Construction of Gender in Linguistic Signs in Selected Kenyan Secondary School English Textbooks

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Abstract

In countries such as Kenya, where textbooks are a core component of classroom experience, the materials have the potential to shape socially enacted identities. Gender representation via linguistic signs in textbooks can have a substantial impact on how students perceive men and women in society. In order to achieve equity in education, which is a key mandate of both the Education for All (EFA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), gender bias in textbooks must be addressed. The National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGAD) in Kenya sought to enhance equal participation among men, women, girls and boys in education and other thematic areas. This paper contributes to the discourse on gender representation in textbooks by examining gender portrayal in linguistic signs found in selected English secondary school textbooks using Halliday's (1985, 2014) systemic functional grammar approach. The study applied the explanatory sequential research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). A document analysis guide derived from the model for analyzing linguistic signs by Halliday (1985, 2014) was employed in the analysis of quantitative data from the linguistic signs in four English textbooks. Results showed that in the selected textbooks, masculine representations were more prevalent than those of females. The study also revealed that males were more involved in all the three mood types namely; declarative, interrogative and imperative. Again, more males than females appeared as theme and rheme of clauses. Additionally, it emerged that males engaged more in verbal processes than females did. The study concludes that men are either implicitly or explicitly portrayed as being superior to women in the linguistic signs in the analysed textbooks. The study recommends that Ministry of Education in Kenya initiates measures to alleviate gender disparity by focusing on the issue of gender representation in textbooks. On the other hand, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) may find these results useful in improving the textbooks evaluation based on gender equality prototypes. Improved evaluation, could be used as a basis to revise textbooks currently in use and guide in the development of new ones.

Keywords: systemic functional linguistics, textbooks, gender portrayal, linguistic signs

INTRODUCTION

In a conventional language teaching and learning setting, textbooks are essential and common. This could be attributed to the convenience associated with carrying textbooks and also the textbooks' affordability. As Brugeilles and Cromer (2009a, p. 15) noted, textbooks are "still the cheapest of available media, and they are easy to carry and use," making them an effective educational instrument that can reach a wide audience. Veriara (2015) emphasises the crucial function of textbooks by claiming that they direct the teaching and learning process by making up for teachers' knowledge gaps. Carmen (2015) adds that textbooks as learning materials have some authority over students because they rarely object to the content. Textbooks contain both latent and manifest content. A great deal of the content is in form of linguistic signs which consists of all the words that have either meaning or grammatical function. The manifest content includes direct or noticeable elements, while the latent content is the hidden elements of the textbooks, which need to be interpreted for the underlying or hidden issues to be revealed. The content of the textbooks, whether latent or manifest, should be designed to promote gender inclusivity so that learners get

gender-balanced content.

Gender representation is either expressly or indirectly modelled in EFL/ESL textbooks. English textbooks, whether they are EFL or ESL, occasionally use sexist language, stereotypes, and gender disparities (Clarke & Clarke, 1990). Males and females may appear to be outstanding to one another depending on the descriptions and the frequency of gender marked pronouns and nouns in a text. This scenario is contradictory to the policies enacted to ensure that the learning materials portray males and females equally NPGAD (2018) and the Education, Training Sector National Policy (2015), and the Basic Education Act (2013) which advocates for gender discrimination in all circles of the society. In practice, gender preconceptions and biases should not be promoted in EFL/ESL textbooks. English textbooks are fundamental tools for teaching and learning because English is not only among the subjects taught in all basic institutions in Kenya, but it is also the primary medium of instruction. Nofal and Qawar (2015) point out that a hidden barrier to gender equality in the classroom may be the biased construction of gender in EFL textbooks. Since textbooks are essential resources for implementing the curriculum, biased content in the textbooks could degrade the quality of education offered to learners.

Research and analysis can be used to address this, which might result in the reform of textbooks and the creation of gender-sensitive vetting tools. The present study used content analysis, which is one of the most structured methods for analysing the textbook as an artefact.

The Ministry of Education approved a re-evaluation of existing approved textbooks in January 2018, which was meant to achieve 1:1 student book ratio, and led to the selection of the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQIP) textbooks. SEQIP is a nationwide project aimed at ironing out major challenges in the achievement of quality education, such as poor quality science, mathematics, and language education at the secondary level. SEQIP seeks to enhance learning, transition from primary to secondary education, as well as improve learners' retention in school, textbooks have gained significance in Kenya. By ensuring that students have access to the secondary school textbooks used in Kenya, SEQIP aims at enhancing the quality of instruction. More textbooks have been availed for secondary schools' students in form one through form four.

An important step towards attaining educational equality as enshrined in both the Education for All (EFA) and global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) frameworks is addressing gender discrepancy in textbooks and, as a result, the curriculum. The global SDG goal number four focuses on inclusivity in education which implies lack of discrimination in all aspects. In accordance with Article 27(3-8) of the constitution of Kenya (2010), the National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGAD) was developed in 2018. Although the policy is aimed at increasing the participation of women, men, boys and girls, in education among other thematic areas, textbook evaluations have indicated that while representation of women has increased and overt sexism has decreased, more subtle issues with gender roles and representations are evident. Stereotypes and gender inequality are still pervasive in textbooks used in educational systems around the world in general.

SEQIP's goal is to raise teaching standards by ensuring that secondary school textbooks in Kenya are of a high quality. Policies promoting gender parity have not been implemented fully and this may lead to entrenchment of similar gender disparities in real-life circumstances if they are depicted in textbook linguistic signs. Thus, a study of these linguistic signs is necessary to reveal the underlying gender imbalance patterns and aid in increasing teachers' and students' awareness in contexts where English is being learned. Due to the importance of the textbook in the teaching and learning of English, as well as the realisation that gendered linguistic signs are a prominent sign in them, this article investigates the depiction of gender identity in the linguistic signs in the SEQIP textbooks. Gender disparities that are depicted subtly in textbooks' linguistic signs may reinforce other gender disparities in the day-to-day life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Linguistic signs are a key component of gender-based studies in textbooks. The linguistic sign consist of all content in the textbooks. Some of these investigations are based on the conceptual framework created by Halliday (1994, 2004), which promotes the idea that all linguistic signs serve several communication purposes, including interpersonal, ideational, and textual ones. Linguistic signs that allows participants' interactions with the world the purview of the interpersonal metafunction. Mood type realized by use of different sentence types are used to encode the linguistic signs on the interpersonal metafunction. The declarative, interrogative and imperative

moods emphasise that linguistic structures can be used to represent gender disparities based on their meanings. The concept of theme and rheme was applied in analyzing and explicating gender representation based on the textual metafunction. (Matthiessen & Halliday, 1997) believe that specific interpretations of situation and socially instigated interaction are represented by specific linguistic structures in different social contexts to convey communicate specific information.

Halliday (1994) highlights four processes based on verb choices that participants may undertake relational, verbal, material and mental processes have been used to determine gender representation in the textbooks on the ideational metafunction. The verbal processes are realized by the verbs that says something. All the verbs that involve thinking enhance the mental processes while the relational processes are realized by state verbs. The material processes are realized by action verbs. Halliday (1994, 2014) notes that the mood types are used to bring out the interpersonal metafunction,which involves establishing and conducting of social relations. The declarative mood is in form of statements; interrogative mood in form of questions, and imperative mood is perceived through commands. Halliday (1994) further highlights two positions that participants may occupy based on the textual metafunction: the theme position, where the participants perform an action for another person; the rheme position, in which the participants receive an action from another participant. In first instance where, a participant may be the theme object of an action or the subject of a specific circumstance. The writers point out that the gender that assumes the position of the theme is given more weight than the gender that holds the position of the rheme.

Researchers' interest in the linguistic content aspects of gender representation in textbooks has increased. Some studies carried out within the Hallidayan textual metafunction have delved into the representation of gender in the linguistic signs of the EFL textbooks. The findings have revealed misrepresentation in the textual content in textbooks in terms of theme and rheme structure, participants' visibility, and firstness in occurrence in pronouns and nouns. Additionally, these investigations revealed that males frequently appeared in the theme segment of the clause. Additionally, these researches revealed that textbooks tended to favour men. It is worth noting, male participants appeared more frequently in the linguistic signs than the female participants. Further, gender stereotypes in the assigning of adjectival phrases used for females and males that were discovered

through textual analysis, where women are portrayed carrying out tasks like caring for children and undertaking household chores. Males were shown as engaging in outdoor activities in contrast. The research also demonstrate that women are more dependant than men and are fans of the activities performed by men, and that the linguistic items underrepresent and limit the visibility of females (Amini, 2012; Sakwa, 2010; Gharbarvi & Mousavi, 2012; Marefat & Marzban, 2014; Soylemez, 2014; Mineshima, 2008). Under the ideational metafunction, females were underrepresented in other textbooks studies (Mustapha, 2012; Abdellay & Benhaddouchi, 2015). While men were given more occupational roles, women were underrepresented and restricted to home. Further, Saarkivi (2012) noted that verbs used to talk about males were more common than those used for females in Finland textbooks were. On the interpersonal metafunction, some studies have shown that females and males are equally inclined to ask questions while more males than females give commands (Mulac, Weimann, Widenmann, & Gibson, 1985). According to a study applying the SFL theory by Gharbavi & Mousavi (2012), the linguistic evaluation showed more males than females held positions in the rheme and theme sections under the textual metafunction. Therefore, men have previously controlled the textbook clauses' communicative places. Additionally, the results of the participant role analysis revealed males were more likely than females to play different participant roles.

In order to determine how gender messages are portrayed, some Kenyan researchers have also analysed textbooks. Muasya and Kahiga (2018) conducted a documentary analysis of 10 early childhood science and English courses, workbooks, and supplementary books. Though gender stereotypes are prevalent in both masculine and feminine textbooks, the study found that the authors did their best to make them more gender sensitive. Malova (2012) analysed the new intergrated English series within the ethnographic framework and the feminist reproduction theory in visibility, authourship, firstness in dialogues, sex-linked occupations categories, which revealedIt is evident from earlier research that scholars from various disciplines are interested in gender representation in curriculum implementation materials. Stakeholders in the education sector may be interested in being enlightened on how SEQIP secondary English textbooks portray gender because the Kenya Constitution (2010) and National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGAD) formed in 2018.calls for gender pa-

rity in all domains. Based on this claim, the paper seeks to assess how gender is linguistically constructed in the SEQIP English textbooks that were approved and distributed for use in the Kenya secondary schools.

METHODS

Explanatory sequential research design was used in the study (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2017). In this study, gender representation in linguistic signs was first quantitatively analysed, followed by qualitative interpretations. The design is viewed as sequential since the inceptive quantitative stage is followed by the qualitative stage. Equally, the design is viewed as explanatory because the original quantitative data results are further explained with the qualitative data. The design is employed, in accordance with Edmonds and Kennedy (2017), when the researcher wants to supplement the quantitative findings with qualitative information. As a result of combining the two approaches, qualitative data afterwards interprets and explains findings from quantitative data analysis in a complimentary manner, which helps to both extend and deepen the study (Maroko et al., 2019; Maroko, 2021). The English textbooks that were the subject of our study were those that the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) had approved and distributed by MoE for use in Kenyan secondary schools. The primary teaching and assessment tools used by both instructors and students in Kenya's basic education system are approved textbooks. We were interested in analysing the linguistic signs in these texts to find patterns of gender representation that the main audience members of these texts would infer implicitly or openly. There were four Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQIP) textbooks.

The following texts were produced as sources of linguistic signs for study using the purposive sampling technique, which was guided by such inclusion characteristics as KICD approval, use in secondary schools, and use in the teaching of English. *Secondary English: An Integrated Approach Students*' Book 1 (Third Edition)', published by Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB); *Secondary English: An Integrated Approach Students*' Book 2 published by Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB); *Secondary English: An Integrated Approach Students*' Book 3 published by Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB); *New Horizons in English: A Course for Secondary Schools Students* Book 4' published by East African Educational Publishers Ltd.

The four sampled textbooks for form one, two, three and four were abbreviated as SETB1, SETB2, SETB3 and SETB4 respectively in this paper. The study of quantitative data from the linguistic signs in SETB1 through SETB4 the four textbooks used a document analysis guide derived from Halliday's (1994, 2014) model for analysing linguistic signs. The number of linguistic signs with male participants only, female characters only, or both male and female characters, as well as the total males in linguistic signs with both males and females, as well as the total number of females in the same mixed-gender linguistic construction, were the variables around which the document analysis guide was built. On the pronominal token, the pronouns referring to the feminine and masculine gender against the gender neutral pronouns. About order of mention (firstness), the instances in which females and males co-occurred were selected for quantitative and qualitative analysis. All proper nouns referring to females and males were sampled for analysis. The declarative, interrogative and imperative mood was used to assess gender representation in the linguistic signs. Quantitative information about depictions of gender representation necessitated classification of linguistic data into ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions (Halliday, 1994). The guiding theory and other relevant literature were used to interpret and provide explanations for the statistical data that resulted from the document analysis procedure. This quantitative analysis was followed in our study by a qualitative analysis to give the numbers context and adhere to the explanatory sequential design rules. That is, the quantitative data arising from document analysis provided the contextualization needed for qualitative explanation (Maroko, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Guided by the framework for analyzing linguistic signs by Halliday (1994), the first focus was to determine patterns of frequency of female and male participants in the linguistic signs in the sampled textbooks. Frequency patterns are classified as visibility (Stokade, 2006, Birjandi 2012) which shows over inclusion of one gender or the other. Visibility data was summarized in Table 1.

Ideational Metafunction
This sub-section presents an analysis of the linguistic signs within the ideational metafunction. In this study, transitivity is achieved by considering the total number of males and females doing or receiving an action. (Halliday, 2004), in

addition to the order in which male and female participants occur. According to Corbett (2006), grammatical gender is a morpho syntactic characteristic present in many languages, whereby nouns are assigned to classes called 'genders'. Therefore, nouns and pronouns can be used to portray gender, based on how the writer chooses the word. Consequently, in linguistic signs, gender can be portrayed by the selection of words, for instance, nouns/noun phrases, and verbs. Further, at syntactic level, word order may signal to readers or listeners semantic and social hierarchies (Hegarty, Mollin & Foels, 2016, Kesebir, 2017). Accordingly, citing a woman and a man is perceived as not being the same as a man and a woman and the result is biased representation toward the first person mentioned.

Visibility of Pronouns and Nouns

One of the main manifestations of sexism in textbooks has always been female and male visibility, that is, how male and female are represented concerning the linguistic items. When females do not appear as often as males, it implies that women are not as important as men are, or that their accomplishments are not as worthwhile to mention as men's or that they themselves as human beings are not important enough to be included (Porreca, 1984). Over-inclusion of one gender in linguistic signs indicates that, that specific gender has great worth as compared to the gender, which is less included or totally excluded. In this regard, pronouns and nouns were analysed and results represented in the tables below. Gender was represented by the choice of words and more so through nouns, noun phrases and pronouns. According to Evison (2010) in corpus studies, the basic step is to undertake a frequency analysis to reveal how often a specific word is depicted in a corpus. The study focuses on the pronominal and nominal items that are marked for gender. That is, exclusion and inclusion of noun and pronouns referents of females and males, in addition to the pronouns that portray gen-

der neutrality. The focus of the study is to assess the frequencies of feminine pronouns and nouns, and masculine pronouns and names portrayed in the study's corpora. It follows that the gender represented with fewer occurrences than the other is not as important as the one that is underrepresented. Sunderland (1994) pointed out that the matter of invisibility occurs: when females do not appear as often as males in the text (as well as in the illustrations which serve to reinforce the text), the implicit message is that women's accomplishments, or that they themselves are not important enough to be included. (Porreca, 1984, p.706). The first section tackles visibility in pronouns and the next focuses on visibility in nouns.

Visibility in Pronouns

The visibility of pronouns was assessed based on third person singular and plural pronouns: she, he, his, her, hers, him, them, their, and they. Reflexive pronouns, which indicate that the doer of the action is affected by the action were also factored in revealing how gender is represented in the selected textbooks. This study took in to account only three reflexive pronouns namely; himself, herself and themselves. Table 9 shows the specific pronouns besides their frequencies.

The researcher therefore analyzed the frequency of occurrence of male and female 'node words' in SETB1, SETB2, SETB3 and SETB4. The gendered pronouns are ranked according to the frequency of occurrences for males matched with their female equivalents. The gendered pronouns were counted to widen the perspective and support on the findings on the two genders with regard to gender representation. Table 1 shows the frequency in the representation of male and female gender in the selected textbooks by use of pronouns.

With reference to statistics in Table 1 masculine pronouns' cumulative occurrences is more than the feminine pronouns' occurrences. Considering the cumulative 6613 pronouns, 4720 pronouns, (71.37%) specify gender that is, represents

Table 1. Distribution of Gender Representation in Pronouns

Pronoun Form	Frequency											
	He	She	His	Her	Him	Hers	They	Them	Their	Himself	Herself	Themselves
One	363	250	194	207	109	2	200	105	96	14	9	10
Two	358	209	260	197	118	3	252	92	166	4	2	10
Three	427	213	196	97	137	1	289	92	147	5	1	3
Four	400	290	283	283	123	0	217	66	171	21	13	4
Total	1548	962	933	784	487	6	958	355	580	44	25	27

N-6613

either males or females. It can also be noted that cumulative frequencies of masculine pronouns was higher than the feminine pronouns: 2968 times (62.7%) against 1752 times (37.3%) respectively. The masculine pronouns were distributed as follows: pronoun *he* with a cumulative frequency of 1548 times, *his* appeared 933 times and *him* at 487 times. The feminine pronouns were distributed as follows: 962 (54.9%) hers, 784 (44.7%) her and 6 (0.34%) hers. It can also be noted from Table 9 that the frequencies of gender-neutral pronouns occurred 1893 times (28.63%) *They* 958 times (50.6%), *them* 355 times (18.8%) and *their 580* times (30.6%)).

According to Davis (1995) gender-neutrality entails substituting the general *he* with *you, he or she, s/he, she or he*, the indefinite pronoun *one* (or *one's* for possessive) or singular *they* when the gender of the referent is not known. In the data collected the pronouns *their, them, themselves* and *they* were used in plural form in order to achieve gender neutralization.

Gender representation in terms of linguistic signs and feminine pronouns are typically less noticeable than males. The findings show that male pronoun referents outnumbered the females. The analysis show that the third person singular masculine pronouns prevailed in all form 1 to 4 textbooks in relation to third person singular feminine pronouns. The researcher observed that the masculine pronoun *he* appeared more frequently in the examples, tasks or exercises. The males recorded the highest number of masculine pronouns than the females' feminine pronouns. According to (Kim, 2014; Yaghoubi, Notash & Nouri, 2016) gender bias can be detected by assessing inclusion that means the portrayal of one gender more than the other and exclusion which means less or no depiction of one gender than the other. The study therefore concludes that the high number of male pronouns usage in textbooks is naturally influenced by the high number of male characters in visuals as discussed in section 4.1.

The findings of this study are similar to Bahman and Rahimi (2010) and VeriKaite (2012) studies of the English textbooks in Iranian high school and Indian EFL textbooks that found that the total percentage of nouns, names, pronouns, and adjectives referring to males was higher than those referring to females. Table 2 shows the frequency of females and males' names in the selected English textbooks

Gendered nominal visibility

The visibility of nouns was assessed by counting all the names referring to males and females. This was done in a bid to reveal the number of times that the names referring to males and females appeared in the selected textbooks. Table 2 reveals total occurrences of female and male names and their corresponding percentages.

The statistics reported in Table 2 indicate that there are more occurrences of the mention of males' names than females. According to Table 2, the total occurrences of mention of male proper names were 1827 (59.71%) juxtaposed with (1233 (40.29%) females' proper names. Similar findings were revealed in Alemi & Jafari's (2012) study who discovered that females' proper nouns were less than males' in ten ELT textbooks used in Zimbabwe. According to Jin, et al., (2013, p. 18), the gender that is frequently in the linguistic signs portrays pre-eminence or partiality towards the specific gender especially the males. Thus, the findings of this study depict that by representing more proper nouns for males and females, cause them dominant and favour them. However, unlike studies that had been carried before and showed that gender stereotyping could be found in nouns, with men playing the role of *leaders* but women only as *followers* (Wolpert, 2005), the data in the current study reveal that the noun *leader* was collocated to pronouns of both genders as shown below: A good leader is one who respects *himself* or *herself.(SETB3);* A candidate should be provided with everything *he* or *she* needs. (SETB3) (SETB3 pp. 14).

In summary, in terms of male and female

Table 2. Distribution of Mention of Names of People

| Form | # of Occurrences | | | | Σ |
	Female names	%t	Male names	%	
One	290	23.52	433	23.70	723
Two	407	33.01	619	33.88	1026
Three	306	24.82	391	21.40	697
Four	230	18.65	384	21.02	614
Σ	1233	100	1827	100	3060

N-3060

mentions by use of nouns and pronouns, the study concludes that females are underrepresented in the textbooks while men outnumber women in the depiction of participants.

Firstness

Firstness or order of mention is a criterion that was used to identify gender construction in the linguistic signs of the selected English textbooks. In linguistics, firstness refers to a case of mentioning two participants of different genders together and one gender is often said or mentioned first. The study analyzed gender representation in linguistic signs in terms of firstness. In the English language established appositions are used "… where the male referents occur first-as in 'he or she', 'husband and wife', 'men and women" to expound on firstness(Goddard and Patterson, 2000, p.57). Again, Kress (2004) explains, that in a clause that comprises of a male and female name, the name that appears first shows a close relationship with such a person and that is more important than the one mentioned thereafter. This observation clearly affirms that the order in which nouns or pronouns referring to males and females are portrayed in a certain phrase, clause or sentence may convey gender bias.

Firstness, or having a male name preceding a female one in a construction, may portray gender bias against females. According to Mills (1995), one aspect of the gender bias against women is the order of the male and female phrases. Firstness in this study means positioning terms referring to males before the terms referring to females and vice versa. The first part of this section addresses firsness in proper nouns (names referring to females and males) followed by firstness in pronouns, and, finally, firstness in pronoun ordering.

Firstness in Proper Nouns

The study considered items in the sampled textbooks where names referring to the two genders were used. These items included phrases, clauses and sentences, and the order of their mention that is the gender mentioned first was considered. Eckert & Ginet,(2004) note that, males usually mentioned first in the accustomed forms of English usage, for example, males and females, husband and wife etc. A clause containing female and male names, it is principally the terms that refer to males that come before the female terms. Table 3 represents the frequency in order of mention of males and females names in the four textbooks.

Table 3. Firstness in Proper Nouns

Form	Frequency			
	Females first	%	Males first	%
One	21	48.8	25	34.3
Two	5	11.6	19	26.0
Three	11	25.6	19	26.0
Four	6	14.0	10	13.7
∑	43	100	73	100
	N-116			

Table 3 reveals that in the majority of cases, men were mentioned before women. This scenario, according to Eckert & Ginet (2004), historically suggests that males are a more worthy gender. According to Porreca (1984), when manly words typically come first, reflecting the inferior position of women. The occurrences are listed in order of the general notion that men are more important than women in practically every society are. They must always come first, wherever (Hameed, 2014, p. 110). This finding is due to the cultural or traditional representation of women in Kenyan society. In most of the cultures in Kenyan society, males are mentioned first and females are subordinate to them. Nonetheless, these results are favorable since the difference is minimal as compared to earlier studies that show 12 mentions of men against two mentions of females (Lee & Collins, 2010; Amini & Birjandi, 2012).

More specifically, firstness also showed up in the qualitative data when masculine and feminine nouns co-occurred. The following examples illustrate how the male nouns were typically mentioned first in certain situations. Consider examples 3- 6 from this study's corpora.

I want to show *men* and *women* are equal. Both *father* and *mother* care about my performance in school. *Baby girls* like playing with dolls, but *baby boys* prefer toys. *(SETB3)*

Dancing is one of the recognized ways, in which *boys* and *girls* expect to find their future partner.(SETB4)

As examples 3-6 indicate, whereas only a few instances of female firstness were noted (for instance, baby girls and baby boys), males tended to be cited first when two nouns or gendered third person pronouns were paired for gender. These examples of male firstness occur in groupings of nouns (Ref 4 and 6, father and mother, boys and girls). Male gender depicts higher occurrences which may be interpreted as gender bias against females. The Lee & Collins (2008) study, which found a strong tendency for men to be quoted

first in single phrases in Hong Kong English textbooks when two nouns were paired for gender, is supported by this study. Again, Indonesian study by Nashriyah et al. (2020) revealed male characters in the lead in terms of importance. There were five more instances in readings and exercises where men were named first followed by females. Hartman and Judd (1970, quoted by Farooq, 1999, p. 16) further advance this assertion, "While such automated arrangement (where the males come first) could be insignificant, it shows the inferior status of females".

Firstness in Ordering of Pronouns

Firstness was also revealed in the analysis of the frequency of occurrence of pronouns referring to males and females in the study's corpora. Table 4 shows the frequency of the pronouns and their corresponding percentages.

The mention of men first and women first differs noticeably, as shown in Table 4. In comparison to females 8 female pronouns, 87 (91%) male pronouns appear first. The quantitative findings are supported by examples 7–9; this occurs when alternative pronouns are used to include both males and females:

If anyone wants to improve *his* or *her* image, *he* or *she* should seek advice on what suits *him* or *her*. (SETB3)

If anyone wants to pass his or her exam, he or she must work hard on *his* or *her* studies. (SETB3)

I am saying that the war against corruption can only be won if each individual decides *he or she* will never give or take a bribe. (SETB1).

As examples 7 through 9 indicate, usage of alternative pronouns to include both females and males, for instance, Ref 8 *he/she, Ref 7 her/his, her* or *him, himself* or *herself* is evident. The findings show that the authors used dual gender to attain generic neutralization as the examples demonstrate. Willis (2008), however, observes that the use of «he or she» makes a sentence clumsy, and more so, the use of «dual gender" shows how men come first before women. Ac-

cording to Hartman & Judd (1978, p. 390), placing the male first in an order "reinforces the second-place status of women" and have recommended mixing pronoun order to avoid such a situation.

Interpersonal representation

The relationships between the speaker(s) and addressee are fundamental to interpersonal meaning(s). It is employed to establish the speaker's role in the speech situation and his or her association with others.

Mood Type

One of its major linguistic structures is mood (Matthiessen & Halliday 1997), which is actualized by statements, commands, and questions. Mood processes are used to express gender differences in the forms of declaratives, interrogatives, and imperatives. The subject and finite features are what bring out the grammatical representation of the clause, where the subject represents the participant in the clause and the finite relates to the helping verb. Mood choices determine gender superiority (Eggins, 2004). The frequency of males and females appearing as subjects in declaratives, imperatives, and interrogatives was calculated using the mood choices as a measure of gender superiority. The frequencies of males and females in the three moods were determined and represented in Table 5.

Table 5 reveals that in all the three manifestations of mood, the males had highest frequencies in all the textbooks, except in SETB3. The declarative mood which is realised by use of statements represents the highest frequencies, a cumulative of 902(65.0 %) for the males against 484 (35.0 %) for the females. Commands registered the least incidences in all the study's corpora: 38 times (43%) for the females compared to 50 (57%) for the males.

With reference to Table 6, the interrogative mood represented by questions showed 100 females (28.0 %) and 253 males (72.0 %) cumulative occurrences. The data from SETB3s, howe-

Table 4. Order of Mention in Pronouns

Pronoun Form	Masculine pronouns appearing first		Feminine pronouns appearing first	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
One	22	25.29	0	00
Two	16	18.39	4	50
Three	24	27.59	3	37.50
Four	25	28.74	1	12.50
Σ		100	8	100

N 95

Table 5. Distribution of Mood Types

Mood Type		Frequency									
		Form 1		Form 2		Form 3		Form 4		∑	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Interrogative	F	32	19	102	31	50	30	69	20	253	100
	%	63	37	77	23	63	37	76	24	71.7	28.3
Declarative	F	143	64	326	197	119	64	314	159	902	484
	%	69	31	62	38	65	35	66	34	65.1	34.9
Imperative	F	22	03	03	0	21	30	04	02	50.0	38.0
	%	88	12	100	0	41	59	67	33	56.8	43.2

Fr-Frequency N-1835

ver, revealed that females were engaged 30 times (59.0%) in giving commands contrasted with 21 times (41.0%) for the males. These quantitative findings are supported by some qualitative data presented as examples 10- 16.

"Hey guys, I am tired of walking. I have a plan. What about some nice juicy mangoes?" he told them.

"Kisingu's of course," he replied.

"No, not me," Wanza said sternly.

"Oh come on, Wanza…Don't you ever have any fun...You will not chicken out Kasyoka, will you?" Mutuku scoffed.

"Hey, watch out! You are making much noise…." he advised.

"Wait a minute!" Wanza said.

"What for?" Mutuku asked quickly.

(Sourced from SETB1 P.152-154)

Since females make up 35% of the interrogative mood compared to 65% of males (ref. 10, 13, and 16) and the least amount of the declarative mood, it can be inferred that they are portrayed as being less powerful than males are. By asking other people for information, interrogatives are used to start conversational engagements. As a result, men are portrayed as being dependent on the female interlocutors' reactions. In this case, females have been represented as more powerful than males. The commands that carry out the imperative mood may be encoded with instructions, advice, or directives. Males outnumbered females in the declarative mood (see examples 10, 11, 13) meaning that males are superior to the females in this study. Most male participants provide information, as evidenced by the predominance of utterances made by men (Banda, 2005; Eggins & Slade, 1991). Clauses in the declarative mood frequently start conversations by presenting material for discussion. The material offered may be accurate or based on opinions, and it may be used to solicit comments to earlier discussions or to refute and counter refute earlier assertions (Eggins & Slade 1997, p. 85). Because men are more frequently featured in fact presenting, posing, and responding to challenges from women in the declarative mood, there may be some gender bias against women. Therefore, as shown in Table 5, gender bias is perceptible in the interpersonal metafunction in this regard. The results of this study are rather different from those of other studies that have shown that males and females are equally inclined to ask questions (Mulac, Weimann, Widenmann, & Gibson, 1988) and males are likely to give directives as in the current study.

Verbs

The analysis of verbs in the current study follows Halliday's (1994, 2014) views on the ideational metafunctions of language. Ideational mode constructs ideas and experiences using field resources: solely concerned with the clause as representation of patterns of experience, realized by verbs. Patterns of people's experiences are recognized by the structure of transitivity of the lexico-grammar. These resources construct transitivity patterns that comprise the choice of particular kinds of verbs called processes. Halliday (1994, 2014) noted the following processes conveyed by the verb: Material process or doing process; mental process or sensing process; being process; behavioural process; verbal process; and existence process. According to this classification, verbs that appeared together with the pronouns *he* and *she* and proper nouns were distributed into these verb clusters in order to liken the frequency of actions that are generally referred to or ascribed to males or females. The relational processes are realised mainly by the stative verbs: The mental processes refer to verbs that appeal to emotions, such as feel, think, and contemplate. The verbal processes are realised by verbs that portray participants as saying something, mainly in the target

role, where participants are presented as sayers. The material processes involve situations where males and females are involved in an event or an action. These processes are presented in Table 6

Table 6 shows that both females and males are involved in all the processes; however, males occur more frequently in all the processes. The verbs representing the relational processes in both males and females were more numerous than the verbs representing the mental, verbal and material processes in all four textbooks. In comparison to the other processes, the verbs representing the mental processes were used, 117 (70.9%) times for the males and 48 (29.1%) times for the females. Table 6 above shows a relative frequency analysis of the pronouns *he* and *she* and *proper names* against the verbs that they are collocated with and reveals that all forms 1 to 4 show that the most common verb is material process or process of doing (515 times for males and 310 times for females). Also, the action verbs such as *studying, watching, digging, traveling, playing, spending, cooking, carrying, working, typing, going, reading, writing, coming,* and *be*. Concerning the relational processes, Table 6 indicates that men are associated with physically demanding activities such as *digging* and *carrying*. These findings are similar to Pearce's (2008) study on sexist language, which found that men were associated with physically demanding activities.

Further, the content analysis of the verbs in SETB2 also shows material and mental process verbs collocating with the pronoun he **and male names** reveal that males are associated with crime or using physical strength. The verbs for physical and mental processes are indicated in the examples 17- 19 that follow.

The accident *traumatized* **him** so much that he *sank* deeper into drug abuse.SETB2

He *fell* asleep while *holding* a lit roll of bhang.SETB2

However, he *survives* the burns and this happens to be his turning point. SETB2(Sourced from SETB2s comprehension on How I survived drug abuse pp. 77- 79)

Text 17 features mental processes for males while 18 and 19 represent male material process while 18 portrays relational process for males. .Additionally, a content analysis of the verbs in SETB2 reveals that masculine names and the pronoun *he* are frequently used together, suggesting that men are often connected with committing crimes or exerting physical force. In the instances that follow, the verbs for both physical and mental activities are specified.

Mogaka and his sister Nyaboke are convinced by a man that their one thousand shillings would be doubled provided that so long as they had adequate faith but they are *conned* in the process (SETB2 pp. 25- 26)

Mutuku *convince*s, Kasyoka and Wanza *to steal* mangoes from Kisingu's farm. (SETB1) pp. 151- 153) (SETB1 comprehension on Kisingu's mangoes.

However, a number of material verbs were used with the pronoun *she or female proper noun*. The verbs assisted, offered, and helped, among others, are examples. The following excerpt is from SETB1 comprehension on Ndanu and her Teacher, pp. 118–120.

Mrs. Mutiso, a teacher of English at Mtoloni Day Secondary school *assisted* Ndanu and Ndolo from a humble background to continue with their education during a drought season by *offering* Mrs. Kitunguu some housework job. (SETB1)

Verbs represented in examples 20-22 show how helpful and willing to help others women are. The SETB3 also make clear that speaking, giving something, and seeking something are acts

Table 6. Distribution of Occurrences in Processes Types

		Form 1		Form 2		Form 3		Form 4		∑	
Process type		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Relational	Fr	151	104	176	136	229	106	241	193	797	539
	%	51.2	40.8	56.4	43.6	68.4	31.6	55.5	44.5	59.7	40.3
Mental	Fr	38	22	41	12	19	07	19	07	117	48
	%	63.3	36.7	77.4	22.6	73.1	22.9	73.1	26.9	70.9	29.1
Verbal	Fr	108	63	61	39	84	44	96	54	349	200
	%	63.2	36.8	61.0	39.1	65.6	34.4	64.0	36.0	63.6	36.4
Material	Fr	123	114	163	60	115	70	114	66	515	310
	%	51.9	48.1	73.1	26.9	62.2	37.8	63.7	36.7	62.4	37.6

Fr- Frequency M- Males F- Females N-2875

shared by both sexes, whereas giving is a male-only activity. Men and women both used verbal actions like *speaking, saying, explaining, asking,* and *telling.* The examination of mental process verbs demonstrates that the mental process of *thinking* is attributed to both males and females. The study of the verbs *wish* and *dream*, however, was more gender-specific for females. Verbs of behaviour indicate that both men and women yell. This result contrasts with that Willis' (2008) study, which discovered that the verb shout is frequently associated with boys as opposed to girls in the subject position. In conclusion, the findings on verb processes indicate that verbs contribute to the grammatical manifestation of linguistic sexism, and in this study favour males. Modarresi (2007) notes that the gender of the addresser affects the frequency and the manner of realizing the verbal processes. The high frequencies of males across the four verbal processes may be an indicator of their superior social status in society.

Textual metafunction

The textual meanings pertain to the formation of text and the organisation of meanings to make sensible text. Theme and rheme is one of the most important textual systems (Matthiessen & Halliday, 1997). The first place of the phrase belongs to the subject. According to that reasoning, it represents the "theme" of the sentence, which according to Halliday (1994) is "what the clause is about" and "the beginning point for the message" (Halliday, 1994, p. 38). The textual metafunction in this study represents the roles that men and women take on in the clauses and sentences in the chosen textbooks. There are two possible roles: doer and receiver. The gender that plays the doer role was deemed superior to the other gender. The total number of males and females portrayed as themes and rhemes is shown in Table 7.

Table 7 reveals that males were more than the females as themes and rhemes in the four selected textbooks. Table 7 shows cumulative frequencies of 3007 (59.42%) for males as themes against 2053 times (40.58%) for the females. Whereas males recorded 799, (56.0%) cumulative occurrences as rheme females were portrayed 627(44.0%) times. The personal pronoun *he* and the males proper names are collocated with verbs that show both males and females doing something. Examples 23-32 from the selected textbooks display the trend revealed by the quantitative findings.

Mr Tumbo removed a brown envelope
Jane stared at the envelope
He introduced his companion. SETB1 P.160-162
Maria sobbed ceaselessly. SETB4 P.97
Jacob bought the hockey stick. p.98
He opened the door with a master key.p.145
Mary likes chips.SETB3 P.10
He accidentally hit him on the head and hurt him badly.p.25
Does Denise understand that Ndambuki indeed endorsed the deed that David did? SETB2 p.1
She sang a beautiful song.p.48

Examples 23- 32 from the study's corpora shows that males (Ref 23, 25, 27, 28, 30 and 31: Mr. Tumbo, he, Jacob, he, he, and Denise respectively) are more often than females (Ref. 24, 26, and 29 and 32: Jane, Maria, Mary, and she) portrayed as themes and rhemes in the clauses or sentences.

Referring to Table 7 and examples 29-38 on females and males in terms of the participants' role, findings reveal that the female characters play a passive role as compared to men who are more frequently portrayed as themes. The results of the current study are completely compatible with earlier ones (Macaulay & Brice, 1997; Lesikin, 2001). The theme pattern is compared to communicative structures by Lesikin.

Table 7. Distribution of Theme and Rheme Frequencies

Form	Theme				Rheme			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
One	757	25.2	543	26.5	181	22.7	169	27.0
Two	902	30.0	542	26.4	248	31.0	170	27.1
Three	751	25.0	536	26.1	184	23.0	155	24.7
Four	597	19.9	432	21.0	186	23.3	133	21.2
∑	3007	100	2053	100	799	100	627	100

N-6486

It is crucial to indicate that the communicative importance belongs to the individual who is the theme in a clause (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1985, p. 412; Brown & Miller, 1991, pp. 348–349). It follows that people who are the focal point of discussions, writings, or information appear to be more prominent in society than others who are not. Those who are not of interest are not the focus of our communication; instead, we talk about those who in some way interest us or are significant to us. Accordingly, depending on the level of interest given to them, people might be viewed as having varying degrees of social importance (Lesikin, 2001, p. 227). Similarly, if characters of one gender (represented by gender-specific nouns or pronouns) more frequently appear in the position of the theme in a written text like a textbook, the underlying message to the readers is that one gender has higher communicative importance than the other..

Tables 1 through 4.8 demonstrate how masculine stereotypes can be propagated through English textbooks. In fact, Litosseliti (2006) contends that using "generic" masculine pronouns like *he, him, his,* and *man* to refer to both genders enhances the perception of males while diminishing that of females (Holmes, 2001). Even if only a few examples are considered to be instances of gender prejudice, occasioned data in Tables 1 to Table 7 demonstrate that gender inequality is depicted in the study's corpora. Findings on the relative frequency of male and female characters in the textbook demonstrate that male characters exceed female ones in every scenario under study. Women are far less prominent. Females are mostly recipients of the male counterparts' actions.

CONCLUSION

This paper confirms other earlier studies on gender representation in textbooks which have shown remarkable gender imbalances. In the study reported in this paper, findings indicated that females are less visible than males as illustrated by the high frequency of gender-revealing nouns and pronouns. The study further mentions how males are portrayed as giving directives more frequently than females. Further fewer males were depicted in the theme and rheme aspect of the textual metafunction. Generally, gender bias was revealed in the linguistic signs of the selected textbooks. As instrumental tools for curriculum implementation, the English textbooks should be freed of such bias which may influence quality of education.

The revelation may raise teachers and students' awareness of language as an important tool in shaping perceptions about gender as they use the textbooks for curriculum implementation. With these insights, it is recommended that teachers modify instructional materials and guide learners away from projecting gender stereotypical aspects in day-to-day lives. Furthermore, publishers, authors, designers and illustrators should constantly address gender disparities in English textbooks to achieve fairness in the representation of gender. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) could also use results of this study to improve textbooks evaluation based on gender equality prototypes. Improved evaluation, could be used as a basis to revise textbooks currently in use and guide in the development of new ones.

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