

Is what you see what you get? A critical discourse analysis of visual representation of females in junior primary EFL textbooks in Namibia

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Abstract

This paper presents a critical discourse analysis of twelve junior primary English First language (EFL) textbooks in Namibia using visual images as units of analysis. We assumed there is gender inequality in textbooks. The aim of this study is to investigate how females are represented in these textbooks and why females are presented the way they are. The study is informed by the principles of feminist theory which is premised on the subordination and oppression of females in society. This led to the adaptation of the critical paradigm which also aims at bringing justice to the oppressed. The critical paradigm works well with the qualitative approach design chosen. The images were analysed using themes from the thematic analysis approach and were critiqued using the critical discourse analysis. In this article, we argue that females were oppressed, subordinated and stereotyped in various ways in the sampled textbooks. Findings reveal that females were stereotyped in domestic roles, parental roles, occupational roles, activities and games and were depicted as patients or victims who had no agency. Females were subordinated in occupations. This study was conducted in an African country and its findings are similar to those of other studies from other parts of the world which point out that patriarchy and politics influence the way females are portrayed in textbooks.

Keywords: *feminism, critical discourse analysis, thematic analysis, visual images, patriarchy, oppression, society*

Introduction

Textbooks are an important resource material in the teaching and learning process. They help both teachers and learners to achieve their educational goals (Nene, 2014). Textbooks have an element of gender inequality in them in as much as there are campaigns for gender equality worldwide (Darni & Abida, 2017). Gender bias in textbooks gives learners an impression of how society should be and learners will view and accept these gender biases as normal (Ullah and Haque, 2016). Chiponda and Wasserman (2016) note that visual images help learners to understand familiar terms in textbooks and to have a clear picture of social and cultural meanings found in written texts in textbooks. For the sake of this article, visual images found in the textbooks

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will form the data and they include: pictures, charts, strips, comics, posters, newspapers, maps, cartoons, drawings, photographs and any other visual images (Nene, 2014). Globally most governments are trying their best to fight gender imbalances by adopting a series of policies for example; the universal goal to make primary education accessible to all children and to reduce illiteracy worldwide (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2000) and most countries worldwide have adopted and become signatories to the UNESCO's education policies (UNESCO Press, 2007). Namibia is a signatory of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) which strives to bring gender equality globally. Goal number five of the MDG aims at ensuring that, "...by the same date, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education" (United Nations Development Program, 2004). This policy advocates for the complete abandoning of gender inequalities in schools and at the same time promotes total, equal participation and access to quality education (Blumberg, 2007). Our assumption would be that the Namibian government will be adhering to the policy they are signatory to and would expect to see textbooks with visual images that are gender sensitive with little or no gender bias at all in order to align with the country's goals. Ansary and Babii (2003) note that gender oppression can only be removed by having content in textbooks that is gender sensitive.

The rationale of this article is born out of interaction with the Republic of Namibia National Gender policy of 2008 which aims at achieving gender equality nationally. This study analyses how females are represented in English first language textbooks for junior primary schools in Namibia. These grades were chosen since they are the entry points of a learner. These grades are where it all starts, they are not just an introduction or first steps to more advanced work but they are important building blocks that will be used throughout the children's lives (LaTulippe, 2021). We believe if gender equality is made known to them at an early stage they will grow up adhering to these values. The interaction with the gender policy raised the questions: how are females represented in visual images in junior primary English first language textbooks and why are females presented the way they are? The study adopted the feminist theory as the theoretical framework that provides lenses for data interpretation. We formed a bricolage with six feminist theories which are: liberal, Marxist, radical, socialist, black and African feminism. A bricolage can, however, have a shortcoming of the theories contradicting each other (Stinchfield, 2013). We, however, used those different ideologies to explain the representation of females. The textbooks were analysed using thematic and critical discourse analysis (CDA). It should also be noted that the representation of females was done without comparing them with males, where it was done it was for the sake of argument.

Textbook production in Namibia is controlled by the government through the Ministry of Education's branch; the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) which controls all curriculum designs, educational reforms, and development as well as approval of textbooks to be used in schools (Republic of Namibia textbook policy, 2008). Textbooks used in this study are approved by the Ministry of Education for use in primary schools. This article is divided into five sections. The first section provided an introduction and outline of the study. The second section highlights the literature review and theoretical framework, the third is the research methodology followed by the presentation and discussion of findings, and finally, we arrived at a conclusion.

Literature Review

Textbooks are a trusted source of information in education. Most of the information to be learnt or taught is obtained from these school textbooks (Kalmus, 2004). In as much as textbooks are an important resource in teaching and learning, they can save other hidden agendas. Textbooks are a product of economic and political activities, battles and compromises and these are included

in textbooks (Apple & Christian-Smith, 2005; Nene, 2014). In addition, Gharbavi and Mousavi (2012) argue that the challenge with textbooks is that their content reflects the opinion of authors, developers and those in authority. Therefore, the inclusion, exclusion and portrayal of females in textbooks are determined by many factors that result in putting pressure on their production as well (Foster & Crowford, 2006).

For years, numerous studies have been carried out about the visual representation of females in textbooks on other subjects and English textbooks by the likes of: (Chick, 2006; Chiponda & Wasserman, 2016; Nene, 2014; Aguilar, 2019; Elbalqis, Wijaya & Rohmatillah, 2020; Elkins, 1998; Elmiana, 2019; Zerar & Riche, 2014 & Vu, 2008). To get a deeper understanding and more detail into the way females are represented, the article looked into how females are represented in parental roles, domestic roles, occupations, games, activities and as patients, rather than agents.

The literature review shows that females are presented as mothers and wives. In a Ugandan study by Barton and Sakwa (2012), the findings reveal females were highly stereotyped as mothers rearing babies while Dudu, Gonye, Mareva and Sibanda (2008) in their Zimbabwean study, results show that females were depicted as nurturing children and as caregivers of their families. These findings are similar to findings by (Chiponda 2014; O'Kelly 1983 & Osler 1994). Presenting females as mothers and wives in textbooks instils society's values about motherhood to learners since textbooks transmit cultural values of society (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991). In her study, Su (2007) argued that females end up with double roles as employees and caretakers of family roles that often put pressure on them. It is also argued that child rearing roles prevent females from taking active participation in public activities that can benefit them (Christie, 2006).

When it comes to domestic roles, Anjwarati's (2020) study of Islamic studies revealed that females were represented doing domestic roles. A Chinese textbook portrayed females as household workers (Benavot & Jere, 2016). A study of a Kenyan English textbook found that females were depicted preparing meals (Perasso, 2017). Research carried out by Chiponda and Wassermann (2016) revealed that females were mainly portrayed as farming, working in the kitchen and carrying out housework duties while the findings of Schoeman's (2009) study of three South African history textbooks showed that females were attached to stereotypical domestic roles and that these roles were connected to patriarchal ideologies. Domestic roles are said to oppress females and prevent them from developing or upgrading themselves (Clark, 2005).

Regarding occupations, a study from Syria indicates that females had a 16% representation in occupations (Dentith, Sailors & Sethusha, 2016). Findings of a study in Australia indicate that females were not depicted in high positions in occupations; instead, they were featured as subordinates (Benovot & Jere, 2016). In a Chinese study, 100% of soldiers and scientists were presented as males. Females were depicted as teachers, and three-quarters of them were in service occupations (Yi, 2002). In agreement, an Iranian study of two English textbooks pointed out that females were presented as nurses, teachers and dressmakers while males were presented as doctors, engineers, pilots, bosses, hunters and wrestlers (Blumberg, 2015). Similarly, in India, a report on gender showed that females were limited to teaching, nursing and homemaking while males were exposed to a variety of occupations (Srivastava, 2016). Schoeman's (2009) South African study revealed that females were omitted and never appeared in any occupation in the three history textbooks analysed. It was rather unfortunate that textbooks portray and reinforce these occupational imbalances that manifest themselves in society (Auleer, 2001). In their studies, they concluded that one of the oppressive ways is to present males in paid jobs while females remain in domestic jobs they are not paid for (Darni & Abida, 2017; Chiponda, 2014; Nene; 2014). In agreement, a study of a Mauritius textbook reveals that females are

depicted working in the factory and doing menial jobs which are not paid much (Auleer, 2001). However, on a positive note, Lee and Collins (2009) found that females were at times represented in male-dominated occupations like a boxer, weight lifters, astronauts and filmmakers.

A study of eight textbooks of sports in the United States of America reveals that sporting pictures had 19% representation of females versus 81% of males, 12% of athletes were females while 88% of athletes were males and 11% of females were sports journalists while male sports journalists had 89% representation. Out of all the pictures in the sports textbooks, females were not represented in any leadership position in sports (Hardin, Dodd & Lauffer, 2006). Abdelhay and Benhaddouche (2015) found that females were not depicted as taking part in sporting activities at all.

Darni and Abida (2017) found out the way boys and girls play is illustrated differently in textbooks. They found that boys were playing with toy cars while girls were playing with dolls an activity that helps them to prepare to be future mothers. In China, a study by Chen and Chen (2002) found that 70% of females were involved in passive activities. These same findings concurred with results from Sunderland's (2000) study where females were engaged in passive activities. In a study of a Kenyan English reader, findings reveal that females were presented with plaiting dolls' hair while males were presented as being lively and involved in interesting activities (Perasso, 2017). Benavot and Jere (2016) found out that females were portrayed to be dull and lifeless while males were full of energy and girls were having their activities in the private sphere while boys were active and dominating in the public domain.

Vincke (2004) suggested that it was considered normal for females to cry in public while it was taken as being weak for males to cry in public. A study by Ena (2013) on visual analysis of E-textbooks in Indonesia revealed that females were depicted in gender stereotypes related to feelings and emotions. The study by McCabe et al. (2011) on Palestine textbooks indicated that females were depicted as patients while males were overriding them. From the studies on the visual representation of females, we did not find a study on the analysis of visual images in primary English textbooks in Africa. This made us have a niche in knowledge and this article seeks to contribute to the area of textbook analysis.

As eluded earlier, this study drew on the principles of the feminist theory which was used as the theoretical framework. The feminist theory describes how females are oppressed in society, what causes the oppression and how to deter oppression among females (Chiponda, 2014). The theory proclaims that there should be fairness socially, politically and economically (Tong, 2009). It is concerned about the discrimination and inferior position of females in society (Chiponda, 2014). According to Ullah (2013), feminist researchers worldwide claim that materials in textbooks promote gender inequalities. Adopting the feminism theory in our article will help us to understand the representation of females in textbooks and why they are represented in particular ways. Feminism has many branches which differ slightly in what they believe about female oppression and subordination although all of them aim at seeing justice for females prevailing. We made a bricolage with six feminisms: liberal, socialist, radical, Marxist, black and African feminisms. We briefly described each of them highlighting what each of them believes is the cause of female oppression, and subordination as well as the way this oppression and subordination among females can be prevented or reduced.

Liberal feminism: Its principles are linked to the traditional themes of liberalism which upheld individual rights, democracy, justice and freedom (Abbott, Wallace & Tyler, 2005). Liberal feminists believe that gender inequality is created by limiting females from accessing civil rights and by unfair allocation of resources (Giddens, 2001). Hence, it is concerned about fairness

towards everyone and fair distribution of available resources (Chiponda, 2014). Unequal rights and the legal system are blamed for females' oppression. The legal system encompasses the laws, traditions and customs of society (Tong, 2009).

Radical feminism: It claims that females are oppressed by males in the private and political spheres (Bryson, 1992). Radical feminism believes females are oppressed because of patriarchy and that females are forced to subordinate to males (Chiponda, 2014). Radical feminism condemns the system of patriarchy of keeping females in the private sphere where they focus on housekeeping, marriage and childbearing. Patriarchy uses threats, economic exploitation, force and rape to oppress females (Doude, 2014). It argues that females are oppressed by males regardless of their race, ethnicity, nationality or class (Bryson, 1992). Uprooting patriarchy is the only way radical feminists believe can liberate females (Chiponda, 2014; Tong, 2009). Radical feminists adopt a military stance of fighting patriarchy. This perspective will help us to explain how patriarchy is responsible for females' subordination and oppression in textbooks. We will use the assumption that patriarchy uses threats, violence, force and rape to control females, that females are dominated by males socially, culturally, politically and economically and that females are viewed as subordinates and inferior to analyse textbooks.

Marxist feminism: Marxist feminism used the ideas of Karl Marx to help define the subordination and oppression of females in capitalist societies (Bakan, 2012). The hierarchical class system in traditional societies and capitalism in modern societies oppress females because in the first place it creates a division between females and males. Hence the oppression and subordination of females should be understood as a class struggle (Beasley, 1999). Marxist feminists view family as a source of female oppression (Bakan, 2012). Secondly, they are concerned about females' unpaid labour (Chiponda, 2014). They argue that females' unpaid labour provides capitalists with workers, sustains bosses and produces the next generation of workers, bosses and their wives (Chiponda, 2014; Lorber, 1994). Marxist feminists believe females can be liberated if they enter the labour market in large numbers and fight to replace capitalism with communism (Chiponda, 2014). This feminist perspective is going to provide lenses through which I will analyse how females are portrayed in occupations and hierarchical classes in textbooks.

Socialist feminism: This feminism emanated from the debate between radical feminism and Marxist feminism. Socialist feminists combined ideas of the two theories. They believed that patriarchy oppresses females while capitalism reinforces the oppression and it is difficult to separate the two forms of power (Chiponda, 2014). Generally, it is the most favoured feminism because it is willing to work with both genders. It encourages females to fight against capitalism and patriarchy in order for them to liberate themselves (Bryson, 1992). This perspective will provide a lens to look into how gender and class oppress females in textbooks.

Black feminism: Black feminism is of the notion that mainstream feminism does not consider the experience of black females (women of colour) while the white females are considered the norm. Black feminists believe that the experience of black females is the starting point for feminism (Bryson, 1999). They see race as a more powerful source of power (Beasley, 1999). They believe in treating females differently even when they are all black when dealing with oppression and subordination (Abbott et al., 2005). The theory provides insight when explaining the portrayal of females in relation to gender, race and class.

African feminism: This perspective looks into the oppression of African females in Africa and those that are in the diaspora (Kolawole, 2002; Msimang, 2002). It acknowledges patriarchy as a source of power while admitting that females are oppressed by other sources of power (Kolawole, 2002). These sources of power include religion, apartheid, colonialism, ethnicity, culture, class, racism,

tradition and neo-colonialism (Arndt, 2002). African feminism fights to remove all these oppressive mechanisms at once (Arndt, 2002; Kolawole, 2002). It believes in motherliness and taking family seriously (Chiponda, 2014). This theory will help us to analyse the portrayal of females in textbooks, not only according to gender but using other aspects that depict the oppression of females.

Methodology

The sample for the study was drawn from visual images of females from twelve English textbooks for junior primary level in Namibia. The sample was chosen using convenience sampling and purposive sampling because of the availability and relevance of the textbooks to the study. Table 1 below shows the sample.

Table 1
The research sample

GRADE	SELECTED LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS	SELECTED READING BOOKS
1	Creative English [CL1]	Creative reader [CR1]
	Platinum English first language [PL1]	Platinum reader [PR1]
2	Creative English [CL2]	Creative reader [CR2]
	Platinum English first language [PL2]	Platinum reader [PR2]
3	Creative English [CL3]	Creative reader [CR3]
	Platinum English first language [PL3]	Platinum reader [PR3]

- Creative English Textbooks are published by the Namibian Publishing House.
- Platinum English Textbooks are published by Pearson Namibia.
- Platinum English story books were published by Longman South Africa.

It is not very clear if the authors of these sampled textbooks are Namibians.

The textbooks were comprised of language textbooks and reading textbooks. The textbooks were coded as shown in the table. This was done in order to mitigate bias, for easy identification and presentation.

Data for this article was generated by the publishers of textbooks that include Pearson, Longman and Namibia Publishing House and it was then collected by the researcher who borrowed the textbooks from the Zanele Mbeki Private School library. Analysing textbooks is not an easy task since there are no fixed methodologies used for analysis (Nicholls, 2003). To help us analyse these textbooks, we came up with an analytic instrument we thought will be suitable. We grouped the visual images in themes using the thematic analysis approach and analysed them using the CDA. CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse (texts) (Huckin, 2012). CDA tries to analyse the source and effects of a text which are more interesting from a critical point of view (Huckin, 2004). The themes were as follows: representation of females in parental roles, representation of females in domestic roles, representation of females in occupational roles, representation of females in games, representation of females in activities and representation of females as patients.

Using the themes from the thematic analysis approach, we selected themes we thought would be relevant. After going through the visual images, we streamlined the themes until we remained with a relevant and sizeable number of themes. In general, during the data collection stage, researchers need to discern between useful and redundant data (Creswell, 2011). We discarded data we felt was not relevant. This idea of discarding irrelevant data is supported by Walcott (1994). We grouped visual images of females under each theme and analysed how females were

being portrayed. We combined both the semantic and latent coding. The semantic coding helped us to be able to identify common themes, ideas and patterns that were appearing repeatedly and latent analysis assisted us to identify hidden assumptions, ideologies and ideas that form the semantic analysis. We adopted the six steps of thematic analysis which include: familiarization of data, coding of data, general themes, reviewing themes and writing up (Creswell, 2011; Huckin, 2004).

The CDA adopted is relevant when one is analysing data where there is suspicion of unfair treatment of a subject in discourse (Mogashoa, 2014). In this study, we assumed that females were unfairly portrayed in the textbook. Therefore, the use of the CDA helps us to analyse the demonstration of the subordination and oppression of females in textbooks. Analysis was done qualitatively by analysing visual images from each theme and then moved to the next one until all themes had been finished.

Data Presentation and Findings

The explanation in the methodology section illustrates how the analysis of the textbooks was done. We started by putting themes we identified, then, visual images were allocated to the themes, the images were analysed and finally the findings.

Female Representation in Parental Roles

Textbooks CL1, CL2, CL3, CR3, CR2, CR1 and PL3 represent females in stereotypical parental roles. Females are depicted as mothers taking care of children; ranging from carrying children on their back, comforting crying children, Children sitting on their lap, taking care of sick children and helping them to cross the road. Textbooks CL1, CL2 and CL3 portray females taking care of more than one child at a time. Textbooks CL2, CL1, CR2 and CR3 depict females taking care of children while performing other household roles. For example, in textbook CL2 a female was shopping while taking care of a crying baby, in textbook CL2 a female is looking after a child while hanging clothes.

Female Representation in Domestic Roles

Females are presented as being involved in various domestic roles. In all the textbooks, females are depicted at home carrying out a variety of domestic roles. Females are presented serving food, cooking, ironing, washing, shopping milking sweeping, and fetching water. For example, textbooks CR1, CR2, CL1, CR3, CL2, CL3, PR3, PL2, PR2 and PL3 all depicted females washing. Textbooks CR2, PR1, PR2 and PL1 presented females cooking while textbooks CR1 and CL1 presented females working on the farms. In CR1 a female is carrying a bucket with milk and a basket of eggs while surrounded by farm animals. In CL1 the female is milking goats and making cheese out of the milk. Females in CL1, CL3, CR3 and PL2 are presented as joining males in working in the garden, planting, watering and harvesting yet there are no males who joined females in any stereotypical household chores. Females were presented as wives in textbooks CL1, CL2, CR3, PR1, PR2 and PL2 where they were depicted serving their husbands meals.

Female Representation in Occupations

Females are depicted as being in various occupations. However, females are mainly presented in big numbers as nurses, teachers and social workers. This is evident in textbooks CL1, CL2, CL3, CR1, CR2, PL1, PR1 and PL1 which present females as teachers teaching, discussing with learners or working on a project with learners. In textbook CR2, female teachers are presented as being addressed by a male principal. Textbooks CL1 and CL3 have a lot of pictures that depicted females as nurses. Almost half of the pictures depicted female nurses alongside male doctors who are attending to patients while female nurses were just standing watching. Textbooks

CL2 and CR2 presented females as social workers with their superiors being males. As seen under the section on females in parental roles, females are seen as nurturing. This might be the explanation for why females are attached to these nurturing occupations. The textbooks are silent about females being leaders in workplaces. One would wonder whether females can be leaders in the workplace.

Females were presented as doing menial and low paying jobs. Textbooks PL1 and PL3 depicted females as housemaids, PL1 presented females as a hairdresser and working in the factory, PL1 females weaving and CR2, PL1 and PL3 females selling in the marketplace. These occupations due to their nature are likely not to give them a lot of money.

Females were also depicted carrying out male-dominated occupations although in small numbers. Textbooks PL1 and PL2 presented females as builders, PL1 as a plumber and carpenters, CR1 as a musician, PL1 as veterinary surgeons, and CR1 and CL1 as pilots. Presenting females in male-dominated occupations proves that females are capable of taking up challenging occupations and it works as a counter stereotype.

Female Representation in Games

The results show that females are presented participating in a variety of sports games. Textbooks CR1 and PR1 present females playing netball while in textbooks CR1, PL1 and PL2 females are participating in athletics and PL1, PL2, PR1 and CL3 in swimming, and soccer in PR2, PR3, PL1 and PL. There are many images depicting females participating in the above-mentioned sports codes. Females are, however, only occasionally depicted playing tennis in PL1, cricket in PR1, volleyball, skipping and dodging in PL2. In one textbook, pictures of females engaged in cricket are found. This is fairly unusual, as cricket is a male-dominated game. In textbook PR1 for example, a female is presented in cricket attire, holding a cricket bat while standing next to a male cricket player. The umpire is shaking hands with the male cricket player which may be interpreted to mean that the males were the winning team.

Female Representation in Activities

The textbook analysis found that females are depicted in various activities. Textbook CR1 has pictures of females playing with dolls, puzzles and balls. Textbook CR2 and CL2 show females collecting bugs and doing a role play while in PR1 a female is playing the piano. In textbooks PR1 and PL2, females are depicted skating and CL1 and CR2 depicted girls with kites which are not flying. The boys next to the girls have their kites flying which may mean that flying kites is a game for boys. In textbooks, CR1 and CR2 girls are presented doing role plays as mothers while other girls are playing with dolls. This can be seen as preparing girls for motherhood. Females are depicted playing with stereotypical toys that include dolls.

Female Representation as Patients, rather than Agents

In the textbooks analysed, females are portrayed as patients in the sense that they are emotionally depicted as sad, miserable, hopeless and afraid. In textbooks CR1 and PL3, females are presented as afraid. In CR1 a girl is screaming because she is afraid of sleeping in a dark room alone. Females are depicted as helpless in textbooks CR1, PR1, CL3, CR2 and PL3. For example, in textbook CR1, a female looks helpless after her car has been hit. In textbook CR2, a girl was pushed into a flooded river by his brother. The girl is helpless and the father also blamed the girl. In textbook CR3 a girl was crying after failing to read a passage while in textbook CL1 a girl hurt her knee and started crying. These examples suggest that girls easily cry. Females are presented as failures in textbooks CL3 and PR1. For example, in textbook PR1, Sindi, a girl, is playing with a skateboard and she fell off several times because she is failing to control it. We can

argue that Sindi is given an opportunity to play with the skateboard which is normally considered a boys' toy. She is then portrayed as an embarrassment for failing to control it.

Discussion

In the previous section, we explain our investigation of the visual portrayal of females in textbooks. In this section, we will focus on why females are represented the way they are. The manner in which females are portrayed points out that they are presented in stereotypical ways. Females are almost exclusively presented as mothers and wives, serving husbands and taking care of children around them a notion that shows females are subordinates to males. The persistent serving of males by females is condemned by the Radical feminists who argue that females are forced to be subordinate to males (Chiponda, 2014). In textbook CR1 for example, females are presented proudly introducing their families. This coincides with the belief of the African feminists who have their families at heart (Bittman, 2000). Studies (Barton & Sakwa, 2012; Chiponda & Wasserman, 2016; Chiponda, 2014; Dudu, Gonye, Mareva & Sibanda, 2008; O'Kelly, 1983 & Osler, 1994) on the portrayal of females in textbooks found that females were constantly depicted as wives and mothers in visual images in the textbooks studied. Depicting females as mothers and wives in school textbooks can be argued to perpetuate the custom that society values of females being mothers in society since textbooks transmit cultural beliefs and values (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991).

Females are depicted taking care of children. Similarly, Benavot and Jere (2016) alluded to the fact that females were depicted as caregivers. Christie (2016) complained that these child rearing activities hinder females from taking up public activities that can benefit them. This sentiment is also echoed by Radical feminists, Marxist feminists and socialist feminists who condemn the patriarchal system that keeps females in the private space concentrating on marriage, childbearing and housekeeping (Doude, 2014). Marxist feminists are of the view that family is a source of female oppression (Bakan, 2012). In contrast, the African feminists view childbearing and rearing as their sole responsibility (Mikell, 1997). Females were depicted carrying out double roles. In her study, Su (2007) commented that these double roles add a lot of pressure to females who are already overburdened.

Females are depicted carrying out stereotypical domestic roles. Our findings concur with the findings of Islamic studies (Anjwarati, 2020; Benavot & Jere, 2016; Chiponda & Wasserman, 2016; Perasso, 2017; Schoeman, 2009) which also found that females were presented mainly performing domestic roles. All the textbooks under study depict females in stereotypical domestic roles. Our findings coincide with studies in Kenya which found that females were mainly depicted in cooking (Perasso, 2017). Chiponda and Wasserman (2016) in Malawi found that females were portrayed as working on the farm, in the kitchen and involved in other typical household duties. It can be derived that these domestic roles prevent females from upgrading themselves to better-qualified people (Clark, 2005). Marxist feminists are against females' unpaid domestic labour; they believe females' unpaid labour is taken advantage of and used to provide capitalists with workers, capitalists' wives, and wives for their workers and produce the next generation of workers, capitalists and their future wives. Marxist feminists therefore advocate for females to enter the labour market in large numbers in order to get rid of capitalism and adopt communism (Chiponda, 2014). Liberal feminists argue that gender inequality is created by limiting females to opportunities and resources (Giddens, 2001).

In a number of textbooks analysed in this study, females are depicted taking part in some occupations. This finding is contrary to findings of a South African study by Schoeman (2009) which found that females were never depicted taking part in occupations. In our study, females were portrayed mainly as nurses, teachers and social workers. This finding concurs with the

findings of a Chinese study by Yi (2002) which pointed out that females were depicted as teachers and that three-quarters of females are involved in service occupations. An Indian report on gender found that females were depicted mainly as nurses, teachers and homemakers (Srivastava, 2016). A study of two Iranian English textbooks reveals that females were presented as teachers, nurses and dressmakers (Blumberg, 2015). Findings from this study also revealed that females are depicted as male subordinates; the textbooks are silent about females holding posts of higher authority in workplaces. Female teachers had male principals, nurses had male doctors as their superiors and social workers had males as their managers. Similarly, a study by Benovat and Jere (2016) concluded that females were not portrayed in high positions in occupations. This resonates with the findings of a Mauritius study which found that females were generally portrayed in subordinate occupations (Blumberg, 2015). Hence, Marxist feminists are of the opinion that the subordination and oppression of females is a matter of class struggle (Beasley, 1999).

The findings of this study reveal that females were depicted in low paying and menial jobs as factory workers, housemaids, selling at the market and weaving. These findings concur with findings from a Mauritius study which reveal that females were depicted in menial jobs like picking cotton and working in the factory (Auleer, 2001). In their studies, they concluded that presenting females in low paying jobs while males are in high paying jobs is oppression (Chiponda, 2014; Nene, 2014). However, it is encouraging to find that in this study, females were occasionally depicted in challenging occupations which are usually assigned to males although in very small numbers. For example, a few females were indeed depicted as doctors, pilots, carpenters, builders, musicians and plumbers. This finding resonates with findings by Lee and Collins (2009) whose study reveal that females were occasionally depicted as boxers, astronauts, filmmakers and weight lifters. Such a portrayal of females helps to address gender inequality although a low number of females are presented in those occupations. Liberal and social feminists believe that gender inequality is created by limiting females from accessing civil rights (Giddens, 2001). Hence, Marxist feminists believe equality can be achieved if females leave unpaid domestic roles and take up paid jobs in order to bring equality (Chiponda, 2014). The Radical feminists are of the idea that females should get rid of all oppressive systems by force (Chiponda, 2014; Tong, 1989).

Another finding was that females were depicted in sports activities. Females were involved in netball, athletics, tennis, swimming, skipping and dodging. Our findings are contrary to findings of the study by Abdelhay and Benhaddouch (2015) and Hardin, Dodd & Lauffer (2006) which showed that females were seldom involved in sporting games. We also found that females were presented as failures in male-oriented games. This finding was however not supported by the literature. This is in line with the views of the Radical feminists who note that females are oppressed by patriarchy.

Regarding activities, it was noted that females were portrayed doing both feminine and masculine related activities. Females were depicted collecting bugs, doing role play, flying kites, skating, playing the piano, playing with dolls and building puzzles. The girls are allowed to play with the kites although they are presented as spectators rather than as demonstrators. This seems to contradict the findings of Darni and Abida (2017) which indicate that boys and girls were constantly playing different games. However, their study and our finding concur on the use of gender aligned toys. For example, girls were playing with dolls while boys had cars. When girls were playing with dolls, puzzles and role play, their activities were indoors and passive. Sunderland (2000) had similar findings as well. This is in agreement with Chen and Chen (2002) who found out that 70% of female activities were passive. Radical feminists also argue that females are oppressed by being kept in the private sphere (Bryson, 1992).

Lastly, the study found that females were depicted as patients or victims without agency. They were depicted as failures, crying and helpless. A study of Palestine textbooks by McCabe et al. (2011) found that males were dominating females while females were depicted as patients. Regarding females crying, a study by Ena (2013) on E-textbooks in Indonesia concurred with our findings where findings reveal that females were presented with gender stereotypes related to feelings and emotions while Vincke (2004) found that it was viewed as normal for a female to cry in public while it was considered as weak for a male to be seen crying in public. This is in line with African feminism which admits that females are oppressed for various reasons and sources of power (Kolawole, 2002). These sources of power include religion, apartheid, colonialism, ethnicity, culture, class, racism, tradition and neo-colonialism (Arndt, 2002). In this instance, females were depicted as patients. For example, a girl was presented in one of the textbooks as vulnerable to sexual abuse. In agreement, Radical feminists believe that patriarchy controls females using force, rape, violence and threats (Doude, 2014).

Conclusion

This article considered female representation in visual images in Namibian English junior primary EFL textbooks. The findings of this study reveal that females were portrayed in a stereotypical manner in parental roles, domestic roles and occupational roles, games and activities. Females were further portrayed as patients or victims who do not have agency. In parental roles, females were depicted as mothers where they were taking care of children. They were further presented as wives serving their husbands. In domestic roles, females were further depicted in unpaid household chores. Females were depicted mainly in feminine aligned occupations and as subordinates. In games and activities, females took an active part in both feminine and masculine aligned games and activities. They were shown as failures in male-oriented games and activities. Since textbooks are a powerful ideological tool, such portrayal sent a strong message to the end users of textbooks who are learners. We concluded that what we see in society is what we get in textbooks. The portrayal of females in these textbooks reflects the society's view of females in Namibia. The stereotyping of females in various roles resonates with studies of English textbooks and those of other subjects across the globe. The study was guided by the principles of feminism theories. We used these theories to make a bricolage. We found that patriarchy is the main cause of female oppression and subordination although we cannot rule out other causes in English textbooks. This study from an African country hopefully has added to the existing body of knowledge in English textbooks for no such study on junior primary English textbooks has been conducted in Africa. Similar studies found were for secondary level English textbooks and those of other subjects.

Recommendations

As researchers, we came up with some recommendations from the study:

- Textbook authors, publishers and other education stakeholders should take note of the different stereotypes highlighted in the study and improve the manner in which females are represented in textbooks.
- Textbook authors and publishers should avoid the marginalization of females in textbooks instead they should promote gender equality. I suggest that this should first of all be incorporated at the curriculum implementation stage when the curriculum is being developed.
- The Ministry of Education through the curriculum development unit (NIED) should train its personnel about gender and the effects of gender inequality before developing the curriculum. This can help NIED to produce a curriculum that is gender balanced with no stereotypes. If there is gender balance in the curriculum, textbook publishers will automatically follow suit because they will not want to produce textbooks that deviate from the curriculum; thus maintaining gender equity.

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