of the women in pictures are dressed in contemporary fashion that show arms and legs.

FIGURE 28: WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION



FIGURE 29: WOMAN IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION



We also find women in modest attire=23% are seen as frequently as women in sports attire=25%. See *Figures 30, 31, 32 and 33.*

FIGURE 30: WOMAN IN MODEST ATTIRE

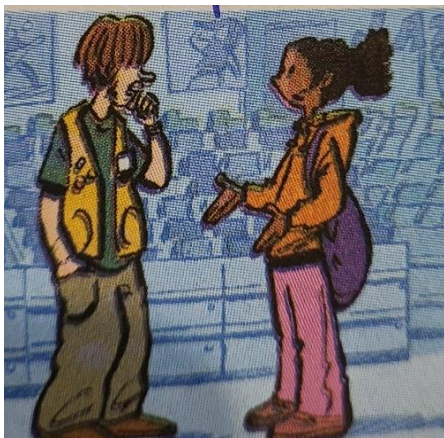


FIGURE 31: WOMEN IN MODEST ATTIRE



FIGURE 32: WOMEN IN SPORTS ATTIRE



FIGURE 33: WOMEN IN SPORTS ATTIRE



Although, showing women in sports and contemporary fashion are forms of inclusive and counter-stereotypical representation of women, it is worth noting some of these pictures are altered to cover areas of women bodies to make them more aligned with local modest standards. Notice here in *Figure 34*, ballet dancers' legs are colored in black, and the shopper's chest and shoulders are retouched with black color.

FIGURE 34: ALTERED PHOTOS OF WOMEN



FIGURE 35: ALTERED PHOTOS OF WOMEN



Lastly, work attire represents only 1% of the total number of women in pictures since the majority of characters in the textbooks are adolescents.

TABLE 61: WOMEN'S ATTIRE IN ARA1, (%)

Head scarf	Modest attire	Contemporary fashion	Work attire	Sports attire	Total
88	0	0	0	0	7

We can notice in ARA1 that all women are portrayed wearing the head scarf = 100%.

FIGURE 36: WOMAN IN HEADSCARF



FIGURE 37: WOMAN IN HIJAB



Figures 36 and 37 represent women in two different time settings – ancient Arabian nomad life and a modern professional setting, however, the headscarf is a common factor that conditions how women could participate in the public sphere. We can also notice how men’s attire had changed, while women’s attire remained the same.

FIGURE 38: BRIDE IN FACE COVER AND WOMEN IN HEADSCARVES

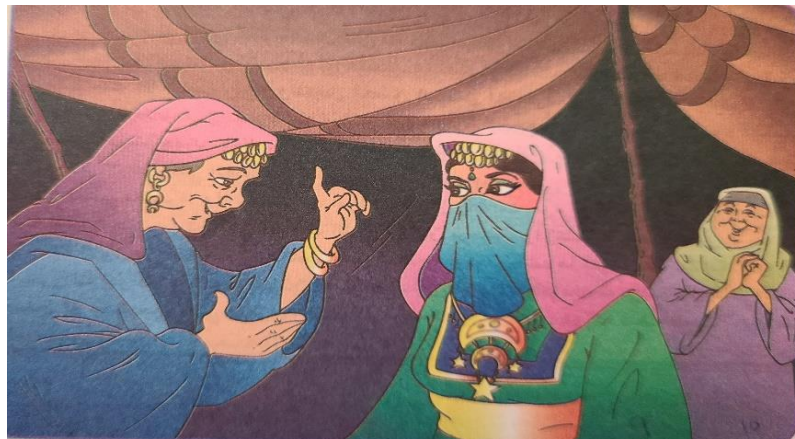


Figure 38 presents another depiction of a young pretty bride in *niqaab*, face covering garment, while two other older women with headscarves only. This contrast could reflect beauty and young age as factors entailing more coverage and hiding.

TABLE 62: WOMEN’S ATTIRE IN ARA2. (%)

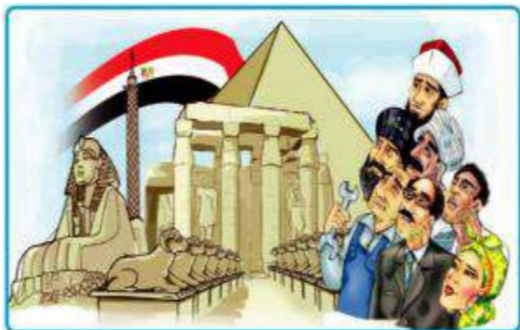
Head scarf	Modest attire	Contemporary fashion	Work attire	Sports attire	Total
100	0	0	0	0	6

Similarly, all women in ARA2 are depicted covering their hair in headscarves, as shown in *Figures 39 and 40*.

FIGURE 39: WOMEN IN HEADSCARVES



FIGURE 40: WOMAN IN HEADSCARF



Upon further examination of women in ARA2, we noticed that women are portrayed in headscarves in professional settings, which also dictates a modesty standard for women to share the public sphere.

In *Figure 40*, the authors display different people in various uniforms that represent the fabric of the Egyptian society. We could see the woman, on the other hand, without any indication of her profession. The contrast in this picture underpins the role of the headscarf as a main marker for woman's representation rather than her role in society.

FIGURE 41: WOMAN WITH HEADSCARF



Figure 41 shows a family having a conversation at the dinner table. Although Muslim women are not expected to cover their hair in front of family members, this picture portrays the mother in the headscarf in clear indication that it is the authors' decision not to show a woman in the textbook without the Islamic dress code.

5.5.7. Gender interactions

In this section, we will demonstrate the form of interactions that occur between the genders. The data in this section will highlight the authors' views regarding gender segregation or interactions. The type of interactions of each individual male and female characters are displayed and compared in the following tables.

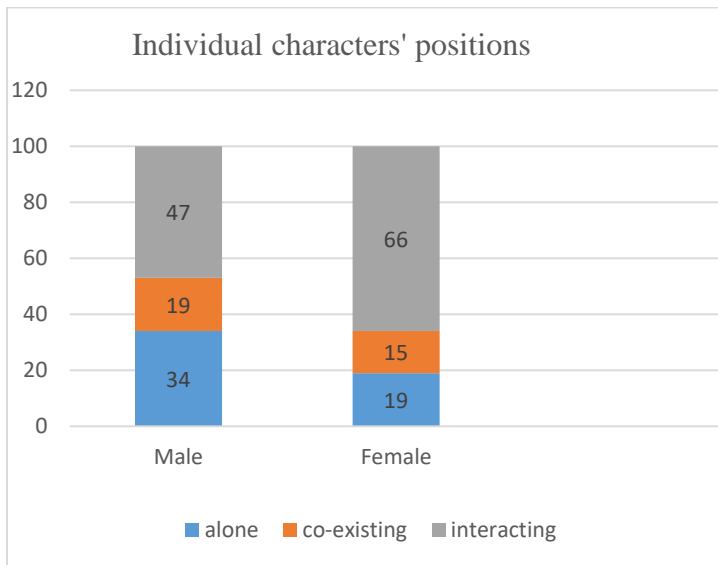
TABLE 63: TYPE OF INDIVIDUAL MALE CHARACTERS' POSITIONING IN ENG1, (%)

Gender	Alone	Co-existing	Interacting
Male	34	19	47

TABLE 64: TYPE OF INDIVIDUAL FEMALE CHARACTERS' POSITIONING IN ENG1, (%)

Gender	Alone	Co-existing	Interacting
Female	19	15	66

FIGURE 42: COMPARISON BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS' POSITIONING IN ENG1, (%)



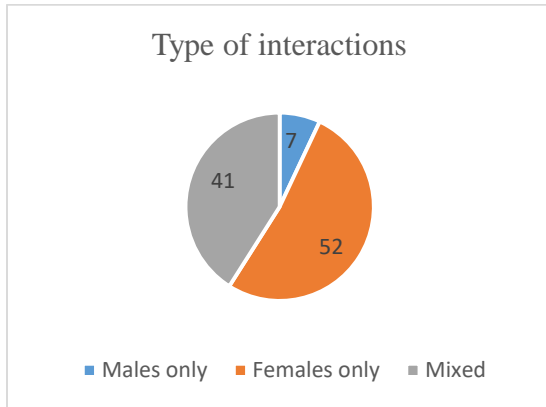
We compared the data in *Table 63* and *Table 64* as shown in *Figure 42*, and the result is that male individual characters in ENG1 are less interactive than female characters by 19% difference. The number of co-existent characters is almost similar, while the number of male characters portrayed alone is almost twice the number of that of women (34% - 19%).

FIGURE 43: EXAMPLE OF CO-EXISTING CHARACTERS



The job advertisement, *Figure 43*, provides an example of the photos of co-existing male and female characters without direct interaction.

FIGURE 44: TYPE OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN ENG1, (%)



Upon a closer examination of the type of interactions taking place between individual characters in ENG1, it was clear that an overwhelming majority of interactions (93%) were carried out by same gender interactions. Male-female interactions, on the other hand, are only 7% of the total number of characters.

FIGURE 45: SINGLE-SEX COOPERATIVE INTERACTION

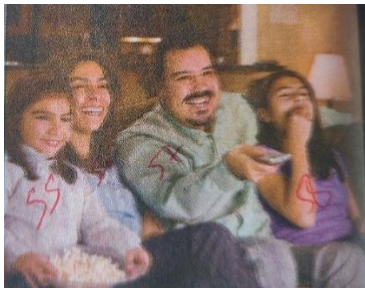


FIGURE 46: SINGLE SEX COOPERATIVE INTERACTION



Figure 45 and *Figure 46* are samples of same sex interactions prevalent in ENG1. The only occurrences of male-female interactions were in either family settings as demonstrated in *Figure 47*.

FIGURE 47: MIXED-GENDER INTERACTION



The other category of photos where mixed gender interaction occurs is that of professional settings *Figure 48*.

FIGURE 48: MIXED-GENDER INTERACTION



While, women were equally represented as frequently as men in a state of interaction, yet none of the genders were portrayed taking part in a co-ed educational, sporty or friendship interactions. Hence, it is clear that the authors’ message is that gender segregation is preferable in these areas.

In the case of FRA1, the tables below unravel the author’s views on single- sex and mixed gender interactions.

TABLE 65: TYPE OF INDIVIDUAL MALE CHARACTERS’ POSITIONING IN FRA1, (%)

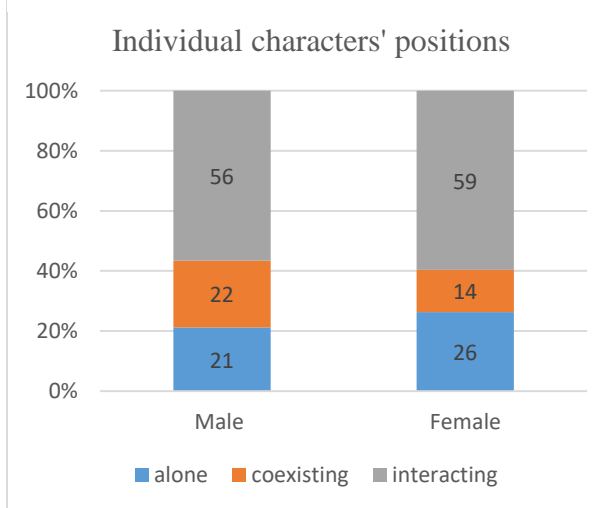
Gender	Alone	Co-existing	Interacting
Male	21	22	56

TABLE 66: TYPE OF INDIVIDUAL FEMALE CHARACTERS’ POSITIONING IN FRA1, (%)

Gender	Alone	Co-existing	Interacting
Female	26	14	59

After examining the data, we present a comparison between the two tables *Figure 49*.

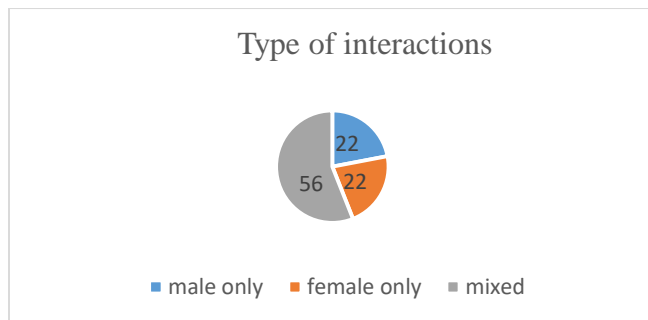
FIGURE 49: COMPARISON BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS’ POSITIONING IN FRA1, (%)



We can see here that co-existing is higher amongst male characters that it is in females, and the level of interaction is the same amongst men and women (56% - 59%). Therefore, FRA1 presents gender-balanced characters' positioning.

Now, we focus on the type of interaction that is carried out by characters.

FIGURE 50: TYPE OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN FRA1, (%)



As demonstrated in *Figure 50*, the mixed gender interaction = 56% of the total interaction occurrences. Single-sex interactions, on the other hand, have equal percentages= 22%.

FIGURE 51: MIXED-GENDER INTERACTIONS



FIGURE 52: MIXED-GENDER INTERACTIONS



As shown in *Figure 51* and *Figure 52*, mixed-gender interaction takes place in various social occasions. Furthermore, girls in regular or modest clothing are depicted interacting with boys outside of family settings. Therefore, FRA1 presents counter-stereotypical representation of women liberally negotiating their presence in the public sphere. Also, they are not limiting their mixed-gender interactions to family or work settings like in the ENG1.

As for the first Arabic textbooks, ARA1, we also scrutinized the position of male and female individual characters.

TABLE 67: TYPE OF INDIVIDUAL MALE CHARACTERS' POSITIONING IN ARA1, (%)

Gender	alone	Co-existing	interacting
Male	19	19	63

TABLE 68: TYPE OF INDIVIDUAL FEMALE CHARACTERS' POSITIONING IN ARA1, (%)

Gender	alone	Co-existing	interacting
Female	25	0	75

The data was further demonstrated in the figure below.

FIGURE 53: COMPARISON BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS' POSITIONING IN ARA1, (%)

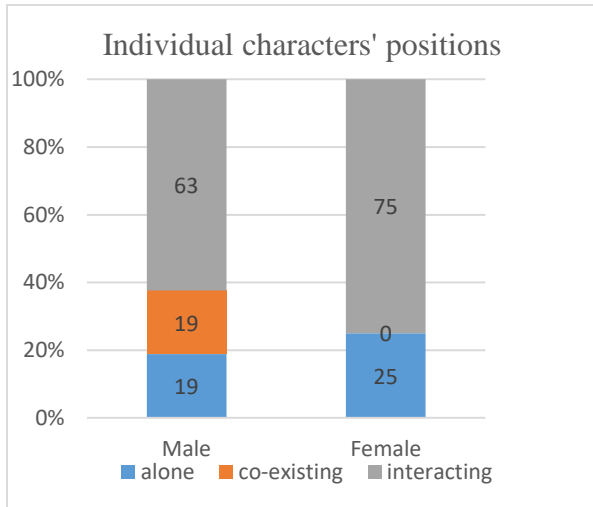
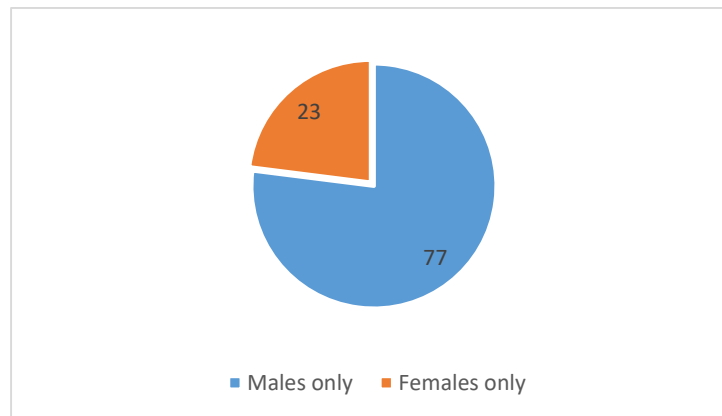


Figure 53 illustrates how almost 40% of male characters are represented as co-existing with other characters or alone. The remaining 63% are interacting with other characters. The majority of female characters, on the hand, are interacting= 75%, while the remaining 25% are alone. None of the women co-exist with other characters.

FIGURE 54: TYPE OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN ARA1, (%)

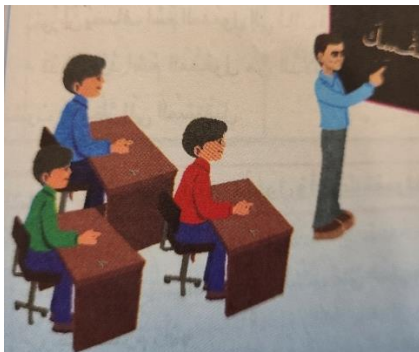


Interestingly, all interactions in ARA1 are gender segregated, where an overwhelming majority of men carry out more interactions = 75% and women=23%.

FIGURE 55: SINGLE-SEX INTERACTIONS



FIGURE 56: SINGLE-SEX INTERACTIONS



The lack of mixed-gender interaction is evident in ARA1. The authors did not attempt to provide counter-stereotypical man-woman interactions, hence, reinforcing current conservative views on gender segregation behavior in Egypt.

Lastly, the same procedure was applied to the second Arabic textbook, ARA2.

TABLE 69: TYPE OF INDIVIDUAL MALE CHARACTERS' POSITIONING IN ARA2, (%)

Gender	Alone	Co-existing	Interacting
Male	42	8	50

TABLE 70: TYPE OF INDIVIDUAL FEMALE CHARACTERS' POSITIONING IN ARA2, (%)

Gender	alone	Co-existing	Interacting
Female	40	40	20

FIGURE 57: COMPARISON BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS' POSITIONING IN ARA2, (%)

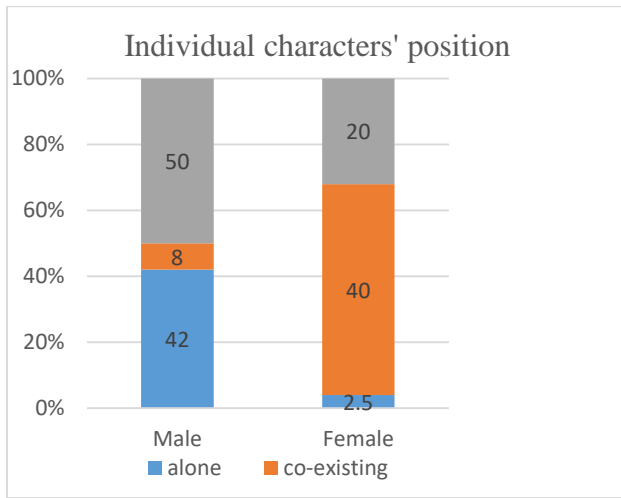
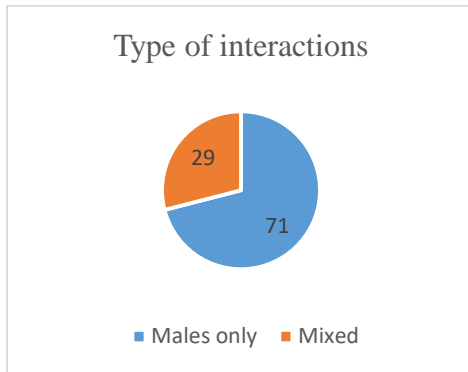


Figure 57 demonstrates the difference between the types of interaction that each gender engages in. Male characters have more interactions than female characters by 30%.

FIGURE 58: TYPE OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN ARA2, (%)



An overwhelming majority of interactions took place between male characters only as shown in *Figure 59*. Mixed-gender interactions, on the hand is only 29%. Upon closer of examination of photos of inter-gender interactions, women are covered, and limited to static positions.

FIGURE 59: SINGLE SEX INTERACTION



Also, notice in *Figure 60*, the adult female’s head is covered in a veil and is the only character not facing the audience. Not showing the woman’s face highlights her inferiority vis-à-vis the father. Moreover, hiding the women’s face and adhering to the Islamic dress attire in this photo setting (domestic sphere) adds more limitations to women’s territorial negotiation⁴⁶.

FIGURE 60: WOMAN WITH HEADSCARF



Finally, this section displayed analyzed data collected across the four textbooks under review before we embark on the next step in our evaluative framework: students and teachers’ questionnaires.

⁴⁶ The purpose and the function of the head and/or face covering (*hijab/niqab*) serves a similar function to that of gender segregation and is based upon the same understanding of female and male sexualities. Veiling, according to Mernissi, is in actual fact “a symbol of sexual segregation”. This is so because the classical understanding of Muslim sexuality is also “territorial” in a sense that “its regulatory mechanisms consist primarily in a strict allocation of space to each sex.” The public sphere belongs solely to the males, while the domestic sphere, the sphere of sexuality, to the female (Duderija 2007: 298).

5.6. Second Part: Questionnaire results:

The respondents were divided into two groups; secondary school students and secondary school teachers. In this section, we will display the answers collected of the student sample.

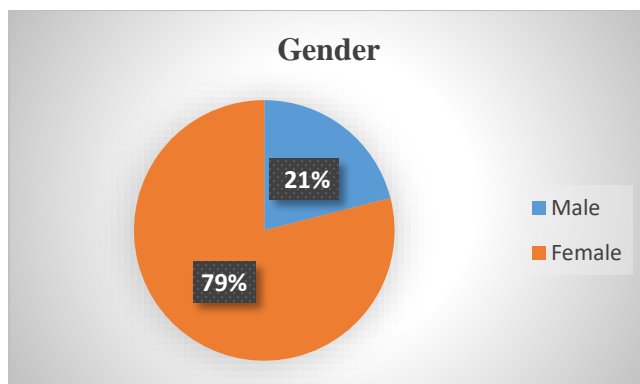
5.6.1. Student sample

The first section of the questionnaire provides a general profile for students. Who are they? What type of school are they enrolled in? Where are they from?

5.6.1.1. Subjects' profile

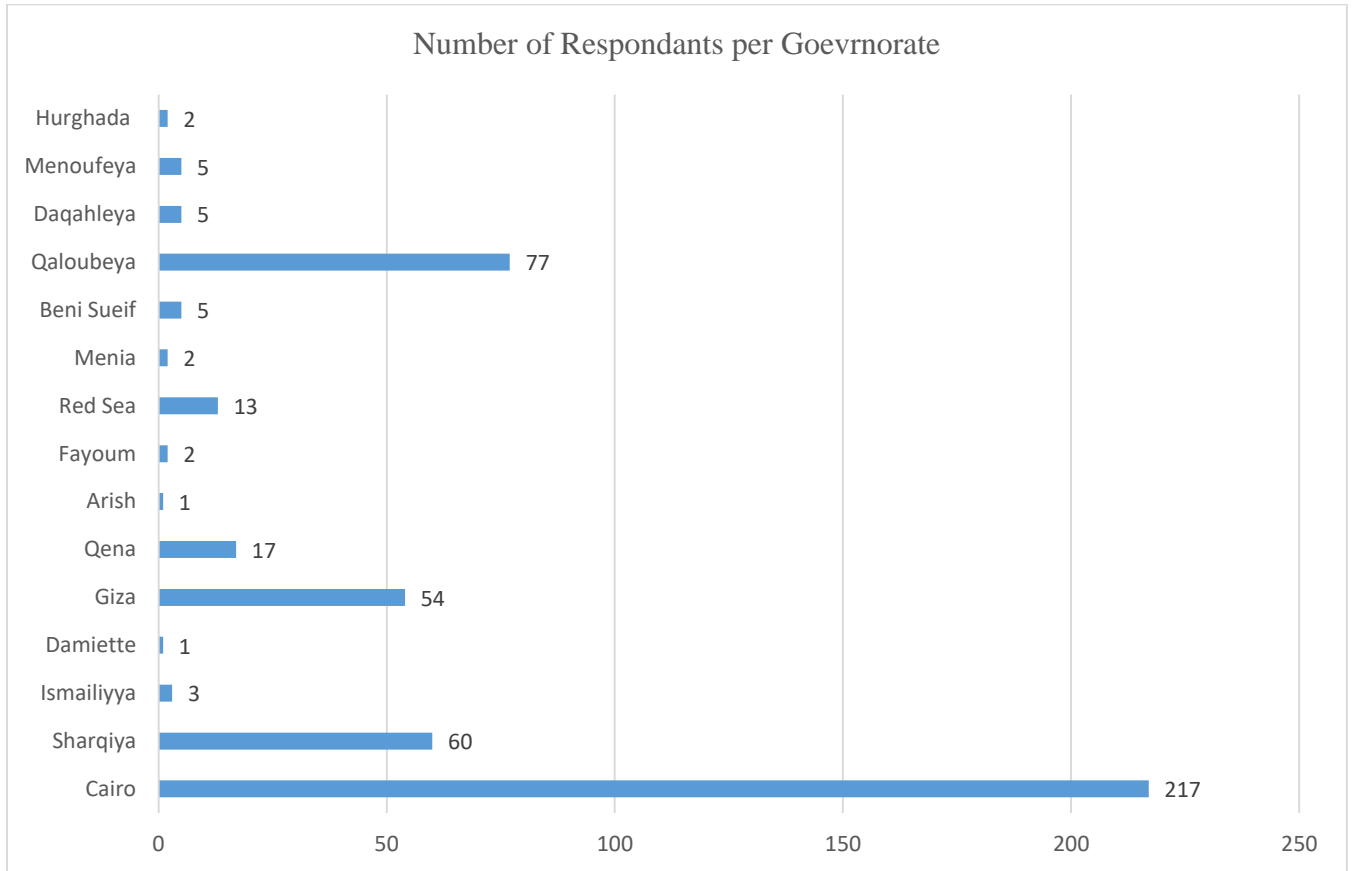
While the survey was distributed to equal number of males and females 98 boys participated in the survey as opposed to 366 girls. Apparently, more girls were willing to participate as opposed to males. Although many efforts were done to reach equal number of males and females, however, it was not uncommon that males would agree and consent to participate without actual commitment to finish the questionnaire. Hence, their answers were not counted and affected the overall number of respondents' ration. Female respondents' willingness to finish the questionnaire could be an indication of higher agreeableness of the females in the student sample than the males (Feingold 1994; Costa et al. 2001). Agreeableness in this context is one the Big Five personality traits that "involves the tendency toward cooperation, maintenance of social harmony, and consideration of the concerns of others" (Weisberg *et al.* 2011: 2).

FIGURE 61: SECONDARY STUDENTS' GENDER



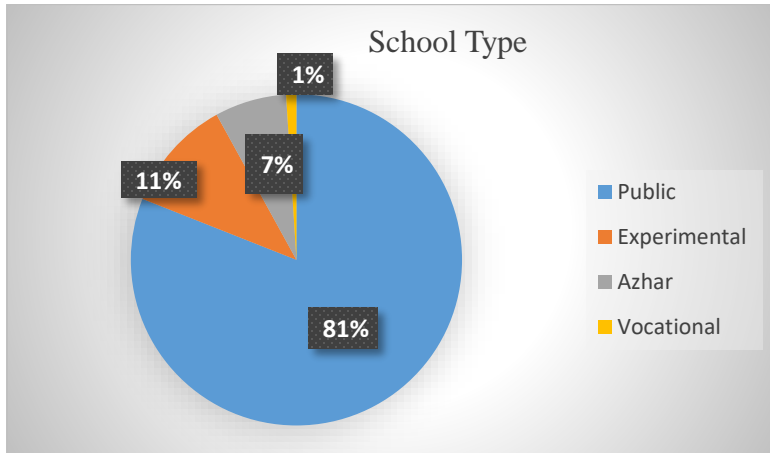
This figure shows the ratio of male to female student respondents that undertook the questionnaire for our study.

FIGURE 62: EGYPTIAN GOVERNORATES REPRESENTED IN THE STUDY



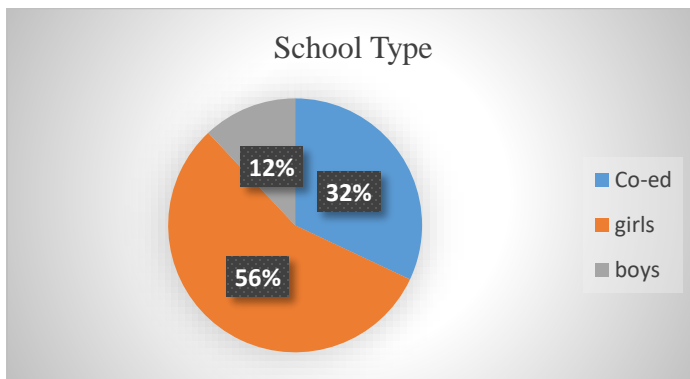
As demonstrated in *Figure 62*, respondents are from different governorates of Egypt. The largest representation is from Cairo = 217 participants, followed by Al-Qaloubeya = 77 participants, Sharqiya = 60 participants, and Giza= 54 participants. The remaining governorates vary in their representation with a minimum of 1 participant per governorate.

FIGURE 63: TYPE OF SCHOOLS STUDENTS ARE ENROLLED IN (%)



This figure displays the different types of schools that the students are enrolled in. A total number of 464 students are divided into 377 students enrolled in Arabic public school; 50 students in experimental schools; 33 students in the Islamic Azhar system and only 4 students in vocational secondary schools. Given the nature of the research, we did not include students from private schools. Although they also use the same textbooks under review, private schools require school fees that are not affordable for the majority of the population. Hence, the participants would represent a different socioeconomic milieu that might affect the coherence of results.

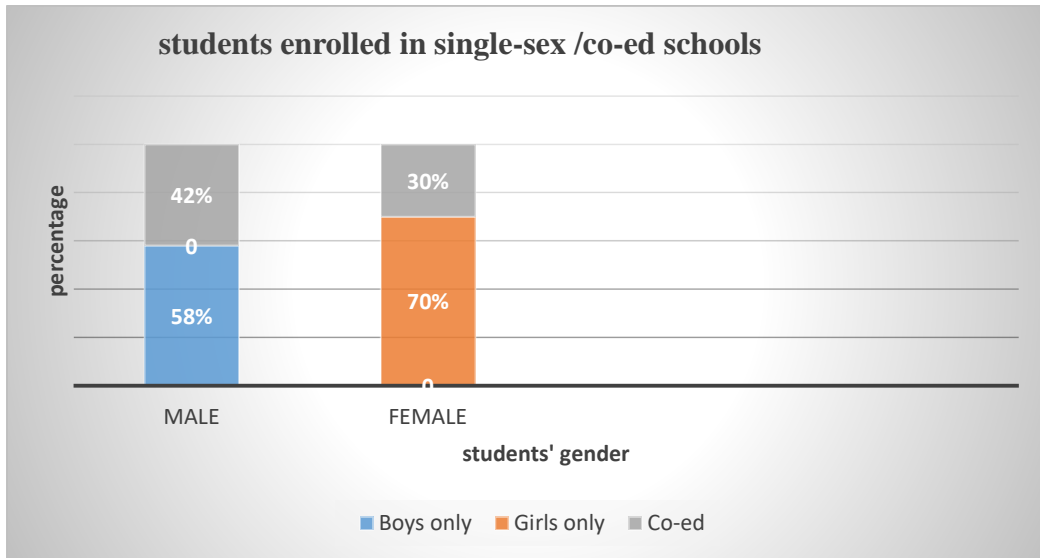
FIGURE 64: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CO-ED OR SEGREGATED SCHOOLS



The data shows that the majority of respondents are enrolled in single-sex schools: 258 respondents are in girls' schools, 57 respondents in boys' schools, and 149 students are in co-ed schools.

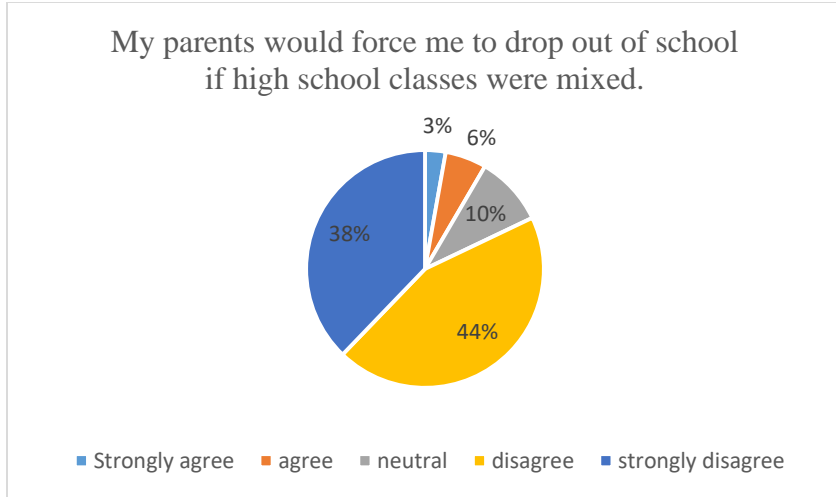
As shown in *Figure 64*, we observed that girls constituted the majority learners enrolled in single-sex schools: 70% of 366 girls. The percentage of participants enrolled in single-sex schools is close to that of co-ed schools: 58% to 42% respectively as shown in *Figure 42*. It is worth noting, however, that segregated schools are the de facto type of schools available in the secondary stages in Egypt, sometimes the lack of financial resources are the reasons why students are grouped in one school. However, boys and girls are not on the same floor and sometimes not even in the same building. Hence, co-ed schools in public Egyptian system does not necessarily mean cross gender interactions.

FIGURE 65: GENDER OF STUDENTS IN CO-ED OR SINGLE-SEX SCHOOLS



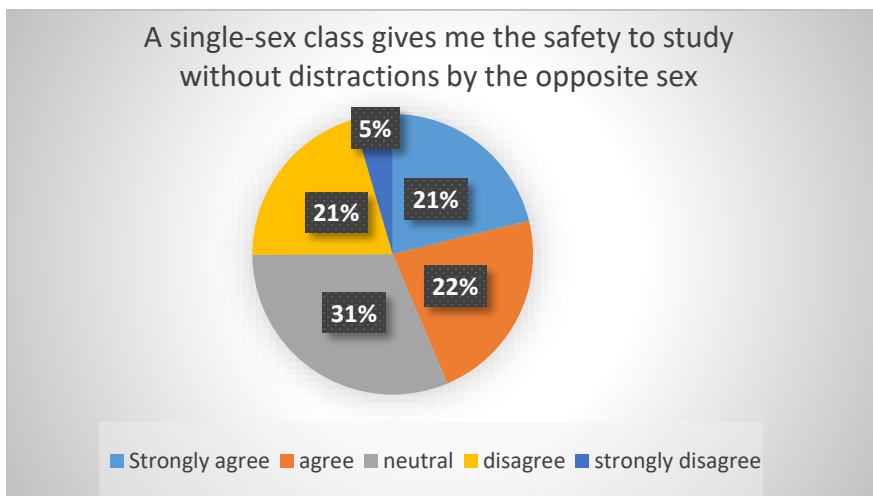
5.6.1.2. Students' perception of gender segregation

FIGURE 66: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR PARENTS' OPINION REGARDING CO-ED CLASSES



Strongly agree= 13, agree= 26, neutral= 44, disagree= 205 and strongly disagree = 175. The following question explores their personal views on gender-segregation.

FIGURE 67: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF CO-EDUCATION

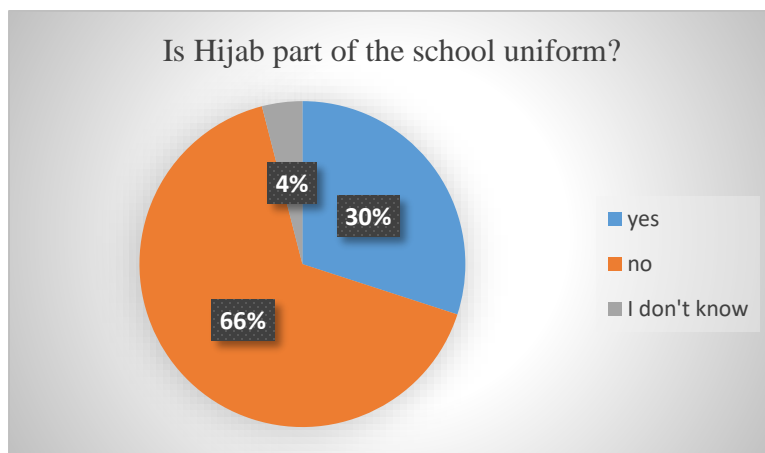


This question explores students' opinions regarding gender-segregation in education. Their opinions varied between strongly agree= 98, agree= 104, neutral = 145, disagree=95, strongly disagree= 21.

5.6.1.3. Students' views on appropriate women's attire

In order to have a clearer idea about students' perception of the veil they wear in school, despite the fact that it is not enforced by state law, *Figure 68* shows that 30% of students believe it is obligatory, while 4% =do not know. The majority of the girls= 66% are aware of the fact that the school does not require the head cover.

FIGURE 68: SCHOOLS WHERE THE HIJAB [HEADSCARF] IS COMPULSORY



The next question was to further probe into their perception of what is considered appropriate female attire in textbooks. We included a picture (*Figure 69*) of the previous edition of secondary level English textbook in the questionnaire and asked them if they consider this book cover more appropriate to the Egyptian culture.

FIGURE 69: OLD ENGLISH TEXTBOOK’S COVER

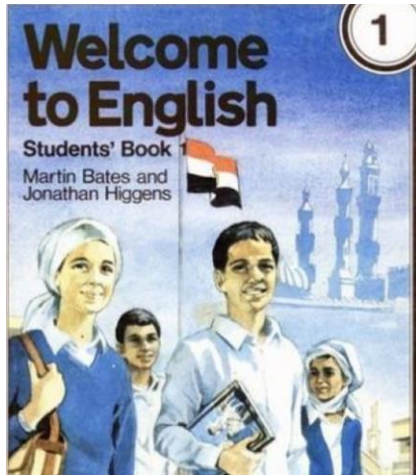
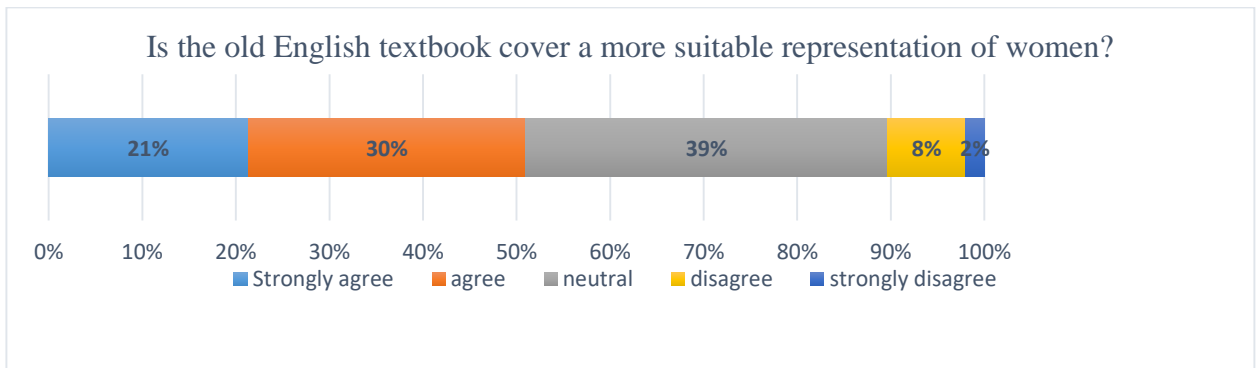
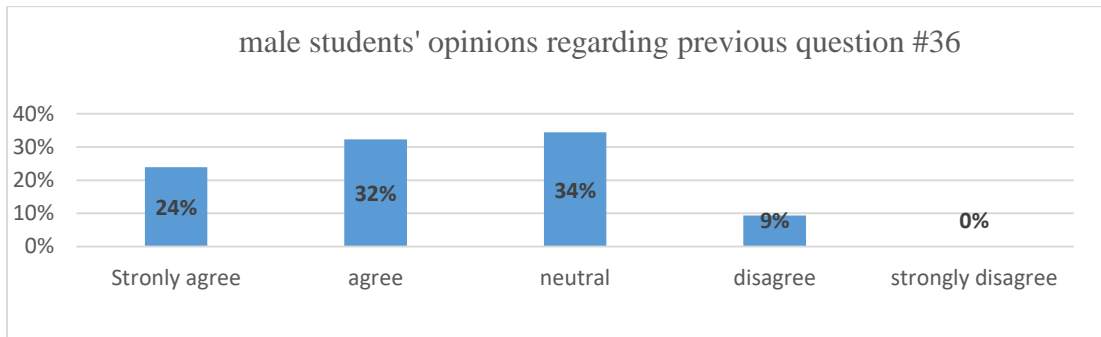


FIGURE 70: STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION OF WOMEN’S ATTIRE REPRESENTED IN TEXTBOOKS



The majority of responses tend to agree with veiled women, considering the old textbook cover as a more suitable representation of Egyptian girls' attire, followed by neutrality. Out of 455 responses, strongly agree= 97, agree = 135, neutral= 176, disagree=38, strongly disagree=9. The percentage of disagreement to this question is very low, which indicates students' internalization of the Islamic headscarf as a de facto school uniform.

FIGURE 71: MALE STUDENTS' VIEWS ON THE OLD TEXTBOOK COVER (FIGURE 69)



Upon further investigation into the sexes of the respondents, we noted that the majority of boys in our sample are in favor of the headscarf as a better representation of women attire in pictures. Out of 98 students, 96 replied to this question and 2 left the question blank, total = 96. Strongly agree=23, agree= 31, neutral= 33, disagree= 9 and strongly disagree=0.

The following question included a picture of the female characters in sports attire (*Figure 72*) from French textbook FRA1, since none of the other books displayed women in sports. The question probed students' views on the appropriateness of this type of dress to the Egyptian culture.

FIGURE 72: WOMEN IN SPORTS ATTIRE

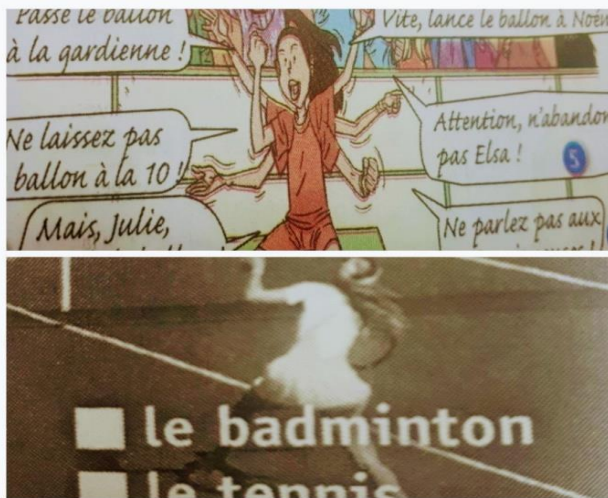
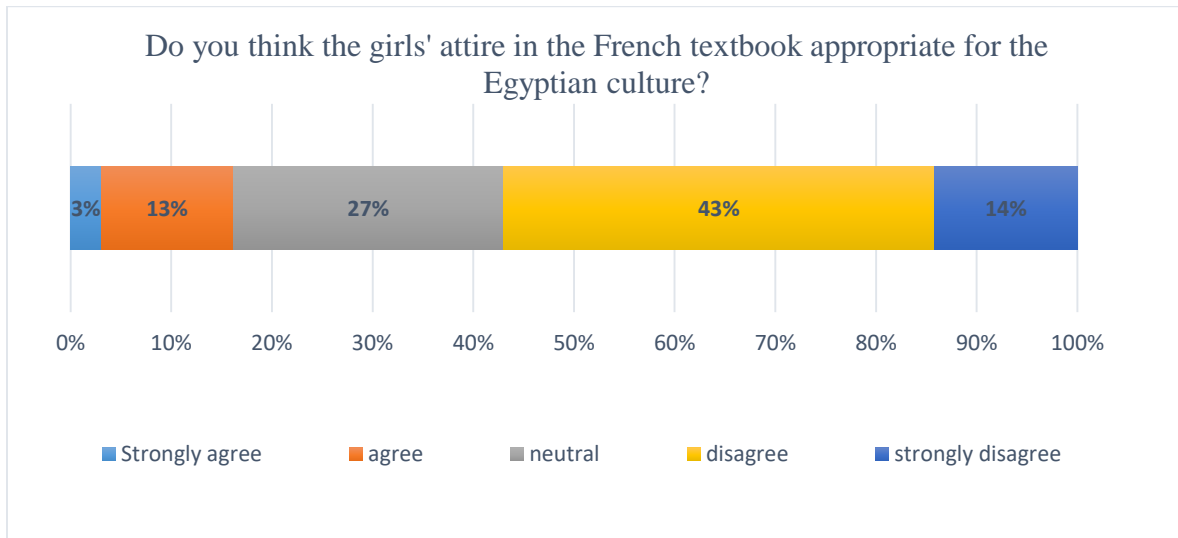


FIGURE 73: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WOMEN'S ATTIRE IN THE FRENCH TEXTBOOK, (FRA1)

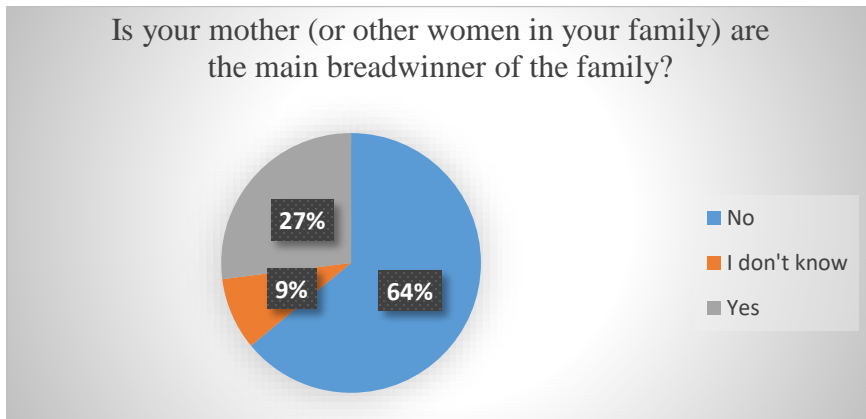


Along the same line of the previous two questions regarding women's attire, the majority of students find the pictures in the French textbook, FRA1, is inappropriate to the Egyptian culture. The wording in the textbook refers to culture rather than religion in order to avoid bias, yet the majority of the sample disagree with the appropriateness of girls' clothes. Strongly agree= 14, agree= 60, neutral= 123, disagree=196 and strongly disagree= 65.

5.6.1.4. The status of women in the students' families

These questions are designed to assess the role of women that the subjects are accustomed to from their surrounding medium.

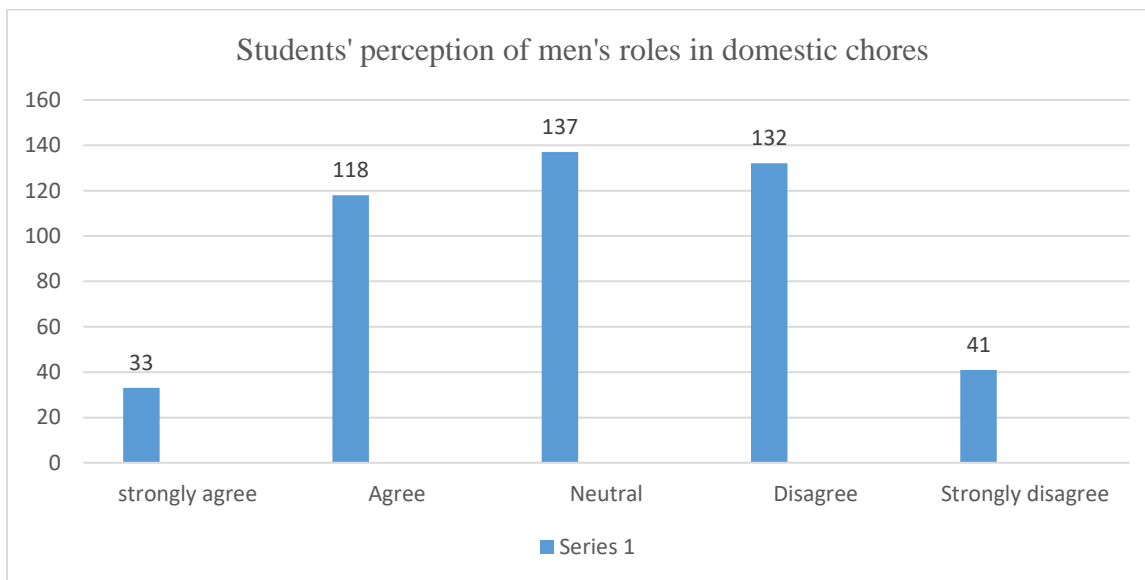
FIGURE 74: ROLE OF MOTHER IN THE STUDENTS' FAMILIES.



We find that 125 students agreed that their mothers are the main breadwinners, while 44 replied with I don't know – a response that indicates their mothers' participation in the workforce to say the least. The remaining 295 students =no. The percentage reflected in our student sample confirms with the aforementioned status of Egyptian mothers as main breadwinners or at least participate in family finances.

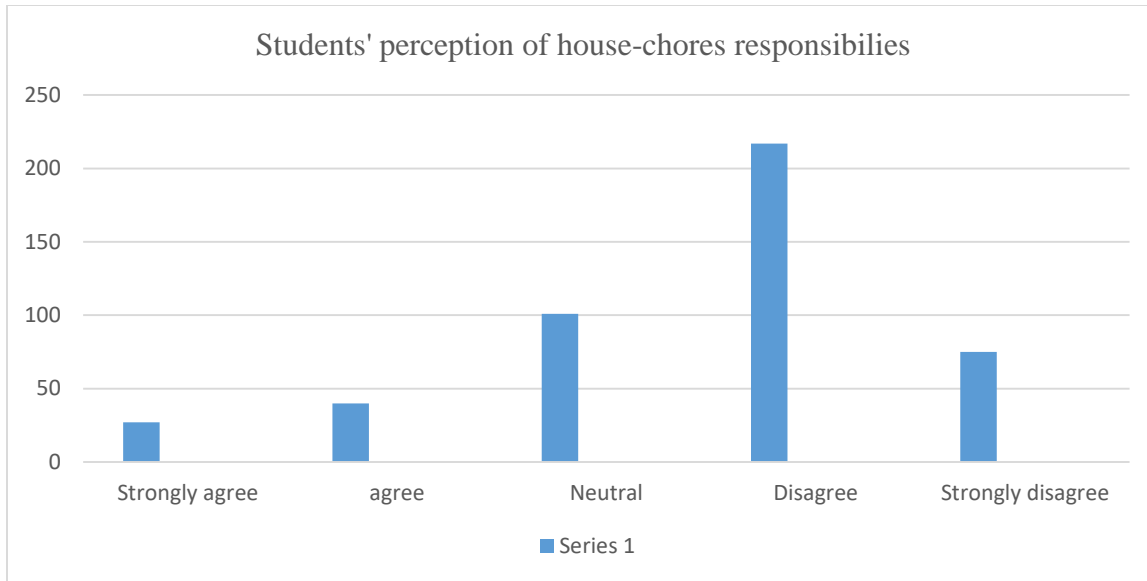
5.6.1.5. Students' perception of traditional gender-roles

FIGURE 75: QUESTION 10



The first question in this figure is to measure students' perception of man's role in domestic responsibilities. A total of strongly agree =33, agree=118 and 137 remained neutral. Yet, disagreed= 132 with the concept of undertake household chores and 41 strongly disagreed.

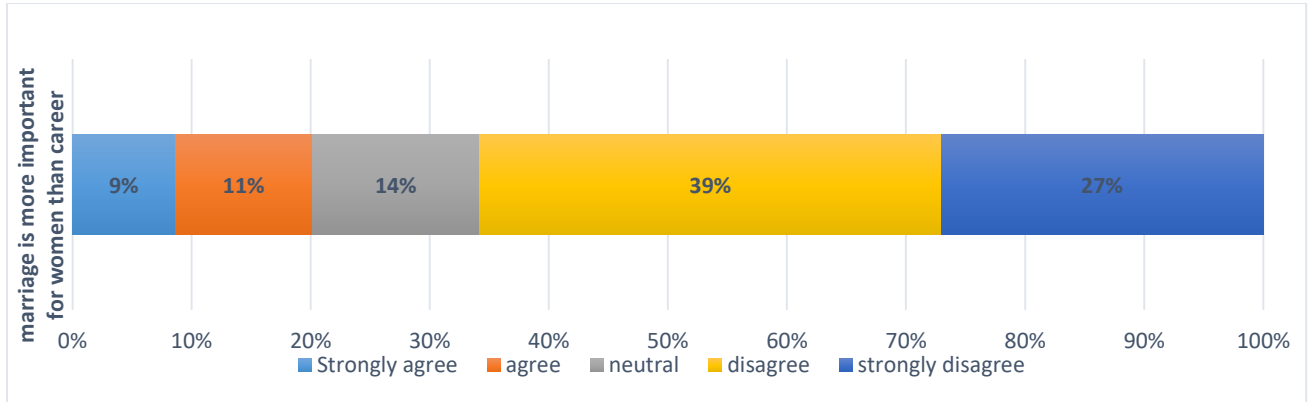
FIGURE 76: QUESTION 11



In this question students are asked if women should be the sole responsible of household chores even if they work, so we find that 217 responses disagreed and strongly disagreed= 75, while 101 answers were neutral, agreed= 40 and strongly agreed =27.

5.6.1.6. Students' awareness of gender-bias in the Egyptian society

FIGURE 77: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF MARRIAGE FOR WOMEN THAN CAREER.



The number of respondents who believe that marriage is more important than a career for girls is relatively low. In response to this question “Is marriage for women more important than a career?” 43 students strongly agree, agree =53, neutral= 65, while disagree =179 and strongly disagree =125. This question was complemented with their opinion regarding the support families provide towards females to enroll in the science track in Higher education. 190 students chose strongly agree, agree=189, neutral = 56, while only disagree=19 and disagree=5.

FIGURE 78: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF EGYPTIAN FAMILIES' EQUAL GENDER ENCOURAGEMENT TOWARDS SCIENCE TRACK IN HIGHER EDUCATION

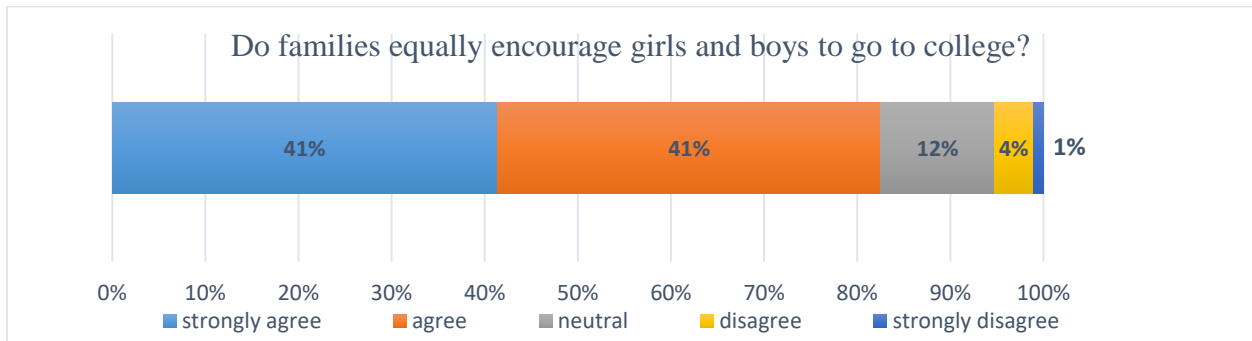
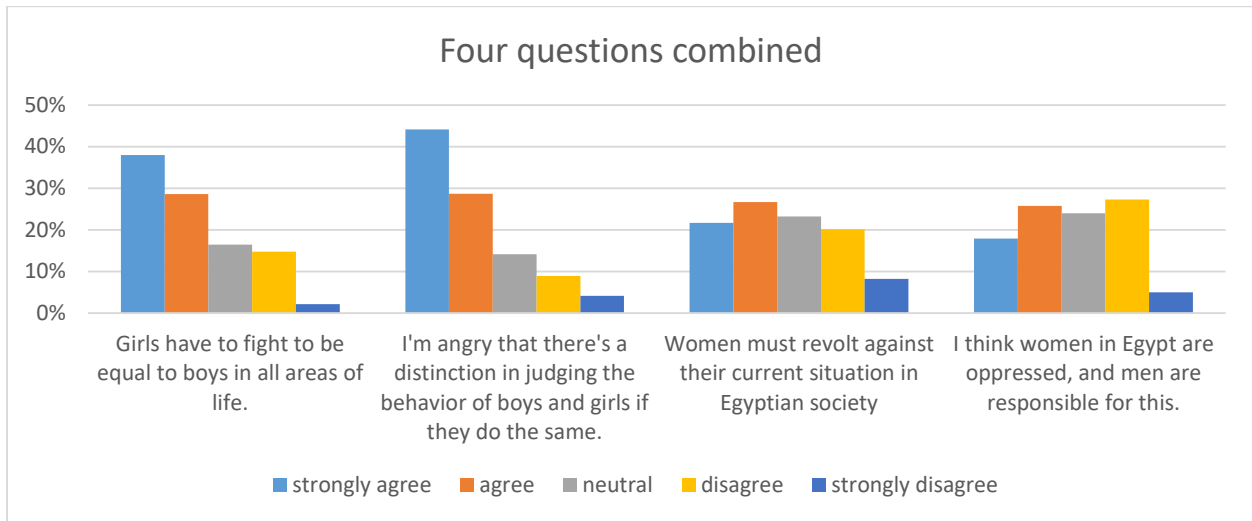


FIGURE 79: STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION OF GENDER BIAS IN THE EGYPTIAN SOCIETY



These four questions in the survey aim to assess students’ perception of gender bias through the measuring their responses towards four different points. First, both boys and girls agree on the necessity and importance of fighting to achieve equality between men and women in all areas of life. Secondly, the majority of answers (strongly agree=203, and agree=132) that there isn’t an equal treatment between boys and girls, where women are judged harsher than boys.

The third question is concerned with students’ opinions on the need to revolt to change women’s current status. We noted that the answers have a close range strongly agree=22%, agree=23%, neutral 23%, disagree=20% and strongly disagree=8%. The last question in this section measures students’ perception of men as the cause of gender inequality and women oppression. Their answers scored higher in the disagreement: disagree= 27% and strongly disagree= 5%.

5.6.1.7. Students’ perception of the importance of positive gender representation in current textbooks

FIGURE 80: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF SCHOOL CURRICULA WITH REGARDS TO GENDER AWARENESS

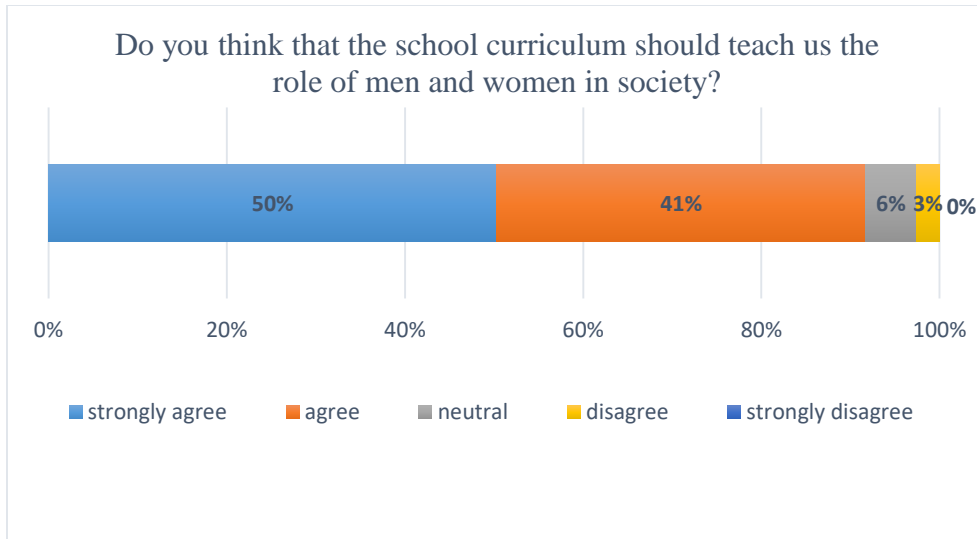
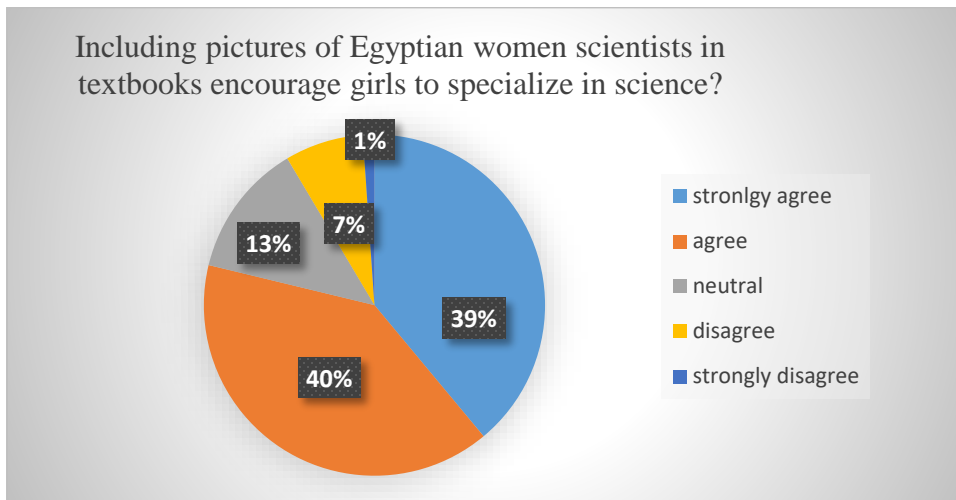


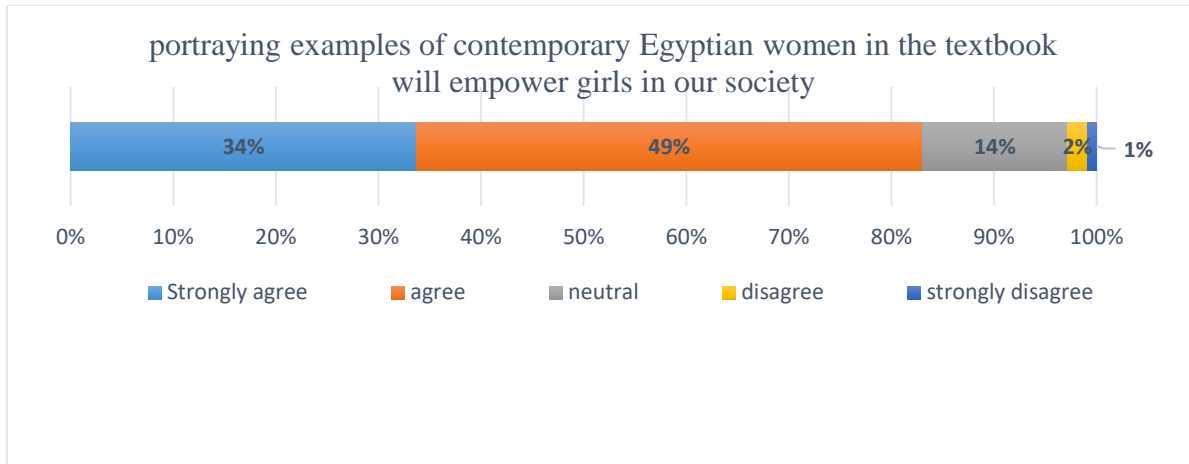
Figure 80 shows that 230=strongly agree, 189 = agree, 26 =neutral, only 12=disagree, while 0=strongly disagree.

FIGURE 81: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN REPRESENTATION



Along the lines of the previous question (Figure 82), this question also sheds light on students' perception of the effect of positive representation. We find that strongly agree= 178, agree= 182, neutral= 58, disagree=34, and strongly disagree=5 that including Egyptian role models, female scientists, encourage girls to pursuit careers in science.

FIGURE 82: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE EFFECT OF SUCCESSFUL WOMEN ROLE-MODELS IN TEXTBOOKS



A predominant majority of learners strongly agree and agree with the positive influence of including inspiring women in textbooks, while very few percentages disagree = 2%, strongly disagree = 1%.

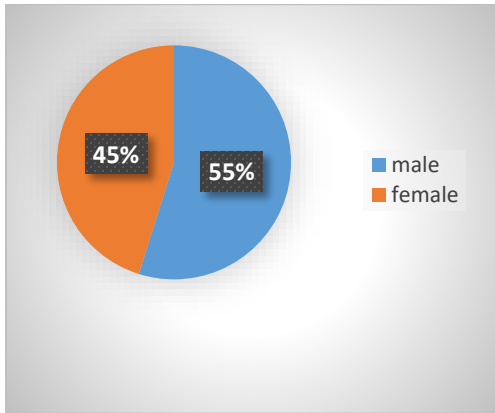
To conclude, the questions were grouped thematically according to their relevance to reveal the subjects' opinions regarding various areas that complements our research to answer the research questions. In the next section, we will present teachers' version of the questionnaire to explore other areas relevant to our study.

5.7. Second Part: Teachers' questionnaire analysis

The general profile of teachers is presented in the first section of the questionnaire: gender, age, the type of school they work in, their origin, the language they teach, and the number of students in their classes.

5.7.1. Subjects' profile

FIGURE 83: GENDER OF PARTICIPANTS.



The total number of teachers who took the questionnaire is 226; female = 102 and male = 124.

FIGURE 84: TEACHERS' DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

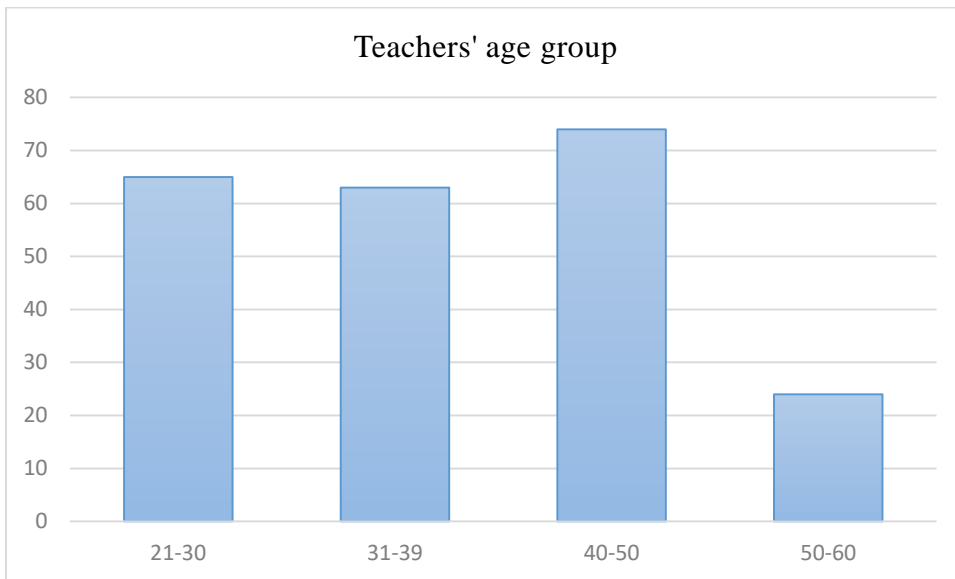
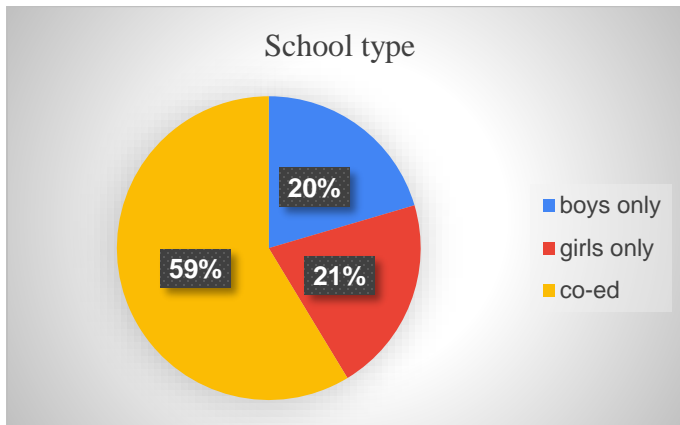


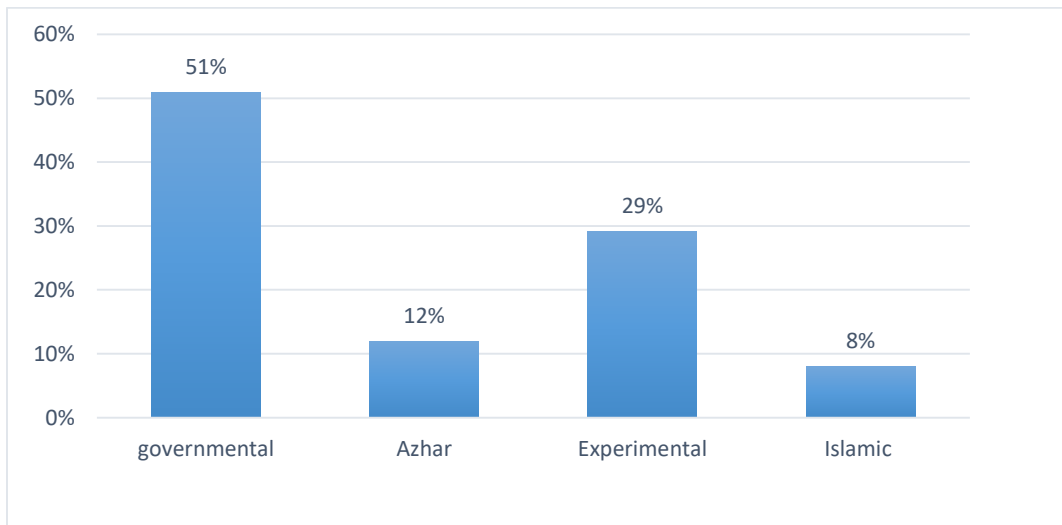
Figure 84 shows that the majority of participating teachers are in the 40-50 age group = 74, (21-30) = 65, (31- 39) = 63, and 50-60 = 24. Specifying the age of teachers reflects the level of experience in the education field.

FIGURE 85: TYPE OF SCHOOL TEACHERS WORK IN



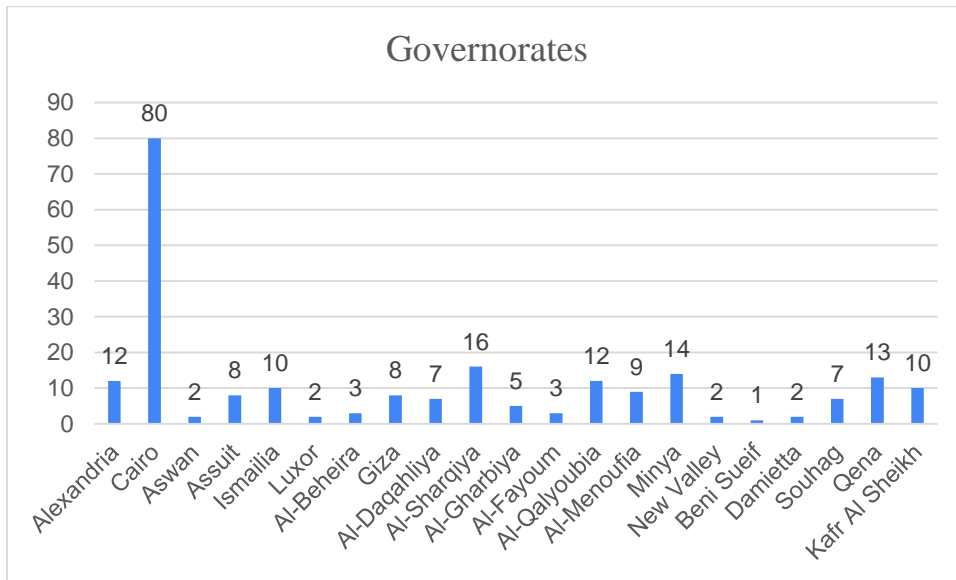
The majority of teachers teach in co-ed school = 132, while girls only schools = 47 and boys only = 46.

FIGURE 86: RESPONDENTS' SCHOOL TYPE



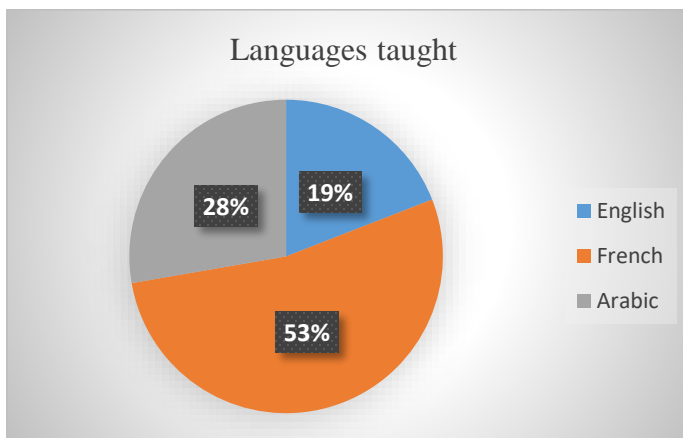
The governmental schools are the majority = 115, as shown in figure 64 while Azhar schools = 27, Experimental schools = 66, and other option specified as Islamic schools = 18.

FIGURE 87: RESPONDENTS' LOCATIONS



The participants represent 21 governorates out of Egypt's 27 governorates; As shown in figure 46, the majority of participants are from Cairo = 80 teachers. The second largest representation is from Al-Sharqiya=16, Minya= 14, Qena=13, Alexandria= 12 and Kafr Al Sheikh = 10. The remaining governorates vary in their representation ranges (8 – 1 teacher). The governorates represented in this study cover the Northern and Southern parts of Egypt.

FIGURE 88: PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPATING LANGUAGE TEACHERS

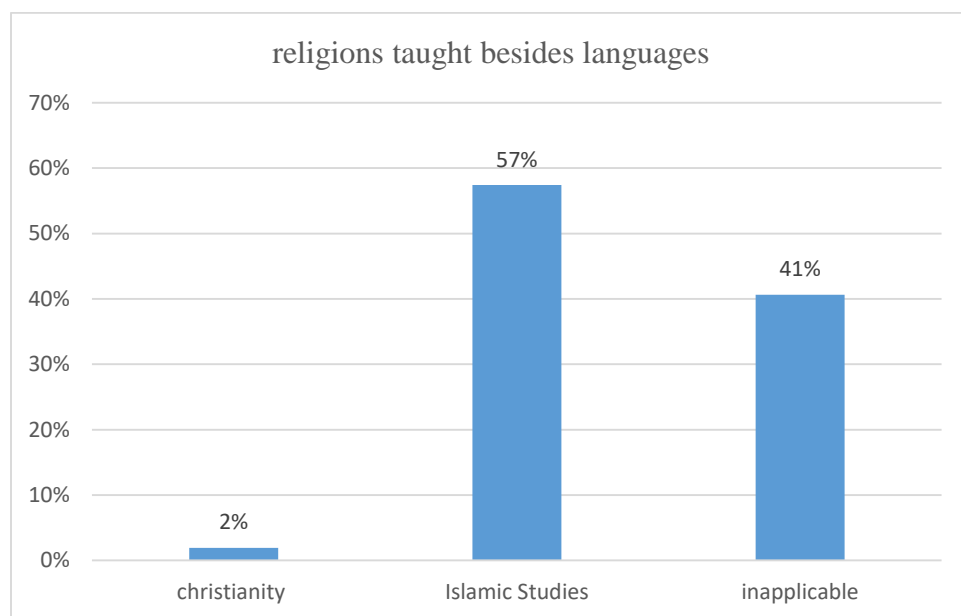


As shown in *Figure 88*, Arabic teachers = 66; French teachers= 118, and English teachers = 42 teachers.

To further elaborate on teachers' profiles, we need to understand who they are and the extent to which their social beliefs or faiths impact their teaching. Investigating teachers' religion is relevant to our study to understand how their personal beliefs affect teachers' interpretation of representations in textbooks.

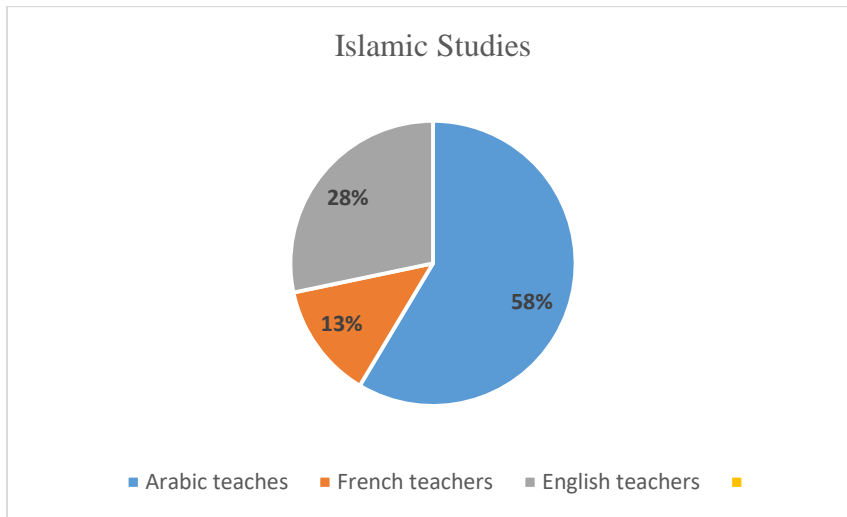
Religion – Islamic or Christian – are obligatory subjects in Egyptian schools, usually language teachers teach religion subjects in addition to language classes due to lack of funds to hire religion teachers. In our sample, 59% of respondents teach religion in addition to languages, while 41% teach their main subject only.

FIGURE 89: NUMBER OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS TEACHING RELIGION SUBJECTS



Upon further investigation of the data, we find that Christian studies are taught by French language teachers, while the Islamic studies are taught by Arabic, English and French teachers. Amongst the 89 teachers who teach Islamic studies, Arabic language teachers = 52, English language teachers = 12, and French language teachers = 25 as shown in *Figure 89*.

FIGURE 90: PERCENTAGE OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS TEACHING ISLAMIC STUDIES

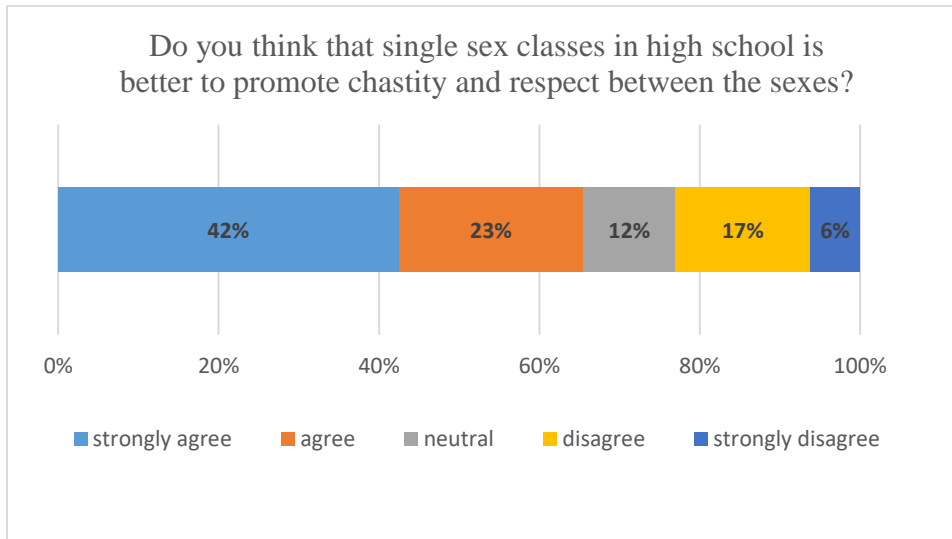


The main religion taught by the majority of teachers in our sample is the Islamic studies, where 58% are Arabic language teachers, 28% English teachers and 13% French language teachers.

First, sex segregation is highly encouraged amongst the majority of teachers to promote chastity and foster respect between girls and boys. According to our results, an overwhelming 42% strongly agree and 23% agree that boys and girls should be segregated throughout the adolescent period for the aforementioned reasons as shown in *Figure 90*.

5.7.1.1. Teachers' views on gender segregation and women's attire

FIGURE 91: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF SEGREGATED EDUCATION

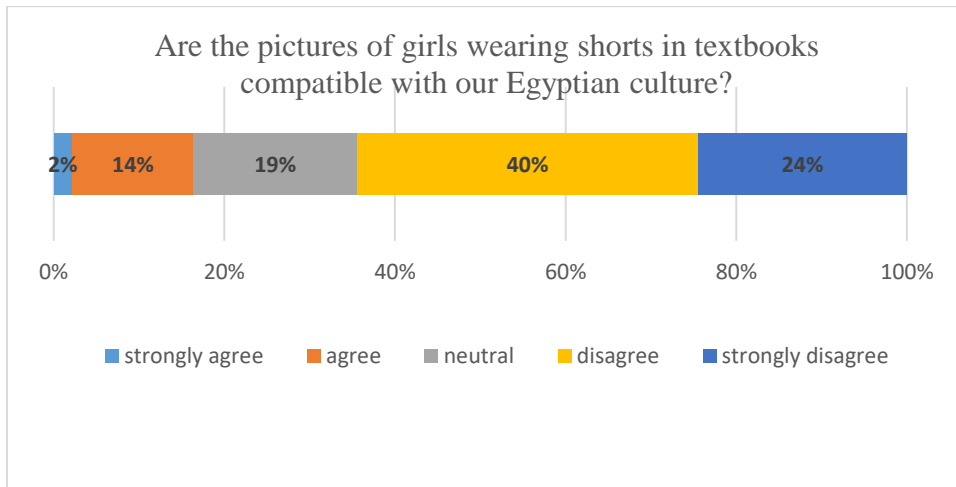


The following question inquires about the appropriateness of revealing sportswear to the Egyptian culture. The question included the picture from FRA1 of a female character in tennis outfit that reveals the arms and legs, *Figure 92*.

FIGURE 92: WOMEN IN SPORTS ATTIRE

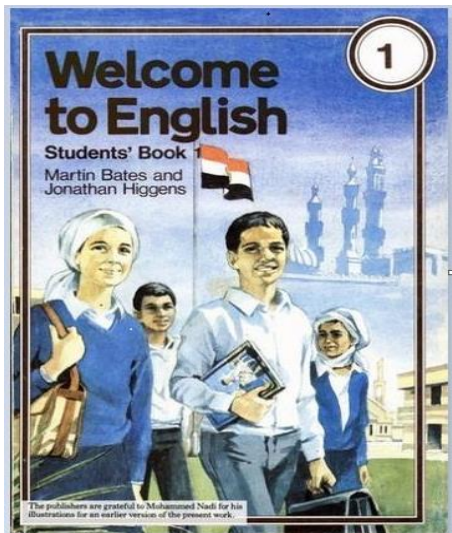


FIGURE 93: TEACHERS' VIEWS ON WOMEN ATTIRE



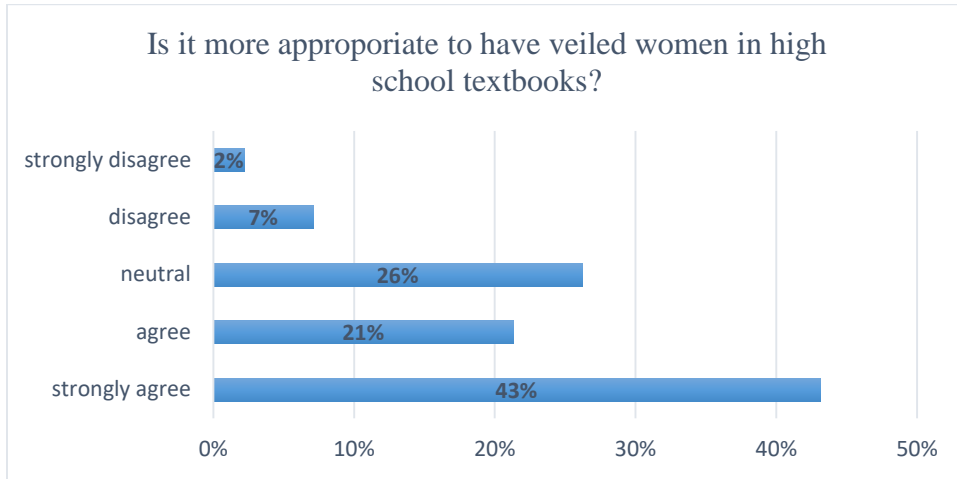
In this section, the majority of teachers find women's active wear too revealing or inappropriate to Egyptian culture. The following question also focuses on women's dress, specifically the head scarf. The majority of teachers (strongly agree=43%, agree= 21%) believe that women in textbooks should have their hair covered.

FIGURE 94: OLD ENGLISH TEXTBOOK COVER



This question is similar to the one in the students' version, as it seeks to uncover teachers' views on representing female characters wearing *hijab*.

FIGURE 95: TEACHERS' VIEWS ON THE INCLUSION OF THE HEADSCARF IN TEXTBOOKS

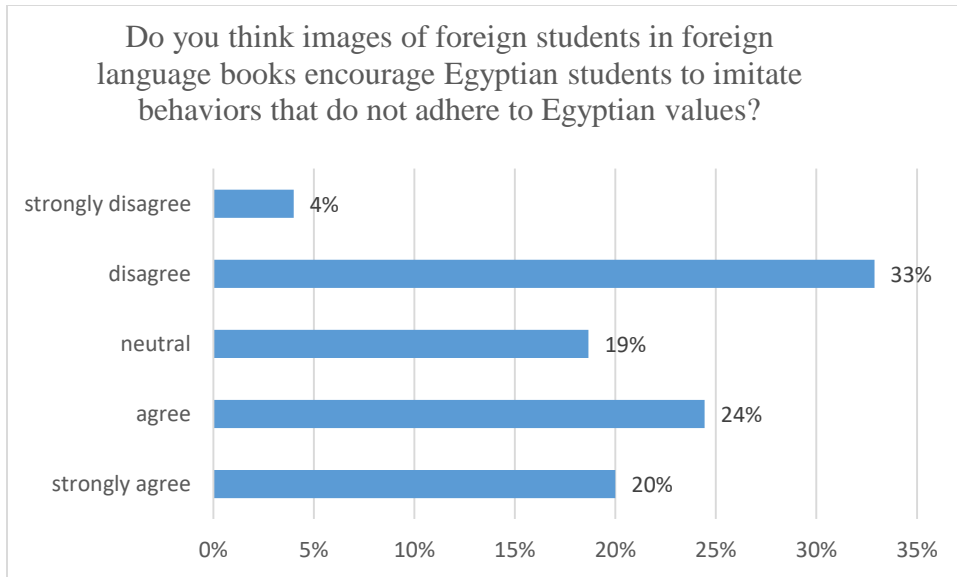


According to the data presented in *Figure 95*, it appears that the vast majority of teachers hold a preference for depicting female characters wearing a headscarf in educational textbooks. Conversely, a negligible proportion of respondents appear to disagree with this particular viewpoint.

FIGURE 96: EXCERPT FROM FRENCH TEXTBOOK



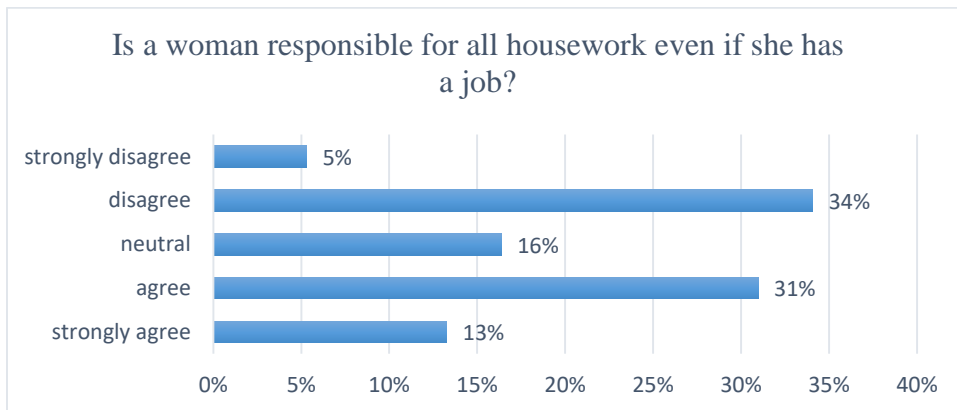
FIGURE 97: TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION OF THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN EXPOSURE ON EGYPTIAN STUDENTS



The perceptions of teachers regarding the impact of exposure to images of foreign characters on Egyptian students' behavior were found to be evenly distributed. Specifically, the data indicates that 20% of teachers strongly agree that such exposure has a significant impact, while 24% merely agree with this notion. A notable proportion (33%) does not perceive any potential threat arising from this exposure. Only a small fraction (4%) of teachers strongly disagree with the claim that exposure to images of foreign characters affects the behavior of Egyptian students.

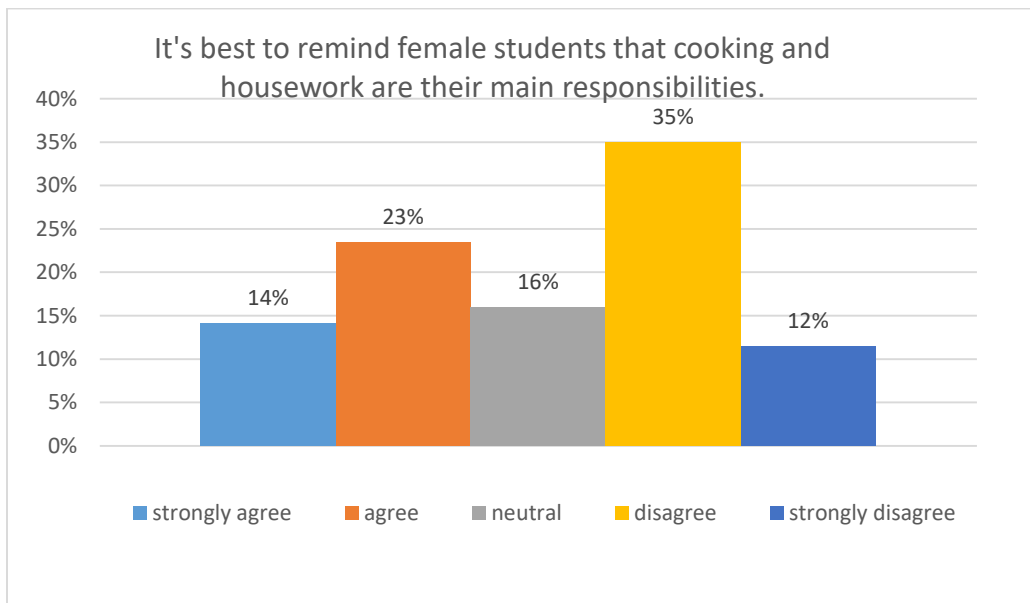
5.7.1.2. Teachers’ perception of gender equality

FIGURE 98: TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION OF GENDER ROLES



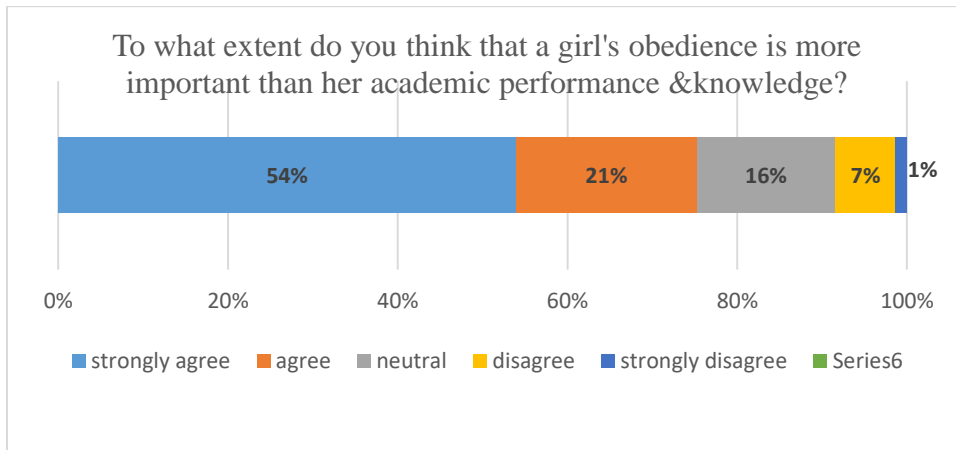
The distribution of responses regarding whether household chore responsibility is a suitable indicator of societal gender roles is noteworthy. The data suggests that a considerable proportion of respondents agree with this notion, with 30% strongly agreeing and 70% merely agreeing. However, a significant portion of the sample displayed a neutral attitude towards this issue, with 37% of respondents indicating no strong opinion either way. On the other hand, a sizable proportion of respondents expressed disagreement, with 77% indicating disagreement and 12% strongly disagreeing with this perspective.

FIGURE 99: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF GENDER ROLES



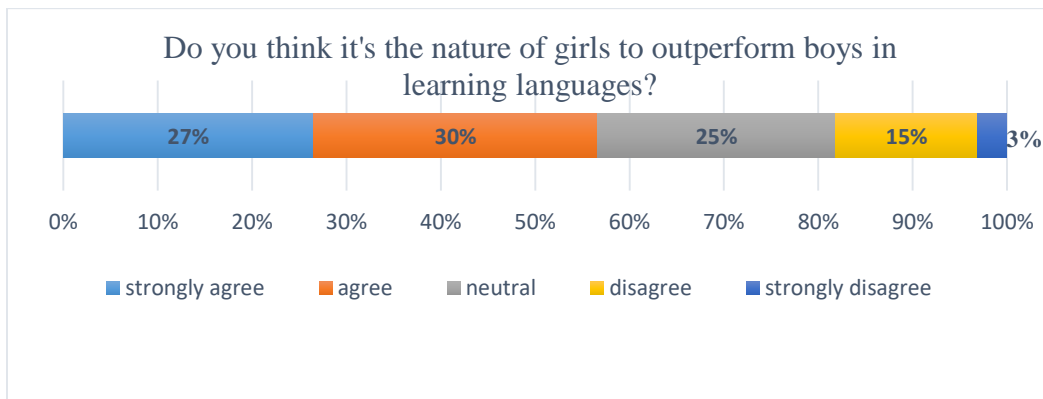
Teachers' responses varied to this particular question, however, we cannot ignore relatively high percentage of agreement and neutral choices.

FIGURE 100: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF GIRLS' ROLES



This question tackles the concept of female obedience as perceived by teachers. Here, an overwhelming majority (strongly agree = 122, agree = 48) agrees that obedience for girls is more important than advancement in academic performance. Other answers vary between Neutral = 37, disagree = 16 and strongly disagree = 3.

FIGURE 101: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF GIRLS' PERFORMANCE IN LANGUAGES



These two questions tackle stereotypic beliefs regarding girls and boys' excellence in languages and STEM respectively. The results presented in *Figure 101* shed light on the perceptions of teachers regarding gender differences in language competences. The data reveals that a significant proportion of respondents hold the view that girls outperform boys in this domain, with 60% strongly agreeing and 68% merely agreeing. This finding is consistent with numerous studies in the literature that have investigated gender disparities in language learning. However, a sizeable proportion of respondents expressed a neutral stance towards this issue, with 57%

indicating no strong opinion. In contrast, a minority of respondents disagreed with this perspective, with 34% expressing disagreement and only 7% strongly disagreeing.

Similarly, *Figure 102* provides insight into teachers' beliefs about the proficiency of girls and boys in STEM subjects. The data highlights a pervasive stereotype, as a majority of respondents agree (Strongly agree= 53, agree= 68) that boys outperform girls in STEM subjects, despite evidence indicating otherwise. A considerable proportion of respondents displayed neutrality on this issue (neutral =53), while 33% disagreed with the notion that boys are superior in STEM subjects (disagree = 23, strongly disagree= 10).

FIGURE 102: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF BOYS' PERFORMANCE IN STEM

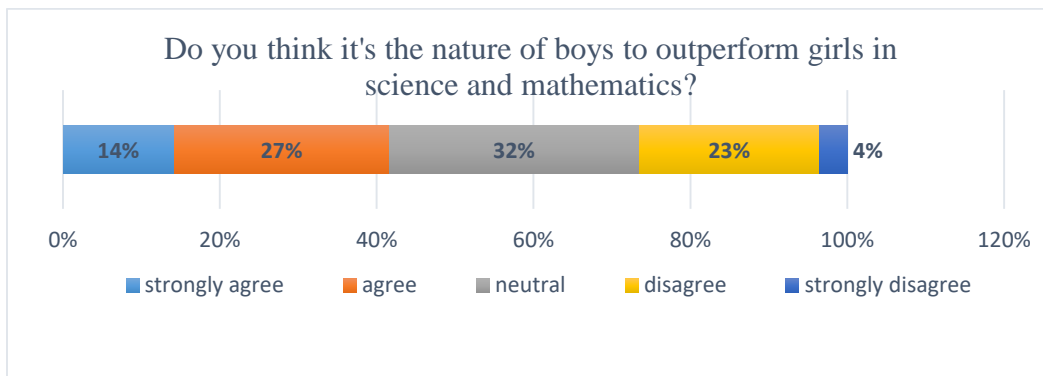
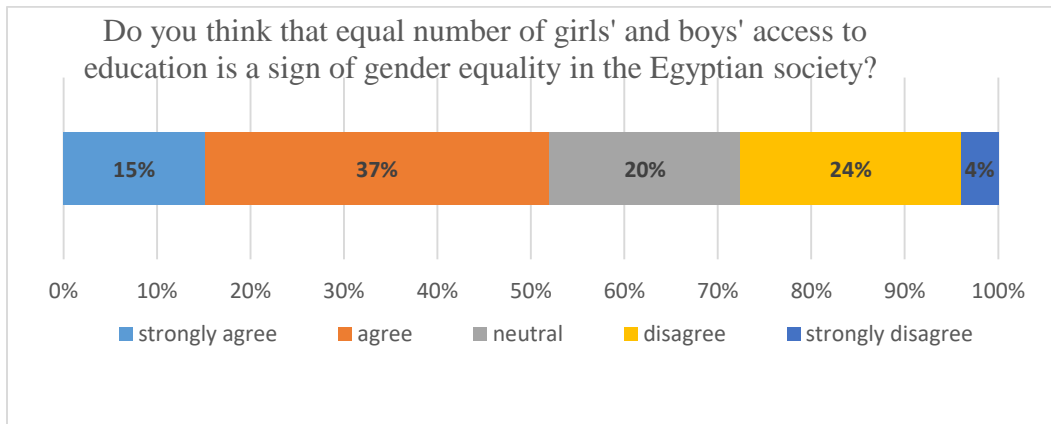


FIGURE 103: TEACHERS' VIEWS ON ACCESS TO EDUCATION AS A SIGN OF GENDER-EQUALITY

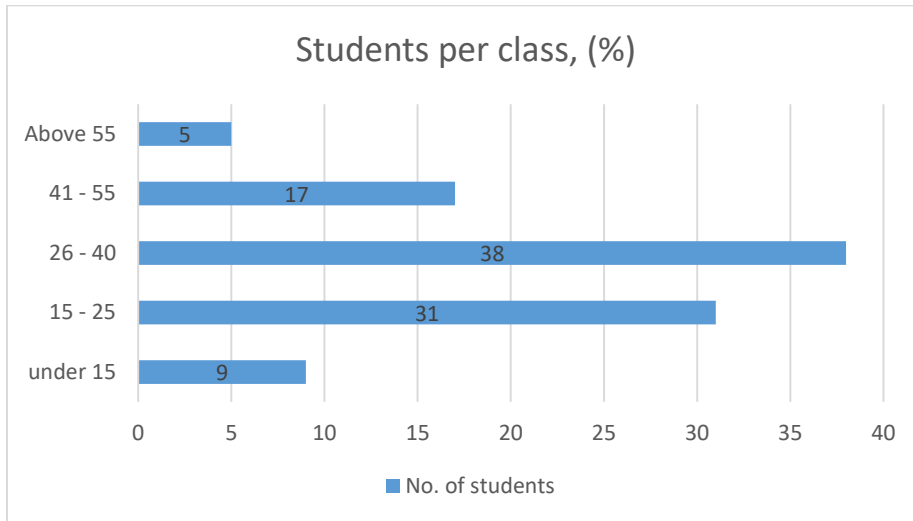


The data presented in this figure indicates that a considerable proportion of teachers hold the belief that girls' enrollment in schools is a manifestation of empowerment for girls within Egyptian society. Specifically, 34% of respondents strongly agree and 83% agree with this

perspective. This finding suggests that many teachers recognize the importance of girls' education as a means of empowering them and promoting gender equality.

5.7.1.3. Teachers’ perception of student-teacher interpersonal relations

FIGURE 104: NUMBER OF STUDENTS PER CLASS



As demonstrated in the chart, *Figure 104*, the majority of teachers have 26-40 students per class and only 9% have classes of 15 students and under. These types of classes will not allow student-centered learning skills, but rather give the teachers more authority in class.

FIGURE 105: TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS’ RESPECT TOWARDS LANGUAGE TEACHERS

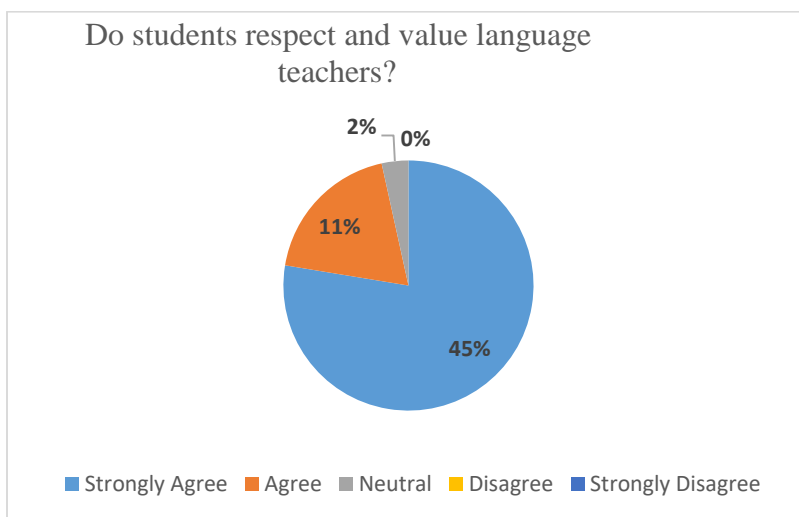


FIGURE 106: TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION OF THEIR VALUE IN STUDENTS’ EYES

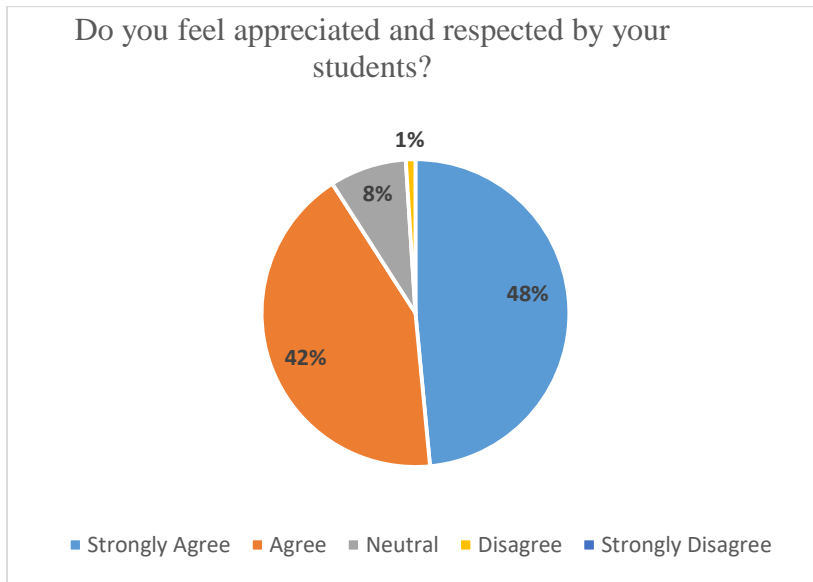


Figure 105 and *Figure 106* demonstrate the majority of respondents’ beliefs that language teachers, compared to other subjects’ teachers, are highly valued and respected amongst students. Moreover, they personally feel respected and appreciated by their students.

FIGURE 107: TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION OF THEIR PROXIMITY TO THEIR STUDENTS, (%)

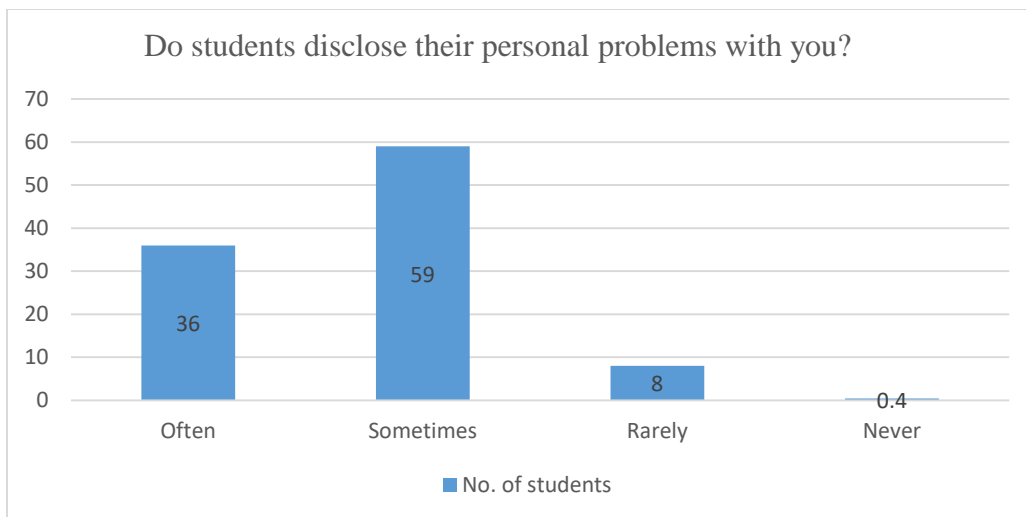


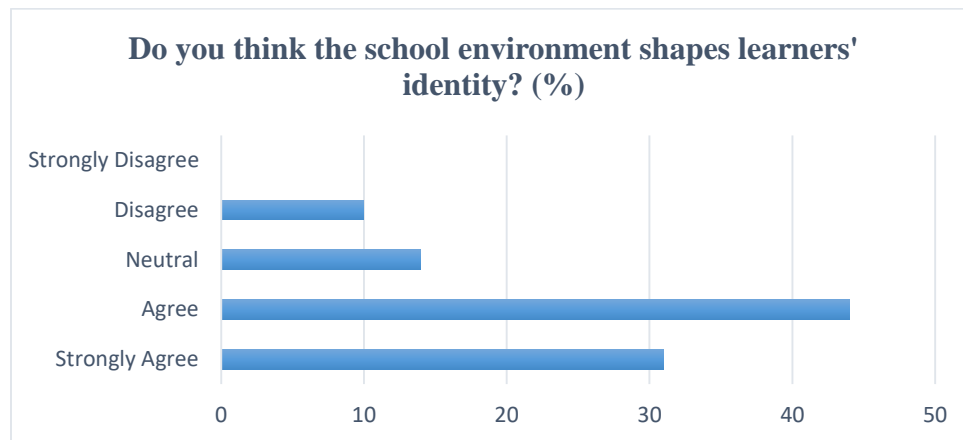
Figure 107 demonstrates how teachers perceive the level of interaction with their learners as 59% of teachers reported that sometimes their students share private issues with them, while

36% reported that it is a common behavior that happens quite often. Often = 80, sometimes = 123, rarely = 18, while never =1. We can conclude that there is high level of openness between teachers and learners despite high class density.

5.7.1.4. Teachers' perception of their influence on students

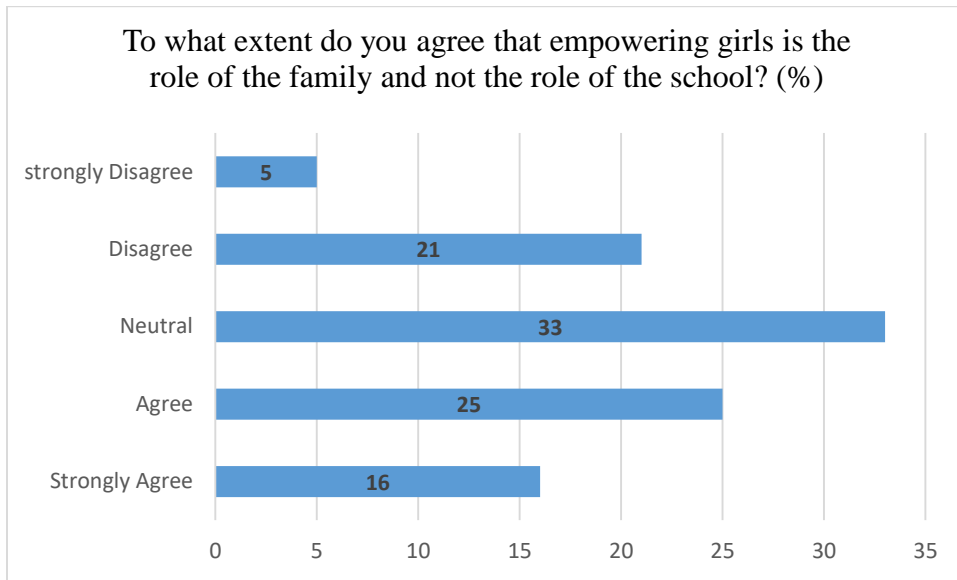
This section in the questionnaire tackles teachers' perception of their role to combat gender stereotypes and to raise learners' conscience awareness regarding gender equality. The high level of proximity demonstrated in the previous section could be an indication of teachers' initiatives to teachers' positive position to tackle social values with their learners. The next few questions will unravel teachers' perception of their efforts to raise students' awareness towards empowering women in particular, one of Egypt's pressing societal problems.

FIGURE 108: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL INFLUENCE ON SHAPING LEARNERS' IDENTITY



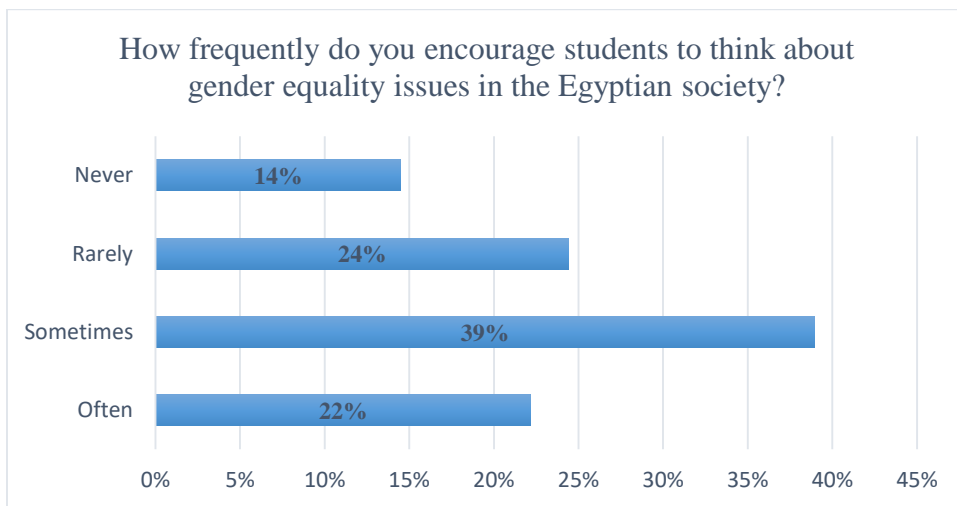
The majority of teachers believe that the school environment has a strong impact on learners' identity. Strongly agree=69 responses, agree= 98 responses, neutral = 32 responses, disagree= 23 responses and strongly disagree = 1 response.

FIGURE 109: TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION OF SCHOOLS’ ROLES IN EMPOWERING GIRLS



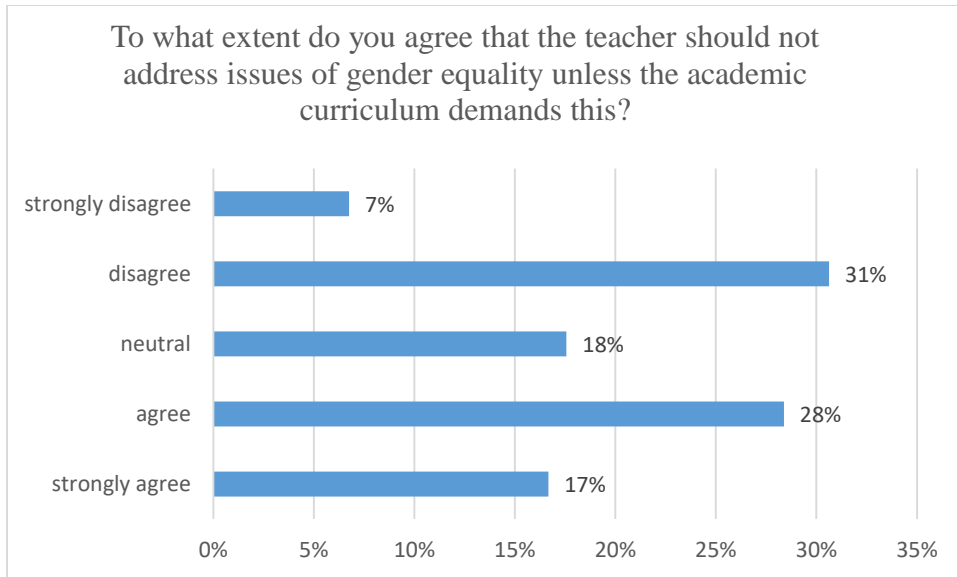
It is clear here that the answers varied between agree, neutral and disagree; strongly agree = 36, agree = 55, neutral = 73, disagree= 47, strongly disagree= 10. The discrepancy in the answers to this question and the previous one highlight the teachers’ hesitance regarding the responsibility of the empowering girls in specific.

FIGURE 110: TEACHERS’ INITIATIVES IN RAISING GENDER AWARENESS



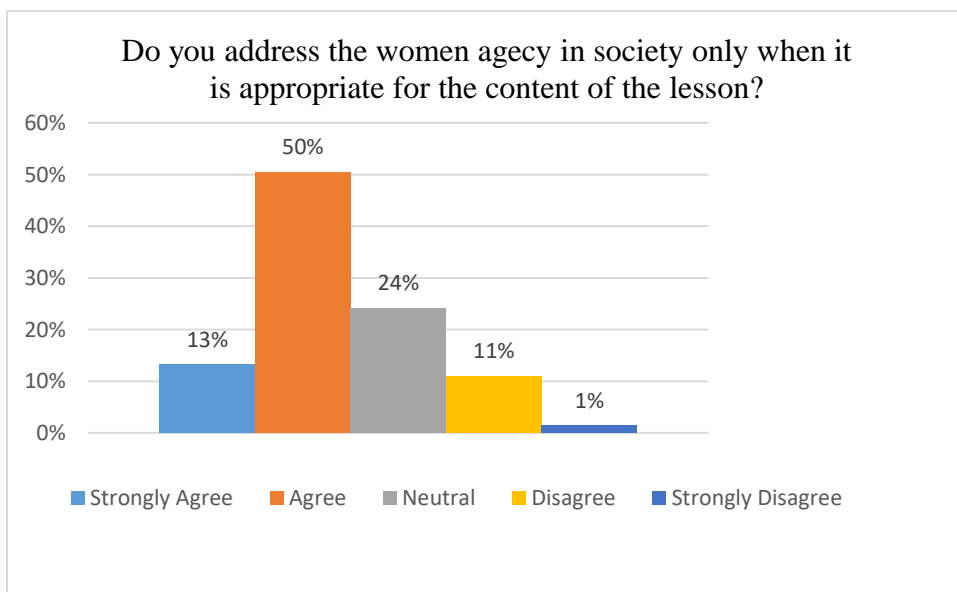
The majority of teachers chose, sometimes = 86 with regards to raising students gender equality awareness, Often = 22 rarely= 54, never = 32 responses.

FIGURE 111: TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION OF THE CURRICULUM’S ROLE IN RAISING GENDER AWARENESS



This question deals with teachers’ initiatives to raise students’ awareness regarding gender equality (Strongly agree = 37, agree = 63) believe that teachers should not initiate gender awareness unless it is required within the school curriculum. On the other hand, other teachers (disagree= 68, strongly disagree = 15) believe that raising awareness on gender equality is not tied to a specific curriculum requirement.

FIGURE 112: TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF LESSON OBJECTIVES IN PROMOTING WOMEN’S AGENCY

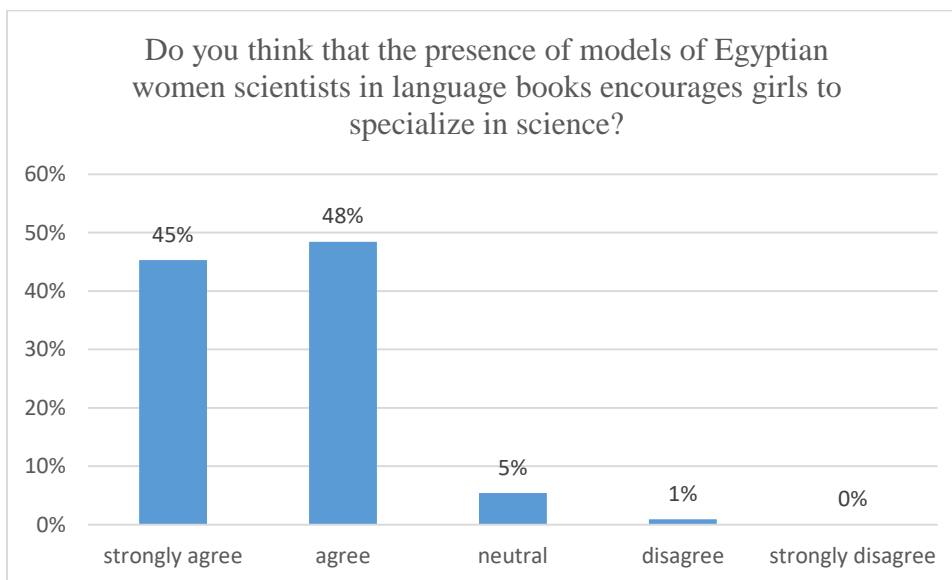


The results from the two questions reveal a discrepancy in teachers' attitudes towards gender equality and women's empowerment. While a majority of teachers in the previous question did not consider raising students' awareness of gender equality as part of the school curriculum, a significant proportion of teachers in this question (strongly agree=29, agree=111) believe that initiating discussions on women's empowerment must be one of the objectives of classroom lessons. This inconsistency suggests that teachers hold varying opinions and understandings of gender equality and women's empowerment, which may be influenced by various factors, such as their personal beliefs, cultural and social norms, and educational background.

5.7.1.5. Teachers' perception of the impact of textbook representation on students

The last section in the questionnaire tackles the perception of teachers of the impact of gender representation in textbooks. After establishing that teachers are aware of their impact on learners, unraveling their perception of gender roles and their initiative to raise gender awareness, it is necessary to explore their perception of the impact of gender representation in students. This is an essential dimension to discover because their awareness of the impact of representation sheds light on their contribution, or the absence thereof, in accentuating counter-stereotypes.

FIGURE 113: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE IMPACT OF REPRESENTING FEMALE FIGURES IN STEM



The vast majority of teachers believe that representation of women as scientist will encourage present encouraging role models in STEM. Similarly, *Figure 113* demonstrates teachers' perception of the positive impact of representation on girls' empowerment in general.

FIGURE 114: THE EFFECT OF POSITIVE WOMEN REPRESENTATION ON GIRLS.

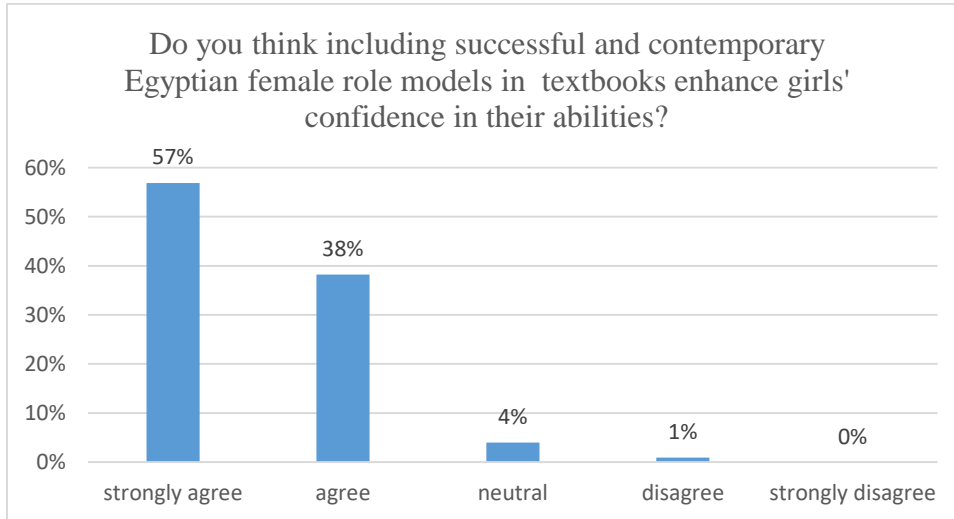
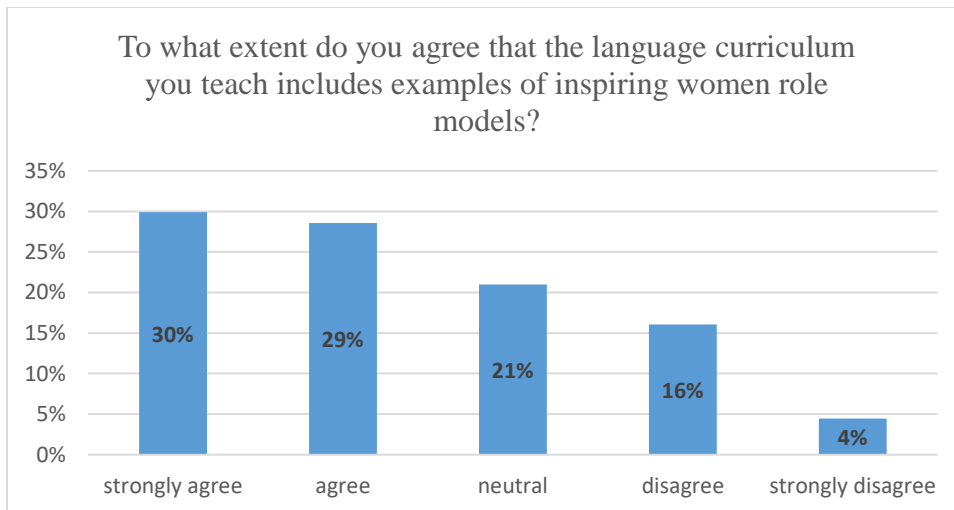
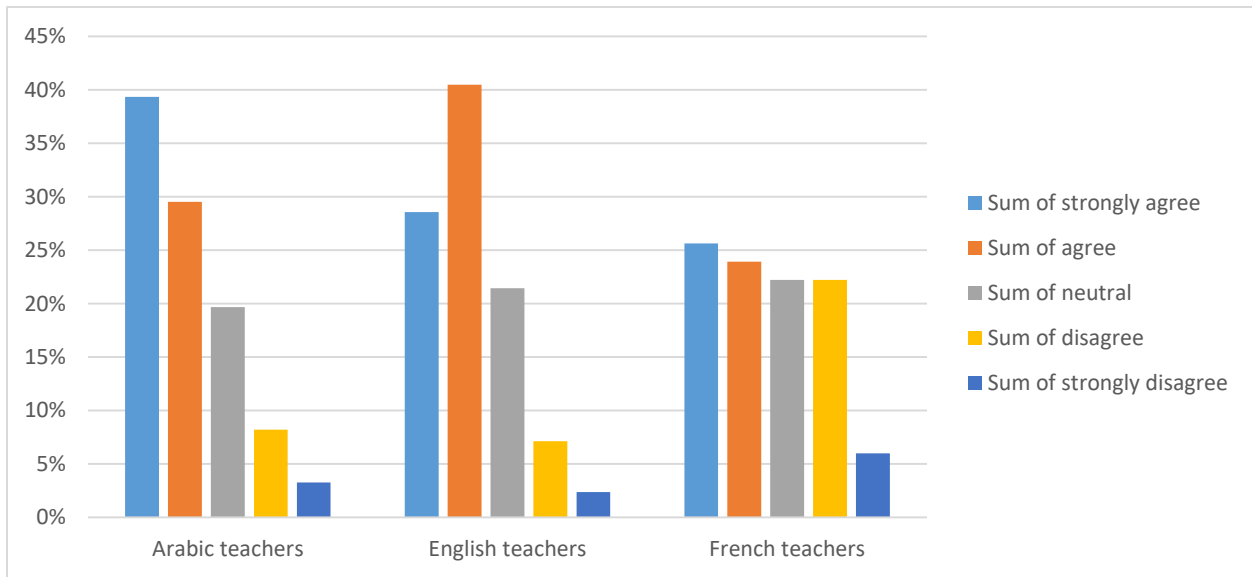


FIGURE 115: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN TEXTBOOKS.



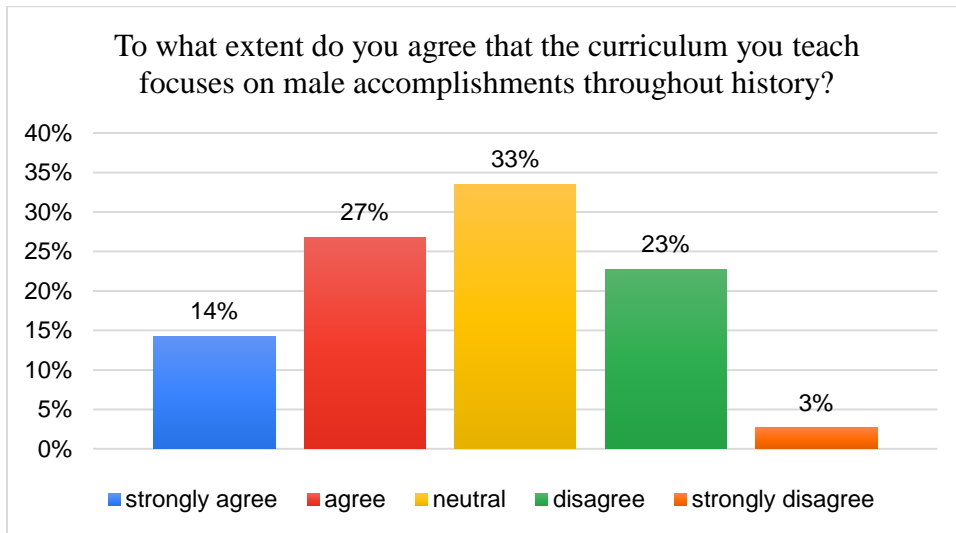
The majority of teachers agree that the textbooks include inspiring female role models, thus, it was necessary to investigate which teachers perceive their textbooks inclusive of positive women representation. *Figure 115*, demonstrates the perception of teachers of the three languages separately.

FIGURE 116: TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION OF POSITIVE WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN THEIR TEXTBOOKS



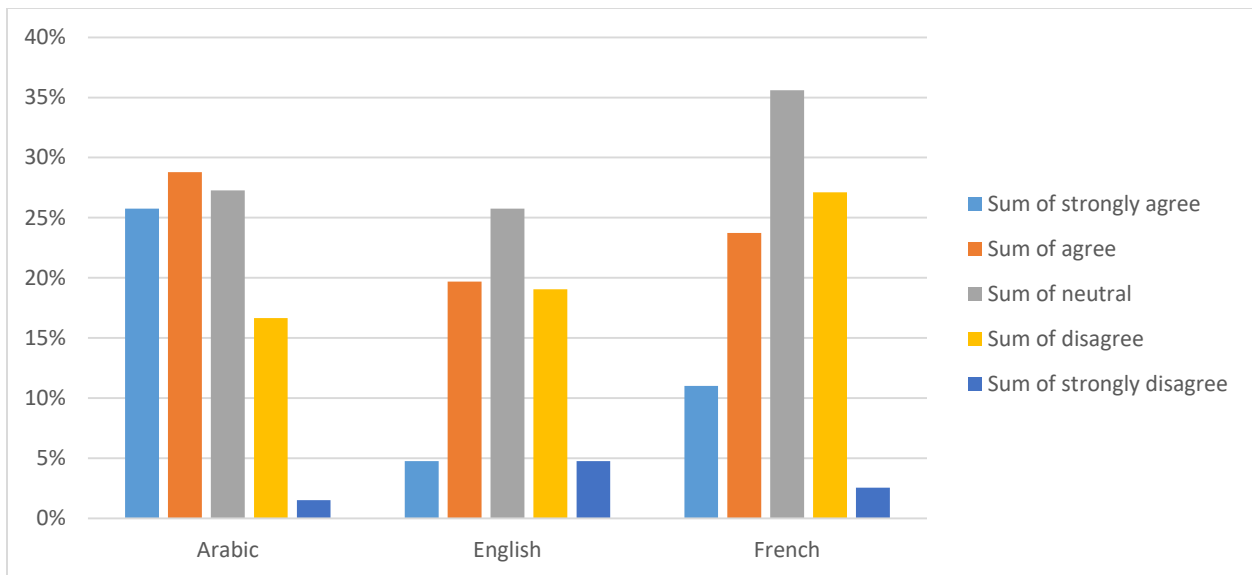
The findings from this question reveal interesting insights into the perceptions of Arabic, English, and French language teachers regarding women's representation in textbooks. Surprisingly, a large proportion of Arabic language teachers (strongly agree=39%, agree=30%) believe that their textbooks contain positive representations of women. Similarly, a considerable proportion of English language teachers (agree=40%, strongly agree=29%) hold a similar view. In contrast, the responses of French language teachers were more varied, with 26% strongly agreeing, 24% agreeing, 22% remaining neutral, 22% disagreeing, and only 6% strongly disagreeing with the notion of positive representations of women in their textbooks. These findings suggest that perceptions of gender representation in language textbooks vary among different language teachers, which may reflect differences in cultural and educational backgrounds, as well as differing interpretations of gender roles and stereotypes.

FIGURE 117: TEACHERS’ VIEWS OF MALE DOMINANCE IN THEIR TEXTBOOKS



Interestingly, teachers’ views regarding male dominance in their textbooks have small variation between agreeing, neutral and disagreeing. *Figure 117*, provides a further distinction between Arabic, English and French language teachers.

FIGURE 118: TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION OF MALE DOMINANCE IN THEIR TEXTBOOKS



In this question, half of the Arabic language teachers (strongly agree= 26%, agree = 29%) believe that the content is dominated by male figures, while neutral = 27% and disagree= 17% and only 2% strongly disagree.

As for English language teachers, strongly agree= 5%, agree= 20%, neutral =26%, while disagree= 19% and strongly disagree= 5%.

The French language teachers strongly agree= 11%, agree= 24%, neutral = 36%, disagree= 27% and strongly disagree= 3%.

5.7.1.6. Teachers' recommendations towards improving women representation in textbooks they use (Open-ended question).

Question: What are your recommendations to enhance women's representation in the textbook you currently use?

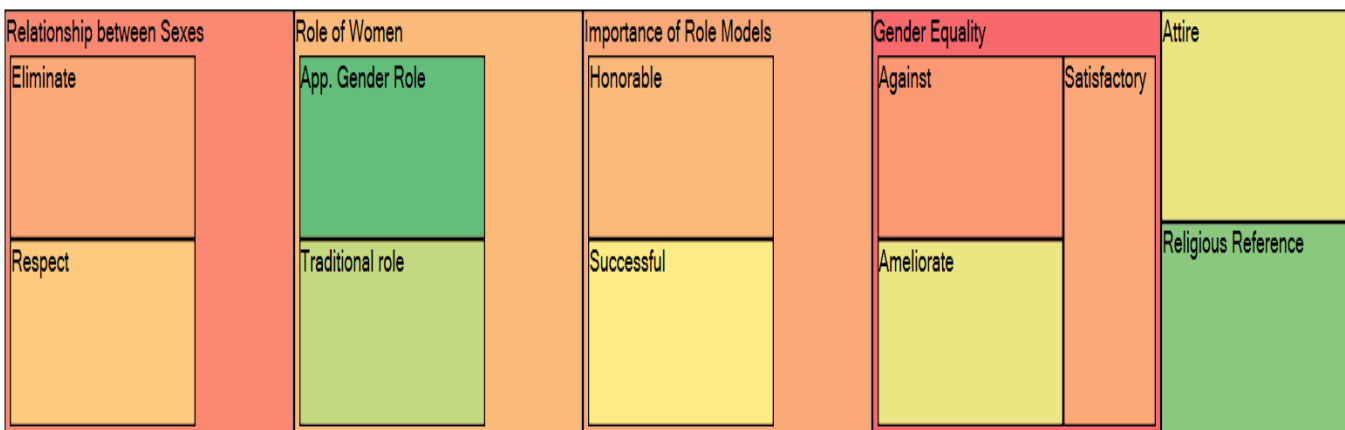
The answers compiled had a total of 108 responses. We imported the data into Nvivo to be analyzed for frequent words and patterns. All answers were numbered and given a reference R 1 – R 108.

After reading the answers thoroughly, words were detected for repetition and coded into Nodes and sub nodes as shown in *Figure 119*.

The following nodes and sub nodes were created:

1. Role of Women
 - i) Appropriate Gender-Role
 - ii) Traditional Role
2. Role models
 - i) Honorable
 - ii) Successful
3. Gender Equality
 - i) Against
 - ii) Satisfactory
 - iii) Ameliorate
4. Relationship between sexes
 - i) Respect
5. Women's attire
6. Religious reference

FIGURE 119: NODES COMPARED BY NUMBER OF CODING REFERENCES



A. Role of Women

The first theme in the teachers’ recommendations is the inclusion of women’s role in the society so that learners are aware of their contribution = 33%. Upon further analysis, the roles explained by teachers were grouped into to sub-groups:

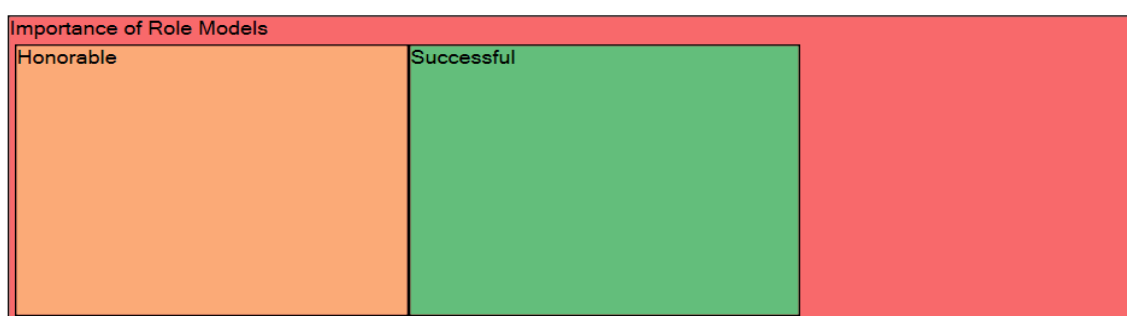
TABLE 71: ROLE OF WOMEN

Child Nodes	%	Teachers’ recommendations	Examples
Appropriate role	17	Throughout the answers, some teachers stressed on the notion of appropriate duties/professions)	-R94, a French teacher “women are the basis of society and their appropriate role begins at home,” -R50, Arabic teacher, “each gender should do their appropriate role”
Traditional role	11	women should be represented in the textbooks as mothers/ sisters and wives	-R61, French teacher: “She should be represented as a mother, sister, daughter and

			wife and that she is a gem and a preserved jewel”.
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A. Role models

FIGURE 120: NODES AND CHILD NODES COMPARED BY NUMBER OF ITEMS CODED



Secondly, 17% of the answers specified the inclusion of female role models in textbook as necessary for learners. As shown in *Figure 98*, the answers were divided between honorable and successful due to the nuance difference between the honor and success. The former focuses more on respect and piety, while the latter leans more towards achievement and progress.

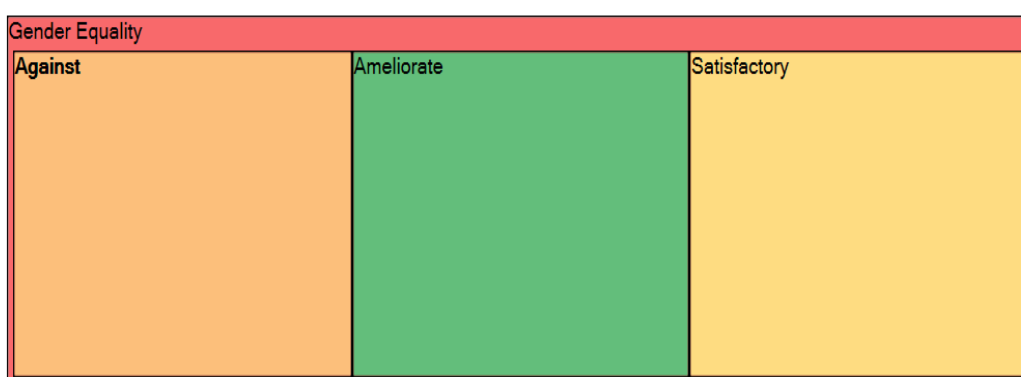
TABLE 72: ROLE MODELS

Child Nodes	%	Teachers' recommendations	Example
Honorable	5%	The answers specified "honorable and respectable female figures to act as role models for learners.	- R55, French teacher: "There should be more focus on rural girls and present honorable models from them". - R80, French teacher; "the textbook lacks honorable female models".

Successful	8%	Other teachers chose the “successful” role models to empower female students.	- R26, French teacher: Presenting Egyptian role models such as Nabawiyeh Musa’s 47 successful journeys
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B. Gender Equality

FIGURE 121: CHILD NODES COMPARED BY NUMBER OF ITEMS CODED



The third coded theme is gender-equality, since the term was present in teachers’ answers = 17%. This theme was divided into three subcategories according to respondents’ views on gender-equality.

TABLE 73: GENDER EQUALITY

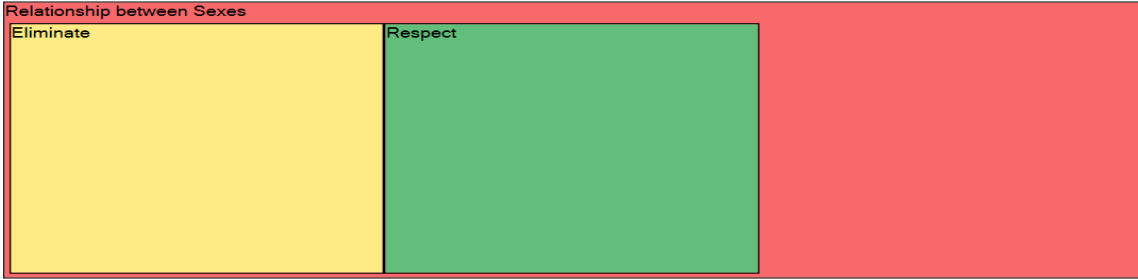
Child Nodes	%	Teachers’ recommendations	Examples
Against	3%	This group signifies teachers’ views regarding including gender-equality concepts in textbooks	- R29, French teacher: “I would like the syllabus not to touch on that.” -R31, English teacher: “Equality between men and

⁴⁷ Nabaweya Musa is the pioneer of Egyptian Feminism 1886-1951.

			women in general is not correct.”
Ameliorate	9%	Some answers stressed on the importance of improving gender-equality	-R6, Arabic teacher: “The textbooks should be edited for more equality”
Satisfactory	4%	Some answers reflected satisfaction with the status-quo	-R30, English teachers: “I would like everything to be the same as it is for men and women.”

C. Relationship between sexes

FIGURE 122: NODES COMPARED BY NUMBER OF ITEMS CODED



Some of the answers mentioned inter-gender interactions or relationships to be included or avoided in the content of textbooks = 12%. Only 2% mentioned the overall idea of gender interaction. The remaining 10% are divided into two sub-categories.

TABLE 74: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SEXES

Child node	%	Teachers’ recommendations	Examples
Eliminate	4%	Some views were against including any form of gender interaction in textbooks.	- R99, French teacher: “Eliminate some representations that do not agree with our society, such as the mixed gender interaction in the textbook.”

			-R67, French teacher: “delete mixed-gender dialogues.”
Respect	6%	Some answers included respect as a condition for allowing gender mixing in textbooks.	-R75, French teacher: “reinforce respect and politeness in conversation between the two sexes.”

D. Women’s attire

The fifth theme reflects the number of references made by teachers to women’s clothes that should be represented in the textbooks = 9%

Example:

- R61, French teacher: “I refuse to show her charms and focus on places that arouse the students' instincts.”
- R90, French teacher: “Commitment to the appropriate dress for the Egyptian culture.”

E. Religious references

The last detected theme in the teachers’ answers is to code the number of references made to the religious figures or teachings to be included in the textbooks = 14%.

- R28, Arabic teacher: “We should focus more on the traditional pious predecessors.”
- R62, French teacher: “The role of women in the home is one of the greatest roles in Islam.”
- R91, French teacher, “Depicting the role of women and giving their form in line with our Islamic identity.”
- R104, Arabic teacher: “To show women’s role in accordance to the rules of religion.”
- R85, French teacher: “There should be more stories of the wives of the Prophet be explained in French, English and Arabic.”

In summary, the teachers’ answers carried many overt and covert forms of sexist bias. The teachers’ current stance on gender equality and women empowerment provides us with a glimpse about the way they view and address gender representations in the textbook.

Chapter VI: Discussion and Conclusion

This study integrates social representation theory and social identity theory as frameworks to examine the existing social representations of women in state school textbooks. These representations have a direct impact on how learners perceive the status of women in Egyptian society and influence the way young adult females identify themselves in order to adhere to societal expectations.

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In this section, we will delve into our findings and establish connections with the concepts discussed in the previous chapters. Additionally, we will analyze and evaluate the results, as well as discuss their significance and implications. Moreover, we will compare our findings with previous studies on the representation of women in language textbooks to highlight any notable differences. Throughout this study, we aimed to address the following research questions:

- How are women represented across Egyptian public secondary language textbooks: English, Arabic, and French?
- How do learners perceive the current gender representations in language textbooks?

We hypothesized that there will be variation in women representation across the language textbooks, where Arabic will have the most evident bias representation in comparison to the other language textbooks. Moreover, we expected learners and teachers would be oblivious to the gender bias in textbooks due to the overall low status of women in the Egyptian society.

The methods used in this study are divided into content analysis of the texts and pictures in the textbooks under review to investigate bias in gender representations, and questionnaires distributed to learners and teachers to analyze the extent to which the representations are accepted.

We developed content analysis categories for both text and pictures based on the approach outlined by Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) to capture gender stereotypes in school textbooks. Some categories were modified or added to their recommended indicators to be more suitable for the conditions of the Egyptian culture. The data collection document used in our research comprised of the following categories:

TABLE 75: DATA COLLECTION CATEGORIES

Text	Pictures
1. Gender visibility	
a. chapters' titles b. text	a. cover page b. illustrations
2. pedagogic significance of characters	
a. Characters' roles: Actors/identifying/ Extras. b. Famous characters	a. Characters' roles: Pilot – Substitute – ordinary b. Famous characters
3. Gender negotiation of the public sphere	
a. Gender in occupations	a. Actions attributed to individual characters b. Actions attributed to collective characters c. Type of interaction between characters
4. Nouns associated to genders	5. Women's attire

6.1. Results of textbooks' content analyses

In this section, the findings will be outlined in an attempt to comprehend how and why women are represented in the textbooks under review in the manner observed. Guided by the research questions, this part of the findings will be presented thematically.

Our exploration of women representation in the textbooks under review compelled us to review gender representation as a complex notion of character representation as a whole, rather than peripheral concepts, such as prejudice or stereotype, since the material are in different languages and we wanted to avoid a bias stance against any of them. Our approach, however, provided a holistic interpretation of each textbook representation of female characters and role

models. The content analysis approach revealed repetitive patterns that we will lay out in the following themes for deeper meanings.

6.1.1. Gender Visibility

A. Gender in chapters' titles (texts)

Upon the initial examination of gender visibility in chapter titles, the four textbooks demonstrated variation in terms of gender visibility. ENG1 presented gender-balance in titles, where there is equal visibility of males and females in the titles. FR1, represented a different progressive model, where the majority of titles were ungendered to eliminate gender bias. In contrast, the two Arabic textbooks demonstrated male dominance with absence of female presence in the chapters' titles.

B. Characters in reading texts

Through examining women visibility across the textbooks under review, we noticed a salient difference between the Arabic textbooks and foreign language textbooks. First, foreign language textbooks presented a gender-balanced titles, whereas the two Arabic textbooks were male-biased. As for the characters inhabiting the texts in the textbooks, we found that the frequency of occurrence of male adult individual characters in ENG1, ARA1 and ARA2 left female adult individual characters under represented and even non-existent in ARA2. In contrast, FRA1, had the highest frequency of female adult figures creating the highest visibility rate amongst the textbooks.

A. Gender in cover page (Pictures)

As for book cover, the two Arabic textbooks do not display characters on their covers. The French textbook's cover, displays counter-stereotypical messages by showing girls and boys interacting in leisure activity as shown in *Figure 124*. The current English textbook, ENG1, also presents a progressive cover when compared to older editions that show the girls in veil. However, the girl and boy on the book cover do not interact with each other in clear mark of segregation as shown in *Figure 123*.

FIGURE 123: CHARACTERS IN ENG1 BOOK COVER

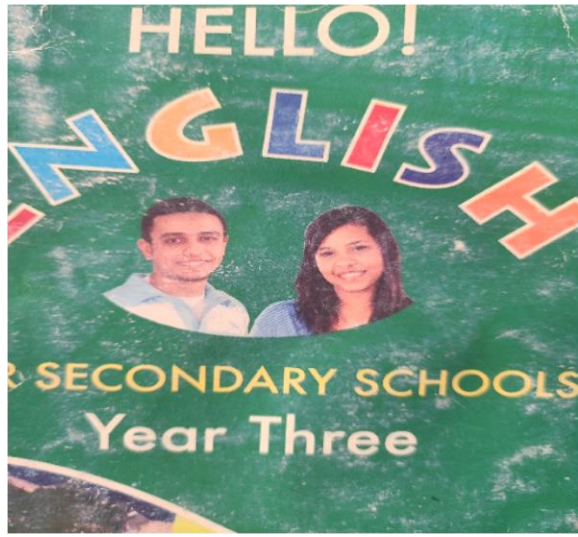


FIGURE 124: CHARACTERS IN FRA1 BOOK COVER



B. Characters in pictures (Pictures).

Similar to the characters in text, FRA1 has the most gender balanced characters. On the other hand, ENG1 has significant male dominance in individual male characters in pictures with more than double the percent of female individual characters. Lastly, both Arabic textbooks demonstrate a remarkable predominance of male figures.

Amongst the four textbooks, the gender balance in pictures of collective characters was established in FRA1, where male and female visibility is equal with neither gender dominating the other, as shown in *Figure 125*. However, the two Arabic textbooks ARA1 and ARA2 have significant male dominance in their pictures and photos with prevalence of photos of males only as shown in *Figure 126*. Remarkably, both Arabic textbooks had 0% groups of girls or women in the illustrations. They had, however, few pictures of groups of people where no specific sex dominates the other: ARA1 (16.67%) and ARA2 (20%).

FIGURE 125: GENDER BALANCE IN FRA1

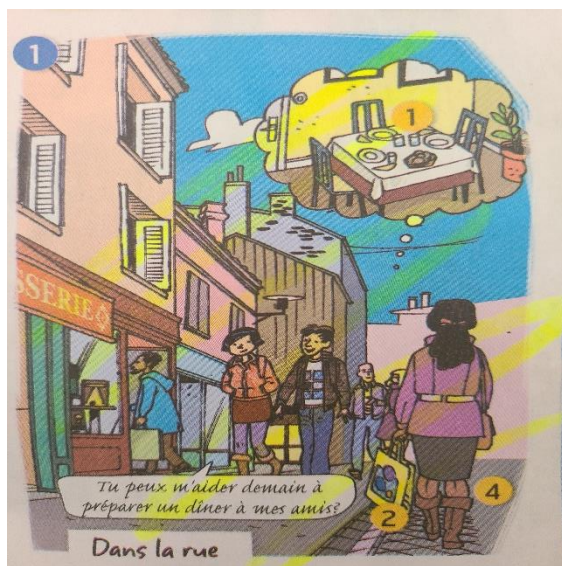
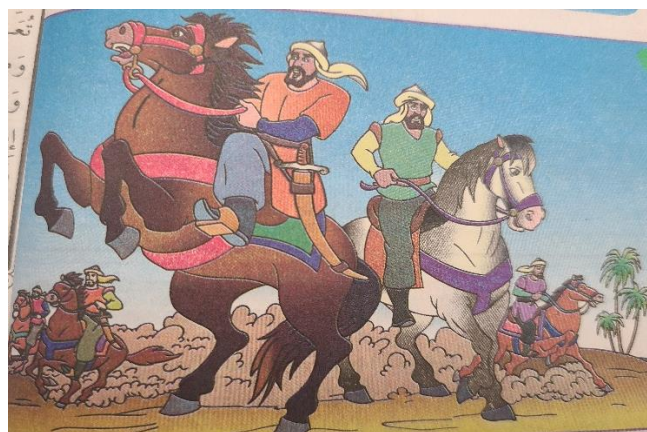


FIGURE 126: MALE DOMINANCE IN PICTURES IN ARA1



6.1.2. Pedagogic Significance of characters

The pedagogical weight of characters was determined through examining the characters' roles in the texts and pictures, in addition to the gender of the famous characters used in the textbooks as role models for learners.

A. Roles assigned to characters (texts)

As hypothesized, the role of actor was the prevalent type of roles given to individual characters and an overwhelming majority of these actor roles is for males. Fewer roles were given to identifying and extra characters across the textbooks, which promotes the idea of single-actor stories rather than more diverse versions. FRA1 is an exception to result, as females are more represented than males. As for the age category, the majority of actors are adults, while adolescents are confined, despite their scarcity, in identifying actor roles. However, in FRA1, adolescent characters take leading roles as actors - female adolescents, specifically, have the highest presence across all other types of roles. In conclusion, FRA1 presented a progressive model where women were given main actor roles by the authors and adolescents were given voice indicating reader relatability in accordance with Reuter's (2000).

B. Famous characters (Text).

Female characters in texts in ENG1 are underrepresented in terms of number of famous characters in the textbook. Male famous figures are STEM figures in addition to literary, political, religious figures. Famous female figures, on the other hand, are all successful figures in the STEM fields. The authors are clearly trying to include women in STEM as part of women inclusion in STEM domains as shown in figures 103, 104 and 105. As for FRA1, the authors did not include any famous figures whether males or females. While the authors relied in adolescent characters for relatability purposes, they could have also included authentic famous figures as role models and as counterstereotypical figures.

In the Arabic textbooks, we noticed that in ARA1, famous women are more visible than male figures. Moreover, they are all introduced as mother, wife or fiancée, with the exception of one female scientist, Dr. Nadia Hajazi, that was not thoroughly introduced like her male partner.

The salient difference in the biography provided for both figures sheds light on the gender bias in this textbook. This dominance of male in the celebrated personalities diminishes the role of women in the Arabic history, and confines women in kinship roles only.

Furthermore, the way women are mentioned in the textbooks indicates that the authors positioned women in subordination status. In accordance with Hellinger's two identified criteria to assess subordination in textbooks: (a) the way in which women are introduced in the texts, and (b) the kind of information provided on their educational background and professional status. When we apply these criteria, we find that female famous figures are only mentioned briefly without informative details (1980: 270). For example, *Al-Khansaa*, one of the most influential poets of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods, was briefly mentioned in one sentence, while the entire text was about the nobility, affluence, and generosity of her brother, *Sakhr* (ARA1: 12).

Likewise, *Aisha Al Taymoureya* was only mentioned as one of the followers of *Al-Barudi's* style in modern Arab Poetry. However, the authors did not provide additional information about her extensive background as a novelist, social activist, and feminist during the Ottoman era. Both female figures, could have been thoroughly introduced, like their male counterparts, in order to demonstrate women's role in the historic and modern history of Egypt and the Arab world, however, they are positioned in a subordination status.

In summary, the way famous characters are positioned in the textbooks highlights the authors' shortcomings in elevating women's status. In ENG1, there is an undeniable effort by the authors to present historical figures in STEM fields in an effort to combat stereotypical roles. Yet, the salient difference between the numbers of male and female calls for more efforts in this aspect. As for FRA1, including famous characters could enhance the girls' empowering role that the authors adopted. Finally, ARA1 and ARA2 are dominated by famous male characters, and the scarce attempts of including women proved to be doing more harm than good.

A. Roles assigned to characters (pictures)

The authors did not rely on pilot characters in alignment with secondary level textbooks. The majority of characters in the textbooks under review are ordinary, who do not have high pedagogic weight due to their single appearance and lack of interaction with the readers. They can

reflect, however, that gender visibility proved to be male dominant in the four textbooks. The textbooks did not include substitute characters either, except for ENG1.

Substitute characters play an essential role in drawing learner's attention due to their role in mirroring learners or teachers. Our findings show that ENG1 substitute male characters were over-represented when compared to female substitute characters. In conclusion, the authors do little to enhance the position of women in these specific types of characters.

B. Famous characters (pictures)

Due to the overemphasis on adolescent characters to increase relatability to learners, the French textbook did not include any famous adult characters in pictures, either males or females. Male characters were predominant in the three other textbooks. In ENG1, the majority of famous characters are males with various professions. Despite the fewer number of females, the chosen figures were mostly in STEM fields, as shown in *Figures 127, 128, 129 and 130*. One can notice here the authors' efforts to represent women in STEM careers as a means of presenting a positive image of women in the professional world.

In the two Arabic textbooks, women were not visible in terms of famous characters or role models. While women role models were totally absent in ARA2, two famous figures in ARA1 were used by authors, yet, they were presented in the form of mother and fiancée of a famous male figure. The emphasis on kinship roles for women is evident in ARA1, where women are limited to family roles. Clearly, women are not justly presented as role models in the textbooks under review.

FIGURE 127: FAMOUS WOMAN IN STEM IN ENG1 – FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE



FIGURE 128: FAMOUS WOMAN IN STEM IN ENG1 – DR. AISHA ABDEL-RAHMAN

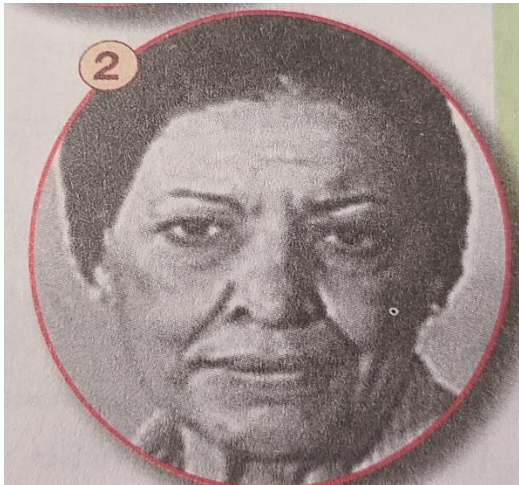
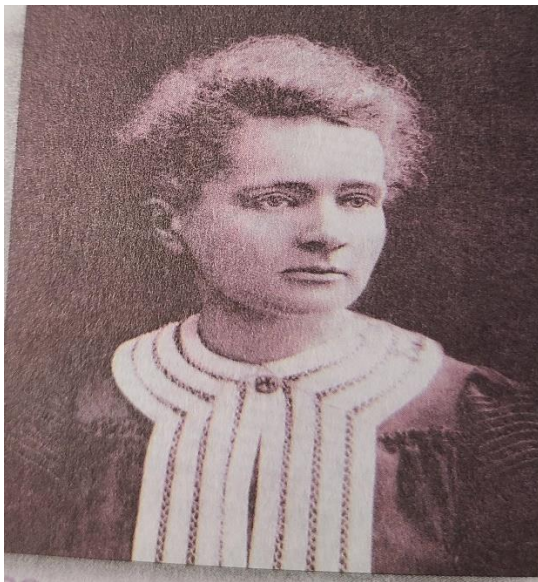


FIGURE 129: FAMOUS WOMAN IN STEM IN ENG1 – DR. KARIMAT AL SAYED



FIGURE 130: FAMOUS WOMAN IN STEM IN ENG1 – MARIE CURIE



6.1.3. Gender negotiation of the public sphere

A. Gender in occupations (text)

Current literature has shown systematic pervasive associations of men with STEM positions and leadership, while women are limited to low-skilled positions to reinforce traditional gender roles.

In ENG1, male characters are generally portrayed in various occupation more than the options given to women. However, women are not limited to normative low-skilled professions, on the contrary, women are attributed with STEM positions, literary positions and adventurous occupations like “pilot” and “secret agent”, which is clearly a conscious decision made by the authors to combat gender bias.

On the other hand, men are given more occupation options than their female counterparts. Furthermore, some occupations that are attributed to both males and females are dominated by males, for example, the presence of 8 male writers versus 1 female writer, yet this could be due to the numerical unbalance between male and female characters in the book. Therefore, women in ENG1 are associated with STEM position and other non-traditional professions, yet their overall visibility is not as high as men.

FRA1 included more adolescent characters than adults, therefore, the number of occupational representation in both genders is low. It is clear, however, that the occupations were not gender segregate, like for example coach and referee, were represented as male and female occupations. In fact, all the occupations in the female section were also attributed to male characters, while, the profession, dentist, was the only profession attributed to males only. At the same time, stereotypic female jobs like baking were attributed to males. Therefore, we can argue that FRA1 provides a gender-balanced model in the occupation section, despite its overall under representation of occupations to set career goals for both males and females.

In ARA1, women were represented once in a professional role: doctor. Yet, male characters are given different options that represent leadership: chief, manager; strength and authority: knight, army and police officer; STEM: doctor, scientist, engineer; and literary positions: poet and writer. Not only does ARA1 reflect an unequitable representation of occupations, it failed to acknowledge women’s presence in the professional sector as it confines women within kinship relations such as wife and fiancée.

Similarly, male characters in ARA2 have a variety of occupations that demonstrate literary skills: writer, poet, teacher; leadership: school principle, chief, manager; STEM: doctor; authority: militant. On the other hand, women are represented once as a literary figure (poet). While this is directly related to the overall absence of female characters in ARA2, it still sends a clear message to learners that women are not expected to be acknowledged in occupations.

To summarize, the four textbooks under review presented different representations of women in the professional sector. First, ENG1 succeeded in presenting women in various prestigious and adventurous professions, yet the overall occupational roles were fewer than that of the male characters. Secondly, FRA1 attained a gender-balanced representation of occupational options and even included counter-stereotypical occupations to women like, for instance, “referee” and “coach”. However, the textbook does not include wide variety of occupations to further inspire women. Overall, there is evidence of a small effort on the part of the authors of ENG1 and FRA1 to portray some of the women in as leaders and inventors. As for ARA1 and ARA2, evidence in the written text show disproportional representation of men and women in occupations.

A. Actions attributed to individual characters (pictures).

In ENG1, adult male had predominance in work related activities more than adult females. Furthermore, some activities were exclusively carried out by adult males like leisure, combat and indoor activities. Lastly, the category of traditional gender roles and /or house chores is only carried out by a low percentage of adult females = 3% and 0% of men. While the low percentage could be considered a positive portrayal of women, yet more counter-stereotypical images are required to radically change the societal norm of assigning all house chores to women, whether they are in the work force or not.

As for adolescent males, the majority of their actions are educational activities, which are less than the adolescent females ‘percentage of participation in academic-related actions. The authors also portrayed more male adolescents than females in outdoor activities. Moreover, adolescent males are the only characters performing sports activity, as shown in *Figures 131 and 132*, whereas females did not engage in any sports related actions. This gap indicates the difference between representing young girls’ and boys’ acceptable actions in the public sphere.

FIGURE 131: MALE DOMINANCE IN INDIVIDUAL SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN ENG1



FIGURE 132: MALE DOMINANCE INDIVIDUAL SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN ENG1



Lastly, the individual female child, as demonstrated in *Figure 133*, is mostly portrayed as engaged in educational activity = 60%, which is double the percentage of males. Furthermore, female children are also depicted in family situations as opposed to male children who are portrayed in leisure activities. This pattern of portraying individual characters highlights the authors' emphasis on education and work as the main activities attributed to females, at different age groups, as a means of positive representation. However, there is not any effort done to provide counter-stereotypes to combat traditional gender roles of carrying out house chores and family roles for example. Also, the visibility of women in the public sphere is low compared to men; one of the Egyptian women's pressing problems that needs more intervention from the authors.

FIGURE 133: FEMALE CHILD IN AN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY



B. Actions attributed to collective characters (Pictures).

Actions attributed to groups unravel patterns in associating actions with gender, and provides a magnifying lens on what is expected of a group of males and females to behave or do. Across the four textbooks, we find variations in the actions carried out by gendered groups. In ENG1, work related activities are mostly carried out by male groups more than female groups, while education related actions are equally represented by males and females. Although, the authors do not confine female groups in family actions, they also do not promote the participation of female groups in sports, outdoor or social activities. Hence, ENG1 lacks positive representation and counter-stereotypical representations.

FRA1 presented a progressive model in presenting female groups in sports with the same frequency as male groups. Although, female groups were more frequently associated with education activities in comparison to male groups, who had more opportunities for outdoor actions. Hence, FRA1 uses counterstereotypical activities for females in the public sphere; *Figure 134*, demonstrates the counter-stereotypical participation of girls in male-dominant leisure activities, like skateboarding. Also, *Figure 135* is an example of female participation in counter-stereotypical outdoor activities.

FIGURE 134: GIRLS IN LEISURE ACTIVITIES IN FRA1



FIGURE 135: FEMALE CHARACTERS IN SPORTS /OUTDOOR ACTIVITY IN FRA1



ARA1 and ARA2 present a gender-bias model as female groups are not present throughout the textbooks. Male groups, on the other hand, are associated with variety of actions such as education, as shown in *Figure 136*, and work related activities, and other categories that were not offered in the previous foreign language textbooks - social activities and family activities, as demonstrated in *Figure 137*. By eliminating female groups from the scene, the authors ARA1 and ARA2 deprive learners from presenting models that promote agency and negotiating the public sphere.

FIGURE 136: MALE DOMINANT ACTIVITY-EDUCATION IN ARA1

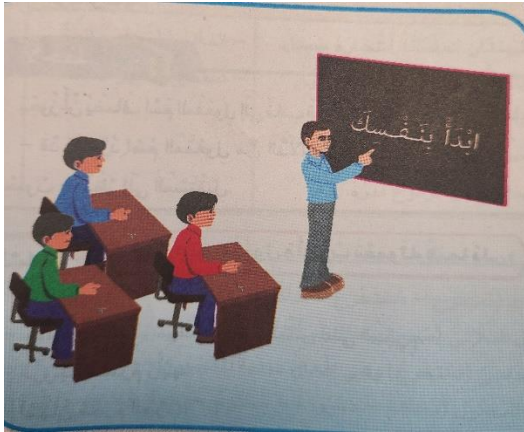


FIGURE 137: MALES ONLY IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES IN ARA1



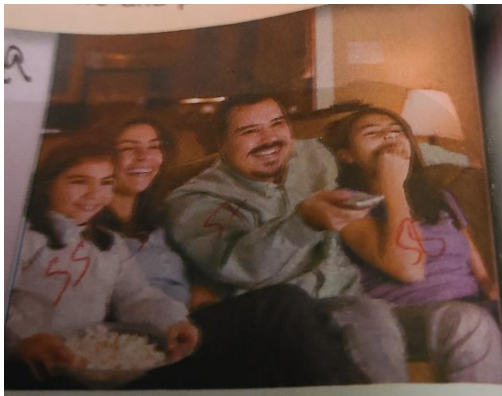
C. Nature of gender interaction (pictures)

Interactions between genders in pictures revealed deeper insights and patterns than in the texts. First, in ENG1, an overwhelming majority of interactions were carried out by same-gender interactions. The representation of male-female interactions in the data was quite limited, comprising only a small proportion and primarily occurring within work and family contexts, as illustrated in *Figures 138 and 139*. Notably, the sole depiction of such interaction, *Figure 138*, in the form of a drawing rather than a photograph serves to underscore the scarcity of real-life instances of male-female interaction. Lastly, male and female characters did not participate in leisure, social or sports activities.

FIGURE 138: MIXED-GENDER INTERACTION IN WORK RELATED ACTIVITY IN ENG1



FIGURE 139: GENDER INTERACTION IN FAMILY SETTINGS IN ENG1



The two Arabic textbooks presented an even more conservative model, where an overwhelming majority of interactions were carried out by single-sex characters - men, as shown previously in *Figure 141*. Otherwise, the nature of interactions was limited to family settings while wearing the Islamic dress as demonstrated in *Figure 140*.

FIGURE 140: WOMEN IN FAMILY ROLES IN ARA1



FIGURE 141: VEILED WOMAN IN MIXED-GENDER INTERACTIONS



Moreover, women in mixed gender interactions were confined to static postures as shown in *Figure 140 and 141*.

The French textbook on the other hand, presented counter-stereotypical representation of women in various mixed gender interactive settings, such as leisure and sports, see *Figures 142, 143, 144 and 145*.

FIGURE 142: MIXED-GENDER INTERACTION SAMPLE IN FRA1



FIGURE 143: MIXED-GENDER INTERACTION SAMPLE IN FRA1



FIGURE 144: MIXED-GENDER INTERACTION SAMPLE IN FRA1



FIGURE 145: MIXED-GENDER INTERACTION SAMPLE IN FRA1



Finally, representation of gender interaction in textbooks highlights the space given to women to interact with the opposite gender and negotiate their agency in the public sphere. While English and French displayed gender-neutral dominance in the text, the Arabic textbook presented solely male interactions. The pictures on the other hand, presented more salient differences between the textbooks' approach regarding gender segregation. The French approach presented mixed gender interactions in various counter-stereotypical activities. The English textbooks presented a balance between male and female in interactions with peers, however, a strict segregation between the sexes is enforced. On the other hand, the Arabic textbooks clearly confine women in static situations, while the interactions are male dominant in gender segregated settings. Clearly, the representation of gender segregation in the English and Arabic textbooks, reflect the gender segregation within public space that is broadly acknowledged as a key means of facilitating public morality (Rocky-Singer 2016: 303).

6.1.4. Nouns

Nouns were counted and compared to highlight what words are used to describe genders. The following categories were developed to group the words used throughout the textbooks:

- a. Profession
- b. Forename
- c. Surname

- d. Kinship bond
- e. Generic name that indicates gender
- f. Courtesy title (Mr., Mrs. Dr, etc.)

Nouns used to identify male and female characters by authors of the textbooks under review reflect an overall male bias with the exception of FRA1. Occupations are overwhelmingly associated with male characters more than with females. Also, the majority of courtesy titles associated with men indicate professions. In FRA1, the authors present a counter-stereotypical model in which 100% of the adult female characters are identified by their occupations. At the same time, occurrences of occupation associated with male characters is 0%.

Secondly, the use of courtesy titles complements the previous idea as it scrutinizes the use of titles due to hierarchical or formal situations. Our data shows that courtesy titles varied across the four textbooks; while it was overwhelmingly more used with males than females (83% - 17%) in ENG1, it was not used altogether in FRA1 and ARA1. However, courtesy titles were reserved only for males in ARA2. This result is in accordance with the marginalization of women shown above.

Thirdly, proper nouns, such as surname and forename, help us unravel individuality and family connectedness patterns as sociologist Norbert Elias (1991) argued. Therefore, when adopting this concept in our data analysis, we find that in ENG1, male characters had higher number of forename and surname than females which indicates that males are more recognized as independent individuals and as family members. In contrast, surnames were not used in FRA1, which puts more emphasis on identifying characters as individuals. At the same time, male and female characters had equal number of forename identifiers (50% - 50%), which promotes a gender-balanced model in this aspect. In ARA1, on the other hand, forename use with males is 100% while female 0%, which clearly permits men's possibility of individuality without the same option for women. Furthermore, surname identifiers for females is higher than males (57% - 43%) confirming the need for women to belong to a family to be visible. In the case of ARA2, only male characters were referred to with both forename and surname, while women were not.

In the same way, referring to character by a kinship bond, (father, mother, son, sister, etc.) could be a limiting status that confines women in family roles. Our data demonstrate the females in ENG1 had the most gender imbalance in kinship nouns for females, while FRA1, ARA1 showed equal percentages, yet, due to the numerical imbalance between male and female characters, students are in fact encountering far more females with kinship status than males. Lastly, ARA2

demonstrates an obvious imbalance between males and females due to the absence of forename and surname identifiers of females.

The use of nouns with gendered characters in the textbooks highlights how the authors marginalize women in professional settings, diminish her individuality, and confine her within family roles.

6.1.5. Women's attire in pictures

In ENG1, women's attire was either modest or professional uniform. The predominant majority of women wore modest clothing that covered their arms and legs, yet they were not veiled. Also, women were also shown in uniforms, like pilots' and scientists'. We can observe the authors' emphasis on representing women in the workplace, where half of the women were in professional uniforms. Furthermore, the author's stance against limiting women to wearing the headscarf in public spaces is clear, while conforming to the society's conservative culture when showing women in modest clothing. Lastly, the absence of women, especially adolescent girls, in sports attire is remarkable.

As for FRA1, half of the women in pictures are dressed in contemporary fashion that show arms and legs. While the other two categories are equally divided between modest and sports attire. We also observed that some of the sports clothing are retouched to cover bare skin to protect girls' modesty by adding sleeves to arms and trousers to legs – even ballet dancers. Nonetheless, the French textbook provides a relatively wide range of women's attires: contemporary, modest and sporty. The absence of women in uniform is due to the absence of adult female characters throughout the textbook, since the author focused on relatable characters rather than inspiring adults. We can infer that representing female adolescent figures in sports attire is a counter-stereotype where women are represented in sports activities, even if some of their sportswear are altered to conform to societal restrictions on Arab women clothing.

As for the two Arabic textbooks, all the women are shown in headscarves. Women wore the headscarves in different settings throughout the books: work, family gatherings, social occasions, which highlights the headscarf as a common factor associated with women to negotiate her presence in the public sphere. Clearly, the authors decided that the Islamic dress is a prerequisite to women's interaction with the opposite gender, although women are not required to

wear the veil in front of their family members⁴⁸. Hence, the role of the headscarf is a main marker for woman's representation rather than her role in society.

In summary, language textbooks presented different counter-stereotypical women representations, like Egyptian women without the headscarf in ENG1, and girls in sports' clothing in FRA1. At the same time, there are photos of female characters in these textbooks that were also altered to cover women to conform to the culture. The two Arabic textbooks, on the other hand, overemphasized the Islamic dress as a condition for women to interact with other or to negotiate the public sphere.

6.2. Gender of authors

The English (ENG1) and Arabic textbooks (ARA1), (ARA2) are written solely by male authors. The French textbook (FRA1), on the other hand, is written by a female author. After examining sexism and gender stereotyping in each textbook, we can infer that textbooks written by male authors did not present gender-balanced content. While there is a difference in the level of gender bias between ENG1 and the Arabic textbooks, where ENG1 is far more gender-balanced in terms of visibility and inclusion of women in the workforce. Yet, ENG1 failed to present effective counter-stereotypical representations to provide positive women representation in various areas like including women in sports, mixed-gender settings and in contemporary fashion. In contrast, FRA1 relied on counter-stereotypes in women representation, which suggests that the authors' gender in our corpus is a factor in determining a gender-balanced content.

In summary, the Arabic textbooks presented a gender-bias model in accordance with Wafa's (2021) study that found stereotypes in primary level Arabic language in Egypt. Our study provides a continuation to Wafa's results; her data revealed the association of women with derogatory and traditional roles, so we can conclude that glaring low visibility of women in the secondary level textbook is a consequential escalation to the existing stereotypes in the primary textbooks. So that, the older the

⁴⁸ Women are not required to wear the veil in front of their immediate family members as stated clearly in the Quran "[...] and must not expose their adornment, except to their husbands or their fathers or the fathers of their husbands, or to their sons or the sons of their husbands, or to their brothers or the sons of their brothers or the sons of their sisters, or to their women" (Chapter 24: 31).

age group of learners, the more gender-segregation and the lower female visibility they are exposed to in Arabic textbooks.

The English textbook, on the other hand, does not include glaring gender-discriminatory pictures that show women in stereotypical images as homemakers or women as nurses and men as doctors. Yet, they presented various stereotypes in accordance with Sinigaglia-Amadio's (2010: 48) opinion regarding the role of textbooks being a mere reflection of the society in which it is produced, it would then find itself "naturally" reproducing stereotypes, inequalities, discriminations and other existing social flaws or dysfunctions. The existing content will result in the maintenance, propagation and strengthening of a certain dominant group's ideology (Apple 2012: 58). Hence, we argue that the gender of the authors also proves to be a direct factor in determining the level of bias in the textbooks.

To conclude, this section of analysis echoes other findings where textbooks were found to regenerate gender bias. In accordance with Cantoni, Chen, Yang, Yuchtman, and Zhang who assert that "norms instilled in school may be disproportionately beneficial to the seated elite, who have the ability to shape what is taught" (2017: 386). We argue that the word "elite" could refer to any advantaged group, not necessarily from an economic lens. It could, however, mean privileged male ideologies, or religious ideologies that filter through textbooks to reinforce existing values and knowledge that eventually shape learners' habits, desires and identities. Lastly, our content analysis of textbooks results shows that the French textbooks' content is unbiased, whereas the Arabic and English textbooks fit within the categories proposed by Glick and Fiske (1996) about sexist discourse:

- Arabic textbook: Hostile/ old-fashioned sexism: clearly communicates antipathy towards women. It is recognized as discriminatory (e.g., Barreto and Ellemers 2005) and has become less and less accepted in Western societies (e.g., Twenge 1997).

The authors of the Arabic textbooks included various forms of old-fashioned sexism that are arguably less prevalent in other countries. One of the most noticeable forms of marginalization is the absence of women in the books. This glaring omission is a clear indication of how women are pushed to the fringes of society. Even when women do appear in the books, they are often relegated to kinship roles, further underscoring their subordination. Additionally, the few instances of women portrayed in pictures depict them wearing veils and in static positions, emphasizing the limiting and restrictive gender roles assigned to them.

- English textbook: Modern/ neo sexism: perceived as a socially acceptable way of expressing prejudice and are usually not identified as gender discrimination (Barreto and Ellemers 2005).

The English textbook provides an improved version of language textbook, where none of the female characters cover their hair, and the majority of famous female characters are STEM scientists. On the surface this version of the textbook reflects a remarkable progress compared to previous years, where women were not allowed to appear in the books without the veil as mentioned in Zuhur:

In January of 2013, the Ministry of Education (under the advice of Mohammad Sharif, a philosophy and educational consultant) moved to delete the picture of Durayya Shafiq⁴⁹ and of women who had been killed in the 25th of January revolution from the 2013-2014 editions of public school textbooks for Grades 11 and 12. The reason given was that these women were not wearing the hijab, therefore, their photographs were deleted to avoid “provoking Egyptians’ feelings” (2014: 32).

It could be argued that the authors of the current English textbook are empowering female characters by giving them agency and directing them towards STEM career aspirations. However, our data reveals a contradiction in the messages being conveyed: while girls are being encouraged, the book simultaneously endorses subtle societal constraints, leading to a form of neo-sexism that is less direct than the sexism portrayed in the Arabic textbooks. In contrast to the Arabic textbooks, women in the English textbook are not shown wearing hijab, but they still conform to modest dress codes. Both male and female characters have similar visibility in the book, but they are not depicted interacting with each other. Additionally, the book predominantly portrays girls engaging in education and work-related activities, suggesting limitations to women's accessibility to the public sphere.

⁴⁹ Doria Shafik was an Egyptian feminist, poet and editor, and one of the principal leaders of the women's liberation movement in Egypt in the mid-1940s. As a direct result of her efforts, Egyptian women were granted the right to vote by the Egyptian constitution. Shafiq did not wear a veil and all available photos of her show her hair, face, and neck.

6.3. Difference in women representation across language textbooks

After examining our data, we noticed the variation of women representation across the three languages under review. The difference sheds light on the different marking of each language within the Egyptian society that reveals the embedded ideology in the textbooks.

As discussed in Chapter 2, exploring language policies, and the representation of each language is a necessary prerequisite in our quest of understanding underlying gender messages. After briefly exploring the historical background of the three languages in Egypt, we were able to understand how learners respond to the embedded ideological messages in textbooks in accordance with Dragojevic *et al.* (2013) arguments that language's historical background and ideology play an essential role in developing attitude towards it.

Arabic language is a mandatory language in the public education secondary level in Egypt. In contrast to the Egyptian Arabic colloquial, Standard Arabic is perceived as the divine language of the Quran, the Coptic Bible and the unifying element in Pan Arabism, hence, it indexes authority and divinity. School education is the main resource of Standard Arabic acquisition, where students are exposed to a minimum of 30 minutes lesson every day in the Secondary level. We observed that Arabic textbooks have the highest level of gender-bias in comparison to the other textbooks. Women are confined to secondary kinship roles, where they are introduced as a mother, wife or fiancée of a male character. Female characters are also dressed in accordance to the Islamic dress code with the headscarf and they are generally invisible in pictures and text. Lastly, the authors of the textbooks did not provide counter-stereotypical situations where women are in the public sphere, or in a contemporary attire nor do they participate in gender interactive situations. Clearly, the authors associate between Arabic language and Salafist and/or Muslim Brotherhood's views of Islamic teachings that "condemns cross-sex exposure whether by unnecessary or taboo contact or through immodesty in dress and behavior" (El-Guindi 1981: 476). Consequently, embedded views on women's role and status in the native language state-sponsored discourse affects learners' identities and their views of their self and other.

English language is not viewed as the language of the colonizers, but rather marked with financial gains and connection with the developed Western world. In line with Abouelhassan and Meyer's (2016) assertion of the obvious economic gains associated with English language, the recent increase in English teaching hours in Egyptian public schools underscores the government's

endorsement of the English language as a means of improving the overall quality of education and economic outcomes. The status of women in the English textbook reflects the language index with economic empowerment despite the persisting stereotypes. Although the women were visible in chapters' titles and on the book cover, the overall visibility of female characters were less than males. As, women were disadvantages in other areas throughout the book like their association with kinship titles, their deprivation of sports and leisure activities. Yet, two factors marked women representation in the English language textbooks; their inclusion in the workforce, education and their dress attire that does not enforce the veil as condition to appearance. Despite the obvious numerical difference between male and female character, women were presented as STEM scientists and professionals. Similarly, collective female characters were portrayed in educational activities. Furthermore, famous female characters were mostly scientists and professional figures who played prominent roles in history.

The economic empowerment is also obvious in the choices of women attire: Some of the female characters were in professional uniforms, while strictly conforming to modesty. Women are represented in work settings with modest clothing (that conforms to the conservative culture) yet, not restricted by the veil to negotiate their space in the public sphere.

Clearly, the message embedded in the English textbooks concerning women is that women are encouraged to participate in the workforce. Yet adhering to modest clothing and single-sex settings are required prior conditions that have been demonstrated throughout the book. To conclude, women are encouraged to participate in the public sphere for work related purposes only, not for leisure or sports, and they are expected to conform to a gender-segregated culture. The message for women is contradictory, as they are encouraged to pursue competitive careers in fields like STEM, but also face the risk of damaging their reputation if they interact with men or dress in immodest clothing.

French language has existed in Egypt since Bonaparte's expedition in 1798-1801 and has played various roles ever since. It has been the language of the elites, the Christian minority, the language of anti-British occupation in Egypt, modernization, and currently a state-sponsored language that has become mandatory second language in public schools starting at grade one at the primary level of education. Although the French language is not currently marked with economic gains, it is a sign of modernization and prestige in the Egyptian discourse community.

Upon examining the representation of women in French textbooks, we found that it is by far the most unbiased and progressive content. This starts with the chapter titles that are mostly ungendered and continues throughout the book, presenting counter-stereotypical models of friendship between adolescent boys and girls, and highlighting girls in sports and leisure activities.

The French textbook has the highest female visibility compared to the other textbooks; collective female characters also exceeded the number of male characters. Adolescent female characters were also given leading roles in the lessons. While the textbook did not include famous characters to inspire young learners, it presented many counter-stereotypes that were absent in other textbooks. First, occupations were not gender-segregated, and women were portrayed as professional athletes. Furthermore, adolescent males and females were equally represented in sports activities. Secondly, girls were portrayed in interactive leisure activities with boys. Thirdly, female characters did not adhere to a traditional dress code as in the other textbooks. Also, a few pictures were altered to cover the legs and arms of female characters, yet the majority of the photos were not. Finally, women were presented in a progressive light compared to the other textbooks under review, which aligns with the French language index of modernity and the language of the minority upper class.

To conclude, women representation is directly tied to the language index in the Egyptian discourse community. In Arabic textbooks, the sacred mother tongue of the holy Quran, women are marginalized, veiled or covered their entire face whenever they appeared. Also, their appearance was always confined within in a secondary role tied to a male figure. In English textbooks, the main concern is to empower women to join the work force, STEM professions in specific, while conforming to the conservative dress attire and respecting gender segregation. Lastly, the French textbook, embeds progressive messages of Western cultures that demonstrates gender interactions and friendships, women in sports engagements and women in contemporary fashion.

Since language textbooks are manifestations of a social discourse since they “can provide important insights into the nature and meaning of a culture and the social and political discourses in which it is engaged” (Provenzo *et al.* 2011), the various women representations in textbooks begs the question: Which version of these women representations are widely accepted within the learners’ community? We now compare these versions with the learners’ view of women representations in accordance with Breakwell (1993) recommendation to discover distribution of

the representation in the groups in order to fully understand social representations. This approach is also aligned with Moscovici's assertion that representations are products of the social groups that form the society. He narrowed down on social communication in specific that cause the emergence of representations. That's in accordance with Wagner et al.'s view of SRs's nature:

[a] social representation is a collective phenomenon pertaining to a community which is co-constructed by individuals in their daily talk and action. [...] Instead of imagining representations within minds it is better to imagine them across minds, resembling a canopy being woven by people's concerted talk and actions [...]. In summary, a social representation is the ensemble of thoughts and feelings being expressed in verbal and overt behavior of actors which constitutes an object for a social group (1999: 96).

Consequently, there are two outcomes created as a form of including the subject (learners) in the formation of SRs:

- the fact that in a given social context there are variant SRs of the same object;
- through communication and accompanying processes of influence, normalization and conformity, subjects' beliefs can be the object of consensus at the same time as collective beliefs can be imposed on the subjects.

Therefore, the students' questionnaires highlighted the variant SRs of women's role in the society and helped us unravel the collective beliefs to compare it with the representations in the textbooks to highlight their roles in reinforcing or challenging those beliefs. In line with Sunderland's (2000) assertion that any "effect" can never be accurately be predicted since learners may interpret gender representations rather differently, or even "resist" any gendered "subject positioning" in the text (Sunderland 2004: 22).

6.4. Questionnaire results

In line with the larger discussion on representation of gender segregation, marginalization, and policing women bodies, the questionnaire results revealed students' views on these representations in their language textbooks.

6.4.1. Students' perception of gender segregation

Upon examining the students' answers, we found that while gender-segregation is a de facto rule in secondary education, yet the majority of them believe that their parents do not oppose co-education. Almost quarter of the sample, however, believe that gender segregation in school is

a necessary condition for their enrollment in schools. Remarkably, the numbers show that students are either not in support of the idea of segregation or are at least neutral. We can infer from this section that the majority of students do not view gender segregation as necessary, nor do they believe that it is their parents' condition for their education, yet they are forced into this segregated system that continues to shape their lives. Since segregation of sexes does not provide space for interaction but rather judgments, social categorization results in processing, classification and quantitative judgment. In accordance with Tajfel and Wilkes (1963) students will learn to categorize themselves, and others, by magnifying both differences and similarities between groups which leads to stereotyping.

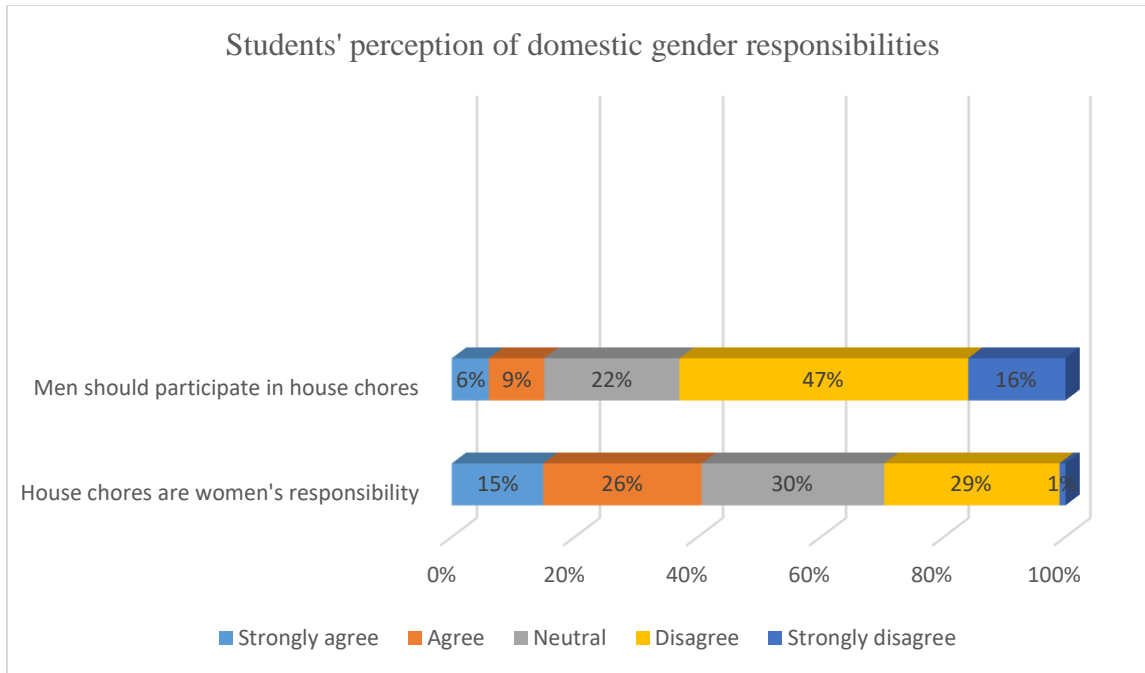
Finally, while several studies suggest that forming friendships with children from the opposite gender with an increase in such friendships as they grow older have resulted positive attitudes toward the other gender in a steady pace (Halim et al. 2021; Zosuls et al. 2014). As logical as this solution sounds, it is important to highlight the cultural difference between the Western world – where these empirical studies are done- and the Middle East.

In our context, forming friendship with the opposite gender is not socially accepted, which results in a wider gap and prejudice between the opposite genders as they grow older, as the theory suggests. That said, gender segregation foregrounds positive representation of genders in teaching materials as a common medium between the two groups to provide gender knowledge that affects judgment of self and others.

6.4.2. Students' perception of traditional gender-roles

Based on students' responses, mothers do most of the household chores, whether they are part of the labor force or unemployed.

FIGURE 146: COMBINING QUESTIONS 10 & 11 REGARDING HOUSEHOLD CHORES RESPONSIBILITIES



Note here that the majority of the adolescent sample in our study did not score high in their view towards men’s participation in house chores and domestic responsibilities, whereas they perceive these responsibilities to be solely women’s, or at least 30% were neutral and only 29% disagree. In accordance with SIT, the separation of groups based on gender leads to corresponding rise of gender bias. This demonstrates how at an early age gender segregation forms intergroup categorization that discriminates against the out-group and favors the in-group (Tajefel 1970: 99). Hence, even if men and women have equal access to the workforce, the inequality in undertaking household chores is a main barrier to women empowerment in accordance with research findings on the effect of women’s perception of their duties. “Such a world view not only places external impediments to women’s engagement in the workforce, either from their families or from employers; it is also often internalized by women themselves” Karia, and Mehta (2021:115). Lastly, having surrounding role models who internalize these representations affect learners at this age and result in a cycle where “[...] adolescent girls and young women do more unpaid work in

the childhood home than their male counterparts – and gender roles, divisions and habits start early⁵⁰.

Furthermore, the data shows that the majority of students agree that women should pursue higher education and careers rather than marriage at an early age, which demonstrates their awareness of the importance of women’s careers as functioning adults in the society. Moreover, the data reveals that the majority of families encourage girls to choose science majors and they are well-aware of this support. The dilemma here is on one hand, students’ and their families’ aspirations towards supporting women’s entering the labor market, while on the other hand endorsing perceptions of traditional gender-roles that impeded women’s advancement. This highlights the effect of internalizing gender stereotypes, while lacking skills to promote women agency and combat gender role stereotypes.

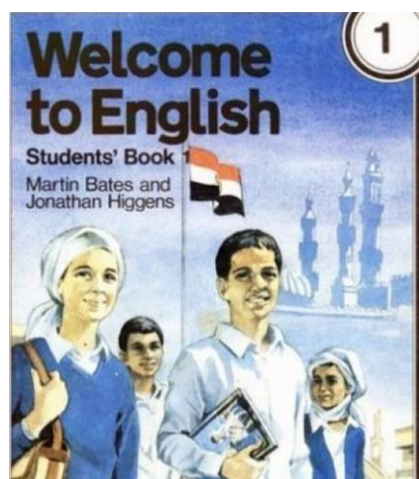
When we compare this to Egyptian women’s reality of struggling to access the formal market and are forced into the informal market with its challenges and exploitation risks, the female labor force participation rate in Egypt is only 21.3%, while women are overrepresented in the informal market, lacking access to social insurance programs and minimum wages” (El Saadany 2021). This discrepancy underscores the effect of women’s representation as the main responsible of house chores and responsibilities: women are either obstructed from joining the work force due to their domestic responsibilities, or they become exploited by “double burden” when they enter the labor market. The term double burden is frequently “used to specify the challenges a mother faces when juggling employment and domestic responsibilities (including household chores and caregiving)” (Chen *et al.* 2018: 1). There is scarcity in literature, however, on the contradicting role of textbooks in promoting women’s agency while preserving traditional gender.

6.4.3. Learners’ perspective towards women’s attire

⁵⁰ EIGE-2021 Gender Equality Index 2021 Report.

The majority of learners are in favor of covering the female characters in the school textbooks. We did not detect difference between the answers of the males and females towards this issue. The majority of students are in favor of covering the female characters in English and French language textbooks similar to previous editions of language textbooks as shown in *Figure 147*⁵¹.

FIGURE 147: OLD ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS COVER PAGE



It is clear that learners have internalized the idea of coverage due to the prevalent representation of modest women in Egyptian culture. While covering the hair and body is a religious preference, the consensus on its compulsion and rejecting other forms of clothing is remarkable. In other words, representation of women as modest and covered function as identity markers, which following Tajfel's theory of social identity (e.g. 1978), may be used to identify with a membership group, and to identify and discriminate an out-group. This results in policing of women's body policing that is evident in the society.

6.4.4. Students' awareness of gender-bias in the Egyptian society

The majority of students' view that boys and girls are treated differently, where women are more likely to receive harsh judgments. Taking into consideration individual differences, one can argue that token situations may result in an increased feeling of common fate when the same sex is lumped together. The gender polarity in the society highlights the formation of opposing groups

⁵¹ See Hochschild and Machung 2012; Massey, Hahn and Sekulic 1995; Milkie, Raley and Bianchi 2009.

with different status (in-group and out- group) in accordance with Tajfel and Wilkes (1963). This observation is a cornerstone in our study as it sheds light on the importance of fair gender representation and eradication of stereotypes due to their impact on learners' self-concept and inter-relations as SIT suggests.

On another note, we observed a passive pattern in students' responses regarding changing or revolting against women oppression, which reflects compliance to social norms in students' responses in contrast to previously documented adolescents' moral tendencies to be "moral rebels" (Sonnetag and Barnett 2013). The term "moral rebel" was coined to describe individuals "who take a principled stand against the status quo, who refuse to comply, stay silent, or simply go along when this would require they compromise their values" (Monin, Sawyer and Marquez 2008: 76–77). In literature on Adolescents' psychology, the study on their "rebellious" desire to stand up for their beliefs and values despite social pressures –also known as moral rebel- is due to a tendency that involves "characteristics and related behaviors that reflect a strong, internalized moral foundation or moral identity" (Sonnetag and Barnett 2016: 278).

Hence, we can conclude that the internalized moral foundation amongst the adolescent sample regarding women chastity and seclusion is the main reason behind their compliance to societal norms. In our view, giving a clear indication of the importance of representation to raise feminist consciousness in this critical age of identity formation to end an endless repeated patterns of gender discrimination.

6.4.5. Students' perception of the importance of positive gender representation in current textbooks.

Our analysis shows that students are aware of the influence of textbooks on social issues, specifically gender disparity. Their opinions shed light on the importance of textbooks' content and the social values the students are willing to find, hence, it highlights the role of gender representation in internalizing gender roles and expectations. Furthermore, students scored high in their perception of the importance of realistic role models in the STEM fields, which emphasizes how they think highly of the role of positive representation in textbooks on their career choices and aspirations. The majority of students, also, believe that the inclusion of successful women, in general, will have an empowering effect on girls. Again, this highlights the effect of women visibility –or the lack thereof- on students. The inclusion of examples of women breaking glass-

ceiling, for example, as opposed to women confined in kinship bonds such as mother, sister and daughter will provide a necessary change in internalized traditional gender-roles.

To conclude, the results of students' questionnaires showcases the ideological mind of adolescents. It is clear that adolescents in the period are more susceptible to be influenced by representations that is "developed and shared socially, with a practical aim, contributing to the construction of a reality common to a social whole" (Jodelet 1989: 36).

The answers of the adolescents' sample scored high in enhancing the economic status of women and value career advancements through pursuing STEM occupations. They do not view early marriage as the sole means of socioeconomic security. On the other hand, gender segregation is an issue they do not agree with, yet they are not rebelling against either. Remarkably, the majority of them have rigid ideas about gender roles and responsibilities in accordance with Ferrant *et al.* assertion that "working for pay is considered a masculine task, while unpaid care work is seen as women's domain" (2017: 7). This view could also indicate the students' judgment of women to belong to low status in the Egyptian society, in accordance with Breakwell's assertion that "intergroup power differentials will have an important impact upon the development of social representations" (*Ibid.* 1993:3). Ironically, it seems that holding rigid traditional views on gender roles, unbeknown to them, will threaten the career aspirations of women. In the same vein, they have rigid opinions regarding women dress attire, which makes them reject uncovered female characters in their textbooks.

6.4.6. Current women representation in textbooks and the prevalent patriarchal culture in Egypt.

As previously explained in chapter 1, the Egyptian society is shaped by culture-specific obstacles that hinder women's equality. Our content analysis reveals that the public education textbooks endorse two of the three main phenomena that shape Egyptian women's struggles:

1. gender-based violence;
2. gender-segregation;
3. moral policing of women's bodies

As our data reveals, the textbooks (ARA1, ARA2, and ENG1) overtly promote gender-segregation. Also, all the textbooks under review enforced a certain dress code on female characters, despite the aforementioned variations between the Arabic textbooks, English and

French. This aligns with views in literature about textbooks being the forefront of the state's authorized teaching materials, reflecting values and signifying society's aspirations (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991; Foster and Crawford 2006; Sleeter and Grant 1991).

While violence against women is not overtly promoted in any of the textbooks under review, one can infer that the gender-based violence is a direct result of gender segregation and traditional gender roles. Gender segregation is problematic as it focuses on women segregation, in particular, rather than both genders as highlighted by Valerie Hoffman-Ladd that "the modesty and segregation of women" is as an "attempt to preserve traditional values perceived to be Islamic" (1987: 43). One can argue, therefore, that sexual harassment is a collective social punishment towards women who do not abide by premeditated dress attire or those who negotiate their space in the public sphere.

According to this SIT, a person's gender identity is shaped by how they perceive their gender's status in the society, consequently affecting the self-concept that is formed by individuals' membership in a specific group. Hence, we can argue that social representations about women's roles and modesty will affect, not only how the society views women, but also the individual women's self-concept, which explains why segregation, traditional women roles and strict dress attires are internalized by boys and girls alike in the study sample.

Despite the efforts of FRA1 to present a gender-balanced model and includes myriad of counter-stereotypes, we found that it did not resonate well with the students. In fact, the female characters in the textbooks were not endorsed by the student sample. In accordance with previous studies (Morin Messabel *et al.* 2017), in which girls experienced intimidation due to what Rudman and Phelan (2010) term as "upward comparison". Yet, the study did not provide recommendations on how to make the pictures more inspiring and relatable at the same time. We can conclude that in the case of FRA1, the use of foreign looking female characters alienated the students. This highlights the essential role of characters in textbooks in gender analysis of textbooks. Our results, therefore, are in accordance with Reynolds assertion that it is "through shared experiences that the reader can connect to a character, they perceive themselves to share similarities on some level" (*Ibid.* 2010: 27). Although, FRA1 included adolescent characters, for relatability purposes, the different nationality, the foreign lifestyle alienated our student sample rather than empowered them.

The purpose of the first three themes (Teacher's perception of gender segregation/ ...appropriate women attire/ ...necessity of gender equality) is to measure the extent of alignment between teachers' perception of social representations of women in the textbooks under review. The other 3 themes (Teachers' perception of student-teacher interpersonal relations/ ...their influence on students/ ...impact of textbooks representation on students) would help us understand the extent of the teachers' contribution in providing counter-stereotypes to SRs present in the textbooks. In accordance with Sunderland et al. (1997), teachers contribute in perpetuating gender (in) equality as they may manipulate gendered roles present in the texts. Similarly, Alderson (1997: 12) argued that language teachers might even subvert textbook authors' intentions, interpreting those intentions through their own models of gender perception. Yet, the effect of teachers' views on gender is scarcely mentioned in research on gender representation in textbooks. Although this part might not be relevant to our immediate investigation on SRs in textbooks, yet we find it necessary step that will guide our pedagogical recommendations.

6.5. Pedagogical implications

After examining women representations across language textbooks and the level of their acceptance across the student sample, it is incumbent upon us to propose recommendations to propose positive textbooks representation. However, we cannot overlook the role of teachers' in attaining our goal since a non-sexist textbook cannot guarantee non-sexist teaching" (Sunderland 1994: 64). Our data shows that the predominant majority of our teacher sample have at least 15 year teaching experience, if not more, upon which we can conclude that their teaching approaches and convictions are not due to novice experience.

Therefore, secondary school teachers' current status amongst students, their views on gender equality need to be considered before we suggest teacher training that might overlook their ideologies and beliefs.

6.5.1. Language teachers are authoritative figures in Egypt

We need to identify the specific role of teachers in the Egyptian education system in order to determine their real influence in women emancipation. The literature on Secondary school education highlighted the significant influence of teachers on learners through “influence (the degree to which the teacher controls communication) and Proximity (the degree to which the teacher and students display closeness rather than opposition and conflict) (Brok *et al.* 2010: 44). Furthermore, the majority of our teacher sample feel sought after by students to help them in personal problems. As opposed to science teachers, who are sometimes stereotypically perceived by students to be distant and authoritative and less socially attractive (*Ibid.*). Language teachers, on the other hand, have higher communicative skills and interpersonal relations with their students. Consequently, this positive attitude towards language teachers gives them a platform to advocate for social values beyond the curriculum: women perception and empowerment are definitely among those social values. Our data reveals that teachers’ perception of students’ attitudes towards language teachers, teachers’ perception of their own value and respect, teachers’ perception of their closeness (proximity) to their learners.

Not only the majority of teachers have a considerable level of closeness with students, they also have an influential power due to their teacher-centered teaching approach. Furthermore, unlike classes in Western countries today, where students are “equipped with high level of linguistic, religious, national and racial diversity” (Bećirović 2015: 23); the classes in Egyptian schools are still traditional in which homogenous groups of students are dominated by their teachers. In accordance with this description, our teacher sample perceive themselves as highly valued and figures of authority to their students. As the data reveals, the predominant majority of Egyptian teachers have an average of 40 students in class in public schools, which makes a student-centered class really difficult or impossible. Hence, teachers control the communication by resorting to teacher-centered instruction and become the source of knowledge. Highlighting the teaching style is relevant to our study as it indicates the level of authority the teacher has in class to control the communication. Teachers in authoritative teaching models are like a higher power on a pulpit that controls the conversations, chooses what to focus on, and what social values to take out of the lesson.

I. The effects when the language teacher is also the religion teacher

This being the global idea, highlighting the dual role of language and religion teaching is within the scope of our study due to its direct effect on their language teaching practices. While language classes are known for their intersectionality with different cultures and exposure, the impact of religious constraints cannot be overlooked. Hence, studies that focus on representation in textbooks solely, without the influence of teachers on pedagogic choices of the textbooks, are not sufficient to fully understand how women are represented.

Teachers play a “paramount role constructing classroom practices; and his/her moment-by-moment as well as long-term decisions about “what to teach” and “how to teach” are not solely informed by techniques or methodologies learned in educational or training programs” (Almayez 2022: 2). There is no doubt that religious beliefs could have positive impact on teachers’ professional identity in terms of commitment and honesty; however, it can also influence the topics that teachers will avoid or focus on in class. Some religiously devout teachers “will stay away from controversial issues” (Boraie *et al.* 2018: 162) or actively engage in “filtering and/or appropriating the textbook content in order to shelter their impressionable students from the potential harm caused by exposure to Islamic unacceptable norms and values” (Almayez 2022: 11).

According to our data, Christian studies are exclusively taught by French teachers, which aligns with the French language index as language of the Christian minority. Islamic studies, on the other hand, are primarily taught by Arabic teachers, which aligns with the previously mentioned language index and the interconnected relationship between the Arabic language and the Islamic religion. Yet, around 30% of the French and English language teachers in our sample teach Islamic studies. Indeed, this is a phenomenon that should not be overlooked; when a language teacher is also an authoritative religious figure, we can infer that their convictions would be transferred to the language classroom. In accordance with Pasquale, “faith can have a direct influence on teaching (either positive or negative) and that a teacher’s faith is integral to their identity” (*Ibid.* 2013: 50). Consequently, Islamic studies teachers would transfer their religious beliefs and convictions in their language classrooms. With this acknowledgment, we can argue that language curricula are influenced by teachers’ beliefs who should provide what Ellis has asserted as a space for youth to learn about sexuality, to develop a sense of their identity as sexual beings and to understand the concepts of social justice and equality (*Ibid.* 2009: 52). While critical reading and writing allow students to develop personal growth and foster understanding about

sexuality and identity, having one's religion teacher the same as the language teacher would not provide students with a liberal space to challenge social adversity and find their voice.

II. Teachers' religious ideologies affect their views towards empowering women

Although the relation between language teaching and religion is fairly underexplored (Farrell *et al.* 2020: 8); studies have primarily focused on Christian religious identity and how this plays out in the teaching of English.⁵² Yet, there is a lot to unpack in the relation between Islamic or Eastern Orthodox Christian beliefs of teachers and language pedagogic practices. The focus on language teachers is due to their intertwined relations with moral values and ethics documented in literature⁵³.

Our data indicates that the majority of teachers hold views on sex segregation, with the belief that it is highly encouraged to promote chastity and foster respect between girls and boys. According to our results, an overwhelming 42% strongly agree and 23% agree that boys and girls should be segregated. Furthermore, the majority of teachers find the female characters' active wear too revealing or inappropriate to Egyptian culture, and a predominant majority prefer veiled female characters in language textbooks. Lastly, our data revealed that almost half of language teachers believe that exposure to other cultures that allows sharing public sphere in mixed-gender settings could impact Egyptian students negatively.

6.5.2. The effect of teachers' gender equity awareness on their teaching

Given the positive attitude towards language teachers, due to their high communicative skills with their students that leads to proximity with them, it is necessary to understand how teachers use this platform to instill social values in the learning environment. Do they promote gender awareness? How do they address gender equality issues? How do they empower girls?

Our data shows that an overwhelming majority of teachers (strongly agree= 29, agree= 111) believe that initiating a discussion on women empowerment, in particular, has to be one of

⁵² See Edge, 2003; Johnston and Varghese, 2006; Pennycook and Makoni, 2005.

⁵³ See also Pennycook 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Canagarajah, *The Politics of English Language Teaching*, Volume 1.

the lesson's objectives. In fact, the overwhelming majority of teachers' understanding of empowering girls is confined within access to education and to STEM in specific. At the same time, the predominant majority of teachers agree that obedience for girls is more important than their academic achievement. The data is aligned with the cultural representation of the ideal Egyptian women to be modest and obedient. Girls will still be raised to be obedient and submissive if the school education system reinforces traditional gender roles. Lastly, the majority of teachers believe that women are the sole responsible of household chores, in accordance with the students' results to the same question.

To conclude, the majority of Egyptian language teachers are influenced by religious ideologies set by the Muslim Brotherhood and *Salafi* movements. Their views are influenced by the 'practical' solutions proposed by both ideologies to allow for women's 'conditional' integration in society. These solutions include gender segregation, preserved traditional gender roles, and modest attire. While most teachers agree with the status quo, their views on women's empowerment are limited to accessibility to education, particularly in STEM sectors. This view is aligned with the women representation of the English textbook.

While in other studies, researchers encourage teachers to be aware of gender bias embedded in educational materials as a means to reduce gender bias in the classroom (Julianti *et al.* 2019; Wasseberg 2008), we cannot rely on teachers, in our case, to combat sexism. Hence, teacher training is fundamental catalyst that goes hand in hand with textbook revisions.

- Teachers should be trained to align with Egypt's 2030 vision for women empowerment.
- Teacher training programs should take into consideration the class size, the teachers' authoritative role and their religious ideologies.
- Gender awareness in teacher training should have a wider scope beyond access to education and STEM specializations. Specific hurdles discussed in this study should be highly accentuated in training programs.
- The ministry of education is highly encouraged to hire religion teachers, so that language teachers would not teach religion.

6.6. Implications for publishers and material writers

We hope that this study will help publishers and content creators understand the magnitude of the effect of the textbooks produced and circulated in Egyptian schools on learners and teachers.

As asserted by Barthelemb (2021 : 90)

Les programmes scolaires – et sans doute à plus forte raison, les manuels scolaires – peuvent être envisagés sous deux angles : ils sont à la fois le miroir de la société qui produit (et en ce sens, reproducteurs des inégalités et/ou discriminations) et un outil susceptible de transformer la société en profondeur en permettant de questionner les représentations courantes. [School curricula - and probably even more so, school textbooks - can be considered from two angles: they are both the mirror of the society that produces (and in this sense, reproducers of inequalities and/or discriminations) and a tool likely to transform society in depth by making it possible to question current representations].⁵⁴

Therefore, Secondary textbooks writers should fully understand the consequences of gender representation on adolescents, identify formation, in addition to acknowledging the current challenges that face Egyptian women in the society. First, enhancing women's visibility sends a strong message of equality and the contrary is true as Porreca (1984) explains the omission of females in curricular materials when she writes, “when females do not appear as often as males in the text (as wells as illustrations) [...] [the] message is that women's accomplishments, or that they themselves as human beings, are not important enough to be included” (Porreca 1984: 706).

Furthermore, to promote women emancipation, textbooks should directly address the current setbacks mentioned in our study rather than the current mere inclusion of women in STEM. This means that writers should start by liberating women from public shaming, which is the main hurdle in their advancement and empowerment. To do so, gender interaction should be normalized and fostered in textbooks through dialogues, inclusions of main actors in stories from both genders and images of shared activities. These activities should not be limited to education, but rather leisure and sports to normalize safe interactions with the opposite gender.

Additionally, there should be a representation of different types of women's attires in all textbooks, to eradicate public shaming and promote acceptance of women's choices.

As for counter-stereotypes, it is crucial to represent men in nurturing roles or partaking domestic chores to combat the exploitation of women and emasculation of men who participate in these responsibilities.

Above all, it is essential to present Egyptian characters carrying out the counter-stereotypical actions since our results showed that foreign characters alienate learners rather than

⁵⁴ Our translation.

inspire them. Moreover, including characters from rural and urban areas in Egypt is also necessary to increase the relatability of characters represented.

Finally, language attitude should also be taken into consideration by content designers in order to dispel fossilized stereotyped representations of the languages studied and increase learners' relatability with the characters. First, Arabic textbooks should not solely represent women through the Islamic lens, where women are covered and are presented in secondary kinship roles. It should rather serve more civic representations of both genders. Secondly, English textbooks should not limit their women empowerment efforts to career aspirations, while maintaining the status of quo gender segregation and female exclusion from sports and leisure activities. Their representation of women should be more inclusive of a variety of roles and activities. Lastly, the French textbook writers should be aware of the language's elitist mark; hence, making the content more relatable by including Egyptian characters from different background in a local relatable context.

6.7. Limitations of the study

No study is without limitations and our research is no exception. First, in this study, sex and gender are dealt with in binary terms despite current research acknowledgement of chromosomal, hormonal, genital variations of biological sex (Ainsworth 2015; Blackburn and Parker 2021). Yet, we abide by the current recognized gender structure in Egypt.

Secondly, we acknowledge that interpreting cues from images is prone to human error and could be biased. However, the images in this study were either introduced in the texts as males or females, or "contained strong visual cues (e.g., beard, male pattern baldness, breasts, etc.)" (Becker and Nilsson 2021: 1147). Therefore, we can argue that the potential impact of research error is minimal.

Furthermore, the students' questionnaires administered in our study were initially designed to reveal the level of acceptance of women's representations in the textbooks. While they were supposed to be distributed in public secondary schools, after obtaining the necessary consents, we could not reach students because schools were closed during the pandemic COVID-19. Consequently, we were not able to have direct interaction with the students and teachers who answered the questions. Due to relying on snowballing technique to distribute the electronic questionnaires, we are not able to attain a gender-balanced males and females, as girls were more

responsive than boys. Moreover, we were not able to carry out focus groups to probe into deeper insights from our subjects.

6.8. Conclusion

This study highlighted the portrayal of women in secondary level language textbooks that mirrors the culture-specific discrimination against women in the Egyptian society. By adopting a triangulation method of analyzing textbooks and administering questionnaires, we examined how women are represented across the textbooks under review, and analyzed the level of acceptance of these representations amongst Egyptian students in public secondary schools. Moreover, we examined language teachers' gender-equality awareness and their gender-bias views that reinforce sexism in textbooks and the society.

Our findings also questioned the sufficiency of current measures of gender-equality prevalent in literature on sexism in language textbooks, namely⁵⁵:

- The inclusion of female role models;
- The representation of female characters in STEM education;
- The representation of women breaking glass-ceiling at the work force.

To assess the adequacy of these measures implemented in current textbooks to portray empowering female images and promote the inclusion of women, our research draws upon concepts from Social Representation Theory and Social Identity Theory, aiming to evaluate their effectiveness within the Egyptian context.

Hence, the study compared the results of content analyses to the existing power dynamics and gender hierarchy that shape the Egyptian society and hinder women's progress. Regrettably, we found that language textbooks, whether they include covert or overt sexism, regenerate gender biases in a vicious cycle that would not end without immediate conscious intervention by authors, publishers, and decision makers.

Interestingly, the bias varied across the textbooks, highlighting the relation between the perception of language in a given society and women's representation associated with it. The Arabic textbooks, presented the most bias content compared to the other language books under review. Throughout the textbooks, women were occulted to present a scenario best described as

⁵⁵ See Dele-Ajayi *et al.* 2022; Hall 2014; Lestariyana *et al.* 2022.

“*toute l’existence de la femme aussi bien concrète qu’imaginaire concourt à faire d’elle une personne inférieure et subordonnée, dont le sort est voué à la servitude*⁵⁶ [All the existence of the woman as well concrete as imaginary concurs to make of her an inferior and subordinate person, whose fate is dedicated to the servitude]” (Ondua 2016: 88).

Being perceived as the sacred language of the Quran, the absence of females as famous role models or even ordinary characters in the Arabic textbooks reinforces the subordination of women in Islamic culture. The authors did not celebrate either Arab or international women’s history and limited their scarce appearances to kinship titles. In the few cases when prominent female figures were mentioned, they were glaringly introduced as mother, wife, or colleague of a famous male figure.

As for English, being perceived in Egypt as the language of economic prosperity, the authors of the English textbook presented women in educational and professional settings, specifically in male-dominated careers. The authors adhere to current measures of empowering women by focusing on their representation in STEM fields, as argued by Wood *et al.*:

Without regular exposure to diverse, relatable role models, scientist stereotypes have the potential to be particularly harmful for students who identify with under-represented and/or marginalized groups. By contrast, exposing students to scientists from a diversity of backgrounds and identities has positive impacts on students’ interest and achievement in STEM. This impact can be long lasting: in one study, biology students exposed to examples of scientists from under-represented groups in class activities reported increased ability to personally relate to scientists up to six months later (2020: 2).

Hence, the authors’ efforts to include women in this male-dominated field are undeniable. However, the emphasis on female modesty in terms of attire and gender segregation remained a constant requirement for women to negotiate the public sphere throughout the book. This leaves us with the question: How can women negotiate their position in male-dominated careers while risking subjecting themselves to shame and accusations for not conforming to traditional measures of modesty and chastity?

Lastly, the author of the French language textbook presented women in line with the perception of the language in Egypt: progressive, yet elitist. Although, the counter-stereotypes presented by the authors varied across different domains like sports, outdoor and leisure activities.

⁵⁶Our translation.

Yet, the overemphasis on European Caucasian female characters throughout the textbook weakened its relatability for Egyptian learners.

Finally, our analyses of the textbooks were complemented with the learners' accepted social representation of women's role in the Egyptian society. Our questionnaire probed their views on gender roles, gender segregation, dress attire, and freedom to negotiate the public sphere. Their answers reflected their acceptance of the way women are reflected in English and Arabic textbooks. Egyptian adolescents are torn between conforming to standards of chastity, modesty, traditional gender roles, and propelling into the workforce.

Our findings confirm our hypothesis that Arabic textbooks would present a gender-bias model due to the perceived intertwined relationship between Arabic language and conservative Islamic traditions. Similarly, our analysis of the French textbook confirms our hypothesis that it would adhere to current gender-equality standards prevalent in European textbooks. Interestingly, our results highlighted the discrepancies in the English textbook that promote women's agency while reinforcing culture-specific gender-bias, adding a dimension to the textbook that was not hypothesized initially.

That said, we argue that the current textbooks do not reflect Egypt's vision 2030 concerning women emancipation:

- women's political empowerment and leadership;
- women's economic empowerment;
- women's social empowerment;
- women's safety and protection.

Finally, our results of teachers' views on sexism underpins the effect of their religious ideologies on reinforcing the same societal prejudices against women. Therefore, addressing sexism in textbooks only is not sufficient to remedy the problem without government-sponsored teachers' training programs.

To conclude, the existing magnified gender categorization in the society, endorsed and reinforced by academic institutions and curricula, affects individuals' roles in accordance with Burke and Tully (1977) and Thoits (1986) connection between social categorization and the expectation associated with that position (role) and its function in the society. Adolescents in this critical age of gender identity formation and knowing the other, are immersed in a prejudiced

system that overtly encourages women to become achievers, while covertly hinders them with collective shame and guilt.

Young women are encouraged by academic institutions to pursue their education, yet avoid gender interactions to protect themselves and their reputation, conform to Islamic dress, undertake all the house chores, and put their families first. These restrictions are reflected in UNDP report on gender inequalities within the Arab region:

Workplace inequalities (including pay gaps and the risk of harassment), social norms (pressure to fulfil the role of mother) and imbalances at home (a greater load of domestic unpaid work), among other factors, may deter her from participating in paid work. The woman's choice may bring feelings of guilt or regret. A large proportion of female homemakers feel that by staying home they are giving up a career or economic independence. A large proportion of mothers employed in paid occupations face the stress of feeling that their choice implies suffering for their children (Conceição 2019: 161).

It is evident that young learners' attitudes towards professions are affected by "...social norms that pressure women to fulfil the role of mothers as a primary occupation and promote the idea that children of working mothers are paying the price for it" (Hussain and Haj-Salem 2022: 4). Their male colleagues internalize these views too instead of learning values of partnership, equal responsibilities and mutual respect.

An excerpt from the speech given by the female Chief of the Medical Syndicate of Egypt at the graduation ceremony of the class of 2022 at Al Azhar Assuit University, Faculty of Medicine, provides an insight on the contradictory messages delivered to young Egyptian women who chose a competitive STEM career:

Now, let me talk to the beautiful girls: First your home, then your children, then your job. (Applause). Don't listen to anyone who would tell you your job comes before your children...Be aware! If your Excellency stay at home, there will be a million doctors to take care of people. Yet, if you leave your children...they only have one mother. It is you! (Applause). In the beginning, I quit the clinical part of the job –although my husband did not ask me to – because my children were distraught and had problems because of me being outside of the house. Consequently, I chose a specialization that does not require me to work night shifts. So, when you choose a specialization...try to choose one that is suitable for the conditions of your household, and always prioritize your house. I don't want to take much of your time. Congratulations! (Ghaleb 2022: 08m: 40sec)⁵⁷.

As explained by Social Identity Theory, the formation of identity occurs through interaction with an already established social structure. Here, it is noteworthy how the categorization of male versus female doctors is amplified, with the latter facing potential shame and guilt if they strive

⁵⁷ Our transcription and translation of part of a Medical school graduation speech posted online.

for career advancement after years of studying and dedication. Interestingly, it is a female leading figure, herself a product of this system, who delivers the commencement address to the assembly of graduates.

Finally, rectifying Egyptian women's misrepresentation in textbooks is the first step in a long journey to break the mold. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the power of representation and fully understand its depth, as Pfeifer asserts:

The issue of gender and representation is multifaceted; that is to say, it is not limited to simply the representation of female characters in texts. Rather, the dearth of female representation as well as the pervasiveness of misrepresentation spans from characters to authorship to historical figures to sense of self within educational spaces (2021: 28).

Adhering strictly to Western or European guidelines aimed at combating sexism may prove to be impractical within the Egyptian context or even have unintended negative consequences. Therefore, it is crucial to tailor counter-stereotypes to address the specific manifestations of sexism prevalent locally, ensuring that they have an inspiring impact on students instead of alienating them. Likewise, teachers should undergo government-sponsored training programs that explicitly address sexism and raise awareness of unconscious biases in the classroom.

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