

Celebrities in Palestinian EFL Textbooks: A Gender and Nationality Perspective

Jehad Faraj^{a*}, Anca Daniela Frumuselu^b, and Andrea Roxana Bellot^a

^a Department of English and German Studies, University of Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain

^b Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Lleida, Lleida, Spain

**Corresponding author: jehadt.faraj@estudiants.urv.cat*

Article information	
Abstract	Drawing on social constructionism theory, this paper explored the portrayal of celebrities (famous individuals) in an English as a foreign language (EFL) textbook series, English for Palestine, in terms of nationality and gender depiction. The data were extracted and classified by performing a quantitative content analysis of the textbooks. Frequency counts were used to highlight the tendencies and recurrences in the gathered data. Findings revealed that the majority of celebrities were either American or British, and female celebrities were underrepresented with respect to their number and occupational roles. The effects of such under-representations are discussed in relation to giving way to intercultural misunderstandings, forming sex-biased attitudes, fostering stereotypical female roles, and affecting young girls' academic achievement and long-term career choices. The importance of the study stems from the fact that it targets the most widely used EFL textbook series in the schools of Palestine. Hence, the recommended amendments to the textbook series, if taken into

	consideration by stakeholders, would have an immense impact on a significant number of English language learners.
Keywords	EFL textbooks, celebrities and characters in textbooks, international representation, gender bias, English for Palestine series
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1. Introduction

Considering that “from elementary through high school, a child reads at least 32,000 textbook pages” (Wirtenberg et al., 1980, p. 17), it is no wonder why textbooks are considered to be a major force in shaping students’ present and future lives. Concerns over the effects of textbooks on students date back to the late 1930s when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP, 1939) made their first report about the underrepresentation of Afro-Americans in American school textbooks. Subsequent criticism included biases against certain age groups, females, and religious minorities. Research on the impact of textbooks on students has revealed that textbooks can greatly influence “(1) children’s attitudes, (2) their personality development and behavior, and (3) their academic and long-range, career-related achievement” (Wirtenberg et al., 1980, p. 17).

Research on foreign language textbooks concerning the representation of characters, on the other hand, has predominantly focused on sex-role biases (Rifkin, 1998). Few studies have targeted underrepresentation of certain nationalities. Thus, this research study investigated the representation of the celebrities (famous individuals) in the *English for Palestine* textbook series in terms of the presence of female and male celebrities and their respective national or international representations.

The educational policy in Palestine ensures uniformity in the teaching materials provided to students. Consequently, the choice of English as a foreign language (EFL) textbooks for state schools in Palestine is determined by the Ministry of Education, which allocates one national textbook series for teaching English. This series is specifically designed to serve Palestinian students. Unlike state schools, private schools have the flexibility to use other EFL textbooks if they wish. Thus, the textbooks used at state schools are centralized and uniform, ensuring consistency across all three regions in Palestine (West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza). The series comes with listening materials, flashcards, posters, and training videos, which are used across nearly all grades.

The significance of this study lies in its unique examination of the representation of incorporated celebrities' genders and nationalities within the context of EFL textbooks aimed at Palestinian learners. This research stands as the only one of its kind, providing valuable insights into how these textbooks portray diverse identities to students.

2. Social Constructionism Theory

The phrase “social constructionism” (first introduced by Berger and Luckmann in 1966) refers to the process of constructing or organizing a specific body of knowledge or practice through socialization (Hibberd, 2005). According to social constructionists, knowledge and practice are shaped through social interaction. Fox (1993) explains that social roles are absorbed through constant exposure to certain images and information that society provides.

Ullah and Haque (2016) emphasize that schooling is a powerful force of socialization, reinforcing specific images and perceptions. Textbooks, in particular, play a crucial role in shaping students' understanding of different nationalities and genders (Park et al., 2018; Watt, 2007). Eigenberg and Park (2016) and Sever and Grillo (2016) confirm that the images presented in textbooks can create false perceptions, distorting the reality of certain subjects (cited in Park et al., 2018).

Gilmour (2015) explains that the construction of images and perceptions occurs through internalizing the facial features of certain groups and associating them with particular behaviors or cognitive abilities. This process, known as stereotyping, arises from the human tendency to judge and categorize those they interact with (Krieglmeyer & Sherman, 2012). Repetitive patterns depicting certain groups can influence young learners, who may not yet have the maturity to recognize the inaccuracies in these representations (Madon et al., 2006). Such stereotyping can be dangerous for young learners, whose limited experience with other nationalities and genders makes them more susceptible to adopting these biased views (Krieglmeyer & Sherman, 2012).

Hirschfeld (1996) states that “racial thinking is not simply a catalogue of human difference; it also encompasses beliefs about the very nature of difference. When imagining the world in racial terms, people are also making judgments about the inner and the nonobvious” (p. 1). Similarly, bias against certain nationalities or genders can stem from beliefs about not only physical differences but also presumed genetic characteristics. Gender bias in textbooks, as Bian et al. (2017) note, can lead to low self-esteem and hinder the development of future aspirations and skills (Crawford, 2004, cited in De la Torre-Sierra & Guichot-Reina, 2022). Furthermore, Keles and Yazan (2020) argue that bias against certain cultures or nationalities perpetuates the legacy of colonialism, encouraging the marginalization of specific groups. According to Nault (2006), such representation fails to acknowledge the status of English as a lingua franca, leading to incorrect assumptions about the English language.

3. Literature Review

This literature review focuses on the research outcomes concerning gender-related and international representations in school textbooks. The objective was to determine whether visual and textual representations in EFL textbooks exhibited biases toward specific genders or nationalities.

3.1 Gender representation

The question of gender representation in school textbooks remains highly significant due to its immense impact on students' development. Previous experimental studies across various academic disciplines have demonstrated that persistent exposure to gender-biased representations can influence students' attitudes (Nilsen, 1977), shape their personality and behavioral development (Ochman, 1996; Weitzman et al., 1972), affect their academic performance (Graci, 1992; Klein, 1985), and influence their career prospects (Sandberg & White, 1978; Warren, 1990).

Moreover, descriptive studies examining potential bias against females (e.g., Bahman & Rahimi, 2010; Gooden & Gooden, 2001; Lsamael & Mohammadzadeh, 2002; Ldli & Zhenzhou, 2002; Lee, 2018; Lee & Collins, 2009; Parham, 2013; Roohani & Molana, 2013; Sánchez Aguilar, 2021; Yi, 2002) have primarily focused on two critical aspects: the gender ratio of women to men and the presence of gender stereotyping. The consistency of findings across various studies regarding underrepresentation of women in textbooks has been traced in various contexts, including in Iran (Bahman & Rahimi, 2010; Parham, 2013; Roohani & Molana, 2013), in China (Yi, 2002), in Hong Kong (Lee, 2018), in Australia (Lee & Collins, 2009), in Mexico (Sánchez Aguilar, 2021), in Northern Iraq (Ismael & Mohammadzadeh, 2022), and in the USA (Gooden & Gooden, 2001).

Studies conducted by Bahman and Rahimi (2010), Roohani and Molana (2013), and Parham (2013) delved into gender biases within Iranian EFL textbooks. Bahman and Rahimi's (2010) investigation of English textbooks in Iranian high schools highlighted a prevalent use of men's names, nouns, pronouns, and adjectives, resulting in a higher frequency of male-generic language and minimal representation of women. Roohani and Molana's (2013) study on another Iranian ELT series unveiled a predominant portrayal of white males from English-speaking nations, indicating disparities in both racial and gender representation. Parham's (2013) exploration of nine EFL textbooks showed balanced representations in

conversations but notably underrepresented females in illustrations, with a depiction ratio 10% lower than males. These studies collectively underscored unequal gender representations in both linguistic and visual aspects across different EFL textbook series.

Sánchez Aguilar (2021) explored EFL textbooks in early elementary grades in Mexico, revealing a prevalence of male characters in illustrations and frequent occupational gender stereotypes. Ismael and Mohammadzadeh's (2022) study on Northern Iraq's state school textbooks highlighted cultural influences leading to a dominant portrayal of males in text and illustrations, alongside females depicted in passive domestic roles. Yi (2002) investigated Chinese elementary social studies materials, discovering a tendency toward female confinement to stereotypical positions with limited representation among historical figures. Lee's (2018) comparison of two editions of an EFL textbook series showed slight improvement in female representation, yet women continued to be underrepresented in specific social roles compared to men. Additionally, Lee and Collins's (2009) study on Australian English language textbooks highlighted a tendency toward male-first language in certain character references. Similarly, Gooden and Gooden's (2001) examination of American children's books revealed persistent gender bias in female social roles, indicating the ongoing necessity for advancing gender representation in textbooks.

3.2 International representation

The widespread use of English as a lingua franca is posing new challenges for the EFL community. According to Nault (2006), the use of the English language to communicate with non-native English speakers has far exceeded that with native English speakers. This is made evident considering that the number of non-native speakers of English is three times greater than that of native speakers (Power, 2005). These speakers "aren't just passively absorbing the language—they're shaping it" (Power, 2005, p. 42). Subsequently, EFL students need to enhance their communication skills to perform well in cross-cultural encounters.

However, this enhancement is hindered by the dominant representation of Anglo-American culture in EFL textbooks, which according to Morales-Gálvez (2016), boosts “the expansion of the English-only way of life” (p. 17). This expansion, as argued by Su (2014), limits students’ access to other international cultural patterns, which in turn affects students’ ability to communicate with people from different cultures. To deal with this problem, Van Parijs (2011) stresses the need for accelerating the process of what he calls “global appropriation of English” (p. 33). The author argues that only with such appropriation would non-Anglo-American cultures repel the dominance of the Anglo-American life-world.

Studies investigating the international component in EFL textbooks have revealed that the target culture, defined as the British and American cultures in this context, is predominantly represented in these materials (Abid, 2021; Arslan, 2016; Dehbozorgi et al., 2014; Lee, 2009; Matsuda, 2002; Ponte, 2019; Su, 2014). In contrast, less research has shown that the source culture was overrepresented at the expense of both the target culture and other international cultures (Morady Moghaddam & Tirnaz, 2023; Pasand et al., 2018; Prihatiningsih et al., 2021).

However, only a few studies exposed an even distribution of the three types of cultures in the textbooks they investigated (Çelik & Erbay, 2013; Sugianto & Wirza, 2021).

According to Pasand et al. (2018), students exposed primarily to such Anglo-American cultural patterns in their EFL materials could develop “a one-sided worldview in which learners prefer particular nationalities, groups, races, and gender over others” (p. 65).

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the present study was to bring into focus the importance of adequate representation of celebrities in Palestinian EFL textbooks. To do this, the national and international celebrities in the English for Palestine textbook series

were analyzed in order to search for potential dominance of Anglo-American and gender-biased representations. While the investigation of international representation was triggered by the particularity of English as a lingua franca, the inquiry into gender bias was prompted by its impact on students. As such, two research questions were formulated as follows:

1. To what extent is nationality equitably represented among celebrities in the Palestinian EFL textbook series?
2. How are gender roles portrayed among celebrities in the Palestinian EFL textbook series?

5. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative content analysis of the *English for Palestine* textbook series. It used frequency counts to explore the representation of gender and nationality among the celebrities featured in the textbook series. According to Krippendorf (2004), this approach is effective for text analysis when it aims to derive inferences that answer specific research questions. Having posed the correct research questions and specified the inferences we hoped to draw—namely, those related to gender and nationality bias—we determined that this research method was the most appropriate.

5.1 Materials

The textbooks chosen for this study were considered based on their overwhelming popularity and widespread use in the Palestinian state schools. They are the only EFL textbooks that were approved by the Palestinian Ministry of Education to be used in Palestinian state schools. Hence, they were deemed more appropriate than other Palestinian EFL textbook series, as they reach all Palestinian students who study at governmental schools. The name of the EFL textbook series is *English for Palestine*, and it covers all the 12 school levels (i.e., from grade 1 to grade 12) using 24 textbooks with two books for each grade (see Appendix). The *English for Palestine* series was published by Macmillan Publishers Limited (latest ed.). All the textbooks in the series were included in the study in

order to give a comprehensive picture of the entire series. The first 20 textbooks are named using the phrase “Pupil’s Book” followed by the number representing the grade the textbook is used for. The two textbooks used at each school level are referred to in the same way with only one of the letters “A” or “B” added to the name to indicate whether the textbook is used for the first or second semester (e.g., the textbooks used for grade 1 are *Pupil’s Book 1A* and *Pupil’s Book 1B*). The rest of the textbooks are created to teach grades 11 and 12, and they are named *Pupil’s Book 11*, *Pupil’s Book 11 Reading Plus*, *Pupil’s Book 12*, and *Pupil’s Book 12 Reading Plus*.

To avoid unnecessary repetition, each of the two textbooks used for the same grade were treated as one entity in the study. Throughout the results section, the EFL textbooks are referred to by either their abbreviated forms (e.g., PB1, PB2), or by the educational stages they belong to, which are specified as elementary, upper elementary, secondary, and upper secondary. Each educational stage includes three textbooks. For example, PB1, PB2, and PB3 belong to the elementary level; PB4, PB5, and PB6 belong to the upper elementary, and so forth.

5.2 Data collection

Quantitative data were collected applying simple manual calculation of frequencies of the target celebrities in all the textbooks of the series. The celebrities in the textbooks that appeared multiple times under the same name and topic were counted as a single occurrence. For instance, Marie Curie, mentioned within the section titled “A Scientist for the World” in *Pupil’s Book 10A* on page 74, was considered as one instance. If the celebrity was mentioned again under another topic, it was counted twice (e.g., Mahmoud Darwish was mentioned in *Pupil’s Book 10A* and *Reading Plus 12*). The tendencies in the examined data were highlighted and linked to the textbooks in which they were found.

5.3 Data analysis

The data analysis involved comparing the frequency counts to highlight differences in the representation of gender and nationality among the celebrities. The results are presented in tables to make the findings clear and easy to follow for the reader. For example, Table 1 presents the distribution of celebrities by nationality, while Table 2 presents their distribution by gender.

6. Results

The results section presents the findings in two parts. The first part presents the distribution of celebrities in terms of their international representation in the textbook series. The second part analyzes the presence and representation of female and male celebrities in relation to their sex and occupational roles.

6.1 International representation of celebrities

Table 1 below shows the distribution of celebrities in each textbook by nationality. While there was no mention of international celebrities in the textbooks created for the first four grades, PB&RP 11 and PB&RP 12 incorporated 31 and 35 celebrities, respectively. The findings revealed more details in terms of the celebrities' nationalities. Starting with PB5 and going upwards, more than half of the celebrities were either Palestinian, British, or American, except for PB9 and PB10, which contained more celebrities of other nationalities than the aforementioned ones. Throughout the textbooks, celebrities belonging to the local and target cultures (i.e., Palestinian, British, and American) were portrayed either in equal measure, as observed in PB5, PB7, and PB10, or were predominantly British or American, as evident in the textbooks designed for grades 6, 8, 9, 11, and 12. Other celebrities from the Middle East and Europe were also present, although with less frequency. Overall, the data showed that Palestinian and English-speaking nationalities (i.e., American, British, Irish, South African, Australian, and Canadian) appeared more frequently in the textbooks than other nationalities.

Table 1*Distribution of Celebrities by Nationality*

Country	PB 1	PB 2	PB 3	PB 4	PB 5	PB 6	PB 7	PB 8	PB 9	PB 10	PB&RP 11	PB&RP 12
Palestine					1		1		1	2	1	5
USA					1	1	1	1	1	1	12	6
UK						2		4	2	1	9	15
Ireland											2	1
S. Africa					1				1			2
Australia											1	
Canada												1
France						1				2	1	
Russia						1						
Morocco						1		1				
Egypt								2				1
Brazil								1				
KSA									1	1		
Turkey									1	1		
Greece									1			
Syria									1	1		
India									1			
Poland										1		
Italy											2	1
Jordan											1	
Finland											1	
Germany											1	1
Belgium												1
Portugal												1
Total	0	0	0	0	3	6	2	9	10	10	31	35

6.2 Gender representation of celebrities

The celebrities were also examined in relation to gender representation. Table 2 below shows the celebrities in the textbooks distributed according to their

gender. Overall, the number of male celebrities far exceeded that of females in all the textbooks that included them, except for PB8, which incorporated an equal representation of both sexes (i.e., 4 from each group). The gap between both sexes reached its highest point in the last four secondary textbooks. Only one-tenth of the celebrities were found to be females in PB9 and PB&RP 12, and about one quarter for both PB10 and PB&RP 11.

Table 2

Distribution of Celebrities by Gender

Gender	PB 1	PB 2	PB 3	PB 4	PB 5	PB 6	PB 7	PB 8	PB 9	PB 10	PB 11	PB&RP 12
Male	0	0	0	0	3	4	2	5	9	8	24	32
Female	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	1	2	7	3
Total	0	0	0	0	3	6	2	9	10	10	31	35

As for the occupational roles of the celebrities, Table 3 below shows that they were found to represent more diverse careers as the textbooks progressed into the secondary educational levels. This seems logical, as the number of celebrities included in the secondary textbooks was much greater than that of those included in the primary textbooks, so the chance of addressing more diverse professional roles increased. Besides, students are generally more capable of making sense of a wider variety of occupations as they grow older. The occupations *litterateur*, *politician*, *athlete*, *scientist*, and *economist* were represented the most throughout the textbooks, with recorded frequencies of 35, 20, 11, 11, and 8, respectively.

Table 3*Distribution of Celebrities by Profession*

Occupation	PB	PB&RP	PB&RP									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Litterateur					1			4	3	2	14	10
Politician					1		2	1	7	3	3	4
Athlete					1			1			1	8
Scientist						1		1		3	3	3
Economist											7	1
Explorer						5						
Musician								2				3
Actor												1
TV star												1
Doctor										1		
Engineer										1		
Psychologist											1	
Academic											1	
Director												1
Pilot												1
Artist												2
Ornithologist											1	
Total	0	0	0	0	3	6	2	9	10	10	31	35

In order to compare how female and male celebrities were represented in terms of their occupational roles, the occupations according to the gender are presented in Table 4 below. Overall, the ratio of all occupations for female celebrities to those for male celebrities was 1:4.57. This shows that female celebrities were underrepresented compared to male celebrities. While almost one-half of female celebrities were represented as litterateurs (i.e., 9 out of 20), the majority of male celebrities were litterateurs (25), politicians (19), athletes (11), scientists (9), and economists (8). The number of male politicians and economists exceeded that of females, with 19 male politicians and eight male economists compared to only two female politicians and no female economists.

Thus, the underrepresentation of females in this occupational aspect signals male dominance in positions of direct influence. Throughout the textbooks, females were represented only once as an explorer, a musician, an actor, a TV star, a doctor, and an academic, respectively. Two female scientists were also represented in the textbooks compared to nine male scientists. In sum, in addition to the high representation of the occupations for male celebrities, men were represented in a more diverse range of occupational roles than females (i.e., 13 to 9), which is indicative of female underrepresentation concerning occupational roles.

Table 4

Distribution of Occupations by Gender

Occupation	Male celebrities	Female celebrities	Total number of celebrities
Litterateur	25	9	34
Politician	19	2	21
Athlete	11	0	11
Scientist	9	2	11
Economist	8	0	8
Explorer	4	1	5
Musician	4	1	5
Actor	0	1	1
TV star	0	1	1
Doctor	0	1	1
Engineer	1	0	1
Psychologist	1	0	1
Academic	0	1	1
Director	1	0	1
Pilot	1	0	1
Artist	2	0	2
Ornithologist	1	0	1
Total	87	19	106

7. Discussion

The international representation of celebrities in the *English for Palestine* textbook series reflects a commonly held belief that English is predominantly associated with the Anglo-American world. This observation aligns with several studies indicating cases of Anglo-American dominance across various contexts (e.g., Arslan, 2016; Dehbozorgi et al., 2014; Lee, 2009; Matsuda, 2002; Ponte, 2019; Su, 2014). This perspective overlooks the unique nature of English as a lingua franca, indicating the need for acquiring an intercultural competence encompassing non-Anglo-American cultures. Unfortunately, English is still viewed as the property of inner circle countries (those where English is spoken as the first language), which deprives learners of enhancing their intercultural communication skills and gives them the incorrect notion that English is only used within British and American borders. To become proficient English language users, students must engage with and understand a broader spectrum of cultures.

From a gender perspective, biases against females were evident in the disparities between both the number of female celebrities compared to male celebrities, and the number of females compared to males in occupational roles. There was a clear underrepresentation of females in all occupations, especially in the ones considered influential in decision-making and economic power (i.e., politician and economist). These findings are in line with previous research within the realm of ELT (Bahman & Rahimi, 2010; Gooden & Gooden, 2001; Ismael & Mohammadzadeh, 2022; Lee, 2018; Lee & Collins, 2009; Sánchez Aguilar, 2021; Yi, 2002). The consistency observed across diverse studies suggests these patterns are part of a broader phenomenon, emphasizing the need for global initiatives to address these biases comprehensively.

Undoubtedly, repeated exposure to certain cultural patterns could have a considerable impact on shaping students' views. Ting-Toomey and Chung (2005) confirm this by stressing the fact that “we are what we watch” (p. 167). The writers explain that internalization of certain attitudes and feelings works through a

process known as “association,” through which receivers are exposed to characters in visual and written materials repeatedly. This exposure results in unconscious linkage of characters’ predominant characteristics to certain ethnic, religious, and gender groups. However, the result is not limited to the students’ perceptions of others; it has a direct impact on students’ perceptions of themselves as well (Kramsch, 1993). In this respect, representations of nationalities and females need to be reconsidered to avoid potential international misunderstandings and biases against females.

The findings related to the distribution of the celebrities by nationality indicate that English language teaching is still perceived as a tool for helping students communicate with native English speakers from the UK and the USA, mainly. With little attention paid to other international cultures, students’ various needs, which can be as broad as pursuing studies in a non-English-speaking country or as simple as using the language to communicate with visiting internationals, seem to be going unaddressed (Baltag, 2017).

Other implications of such excessive focus on British and American celebrities in the foreign language textbooks include conveying wrong messages about the English language and the countries where English is spoken as a native language. According to Nault (2006), such representation fails to acknowledge other English varieties used by Australians, Canadians, or even non-native speakers. Thus, students are prone to fail to realize the importance of learning about other English varieties and accents in sustaining a successful conversation with international people.

Another important point that applies specifically to the Palestinian situation is students’ feelings toward Western and American cultures. Western and American cultures’ strong ties with Israel have resulted in some enmity and reluctance toward these countries and cultures. Therefore, too much Anglo-

American representation in EFL textbooks, as argued by Argungu (1996) and Sárdi (2002), might drive students away from English as a school discipline.

As far as gender bias is concerned, the disproportionate portrayal of male celebrities compared to female celebrities suggests an inherent male dominance, which may have a negative impact on students, both in general and on female students in particular. It is highly recommended to avoid these types of representations in a foreign language class, which is supposed to contribute to social change rather than foster dominant social patterns.

Images of female characters depicted in stereotypical roles can, according to Sheldon (1990), reinforce the stereotypical societal roles of females in the eyes of male students as well as deter female students from pursuing influential roles in society. Peterson and Lach (1990) and Potter and Rosser (1992) claim that this could have future implications on the females' career choices, since girls are likely to unconsciously internalize the characters' roles as measures for what is appropriate and socially acceptable for them. Patt and McBride (1993) suggest that these effects manifest after the formation of distorted beliefs, which assume that boys are more suitable for or capable of working in certain occupations.

Academic performance of female students can also be badly affected as suggested by Crawford and English (1984), who proved that instructional materials in which females are less represented than males are more likely to help male students than female students in retaining information. Besides, feelings of marginalization and underrepresentation can cause female students to dislike school textbooks and to refrain from learning, which could negatively influence their academic performance (Sunderland, 1992).

8. Concluding Remarks

This paper stands as a reminder of the importance of implicit cultural representations in EFL textbooks. It specifically brings into focus the issues of

excessive Anglo-American representations and underrepresentation of females in textbooks used for English language teaching in the Palestinian context.

The research questions aimed to investigate the degree of international representation among the celebrities incorporated in the textbooks, as well as to explore the portrayal of gender roles within the same group of celebrities. Findings suggest a prevalence of Palestinian and English-speaking nationalities in the textbooks compared to other nationalities. In addition, a significant imbalance between male and female celebrities was displayed across the textbooks, with the number of male celebrities surpassing that of females. Concerning the occupational roles, the overall ratio of female to male celebrities across all occupations was 1:4.57, highlighting a male dominance, especially in influential occupations.

The study contributes significantly to the field of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) by highlighting crucial areas for enhancing educational materials. It emphasizes the need for more diverse, culturally inclusive, and gender-balanced content in TEFL textbooks. Identifying the prevalence of Anglo-American contexts and the underrepresentation of females in various roles underscores the necessity for globally inclusive and gender-equitable learning resources. These insights act as a catalyst for improving the quality and diversity of educational materials in TEFL, encouraging culturally sensitive and balanced approaches to language education.

Based on the research findings and their contributions, a number of recommendations could be made to improve the content of EFL textbooks. First, it is vital for policymakers to carry out strict reviewing of the updated versions of school textbooks used to teach foreign languages prior to the approval stage. Second, publishers should also be required to meet certain criteria that guarantee the proposed language textbooks are promoting equity and balanced social roles.

These recommendations are necessary to make sure students' needs are taken into consideration and their school environment is safe and enriching.

Despite its significant contributions to the field of TEFL, the study neither investigated all aspects of gender bias (e.g., use of gender-specific language instead of neutral language), nor examined other areas of Anglo-American dominance in the EFL textbooks. However, the main purpose of the study was to bring into focus the impact that visual representations in EFL textbooks may have had on students' attitudes, personality development, and their perception of English as a lingua franca, which collectively could have an immensely positive effect on students' success in cross-cultural encounters.

9. About the Authors

Jehad Faraj is an English teacher at state schools in Palestine. He holds a master's and a PhD in TEFL from the University of Rovira i Virgili, along with a postgraduate diploma in TAFL from London University. His research interests include education in conflict societies, culture in EFL classrooms, and censorship of school textbooks.

Anca Daniela Frumuselu is a serra hünter lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Lleida, Spain. Her research focuses on teaching English as a foreign language, intercultural competence and virtual exchanges, audio-visual translation and subtitling in EFL, the use of new technologies, e-learning and gamification in the EFL classroom.

Andrea Roxana Bellot is a research fellow at the Department of English and German Studies, University of Rovira i Virgili, Spain. Her research interests include war studies, literary and cultural representations of war and teaching culture in the EFL/ESL classroom.

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11. Appendix

The English for Palestine Textbooks and Their Abbreviated Forms

Title (Authors)	Abbreviated forms	Publishers
<i>Pupil's Book 1 A&B</i> (Arnold, 2011)	PB1	Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
<i>Pupil's Book 2 A&B</i> (Arnold, 2011)	PB2	Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
<i>Pupil's Book 3 A&B</i> (Arnold, 2011)	PB3	Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
<i>Pupil's Book 4 A&B</i> (Arnold, 2011)	PB4	Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
<i>Pupil's Book 5 A&B</i> (Arnold, 2012)	PB5	Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
<i>Pupil's Book 6 A&B</i> (Arnold, 2013)	PB6	Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
<i>Pupil's Book 7 A&B</i> (Coates & Mauchline, 2013)	PB7	Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
<i>Pupil's Book 8 A&B</i> (Macfarland, 2013)	PB8	Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
<i>Pupil's Book 9 A&B</i> (Macfarland, 2014)	PB9	Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
<i>Pupil's Book 10 A&B</i> (Macfarland, 2014)	PB10	Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
<i>Pupil's Book 11 and Reading Plus 11</i> (Baxter & Coates, 2015)	PB&RP 11	Springer Nature Ltd.
<i>Pupil's Book 12 and Reading Plus 12</i> (Baxter, 2015)	PB&RP 12	Springer Nature Ltd.