

GENDER REPRESENTATION IN GENERAL EDUCATION (GE) MODULES

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative discourse analysis and a corpus-based study analyzed the processes employed in embedding male and female characters in General Education (GE) Modules in the local college of Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology. This study aimed to ascertain the processes of both opposite genders utilizing the Eight-Factor Procedure in Gender Discrimination as adapted from Amerian and Esmaili (2015). Results have shown that there was gender bias in text and images. Gender and linguistic bias were evident due to the repeated imbalance of representations in both opposite genders. With these findings, the researcher has seen the need for a more gender-inclusive curriculum that can raise consciousness and awareness in observing gender-fair language in designing educational materials to be used by teachers and learners in the new normal.

Keywords: discourse analysis, gender representation, qualitative study, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Gender bias is deep-rooted in our society, particularly in the field of education. Regardless of the efforts of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals in the year 2000 including gender inclusion, gender inequalities are tangible in many educational contexts. Evidently, the educational system in any country is shaped and affected by the values, prejudices, and traditions held by the society, which are reflected in learning materials. Thus, gender bias is interlaced in education, particularly the imbalance of gender representation in learning and instructional materials (Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2020).

In Punjab, Pakistan, it was observed that the textbooks used in public and private schools were highly gender-biased. In most of the textbooks, genders were not represented equally which affects children's choice of careers and acquire gender stereotyping. Thus, this bias has

been a drawback to the standard quality of education. As such, in the professional sphere, the roles and careers of females were also limited (Ahmad & Shah, 2019).

Particularly in the Philippines, a study revealed that the Gender-Responsive Basic Education (GRBE) Policy was not implemented. Teachers' implementation of GRBE was not totally adhering to the expected outcomes. Utilizing a survey, it was shown that not all educators were observing the elimination of gender disparities such as stereotyping and imbalanced representations of gender. Also, it was unveiled that out of five areas of GRBE policy, there were only two areas that were implemented (Galamgam et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, in pursuit of the Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) in the Philippines, educational authorities underscored equity considerations for all aspects, particularly in the new learning modalities including the use of self-learning

modules (SLMs) that responded to the challenges in education brought out by the new normal. However, no study yet could prove the presence of gender equality as manifested by gender representation in these SLMs. In fact, the researcher has not encountered a gender-based discourse analysis on any modules that have been used in Higher Education institutions.

Most previous studies focused only on the social aspect of gender representation. Hence, to contribute to this study and fill these research gaps, the present study investigated the linguistic aspect of gender representation. In this regard, such a study was adequately urgent since modules were the primary learning and instructional materials used by the teachers and the students in the new normal. This study intended to nurture a positive view of gender equality, analyzing the processes employed in embedding male and female characters in General Education Modules and redressing the imbalance and stereotypical representations and gender-biased text and images.

In connection, this study provided significant social relevance as this will serve as a reference for the students, English teachers, authors, and future researchers in analyzing and investigating gender representation sensitizing about gender discrimination, and eliminating all kinds of gender disparities in education. Thus, this would help to create a society that provided a platform to demonstrate that both males and females were competent and equal.

Further, related international studies have found with regards to the analysis of gender representation in the content of language textbooks wherein it was found that males were shown in superior roles. On the other hand, females were limited to subjugated ones. Results indicated that textbook illustrations and text reflected gender biases that may cause a limited understanding of the societal roles of males and females (Ram, 2008; Durrani, 2008; Siren, 2018).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are enumerated as follows: (1) To determine the processes employed in embedding male characters in General Education (GE) modules; and (2) To ascertain the processes employed in embedding female characters in General Education (GE) modules.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing a corpus-based approach and discourse analysis. This research methodology was chosen to facilitate the examination of the processes involved in embedding male and female characters in General Education (GE) modules, which formed the corpus of the study. According to Kaplan and Maxwell (2005), qualitative research designs effectively interpret social phenomena systematically, encompassing data collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation. As applied in this study, discourse analysis allows the scrutiny of a diverse range of written and spoken exchanges, spanning formal and informal conversations (Harper, 2007). Additionally, the corpus-based approach employed in this study enables the analysis of text structures, including language patterns, recurring word usage, and purposeful interpretations, elucidating the reasons behind these observed patterns (Storjohann, 2017).

The research materials for the study were the General Education (GE) modules in Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology. According to Clark and Braun (2013), 10-100 is the ideal number of entries for a corpora-based study. In this case, I, as the researcher, used 13 modules composed of at least a minimum of 50 pages and a maximum of 100 pages under the General Education program, which was subjected to analysis. Specifically, these modules were used as learning resources during the new normal.

The researchers identified and selected the research material using the following criteria: (a) were courses under the General Education program; (b) with a minimum page of 50 pages and a maximum of 100 pages; (c) research materials were collected in Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences, and Technology; (d) crafted by the instructors; (e) and modules were used in times of the new normal.

In collecting the data, the researchers took a number of systematic steps and measures. This ensured that the study's findings were justified and had a high degree of credibility. First, the researchers submitted the manuscript to a thorough checking, which the research technical panel reviewed. After receiving their approval, the researchers wrote a permission letter to address the institution where the research materials were collected.

Further, it was ensured that the researcher followed the health and safety protocols imposed by the government and the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF). Afterward, the researchers identified the research materials through the purposive sampling method. The researchers personally went to the personnel who handled the research corpora in collecting the research materials. Then, the researchers handed the letter and waited for the approval to receive the research materials. Also, regarding the collected data, the information provided by the research material was treated with utmost confidentiality.

The data for this corpus-based study was analyzed using thematic analysis and interpreted thoroughly the sample statements gathered from the research materials. With the data at hand, the researcher then analyzed the processes employed in embedding male characters and female characters in general education modules of each datum through the help of the data analyst. Research ethics were also observed during the data collection to ensure the confidentiality of the research materials.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Inclusion and Exclusion

In the inclusion/ exclusion factor-procedure of gender discrimination, findings revealed that males were more frequently depicted than females in the General Education (GE) modules. The overinclusion of males in the GE modules implies that males have great worth compared to females, who are less included. Also, this shows that less inclusion of females is a way of disregarding one gender.

2. Stereotypical Representation

Results indicated in the stereotypical representation factor procedure of gender discrimination that males and females were represented in stereotyped occupations. Males tend to have non-traditional careers compared to females, which were represented in subjugated representations. Also, active roles were ascribed to males whereas females were passive activities.

3. Semantic Roles

The results in semantic role factor- the procedure of gender discrimination revealed that males were depicted as superior, whereas females were inferior in the GE modules. Males were engaged in superior positions compared to females. Also, male characters were depicted in masculine roles such as leading, whereas female characters were limited to inferior positions such as doing household chores. Thus, the roles of females were in the second status compared to the opposite gender.

4. Titular Representation

Results indicated in titular representation that the ascription of female titles appeared less frequently. On the other hand, the occurrences

of titles of males were found more frequently in the GE modules. The frequent depiction of ascription of titles ascribed to males was dominant.

5. Order of Appearance

The findings revealed in order of appearance procedure of gender discrimination that females were stated in the second mention compared to males, which were mentioned first in the GE modules. However, there were modules where males and females were presented in turn-taking. Thus, it appeared that males more frequently appeared first compared to females in a text.

6. Representation in Activities

The findings indicated in representation in activities that males were involved in social and outdoor activities. On the other hand, females were engaged in domestic and indoor activities. However, though there were limited active roles and activities ascribed to females, there was an imbalance in the representation of activities in the modules.

7. Male Generic Construction

Results indicated in the male generic construction procedure of gender discrimination that males were dominant based on the result that gender-marked words were exclusively associated with males. Gender-marked words in the modules pertain to males and have been mentioned with man-suffix occupation titles. Thus, word choices were interpreted as biased.

8. Pictorial Representation

The findings revealed in the pictorial representation procedure of gender

discrimination that male dominance was visible in GE modules. Males have been presented more frequently in pictures. On the other hand, females have been depicted less compared to males. Thus, it implied that males appeared most likely to be pictures participating in social and outdoor activities, whereas females in passive roles and activities.


9. Eight-Factor Procedure of Gender Discrimination

Eight-Factor Procedure of Gender Discrimination utilized in analyzing the processes employed in embedding male and female characters in General Education (GE) modules. This procedure encapsulates inclusion and exclusion, stereotypical representation, semantic roles, titular representation, order of appearance, representation in activities, male generic construction, and pictorial representation. Each factor Eight emerged major themes related to the sample statements gathered from the corpus.

The first theme that emerged under inclusion and exclusion is the dominance of male characters in proper Nouns and pronouns. Male characters are mentioned more frequently with proper nouns and pronouns than females. Results showed that female inclusion in the General Education (GE) modules was much less.

The second theme is the stereotypical biased occupations of male and female characters. Male characters were associated to masculine key roles compared to females. Male characters are associated to manly occupations compared to female characters. Thus, results also implied that female characters were limited to traditional careers. The third theme that emerged is the male characters' superiority and the female characters' inferiority. Results indicated that in terms of the position level, male characters were represented in higher positions than females. The fourth theme reveals that male characters outnumbered female characters in ascribing titles.

Table 1
Eight-Factor Procedure of Gender Discrimination, Sample statements, Emerging theme

Eight-Factor Procedure of Gender Discrimination	Sample Statements	Emerging Theme
Inclusion and Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Marlon is one of the players who have joined the soccer team. (GEPC_013)</i> • <i>Jenna is trying hard to qualify for the National Games. She has a regular weekly training for five hours a day. (GEPC_013)</i> 	Dominance of male characters in Proper Nouns and Pronouns
Stereotypical Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Si Mang Manding ang puno ng aming samahan (GERETORIKA_04)</i> • <i>Girls help their mother with housework. (GEGS_01)</i> 	Stereotypical biased occupations of male and female characters
Semantic Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Isang Rizal ang tumayo at nagtanggol sa naaapi. (GERETORIKA_04)</i> • <i>The adviser, accompanied by her students, is attending the symposium. (GEPC_013)</i> 	Superiority of Male characters and the inferiority of Female characters
Titular Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Unfortunately, one month before Mr. Domingo will go back home, he gets another girl pregnant. (GENSTP1_010)</i> • <i>Miss Corpuz did not teach Algebra last summer. (GEPC_013)</i> 	Male characters outnumbered female characters in the ascription of titles
Order of Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pakidala ang laruang ito kina Benny at Maris. (GERETORIKA_04)</i> • <i>Caitlin and Paul lived in Chile. (GEPC_013)</i> 	Male characters outnumbered female characters in order of appearances
Representation in Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Andrew works all the times. (GEPC_013)</i> • <i>Mother was cleaning the house. She told her daughter to fill the pale with water. (GEGS_01)</i> 	Males do more active roles than females
Male Generic Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A businessman attended a conference and he was very tired. (GEPC_013)</i> 	Gender-marked words associated to males
Pictorial Representation		Stereotyped representations of both opposite genders in illustrations

The number of ascriptions of titles associated with male characters outnumbered female characters. The fifth theme that emerged under the order of appearance is that male

characters outnumbered female characters in order of appearance. Thus, findings indicated that male characters were mentioned first with more appearances when both opposite genders



were paired together. The sixth theme, under-representation in activities, revealed that males do more active roles than females. Results indicated that there were limited active roles ascribed to female characters compared to males. Male characters were represented in stereotyped active roles. The seventh theme under male generic construction is the gender-marked words associated with males. The frequency of male generic construction emphasized that the dominance of males, such as general human beings, were signified by using masculine nouns and man-suffix occupation title. The last theme under pictorial representation revealed the Stereotyped representations of both opposite genders in illustrations. Results indicated that the female characters appeared 82 times than male characters, which occurred more. Also, female characters were represented in domestic activities and traditional role which showed traces of sexism. Thus, it implied that the depiction of both opposite genders in stereotypical biased occupations in illustrations can be another reflection of sexism.

CONCLUSIONS

Gender bias is visible in the field of education. Despite the implementation of gender inclusion in the educational context, there is still an imbalance of both opposite genders in gender representation in learning and instructional materials. Given that, as of today, the educational authorities have not yet fully grasped and incorporated the gender-fair language in the development of the pedagogical structure of the curriculum. Hence the Eight-Factor Procedure of Gender Discrimination will serve as a guide in identifying the processes employed in embedding male and female characters in General Education (GE) modules.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study results are anticipated to raise consciousness and awareness in observing

gender-fair language in educational materials by representing gender in equalized proportion. Thus, the implication of these findings will abide to the Philippine Government's efforts and implement Gender Responsive Policy in line with its Gender and Development in the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

Further, this implies that curriculum authors and the implementation division of the educational sector need to be inclined to a more gender-inclusive curriculum. It is also suggested that the curriculum designers, teachers, and learners may need to engage with modules or textbooks critically and examine how particular texts are written and why they are written in particular ways. Also, the teacher-writers can re-assess their own ideological assumption of gender. Engagement in gender and development and training may help teacher-authors in crafting and revising teaching and learning resources that promote gender equality and balance representations of both opposite genders in texts and illustrations. Thus, this demands robust introspection of possible gender stereotypes and reverts to gender ideologies to regressive. It is only by reflecting on and eliminating oppressive gender norms that a gender-inclusive curriculum might be contemplated.

Furthermore, this study recommends that further research be conducted using different frameworks and analyses of gender representation, such as a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches with a larger corpus that could be employed to give a holistic finding, especially in the Philippine setting.

Additionally, as researchers who have utilized discourse analysis, opportunities and research ideas related to gender and language were unearthed. This study has a weakness since it only focused on the set framework given by the authors. Thus, it is recommended that future research be conducted to scrutinize and analyze the ideological assumption of the

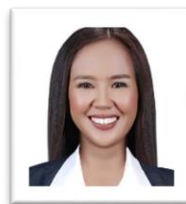
language of curriculum designers and teachers in crafting instructional and learning materials.

In addition, the scope of this research extends beyond the realm of education to include other specialized fields that will benefit from increased awareness regarding the utilization of language that is gender-neutral. This applies to various modes of communication and a deeper understanding that males and females should be portrayed equally. Also, revisions highlighting gender-fair language and balanced representations in illustrations can be applied, as well as seminars and training for teacher-writers and educational authorities in higher education institutions in nurturing a positive view of gender-equality in the field of education.

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AUTHORS' PROFILE



Jeanie Marie A. Inog finished her Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English in Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology (KCAST) last July 2023. Formerly, she was an active news reporter under The Collegial, the official student publication of KCAST. She was also a member of the Stellars Club, an institutionally recognized guild composed of enthusiasts in hosting various academic and non-academic events in her Alma mater. At present, she is pursuing a career as a Virtual Assistant (VA) in a US-based private company. She is also in pursuit of acing the Licensure Examination for Teachers. As a dedicated individual whose

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