Gender Bias in English Language Textbooks

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GENDER BIAS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS

MASTER'S THESIS

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Sveučilište u Zagrebu

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RODNE NEJEDNAKOSTI U UDŽBENICIMA ENGLESKOG JEZIKA

DIPLOMSKI RAD

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1. Summary

The important role of textbooks in education system has been emphasized by many authors. Numerous studies have focused on analyzing textbooks in search of gender stereotypes. This thesis examined three ESL textbooks used in Croatian school system to investigate whether gender bias is present in three different categories: free-time activities, representation of real-life people and achievements, and adjectives. A critical study was conducted using the methods of content analysis and critical discourse analysis and the results have shown that gender stereotypes are not as prominent as they used to be, but they are still present. Even though a change for the better is noticeable, gender bias still remains evident, especially in the categories of real-life people and achievements.

Key words: stereotypes, gender, education, textbooks

2. Introduction

We live in a society that rests on gender roles and stereotypes. We are surrounded by them since our earliest days, we absorb and later manifest them through our own behavior, which is assigned to us by our culture. They affect our opinions, our understanding of ourselves and our own limits and expectations. While children discover the world around them, the way it is presented to them plays a big role, and this is done by their family, school and media. Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada and Ross (1972) observe that children learn distinctions between genders long before they start school. By that time, they have already developed expectations and preferences according to gender and accepted the definitions and characteristics which are typical according to society (p. 1125). Banks (2001) points out that even though "social, economic and political conditions for women have improved substantially", gender discrimination and gender inequality are still very much present, both in schools and in society (p. 123). Gender stereotypes are actually present since the beginning of children's lives. Being a boy is often associated with liking the color blue, football, dinosaurs, rockets, while girls are expected to like pink color, dolls, Barbies, ponies and unicorns. This is what they are exposed to, so they learn what "typical" is for each gender since the early age, and that is only the beginning. Wibraham and Caldwell (2018) explain that gender roles exist to help the children "to respond appropriately within their social environment", which means that they are taught how to behave in a way that suits their gender. Sadker and Sadker (2001) observe that boys are more likely to act and think in a stereotypical way, because they are "taught stereotyped behaviors earlier and more harshly" (p. 131).

Gender as such is a "social division into masculine and feminine" (Brugeilles and Cromer, 2009, p. 27). It dictates the qualities a person should have, their roles and responsibilities, the expectations the society has of them and the experiences and opportunities they will have. But definitions of masculine and feminine can be very different in different societies. Gender roles are diverse in various parts of the world, which is reported by authors who studied other cultures, but also by many travelers who visit places all around the world these days and report on other cultures and their way of living. They introduce us to "different kinds of normal" than the one we are used to, and part of that are gender norms and the roles males and females have in different societies.

Since we are part of the education system since our early days, our teachers and the materials we use to learn also play a great role in the way we experience gender roles and our own roles

in society. Textbooks are a tool used from an early age, which shapes a particular view of what women's place in society should be. They can shape the minds of children and their idea of what the limits and expectations are for young girls and women, and what their behavior should be like. Essentially, they advertise career choices suitable for each gender in the eyes of the society, because under the influence of gender stereotypes "girls and boys' visions of who they are and what they can become are constrained" (Blumberg, 2007, p. 4). Taylor (2003) mentions that "One's expected opportunities and outcomes in life correlate strongly with gender" (p. 300).

The aim of this thesis is to analyze English textbooks used in the Croatian education system, and to discuss the messages that are sent through them about female roles in society. It is also discussed how these messages can affect young girls' perception of themselves and the expectations they come to believe the society has of them, and later on – on their career and lives.

3. Gender inequality

In their 2020 *Global Education Monitoring Report* UNESCO discusses education and inclusion, but also gender discrimination, and many challenges that arise in those areas. Gender discrimination refers to an unequal treatment according to gender. Cocorodă (2018) mentions gender equality as a human right, which is violated by gender bias and stereotypes. According to Do et al. (2012) gender bias refers to "prejudices or distorted images/characterizations generated by gender difference" (p. 48). Girls are more likely to be victims of gender discrimination, since there are many cultures which put women in certain positions in households, marriage and motherhood. Islam and Asadullah (2018) point out that many young women are married off before reaching their 18th birthday, that women are more often victims of domestic violence and they are paid less than men. They also warned that the gap in educational opportunities for women and men is one of the reasons for this situation not improving, along with "social and gender norms, which interfere with the ability of girls and women to take advantage of the opportunities in many developing countries" (p. 2). According to the Report, a huge progress has been made in this area in the last 25 years, since *the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, which resulted in millions of girls enrolling in schools and their education and learning outcomes being improved. But the problem is still very much present, and there is a long road we as a society have to walk to reach gender equality. The Report warns that three-quarters of children who will not be able to attend school are girls.

Fewer females than males are enrolled in secondary and tertiary education in many countries and they constitute the bigger part among illiterate adults. Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) conclude that there are many factors which are negatively affecting girls' education: "the economic situation and low income, a family and social environment with traditional patriarchal structures, and operational failures in the education system (shortages of schools, teaching materials and teachers, sexual abuse of girls, and so on)" (p. 21).

UNESCO (2020) warns that career choices for women are affected by "gender segregation by field of study", since some fields are still dominated by males. Some of those fields are science, engineering, mathematics, technology (STEM areas), ICT and generally Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

There is ample research that demonstrates how gender discrimination in fields of study affects work opportunities for women. Numbers and percentages of women in STEM and ICT areas are disappointing, and the academic expectations for girls and boys, respectably, play a big role in this. Expectations from others, like teachers, and generally gender segregation in these fields affect self-expectation in girls, which is also a big factor. PISA tests showed that a very low percent of girls in OECD countries who performed high in these areas expected to make a career in them (Encinas-Martin, 2020). Wilbraham and Caldwell (2018) conducted a study in which they argue that science is represented as a field for men, that scientists are often portrayed as men, and that this conveys a message that women do not belong in STEM areas.

On the other hand, Sadker and Sadker (2001) point out that there is a higher chance for boys to be disciplined for their behavior and are that they are punished more often in comparison to girls. They are also less likely to enroll in classes such as "English, sociology, psychology, foreign language, and fine arts" (p. 130). The problem also lies in the fact that girls and boys are expected to have different academic abilities, which also affects their outcomes later on, especially since girls are expected to choose certain studies and careers, since there is still a general opinion about jobs which are suitable for different genders. Nosek et al. (2007) have found that 72 per cent of their sample, which is more than 2.5 million Americans, associate science with the idea of *masculine* and humanities with *feminine* (p. 21).

4. The influence of textbooks

Textbooks are an important tool and access to information, which use language to communicate the ideas they convey. Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) emphasized that "not only do they develop the ability to read and write but they also encourage critical thinking, independence and creativity. For many pupils and their families, textbooks are the only introduction to the written word…" (p. 15). However, they do not convey only knowledge, but also values and ideologies. They impact social behavior. Sadker and Sadker (2001) quoted Woodward and Elliot (1990) who suggested that "students spend as much as 80 to 95 percent of classroom time using textbooks and that teachers make a majority of their instructional decisions based on the textbook" (p. 134). Because of that, textbooks are an object of many studies, which try to stress the influence textbooks have on students. They have an irrefutable role in society and shaping of children's minds. In many countries textbooks are a source of discrimination since they can contain gender-based stereotypes and refer more to men than women, especially in terms of success and career, and it is mostly because of lack of training for developers, and the governments not pushing the subject. By demonstrating how the society views gender roles and displaying expected behaviors and roles that boys or girls should take on in life, textbooks become powerful tools in shaping the student's perception of themselves, their ambitions and goals.

UNESCO's Report stated that in 2017 most textbook writers were male, and that they have to overcome their own "personal familial, social and religious influence" (p. 41), and have to be trained, so they could create materials without gender stereotypes. *Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language* (UNESCO, 1999) presented some alternatives to use instead of gender-specific language, such as alternatives for the word *man* and other terms which promote gender-specific way of communication. *Guidelines for Gender-Fair Use of Language* (Women in Literacy and Life Assembly, 2002) gave another suggestion on the topic, which is using inclusionary forms instead of exclusionary ones. It presented examples of using gender-neutral language, for example "*Papers should be handed in promptly* instead of *Each student should hand in his paper promptly*" and "*Does each student have their book*? instead of *Does each student have his book*?" (p. 2, 3). These guidelines can be used by textbook writers in preparing their content, so they can avoid stereotypes in language and use gender-neutral language. That would bring them much closer to eliminating gender bias in textbooks altogether.

Since textbooks are a mode of communication and they communicate what is happening in the world and in our society, they can be used to send a positive message. It is extremely important to change the way parents, teachers, textbook writers and society as a whole see women, so that children can be influenced in a better way. They learn through observing and modeling, so they will copy the stereotypes that are being manifested in their surroundings. Albert Bandura (1971) said that some of the ways in which children can receive our influences are through physical demonstrations, pictorial representations or verbal descriptions. They can also pick up on our unintentionally displayed stereotypical behaviors and thinking, which stem from our implicit stereotypes, because we can manifest this type of behavior through our inner bias without realizing it. Besides family and teachers, one of the biggest influences on children are textbooks in school. They offer a large amount of content to children, both text and visual parts. Children's beliefs and opinions can be changed and influenced by textbooks used in schools (Arıkan, 2005). That is why textbooks should be used to teach children that gender does not and should not play a role in what they can achieve in life. They need to believe that, no matter their gender, they can achieve something if they want to and if they are interested, and that no profession or job is off limits just because they are a girl or a boy. We use them to build girls' confidence so they can achieve their potential. By changing the opinions of children, we can start changing the opinion of the whole society, by bringing up a generation that does not believe in gender stereotypes.

4.1 ESL textbooks

Textbooks are used as main tools of teaching a foreign language to children. They are not only the instrument of presenting the language itself, but they also give the students a glance into another culture, with all its values, the way they think and the way they act in different situations. They present a whole mindset, including "ideas and attitudes of a society" (Gouvias and Alexopoulos, 2016, p. 1). Fairclough (2001) suggested that the role of language is "more significant" than it used to be (p. 6). For that reason, ELT textbooks should not contain any gender bias or stereotypes, because they can heavily influence children's minds, way of thinking and sense of self-worth based solely on their gender.

Since English is spread and taught globally, and English textbooks are used by different age groups around the world – having potential to impact students, gender representation in those books has become an important research topic. Hartman and Judd's *study Sexism and TESOL*

Materials (1987) was one of the first studies that dealt with sexist language in ELT textbooks, and since then there have been many studies researching this topic. Most of them came to the same conclusion – that there was a huge presence of "gender-exclusive language, male dominance and stereotyped gender roles in both western and locally produced printed ELT materials" (Demir and Yavuz, 2017). The authors concluded that women are not portrayed as equals to men, they are not given as much voice or presence, the professions in which they are shown are mostly nurturing ones, and they are generally shown as being the weaker gender. Amini and Birjandi (2012) warned that this type of gender representation can "influence females' behavior in such a way as to restrict their social, behavioral, and linguistic roles. "(p. 135). It is also possible for them to experience "feelings of exclusion, devaluation, alienation and lowered-expectations" (Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012, p.42). The fact that females are underrepresented can also negatively affect their ability to understand the language and culture in the textbooks (Rifkin, 1998). The way of gender representation that is present in the textbooks has consequences on both female and male students. Sadker and Sadker (2001) warned that society presents boys as "active, independent and aggressive", and molds them into those roles, but since that behavior does not match with school rules and expectations, it puts them into conflict with different things that are expected of them. They are more likely to have emotional problems, anxiety and problems with drug and alcohol abuse. They are also less likely to be close friends with one another, because they are taught not to be close to their own sex in a way that would contain emotions (p. 131). All of this leads to behavior problems, emotional problems, substance abuse, and even relationship or domestic abuse. Aydınoğlu (2014) warned that young children "can easily be imposed beliefs and values" because for them, what they read in their textbooks is "unquestionably true". This can be the cause of girls feeling "less important" or losing their self-esteem. They may let the views which society forces on us determine their position in said society and even adapt the kind of behavior that seems expected of them. That is why it is extremely important to avoid any gender discrimination in textbooks (p. 238). Peterson and Lach (1990) also studied this problem, and pointed out that gender stereotypes have a considerable effect on children, their behavior, and their perception of other people's behavior: "gender stereotypes affect not only self-concept, potential for achievement and perceptions of others, but a variety of dimensions of cognitive performance as well" (p. 194).

While Yilmaz (2012) concluded that English textbooks were in fact biased against women, there is also a significant improvement in the last editions, which again proves that the authors are becoming more aware of the problem, and are working on finding better solutions.

5. The role of teachers in promoting gender equality

While textbooks are crucial in conveying knowledge, a big role in this process is the one of teachers. As the ones who help interpret that knowledge in the classroom and decide how they will present it, they get to navigate and influence the process of transmitting knowledge to students. McGregor (2004) explained this by saying that texts, which contain and exhibit power relations, but also worldviews, opinions, norms and beliefs which are being transmitted through them, are studied by the learners and then interpreted according to sets of values and behaviors that are socially learned. Teachers have the role of helping students shape the knowledge and information they receive, but that is a process they do in accordance to their own beliefs and accepted behaviors, in that way undeniably influencing the minds of their students. For gender bias to be removed from the learning process, it is crucial for teachers to teach in a way that supports gender equity.

Luke (1997) mentioned studies from the UK, the USA and Australia which dealt with classroom talk and how it can "shape and reshape what will count as knowledge, subjectivity, legitimate social relations and textual practices". The classroom is a place where textbooks are read, but also interpreted and reshaped under the teacher's lead. Johannson and Malmsjo (2009) believe that teachers should be aware of any gender bias in their classroom and adjust their teaching according to it, because if they are unaware the teachers may "inadvertently limit the speaking practice opportunities for the under-represented gender as well as fail in fulfilling curriculum requirements of providing equal rights for all students" (p. 7). They warned that many teachers believe that working by a textbook means working in accordance with the curriculum, but that is often not the case as textbooks do not necessarily meet all the norms set by the curriculum. For that reason it is important that teachers question the textbooks and adapt them in their teaching (p. 14).

Sadker and Sakder (2001) warned that gender bias in not only present in textbooks, but also in classrooms in the way teachers teach. Even though textbooks are an important factor, teachers are even more crucial for this process of conveying knowledge, because they are the ones who

decide how this knowledge is going to be presented. The authors believe that the bias in the textbooks affects teachers, and consequently through them also students, their opinions, choices and opportunities (p. 125). Bailey, Scantlebury and Letts (1997) suggested that gender discrimination is around us, affecting us, but we are often not aware of it. They used the term "gender blindness" to describe a phenomenon that influences society in every way, including teachers and the way they teach. They insisted that "prospective teachers must consider how subtle and pervasive attitudes toward gender blindness may affect their classroom practices" (p. 29). Sadker and Sadker (2001) reflected on their previous research (1994) in which they emphasized that this problem is common and widespread, and call it "a syntax of sexism so elusive that most teachers and students were completely unaware of its influence" (p. 125).

According to Lee (2014) it is up to the teachers how they will represent the content to their students. They can ignore gender stereotypes in the textbooks or even extend them. She believes that teachers should be sensitive to gender issues and educated on how to deal with them, since they are the ones who control which knowledge from the textbooks will be transmitted to students. In addition, she pointed out that the teachers with heightened gender awareness may be "more ready to notice the inadequacies of their classroom materials in terms of gender parity, and find ways to address the problems" (p. 373).

Lahelma (2011) concluded that the education system has a big role in making girls feel equal to boys, and in encouraging them to pursue any career or interest they want. However, an important aspect of fulfilling that role is avoiding gender stereotypes both in textbooks and in classrooms. Also, during their education, teachers must be made aware of the role they play in interpreting the textbooks and the fact that they are not neutral in that process. To the contrary, they are the ones who shape the curriculum and pass it on to their students. They should be equipped with pedagogical knowledge which will help them develop a critical view of textbooks and make them capable of analyzing and questioning the knowledge being transmitted by the textbooks and of changing and adapting it where needed. Sunderland (2000) agreed with critical pedagogy having an important role in dealing with gender bias in the classroom, as it helps teachers become aware of the issues, but can also involve students in the "critique of practices at all levels" (p. 213).

Sunderland (2000) presented some ideas on how to deal with these issues, and they include classroom discussions of traditional roles and stereotypes which can be found in the textbooks, avoiding texts which display this, or reversing gender roles in the classroom when dealing with

a text which displays subordination or other types of bias, and also educating both young women and men on the issue (p. 213).

6. Approaches to textbook analysis

Textbooks are instruments for transmitting different types of material and knowledge, which can shape minds and views, change or create opinions and dictate the way children learn and receive information. Textbook analysis is used for examining textbooks and the representation of people, cultures, places, language and knowledge being transmitted through them.

Weninger (2018) explained that textbooks nowadays are full of material that usually follows popular culture and trends in society. There are plenty of pictures and content about fashion, food, famous people, music, movies and TV shows. Through all of this they become identifiable to students, and therefore their role is even bigger. All of the themes covered in a particular textbook, characters, visuals, activities and language are a tool through which readers receive certain attitudes, beliefs and knowledge. They present a certain worldview to students and pass onto them values and principles. Because of their role in teaching, textbooks became the focus of a large number of studies. According to Weninger (2018), there are two main types of inquiry in linguistic research of textbooks. Materials evaluation, the first of the two, sees textbooks as pedagogic tools and materials for learning, and evaluates their methodological aspects and linguistic content. The second one investigates meanings transmitted through textbooks, both through their content and design. In this line of research textbooks are seen as cultural device and they are evaluated in a cultural way because they contain meaning of the world around us, of people, languages and cultures, and the way students convey that meaning shapes the way they study, the way they experience the world and the way they socialize.

Weninger (2018) also mentioned two interdisciplinary theories which influenced studies of textbook analysis – the first one being critical curriculum theory in education, largely influenced by Apple, and the other one critical discourse studies, whose representative is Fairclough. Apple (2019), as a representative of the first approach, considered textbooks to be mechanisms of social control. He focused on topics of who decides which knowledge will be presented and taught to students, and why it is organized and presented to them in a certain way. He connected the particular knowledge taught in schools to social, economic and political power, putting curriculum and ideology in relation to one another. According to this theory, those who have

said power decide which practices and meanings will be transmitted to students. They decide on the "truth" which is presented, they shape the view of the world, the beliefs and values that students eventually acquire. Through this it is possible for them to marginalize certain groups and the representation of their knowledge, success, culture and values. Looking at this theory, we can certainly conclude that school creates people, and those who decide which knowledge will be conveyed are the ones that indirectly shape them. This approach is important in gender research because it poses the question of who decides what kind of knowledge will be presented in the textbooks, considering that gender bias is often represented through that knowledge. This approach deals with those responsible for introducing that knowledge, along with all of the bias it contains, to students through textbooks.

Fairclough (2001) is a representative of critical discourse studies theory, which also focuses on ideology. He pointed out that a text contains ideological meanings. He analyzed linguistic and visual parts of textbooks, and through it the worldview that is actually being represented. He believes that ideology and language are closely connected, since language is one of social behaviors that we exhibit most often (p. 2), and he believes that it is a medium of social control (p. 3). Some of the things that can be analyzed are vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, types of speech, visuals, directness/indirectness of expression (p. 109). All of these components hide meanings that are transmitted to students through textbooks, so this type of analysis wants to discern the connection between power and ideology in discourse. Language and discourse are an important factor in the implementation of gender bias, which is in itself a matter of power. Gouvias and Alexopoulos (2016) claim that they reflect "the power relations between genders" (p. 2). They are means through which gender stereotypes can be conveyed and implemented. For that reason, it is important to review them critically, which Fairclough advocates in this theory. Gouvias and Alexopoulos (2016) claim that language is "a crucial point of appearance and realization" (p. 2) of our ideologies, including gender bias, therefore it is crucial to analyze language in an effort to establish gender equity.

Textbook analysis is a broad field, and it is based on many different theories. I have decided to focus on Weninger and Kiss's (2015) distinction of methods. They identify three main methodological approaches: content analysis, critical discourse analysis and multimodal analysis. These are different, but complementary approaches which can be used to analyze linguistic and visual content (p. 5), and will be explained in more detail in another chapter.

7. ESL textbook research

There has been much research concerned with the analysis of ESL textbooks all over the world. The role of textbooks in not just to teach the language, but also to introduce students to a different culture, a different worldview, set of beliefs and values, habits and rituals. By bringing forward another culture, textbooks also include the stereotypes and perceptions that can be a part of it. While some of them are plain and obvious, others can be hidden behind meanings of texts and visuals, which is why there is so much research revolving around this topic. The focus of the research is mostly on different social and cultural themes and issues which are connected to the process of acquiring a language. Some of them are the representation of gender roles and gender stereotypes, the representation of sexual minorities, the representation of ethnic, racial and national groups, and the representation of different cultures (Weninger, 2018). All of these topics, from gender roles to ideologies and cultures, can affect and shape the learning process and therefore are an important aspect of creating a specific worldview in the minds of the students.

A considerable amount of research is concerned with gender. Different authors deal with stereotypes in ESL textbooks and how gender and gender roles are represented in them. Most of the results come to similar conclusions – women are underrepresented, they appear in a smaller range of social roles (usually domestic ones), they are not as prominent in visual representation, they take a more subordinate role in discourse, they are described using different adjectives than men (Aydınoğlu, 2014, Barton. 2012, Dahmardeh and Kim, 2019, Islam and Asadullah, 2018, Lee, 2014, Foroutan, 2012, Zlotnich, 2018).

Research on textbooks often arrived at disappointing conclusions considering the representation of men and women: "Women, often unnamed, are trapped in the domestic sphere and display coquetry, frailty, emotionality and dependence. Men embody moral and physical strength, authority and independence" (Brugeilles and Cromer, 2009, p. 28). Also, women are often associated with shopping, child nurturing, and family and house duties, and often shown in stereotypical positions and roles, being mothers and housewives (Mustapha and Mills, 2015). There is a noticeable difference in the display of genders in textbooks as men in the books are shown mostly in their work spheres, as strong, independent, smart and successful, and women are shown in their domestic roles. This way, there is not enough role models given to young women, which sends a message that their academic performance is not as important as their family and domestic lives.

Sexism is not as blatant and head-on as it used to be before. Some older research shows more obvious cases of gender discrimination and stereotyping. Hellinger (1980) analyzed English textbooks in Germany and came to a conclusion that they represent a patriarchal society which does not contribute to the equal treatment of women and men. The textbooks he analyzed were for children aged 15 and 16, and he warned that language teaching includes "not only linguistic proficiency, but also the development of particular social behavior patterns and attitudes" (p. 274) which is why textbooks should be completely void of sexism. According to his research, women were underrepresented, only briefly mentioned in texts in which men had main roles, subordinate to men in discourse who are in positions of power and not given roles connected to "responsibility, self-confidence, creativity and economic independence" (p. 268). Their identity was defined through their relationship with a man, not their personalities, aspirations, values and skills. Hartman and Judd's research (1978) showed that "women are often less visible than men, are often the butt of many jokes and are often placed in stereotypical roles and assigned stereotypical emotional reactions" (p. 383). Porreca (1984) did a quantitative study in the USA by looking at texts and illustrations in 15 most popular ESL textbooks, and came to the similar conclusions: "five years after the Hartman and Judd study, sexism continues to flourish in ESL materials" (p. 718). Gender bias was found in male firstness, underrepresentation of women and their traditional representation in social and occupational roles, and in stereotypical language (nouns and adjectives). The author warned that this may have serious consequences, especially on younger students who do not have any basis for questioning what they see in textbooks, so they generally trust the printed word (p. 723).

To investigate if more recent research had any different findings, I looked into authors conducting similar studies in different countries in the more recent years.

A study by Dahmardeh and Kim (2019) called "Is sexism still alive?" was conducted in Iran, and came to the conclusion that there was much imbalance and stereotyping present. The authors stated that the textbooks analyzed did not represent a realistic or a fair portrayal of gender roles (p. 8). They also emphasized that through gender-biased language children's awareness of their own roles in society, based on their gender, is shaped. Foroutan (2012) presented another study from Iran which agrees with the one by Dahmardeh and Kim, since the author found gender bias in terms of male dominance and firstness, and noticed that male dominance had become higher with the level of education, but it was also concluded that, in terms of language, ESL textbooks were starting to be more oriented towards gender-equity.

Barton (2012) researched ESL textbooks in Uganda and the results showed that not much had been done there for women and the way they were represented. The author discussed the stereotypes found in the textbooks, some of them being underrepresentation of women in both text and illustrations, traditional roles, male-oriented stories, a dichotomy between the interests of men and women and the negative portrayal of women's emotional state. Stevenson and Zlotnich (2018) added that most women were portrayed in relation to food, fashion or entertainment.

GEM Report (2020) brought up many examples of research done, especially in underdeveloped countries. In Afghanistan, there were almost no women in textbooks 20 years ago. While the situation is better today, women are still shown in traditional, domestic roles. In Iran the pictures that show women were usually tied to family values, not shown as working women except maybe in education. In Malaysia, the textbooks advised girls to be humble and timid, more passive than men, presenting the expectations their society had for them. Research conducted in The Republic of Korea showed that even animals were used to display gender stereotypes, as smaller and weaker animals were shown as female, while big, dangerous and strong animals were shown as male. Chile, Italy and Spain are some of the countries that do not represent women enough in school textbooks, and usually show them in relation to domestic or stereotypical roles. Similar problems are seen in Morocco, Uganda and Turkey, with women being depicted much less than men, and gender discrimination being strong in those representations. Some countries are fighting to get this issue under control. For example, Hungary and India put their textbooks under revision in the last years, with the goal to remove stereotypes and discrimination, and raise awareness of the need for gender equality. Ethiopian government tried to deal with gender inequality in textbooks by education, programmes and reforms. Institutions funded research, training and professional development. Still, same problems remain. Women do not participate in the making of materials, and the representation of men and women is biased and very stereotypical. Men are depicted as "powerful, assertive and intelligent leaders, doctors, engineers and politicians", while women get to be seen as "weak, passive and submissive and are mostly depicted in domestic, caregiving and supportive roles" (GEM Report 2020, p. 41).

Aydınoğlu (2014) brought together other authors in his study, and once again put forward a problem of gender bias in English textbooks in Turkey. One of the things he mentioned was the fact that different adjectives were used to describe men and women. When it came to women, it was mostly their appearance that was mentioned, along with "adjectives with negative

connotations", while the ones describing men were stronger and more complimentary. Söylemez (2011) agreed, saying that women's intellect is often described by the adjective "intelligent", while men are described as "brilliant, bright, clever and genius" (p. 750). The textbooks that Aydınoğlu (2014) analyzed made a distinction between genders in favor of men in many areas: the times they were depicted, the amount of talk, occupations, domestic roles, social roles, and the way they were described (p. 234). He found that males appeared more frequently than females in ESL textbooks, with females often being placed indoors, while males were placed outdoors doing different activities and jobs. There were some differences in the analyzed textbooks, so the author concluded that one of them was "dangerously full of gender bias" (p. 238), and the other one had tried to avoid stereotypes. This shows that there is improvement in some of the English textbooks and that the authors and publishers are aware of the problem of gender bias in the books and are working on solving it. But even though explicit discrimination was not present in these books, the author warned that there was still plenty of implicit discrimination (p. 237). He warned that children of that age (first and second grade) were being introduced to a foreign language for the first time in school by these textbooks, and that it is important what kind of message they receive from them. There are other studies with similar, more positive findings. Lee (2016) conducted a study in Japan and came to a conclusion that, even though Japan is a society that puts women in a subordinate position to men, some of the textbooks analyzed took a step in the right direction. There was more gender inclusive vocabulary used, together with neutral address titles for women and adjectives such as courageous, talented and proud. Another Lee's study (2014), this one from Hong Kong looked into three categories: gender stereotyping, quantitative imbalance and male firstness. The author concluded that the appearance of female characters was increased compared to previous research, same as the proportion of female pronouns used. While men still had higher visual representation, women were represented more than they used to be in previous research. There was an equal representation shown in domestic roles, but still no significant difference in portrayal of women in social and occupational roles. Another study from Hong Kong (Yang, 2016) conducted a visual analysis of women and men in illustrations. The results have shown that, even though women were mostly portrayed with long hair and men with short, gender stereotyping was not that prominent, which could be seen in the lack of typical stereotypes such as women wearing pink and dresses and men wearing blue – the colors usually connected to genders. Jones, Kitetu and Sunderland (1997) analyzed discourse in ESL textbooks in the UK and they pointed out that an equal number of males and females was represented in the analyzed textbooks and that a relatively progressive picture of female characters was shown (p. 447).

Also, there were small gender differences, and social and occupational roles were fairly distributed. Rifkin (1998) analyzed ESL textbooks in Russia and concluded that they were "more equitable in their representation of males and females" (p. 227) than the textbooks made before 1990s used to be. A study from Sweden (Johansson and Malmsjö, 2009) noted that there were more female-dominated dialogues. Out of four textbook series, the two published earlier over-represented men, while the ones that were published later over-represented women. Another positive result came from Demir and Yavuz's study from 2017, which researched the *Yes You Can* ESL coursebook series for high school in Turkey. They concluded that in this textbook series male and females were presented as equals in terms of "visibility in the illustrations, distribution of domestic roles, household and out-of-home responsibilities, assignment of activities and sports, participation in conversations and text writings, primeness in conversation initiation and text mention, and gender focus in writings" (p. 118). There were some negative aspects, too, but it is mostly a step in the right direction. The authors view it as "an exemplary path-breaking coursebook series" (p. 118). This proves that we can move towards gender equality in textbooks if we focus on the problem and try to solve it, instead of overlooking it, and if the authors are educated on the subject. We should strive to achieve gender equality in textbooks in terms of representation of men and women in household, family life and work life and in gender-inclusive language.

When we look at these studies we can conclude that a lot has been done in the past years in the field of gender representation in textbooks – but mostly in more developed countries. Authors from the UK, the USA, Sweden or Hong Kong bring forward research which proves that, while the existence of gender awareness does still vary in different textbooks, it is evident that many countries and authors have recognized the need to deal with gender inequality. Some forms of gender bias still exist, and stereotypes are more prominent in some textbooks, but in others gender bias is not as direct and blatant as it used to be. Lee (2009) concluded that many contemporary authors use different strategies to avoid gender inequality in textbooks, but that there is much room for improvement, because gender stereotyping can still be found.

On the other hand, authors from less developed or Third World Countries report that not much has been done in this area, and that gender stereotyping is still largely present and obvious in ESL textbooks in those countries.

7.1 ESL textbook research in Croatia and neighboring countries

There is not much research available in Croatia on this topic. A study which partly deals with gender, *Representations of culture, social class, race and gender in English language textbooks* analyzed 9 ESL textbooks and came to the conclusion that women are underrepresented. Also, it was noted that men are shown in connection to work and occupations much more than women (66,8% for men, and 27.2% for women). The author also noticed how textbooks show women in traditional roles in illustrations, often being shown in nurturing or domestic roles. Another issued mentioned in this study is presenting young women as being unhappy with the way they look and being obsessed with diets and exercise, which sends a wrong and often dangerous message to female students. The author also mentioned famous men and their contributions being mentioned far more than those of women. She concluded that many stereotypes are present, but some authors had recognized the issues and started to deal with them by either changing the narrative, or discussing the topic itself (Blažević, 2021).

Other research in Croatia that deals with gender bias can be found, but none of the authors analyze ESL textbooks. Kolega, Ramljak and Belamarić (2011) analyzed the representation of occupations in connection to women and men in children's books. They concluded that the representation of women is unrealistic and that they are underrepresented. In addition to that, they noticed that men are perceived as more interesting and more important than women. Baranović (2011) analyzed gender inequality in education, especially gender stereotypes, unequal gender roles in discourse and the role of teachers. She implies that the fact that there is not much research done in Croatia on this topic goes on to show how much of an issue it really is. The same topic was analyzed in a study by Blažić (2016) who concluded that women were underrepresented and found stereotypes in depiction of female and male personalities and professional and occupational roles. However, she concluded that progress is visible when compared to textbooks from earlier years. Knežević (2012) studied gender roles in history textbooks, and came to the conclusion that only a small number of textbooks represented women in a non-stereotypical way, while some of them were extremely biased against women. Nikolić (2017) conducted a study of gender equality in science textbooks, and concluded that women were underrepresented, especially when mentioning real-life people and their accomplishments. She also noticed stereotypes in the representation of occupational and domestic roles.

Some research on this or similar topics can be found in other countries in this area. Janković, Tomović and Gledić (2017) dealt with the representation of culture in ESL textbooks in Serbia, as one of the main aspects of English textbooks as they transfer not only the knowledge of language but also the culture behind it. Pešikan and Marinković (2006) compared the representation of women and men in the illustrations of first grade textbooks. They concluded that boys and girls were equally represented, but that there were still some issues, such as boys appearing in a larger number of activities or girls being "presented in a romantic way" (p. 400). When it comes to the representation of women and men, women were underrepresented, but they were not shown in as many traditional roles, even though the list of male professions was much richer.

8. The study

8.1 Aim

As Van Dijk emphasized, the first step in the critical discourse analysis is to explain the aim of the research and the researcher's point of view, perspectives and principles (1993). The aim of this study was to compare how women and men are represented in three contemporary Croatian ESL textbooks for elementary and high school students. According to Mayring (2014), the first step of discourse analysis in a qualitatively oriented study is to define a "concrete research question" (p. 10). The main research question in this study was "Are gender stereotypes present in the representation of women in ESL textbooks in Croatia?". As already concluded, textbooks can easily shape what students know and how they think about others (Pingel, 2010). In this paper the focus was on how gender is conveyed in ESL textbooks.

8.2 Method

The topic of gender bias in ESL textbooks has been covered in many studies and analyzed using different methods. Many authors used content analysis, which "involves identifying units for analysis in a well-defined textual sample, coding those units based on a priori criteria established by the researcher, then reducing the data by quantifying the results and finally making inferences about the significance of the results" (Weninger, 2018, p. 4) One of the steps of content analysis is deciding on categories the study will focus on, and then coding the texts

according to those categories. For Hellinger (1980) they were "exclusion of women", "subordination", "distortion" and "degradation". A few years after Hellinger's research, Porreca (1984) did a similar one. She studied gender bias through the categories of "omission", "firstness", "occupational visibility in text and illustrations", "nouns", "masculine generic constructions", and "adjectives" (p. 705). For Lee those categories were "the ratio of female to male appearances", "the depiction of men and women in domestic and familial roles" and "male firstness" in her 2014 study (p. 361), "the ratio of female-to-male appearances", "gender-neutral and gender-marked constructions", "adjectives", "address titles" and "the order of appearance" in her 2016 study (p. 6) and "ratio of female to male characters", "portrayal of women and men in social settings", "portrayal of women and men in domestic roles", "visual representation of men and women", "generic constructions used" and "firstness" in her 2009 study (p. 358). Foroutan (2012) studied "names", "images", "pronouns" and "keywords" (p. 778). Dahmardeh and Kim's (2019) chosen categories were "names", "familial and occupational roles", "the frequency of appearance" and "images" (p. 3). Johannson and Malmsjo (2019) studied discourse in ESL textbooks, and their categories were "initiating a dialogue", "turns taken", "number of characters" and "number of words" (p. 23). All these studies have in common the fact that the approach they have used was quantitative in its nature. They presented their results through ratios and percentages, using tables and numbers. This quantitative approach is what differentiates content analysis from critical discourse analysis, which is the other type of analysis used in these studies. Content analysis is used to study diverse forms of human communication. Krippendorff (2004) remarked that it is one of the most important research techniques. It analyzes texts in contexts, paying attention to meanings. According to him, it is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (p. 18). Krippendorff offered a conceptual framework which insures replicability and validity in this type of analysis. The framework consists of a research question, a context in which the analyst makes sense of the text, an analytical construct that explains the context, conclusions that are made from analyzing the text and the validation of evidence (p. 30). In this type of analysis, it is important to put the text into the context and the reality it represents. Then, the data must be unitized and coded. Authors usually develop analytic categories, either from their own interest, or from previous research, and then code the texts according to those categories. Content analysis is mostly interested in frequencies, but it also includes a quantitative type of research. CDA, on the other hand, studies the representations of power, social change and inequality. Its starting point is usually a social issue or a problem which is then analyzed, and this problem is what motivates the research in

the first place. In CDA, language is considered to be a tool in creating social reality (Fairclough, 2001), and it is analyzed in that context. Weninger and Kiss (2015) explained that CDA is more concerned with socio-political issues than with linguistic interests, and for that reason there is a variety of data and analytic categories in this type of analysis, since every author tailors them to their own needs and data (p. 10). They also warned that, despite this being the case, CDA should be more systematized, with "commentary on the procedures of data analysis to establish how texts were sampled, how theoretical concepts were operationalized and how categories were derived" (p. 12). McGregor (2004) explained that critical discourse analysis allows us to take a step from experiencing language as abstract to realizing that words have meaning in a particular historical, social, and political condition. Luke (1997) added to that by saying that it analyses the relationship between social relations, power and knowledge, and discourse in communities and schools. Van Dijk put the emphasis on dealing with the "discourse dimensions of power abuse and the injustice and inequality that result from it (1993, p. 252). According to him, this method brings together "text, talk, social cognition, power, society and culture" (p. 253) and the relationship between them. Discourse in this sense means talk, text and media which dictate and influence our knowledge and the ways in which we experience the world (Mullet, 2018).

Both of these types of analysis are essentially critical in their nature, but critical discourse analysis uses a more qualitative approach. Malterud (2012) emphasizes the nature of qualitative research methods, in which "knowledge is developed by interpreting and summarizing the organized empirical data" (p. 795). Barton (2012) used both methods in her research – she coded the data using predetermined categories, which is one of the steps of content analysis, and introduced her results in tables through numbers. Nevertheless, she also used critical discourse analysis to do a deeper analysis of these categories, give examples from the textbooks, and present the results in relation to the context of her thesis and the social problem presented. When it comes to categories of gender bias, Saker and Sadker (2001) introduced seven forms of bias which are: invisibility, linguistic bias, stereotyping, imbalance, unreality, fragmentation and cosmetic bias (p. 135-137). All of these categories cover the study of gender bias from different angles and perspectives, depending on what the authors wanted to focus on.

Mayring (2014) insisted that the crucial part of content analysis is to establish a "concrete procedural model of analysis" (p. 39), since the method has to be fitted to a particular study. The research procedure in this thesis is similar to the one Barton (2012) used, with the combination of content analysis and critical discourse analysis. Firstly, critical discourse

analysis requires analysts to select a discourse "related to injustice or inequality in society" (Mullet, 2018, p. 8), which in this case is the issue of gender inequality in ESL textbooks. Then, content and historical background must be examined (Weninger, Kiss, 2015, p. 11), along with the existing research on the subject (Mayring, 2014, p. 82), which was done in the previous chapters. After that, data for the research must be selected. Critical discourse analysis deals with existing texts (Mullet, 2018, p. 8), in this case the chosen ESL textbooks. Critical discourse analysis uses another method of choice to identify major themes and subthemes under which the categories are chosen and the text is coded (Mullet, 2018, p. 9). For this study, content analysis was used to determine categories which were then used for coding the texts. Research questions were shaped under every category according to critical discourse analysis – they focus on "socio-political concerns" (Weninger, Kiss, 2015, p. 10). Even though this thesis uses qualitative approach, the quantitative segment of content analysis was used to introduce some basic numbers to present the situation in the textbooks before it goes beyond the numerical representation by being analyzed more deeply using critical discourse analysis, which focuses on the social aspects of communication, in this case text and pictures. CDA allows us to analyze which strategies, and discourse and text structures, are used by those in power to exhibit the said power, and in what way they influence their audience (Van Dijk, 1993).

Mayring (2014) advocated for content analysis to not be represented as a quantitative or qualitative method, but as a mixed approach (p. 6). Following his logic, the "assignment of categories to text as qualitative step, working through many text passages and analysis of frequencies of categories as quantitative step", and then the analysis of texts and images through CDA, was used in this research (p. 10). He also mentions linguistics as the main discipline covering the area of discourse. The areas that he mentions, that are of importance for this thesis, are construction of the texts, the meanings, and the relations the text has with the users (p. 31).

Critical discourse analysis is the method that challenges "the exercise of social power" which can result in social inequality, including "political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial" and in this case, gender inequality (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 249, 250). In the third article of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, it is stated that gender equality and equity are one of the things considered to be of the highest value of the constitutional order and the basis for the interpretation of the Constitution (1990). The critical discourse analysis deals with the abuse of power when it comes to principles of equality like this one, which is supposed to be guaranteed by the Constitution. This equity that is supposed to be practiced in all areas of life, should also be present in the textbooks that students consult daily in their studies, and rely upon when

learning about their society and other cultures. Many positive values and beliefs can be transferred to them this way, and that is extremely important because, as it is already stated in this paper, the representation of women in textbooks can affect the view young women have of themselves, the type of career they choose and the goals they aspire to reach.

In the use of the critical discourse analysis conclusions are made and the text is coded taking into account both the material and the contextual knowledge behind it. The question posed is how do the properties of the material play a role in the reproduction of inequality (Van Dijk, 1993). According to those principles, text and pictures in this study were both analyzed using a qualitative approach, taking into account the concepts of gender representation and social representation, which is the basic principle of critical discourse analysis. It starts from determining a social problem, or a marginalization of a group, and then strives to "explicate and understand the role of discourse in creating, maintaining, or potentially changing unequal and hegemonic power relations" (Weninger, Kiss, 2015, p. 10).

In accordance with the aim of this study, which is the comparison of the representation of women and men, it was analyzed how masculine and feminine roles were constructed in the selected textbooks. Specifically, that means that this thesis tried to analyze whether there were any gender stereotypes and gender-biased components in the books, and if yes, how they were depicted. The representation of women in ESL textbooks was critically examined in this study. Nicholls (2003) says that critical analysis is "used to identify and expose textbook portrayals that perpetuate unequal social relations in society" (p. 14).

Attention was put on both text and illustrations, because both are important and often connected. When it comes to written parts, textbooks can have texts and exercises. Usually, the characters that are depicted in the "text part" are more notable, and therefore more important in the analysis. Images are also important as they are seen as a form of communication, too. They convey meaning, and play a role by shaping the student's views of the world around them (Mustapha and Mills, 2015). Fairclough (2001) stresses the important role of the images, both on their own and supporting a text, since he believes that text and images operate in a "mutually reinforcing way that makes them very difficult to disentangle" (p. 28).

Mayring (2014) stated that the coding categories must be used "to determine the relevant material from the texts", which means they must be clear and explicit. For this research the categories which were selected in advance were:

1)   the representation of women and men in free-time activities

2)   real people mentioned in the textbooks, with special emphasis on the representation of women's contributions

3)   adjectives used to describe women and men

The first thing done in the analysis was coding the text. The textbooks were read from the beginning to the end, checking for any parts of discourse that fit into these categories, as Mayring (2014) insists the method of content analysis requires (p. 82). Three different textbooks were analyzed following this approach.

8.3 Research limitations

The first restriction of this study was the availability of the textbooks. I used the textbooks which I could acquire, but I made sure to cover as wide range of learning and student's age as possible, and used the newest textbooks I could find.

Another problem was also connected to the availability of content. All of these textbooks have listening exercises, which follow up on the texts and would surely show a more complete picture of the issues analyzed. I did not have the access to those materials, so I focused merely on the texts and exercises presented in the textbooks, without the material which is online or on CDs.

8.4 Data

In accordance with one of the stages of CDA which Mullet (2018) describes - exploring the backgrounds of the texts (p. 8), the textbooks used for this research are presented and described here.

The textbooks analyzed in this study were the newest that could be found, since the new editions are usually the ones used by teachers. I have decided to analyze three textbooks, two for elementary school and one for high school. I wanted to cover as wide range as possible with the textbooks I had access to, so I used *Right on!* which is a textbook for fifth grade, *Dip in 8,* a textbook for eighth grade, and *Headway*, a textbook that is used for teaching English to first and second grade of high school in Croatia. Two of the textbooks were published in 2019, and one in 2021. All the books were written by different authors and they have different publishers, which adds to the variety of my sample.

Right on! is a textbook for fifth grade of elementary school, for the fifth year of learning English. The book consists of six modules and covers vocabulary, grammar, reading, listening, speaking and writing. It introduces different projects and presentations of the material and topics it covers. Some of the values that it represents are national pride, healthy eating habits and great minds, which deals with famous historical figures.

Dip in 8 is a seemingly fun, colorful textbook divided into four units, each one having four lessons. The units are made to develop communication skills, life skills, media literacies, emotional intelligence, civic and social competence, ecoliteracy, evaluative skills, media literacy, digital intelligence and visual literacy. It also has "Across cultures" chapters, which present the cultures of Great Britain and the Unites States (education, holidays, cities, important people). There are many different and interesting topics, and the books seems easy to follow.

Headway Intermediate is a textbook which is used in Croatia for teaching English to students attending first and second grade of high school. It consists of twelve units, each of which aims to develop the four skills – reading, listening, speaking and writing – as well as introduce the students to new grammatical structures and vocabulary. The textbook covers various topics and features authentic texts and audio recordings.

8.5. Analysis

8.5.1 Activities

Firstly, I analyzed the "external relations in the texts" (Mullet, 2018, p. 7), which means I put them in perspective considering the already described social situation concerning gender bias, and the existing research.

The existing research suggests that women and men are depicted in different ways and situations when it comes to free-time activities. Lee (2009) suggests that men are usually depicted being more involved with "physically-demanding jobs or activities, including those in the disciplinary forces, rugby, and football" (p. 360). In her research, male characters were shown as being more "active and sporty than female" (p. 362). She found images which portrayed a stereotypical representation of "the active man who likes engaging in outdoor activities" (p. 362). However, she mentioned that some textbook writers focused on the changing roles of women and stereotypes that need to be dealt with, so they discussed women's

involvement in sports and similar activities and dealt with the traditional representation of women (p. 361), which not only take up sports as a hobby, but also compete and excel in them. Another positive example is Demir and Yavuz's (2017) study. While they concluded that in previous textbook research women were underrepresented in spare time activities (p. 106), and that men were usually shown in connection to sports, in their research they found that there was "no discrimination [is] made between males and females" (p. 112), because women were portrayed in different sports and activities, being active and having different kind of hobbies.

This specific category was of interest to me because of the different research results from other authors, and the general impression that women are often underrepresented in sports and other free-time activities, especially when it comes to popular (e.g., football) or extreme (e.g., parachute jumping) sports.

The next step of the research was to code the texts or, as Mullet (2018) puts it, to "analyze the internal relations". That means examining the language used, together with the representations of "social context, events and actors" (p. 7). The idea was to identify any relations or patterns that "represent power relations, social context (e.g., events, actors, or locations), or speakers' positionalities" (p. 9). This step was used to analyze texts, images, grammar, choice of words, omitted information and the representation of genders in all three categories.

This part of the research was guided by the following research questions:

1)   Are there any stereotypes in portraying women doing free-time activities?

2)   Is there a difference between how men and women are depicted in pictures and texts while doing free-time activities?

3)   Are men shown doing sports more than women?

4)   Are women shown doing activities that would portray them as being adventurous, sporty and brave?

Right on! covers many types of activities which are equally distributed among females and males. There are 24 activities depicted in pictures which are linked to men and 24 to women. Some of them are football, basketball, video games, running, cooking, skiing, cycling, camping, reading and others. There are some activities that are only mentioned in relation to women, like cheerleading or playing musical instruments. Others, like bowling or skateboarding, are only

mentioned in relation to men, but this is not done in an obvious or stereotypical way, especially considering all the other sports and activities which are fairly distributed. When it comes to texts and exercises in the textbook, 8 activities pursued by men can be found, and 6 by women. The activities done by women and girls are diverse. From basketball (p. 12), tennis (p. 12) and football (p. 126) to blogging (p. 112), gymnastics (p. 126) and swimming (p. 126). Boys are mostly associated with football (p. 25, 44, 52, 110), but also basketball (p. 52, 57, 126) and tennis (p. 25, 110, 126). Martial arts (p. 12, 126), running (p. 25), computer games (p. 160), golf (p. 160) and going to the gym (p. 160) are also mentioned. Texts and exercises present a slightly different picture, since men are associated with particular activities 19 times, while that number for women stays at 7 times. The first unit in the book deals with the representation of children from all around the world. They are shown doing what they like and mention their favorite free time activities. There is no stereotyping in these depictions, since we can see both girls and boys being interested in different kinds of sports and activities, from football to tennis and basketball. The rest of the textbook continues in the same tone, showing both boys and girls doing all kinds of activities. However, a difference can be seen in the texts and exercises, where boys are usually the ones doing different activities, more so than girls. Another interesting thing is the depiction of real-life people, who are mostly men. When looking at the activities they are seen or described doing, running (p. 25), tennis (p. 25, 52), football (p. 25, 52), basketball (p. 52), computer games (p. 160), golf (p. 160) and gym (p. 160) can be seen. All the activities mentioned are performed by famous athletes, which are all male. There are no female athletes mentioned. So, while female textbook characters are shown doing all kinds of sports, the texts that focus on real athletes only depict men. On page 25 there are texts about Usain Bolt and Rafael Nadal which show them running and playing tennis, respectively, while also mentioning other sports that they do in their free time. The same situations can be found on page 52, with the text about Mario Mandžukić, and on page 160, where three different texts show research on the football player Neymar. It can be concluded that, while girls and boys are equal when it comes to representations of different activities in pictures, boys prevail in texts and exercises.

While people are shown in many different situations in *Dip in 8*, usually hanging out with friends and doing fun things, one thing that stands out is the number of women shown doing any kinds of sports. There are 26 men shown doing sports or similar activities, while there are only 8 women. While there are some pictures that show girls doing sport related activities, like a picture of a girl with a skateboard on page 8, girls shown hiking on page 9 and 13, and two girls riding a bike on page 23, it is still far less girls in that particular field when compared to

boys that are shown. Analyzing the pictures on page 23, it stands out that both girls riding a bike are wearing outfits which are not fit for this particular activity, one of them wearing a skirt. Which means that they are not shown as cyclists, or being serious in this sport, but just hanging around on the bicycle. Page 22 shows what presumably are a father and son watching a football game and cheering from the stands, which is a stereotypical representation of watching sports being reserved for fathers and sons. A picture on the next page shows a boy with a skateboard, with another two on page 52, and another boy rollerblading. The latter is actually a bit unconventional, since rollerblading is usually connected to girls, at least in Croatia, so it is positive that boys are shown doing that activity, too. Page 31 shows a male hiker, but in a much different conditions than women shown before. Women hikers are shown walking in the sun, or enjoying the view, and the pictures make it seem easy and fun. The man depicted on page 31 is shown in seemingly harsher conditions. The weather is not really nice, and he is higher up in the mountains, sitting in front of his tent next to a fire that we assume he built himself. The comparison of these pictures makes the man seem capable, resourceful, adventurous and even brave, and the girls leave the impression of having fun taking a walk through the mountains on a sunny day. Even the picture of one of the girls climbing high up in the mountains does not really make it look hard or dangerous, despite the height. The pages dedicated to adventurers show mostly men. There is a picture of a man in the woods, examining plants with a hiking backpack, and a group of men on a kayak that are in a seemingly dangerous situation in the fast part of the river. Other two pictures show a person diving, and people hiking through deep snow, but it is impossible to determine their gender. The next page shows a newspaper page about a boy who sailed on his own around the world – another man on a dangerous adventure.

Sport is one of the themes in unit 3, and two of the unit's introductory photos show people doing sports. They are all male – a male tennis player and three male football players. Pages 90 and 91 lead us into the world of sports. Page 90 shows random people bungee jumping, which most people consider brave and adventurous. All three of those people are male. Page 91 shows real-life people and teams. Tennis, handball, judo, rugby, rowing, baseball, cycling, athletics and football are all shown being done by men or male teams. Girls are only shown playing hockey (2), swimming (1) and doing yoga (5). The next page shows extreme sports like street luging, highlining and parkouring. On four out of five pictures we can see men doing these sports. In the fifth picture the people cannot be seen well enough to determine the gender. Pages 96 and 97 are completely dedicated to a famous football player Mbappé. All this makes it seem like there is not much space for women in sports, and depicting men in all kinds of adventurous

situations and extreme dangerous sports. We can draw a parallel here between the categories of adjectives and free-time activities, since depicting men in these kinds of situations and doing extreme activities indirectly portrays them as brave, persistent, independent, strong and adventurous, which are adjectives that are not associated with women in this textbook. This confirms what Pešikan and Marinković (2006) said about boys being represented as "more intellectually inclined, physically more active, more inclined to risk, adventurous, the ones who break the rules, expose themselves to danger and solve problems" (p. 400).

Two exceptions are a story of a young woman on page 134, who is the youngest person to complete the polar hat-trick, and the story about Amelia Earhart on page 107, which describes her life and accomplishments, together with her love for flying - usually depicted as male-oriented activity, painting her as adventurous and brave.

In *Headway* there is not much focus put on activities, and the equity between the genders is more evident. In pictures, women are shown kayaking (p. 23), camping, horseback riding, running (p. 36), and cycling (p. 62). Men are shown or mentioned listening to music (p. 18), reading (p. 20), playing instruments (p. 23), playing football (p. 31), cycling, knitting, playing video games, playing tennis, sailing (p. 36), hiking (p. 60), horseback riding (p. 68), running (p. 76), doing gymnastics (p. 76), and parachute jumping (p. 105). Even though men are shown in more activities than women, there is a diversity. One of the texts focuses on a woman who plays ice hockey in her free time together with her boyfriend. She mentions that they both "play for a local team" (p. 10), which shows a positive picture of gender equality.

However, some stereotypes can still be found. While men are shown in the gym, women are depicted doing yoga (p. 36). Also, even though we can see a man in the kitchen with bags of groceries (p. 22), only women are shown doing shopping (p. 36, p. 97). In addition to that, a little girl is shown playing with a teddy bear, having a tea party (p. 90), while two boys around the same age are shown in school, having fun doing science experiments (p. 72). Men are still shown more in connection to group sports like football. On page 31 there is a text about a football manager. He used to be a player, and now he coaches a team (which is also all men, according to the picture and him saying "I like training with the lads, they're great guys"), but he does mention that his twin daughters also love football. One text mentions Victoria Pendleton, who is a former competitive cyclist and a jockey (p. 62), both of which are traditionally male-specific (Demir and Yavuz, 2017). She is shown as a role model, someone to look up to for her passion and talent. Another text talks about a woman named Ann Daniels, who walked to the North and South Poles (p. 66). She is depicted as an ordinary woman, not a

professional, who got a chance for an adventure and took it. These examples, which show women as being active and adventurous, contribute to positive representation of equity between genders.

8.5.2 Real-life people and achievements

The topic of representation of real-life people does not have much coverage in the studies I analyzed for this research. Sadker and Sadker (2001) mentioned this idea in terms of phenomenon of invisibility which refers to "the mentions of women's contributions in the textbooks". The authors pointed out that female experiences and contributions are mentioned far less times than the ones that happened to, or were achieved by men, and that they are "systematically excluded from curricular material". Because of that, both girls and boys "lower their opinions about the importance of females". Most students are able to name far more successful or historically important men than women. They concluded that women are underrepresented in areas of work, success or any kind of contributions (p. 135). Lee (2009) mentioned that textbook authors should consider choosing texts and stories which "describe women as inventors, scientists and heroes so that the contribution that women have made to literature and our history is not overlooked" (p. 366)

This particular category was of a huge interest to me because every ESL textbook I have encountered in my education contained many stories and texts that focused on real people. I wanted to analyze these texts to see if the contributions and success of women were presented in the same way and percentage as those of men. Research questions for this category are the following:

1)   Are women's contributions mentioned to the same extent as men's contributions?

2)   Are famous women presented as much as famous men?

3)   In what way are famous real-life women described compared to men?

Right on! does not show a positive picture when it comes to real-life people shown in the book. While there are not many famous people generally, the situation is very unfavorable for women. There are 23 men and 2 women shown in pictures, while in written texts we can find 7 men and 1 woman. The famous men who can be found in the textbook are mostly athletes (p. 25, 52,

160). Famous footballers and runners are painted as important and meaningful, with one of the titles being "sports legends". The students can read about their jobs, their everyday lives and free time activities. There is no mention whatsoever of a real-life athlete who is a woman, nor do they mention women's contribution or success in the area of sport. There is also a text about Charles Dickens and his works (p. 102) and William Shakespeare (p. 105). These famous writers are depicted along with their work and importance for literature in general. The authors do not mention any female writers. Pages 90 and 91 show some famous people that are represented in Madame Tussauds wax museum, with only one of them, Elizabeth I, being female. Pictures on page 103 show only male historical figures, but the pictures are connected to a listening practice, which may introduce more figures than the ones depicted. Page 139 shows 8 more pictures of famous people, with Elizabeth I being the only woman figure once again. This textbook, which is for the students in the fifth grade, does not do a good job at presenting young girls with female role models, only showing important male figures and their contributions. While boys can identify with their sports heroes and the athletes they already love, girls do not have any figures to look up to or identify with.

Out of all real people in *Dip in 8,* illustrations show only 9 women, while there are 41 men. That makes only 18% of women, and 84% of men. It is positive that the textbook introduces people like Greta Thurnberg and Autumn Peltier, teenagers who are climate change activists. They are female figures with which young girls can identify with, and who can inspire them in important topics such as the care for the environment. However, most examples in this textbook are negative. Pages 48 and 49 present the lives and careers of three famous people from the movie industry. All three of them are male. They are well known actors from Australia and New Zealand. Their careers and hobbies are discussed in the texts, with only one sentence depicting their love/family lives, which is often not the case when women are the topic of the text. On page 88 the book deals with famous inventions and discoveries. The students learn about dynamite, penicillin, radium and polonium, and the inventions of the telephone, light bulb, steam engine and helicopter. In the pictures we can see Thomas Edison, Igor Sikorsky, Alfred Nobel, Alexander Bell, Ian Fleming, James Watt, Leonardo Da Vinci, Nikola Tesla, Albert Einstein and Marie Curie. That means that out of ten famous inventors shown in pictures, there is only one woman. Van Dijk talks about this kind of exclusion in discourse and text. He mentions that "some voices are thereby censored, some opinions are not heard, some perspectives ignored: the discourse itself becomes a segregated structure" (1993, p. 260). This example is visible in the analyzed textbooks by not giving enough space to women and their

accomplishments. This leads to "the less powerful" also being "less quoted and less spoken about" (1993, p. 260).

Pages 106 and 107 deal with famous and important people from other cultures. There are thirteen pictures, nine of them showing men, that is 70%. We can see politicians, athletes, writers, actors, singers and inventors, while the three women that are mentioned are a writer, an actress and an aviator. There are three texts dedicated to Terry Fox, Martin Luther King Jr. and Amelia Earhart. Terry Fox is described as a "national hero", M. L. King Jr. as a person who changed America forever, and Amelia Earhart as a "celebrated female aviator" whose disappearance is still a mystery. However, she is portrayed as being adventurous and brave, which is a depiction that can have a good influence on young girls.

Pages 152 and 153 deal with music. There are nine illustrations, showing solo musicians and bands. Four pictures show all-male bands or duos, four of them show male singers, and only one picture shows a woman. In addition, there are two texts about heavy metal and rap music, and even though there are many musicians and bends mentioned, all of them are male. There are also many texts concerning different topics from history or geography that mention famous or important male figures, but not one of them mention a woman. So, while there is a good ratio of women and men in the textbook as a whole, it is really disappointing to see how many real-life women are mentioned, in comparison to men.

In *Headway* the negative portrayal continues. 38 real-life men are shown in the pictures, compared to only 13 women. While 22 women are mentioned in texts throughout the book, we can find 55 men. The numbers themselves paint a gloomy picture when it comes to representation of real-life women and their achievements, but a deeper analysis shows that it is even worse, because the men and women represented are not shown in the same light. An example of this can be found in the comparison of texts about a 14-year-old boy named Taylor Wilson (pg. 84-85) and a photographer Naomi Harris (pg. 104-105). While both texts talk about non-famous, but real-life people and their stories, the backgrounds are completely different. Taylor is described as "smart", "cool", "articulate" and "amazing", even a little "arrogant", but it is all in a good light. It is a story about a wonder-child who built a fusion reactor in his garage, and is destined for great things. The story about Naomi is different, depicting a 42-year-old "spinster" who went to Japan to have a solo wedding. The story focuses on women paying to dress up and have their pictures taken in a wedding dress, so they could have their "special day" even while being single. While this story could have possibly focused on self-empowerment and self-confidence, it showed this idea as "depressing" and "sad", which is again emphasized

in a dialogue on page 107. It also painted a picture that women need marriage to be fulfilled, and that their wedding day is their greatest accomplishment, something every woman strives to reach.

While there are some famous women mentioned throughout the textbook, some of them being Angelina Jolie, Kate Winslet and Victoria Pendleton, the focus of the texts are mostly men. Besides the ones already mentioned, there are texts talking about a CEO Dan Price, Leonardo Di Caprio, William Shakespeare, Don Jackman, who single-handedly grew out a forest, Andrea Bocelli, a face specialist Tim Doubleday and more. A woman who got her own text is Mother Theresa (p. 128), which only emphasizes the already mentioned fact that women are often shown in caregiving roles. Another example of this can be found on pages 124 and 125, which contains two texts. One is about a woman who did charity work and helped children in Vietnam, and another one is about a man – an astronaut who is currently the last man who walked on the moon.

So, while men are shown in all kinds of life spheres – actors, musicians, environmentalists, astronauts, writers, innovators, comedians, CEOs and much more, women are depicted much less, and their achievements are narrowed down.

8.5.3 Adjectives

Porreca (1984) came to the conclusion that in some categories of adjectives women are mentioned far more than men. Those categories are "Emotionality or State of Mind, Physical Appearance, Environmentally Descriptive, and Physical State/Condition" (p. 718). The category of "Physical Appearance" is especially the one where women were described differently, since the focus was mostly on attractiveness. The "Environmentally Descriptive" category contains words relating to marriage, so that is why it is female-dominated. Women also dominate in the "Physical State/Condition" category since it includes the word "woman" in occupational titles. Porreca also discovered that the categories of "Rapport/Reputation and Intellect/Education" are male-dominated (p. 718). Barton (2012), who used Porreca's categories for her own study, discovered that the adjectives used for women in the textbooks she analyzed were "mostly emotional, but also mainly generated from domestic and/or marriage situations" (p. 183). Not only were women depicted as more emotional than men, the adjectives used for them were also more stereotypical (for example: "grumbling", "jealous", "attentive"),

than the ones used for men (for example: "offended" or "furious" in situations where it was entirely logical to feel that way). This was also concluded by Hartman and Judd (1978) who said that women "are often placed in stereotypical roles and assigned stereotypical emotional reaction" (p. 383). Lee also mentioned this specific category while mentioning another study conducted by Ritchie (2005) which had concluded that men were usually depicted in "cultural, political and scientific pursuits" (p. 358), while women were shown in relation to men, and using physical descriptions. Also, it was noted that there was another issue - "the stereotypically unflattering depiction of women as emotional, clumsy and male-dependent, and by contrast of men as intellectual and adventurous" (p. 358).

Saker and Sadker (2001) covered this topic in their category of stereotyping, which is portraying one gender exhibiting "one set of values, behaviors, and roles, and the other gender is in possession of a different set of values, behaviors, and roles". This form of bias can be seen in adjectives which are used to describe women and men, and the general impression that we have of them in the textbooks. The authors emphasized that boys were shown as "ingenious, creative, brave, athletic, achieving, and curious", and men as "the movers and shakers of history, the scientists of achievement, and the political leaders". They were also portrayed as "the evil doers, or as the violent and unruly ones at home", but in the eyes of the readers that just makes them men. Girls, on the other hand, were portrayed as "dependent, passive, fearful, docile, and even as victims, with a limited role in or impact on the world" (p. 136).

Luke (1997) said that critical discourse analysis is used to describe "particular lexical choices (e.g., "wordings", "namings")". In this study the lexical choices analyzed and described were adjectives. Van Dijk (1993) also mentions the "lexical style and choice of the authors" by using specific words that "imply negative… evaluations" (p. 264) Words and phrases used in discourse can be analyzed for metaphorical content, and gender stereotypes can often be hidden in the use of language. The already described distinction between genders, which is something that prevailed for a long time, along with my interest in linguistics and language being used for this purpose, is the reason that this category was analyzed in this study – to discover whether this type of bias is still present in the textbooks that are being used in schools today. Research questions for this category are the following:

1)   Which adjectives are used to describe women and which to describe men?

2)   How do these adjectives portray women in comparison to men?

3)   Do the adjectives used support stereotypical portrayal of women?

Right on! shows a great diversity of adjectives, but also an equal treatment of females and males. Many adjectives that fall into the category of "Physical Appearance", such as "thin", "short", or "tall" (p. 17, 20, 21) are used for both girls and boys. Adjectives such as "kind", "funny", "great", "popular, "polite" are used for both genders, while "clever" and "friendly" are used for females. The adjective which is used only for men is "important", which can be associated with the fact that no real-life women are described in the textbook. The men that are shown are, however, seen as important, legends, great and popular. These adjectives are used to emphasize their role in real life, in sports, and in our lives – putting them in a position of great role models, while there are no females in that role. A specific example that can be used to compare the description of a male and female character can be found on page 20. Two texts compare Superman to his cousin Supergirl. While both are shown as having great powers and the focus is mostly on their physical features and abilities, he is described as "tall", "strong" and "fast", while she is described as "short", "thin", "beautiful" and "fast". Word strong is used only for males throughout this textbook. He is also described as "kind", and she as "clever".

Dip in 8 does not follow this example. While boys are shown as being good with money (pg. 14), being more realistic (pg. 22), ambitious (pg. 120) and brave (pg. 33), girls are described as prone to fall in love on the first sight (pg. 22), more into social media (pg. 126), shopping (pg. 129) and fashion (pg. 66), and worried about their looks (pg. 126). Some adjectives used to describe men are "fit and full of energy" (pg. 12), "quick-tempered", "keen athlete" "outdoor person…loves being active" (pg. 48), "nervous", "confused" (pg. 53), "spoiled" (pg. 57), "busy" (pg. 58), "disciplined, passionate and hugely talented" (pg. 96), "famous" (pg. 106), "a hero", "competitive and determined", "excellent student" (pg. 107). Women, on the other hand are described with adjectives such as "worried", "silly" (pg. 22), "jealous", "unhappy", "depressed", "desperate" (pg. 53), "hard-working", "lonely", "miserable" (pg. 66), "powerful", "a fighter" (pg. 81), "beautiful" (pg. 106). "adventurous" (pg. 107), "bananas" (pg. 129), "passionate", "persistent" (pg. 134). This confirms Porreca's (1984) view of this issue. Adjectives used to describe women can mostly be found in categories of "Emotionality or State of Mind" and "Physical State/Condition", while the ones describing men focus on their "Rapport/Reputation" and "Intellect/Education", while there are some that fall under the category of "Emotionality or State of Mind", but women prevail in that category. The focus with men is mostly on their accomplishments, which can also be seen when actors are described as talented, best-paid, resourceful and determined, while actresses are referred to as beautiful.

In *Headway* a broad range of adjectives can be found. For this category I have decided to look at both texts and exercises, since many adjectives can be found there. While all different kinds were used to describe both men and women, men were described much more. I have found 70 adjectives describing men, while there were only 28 describing women. The adjectives used to describe men were various and applicable to many different situations. While there were some depicting their appearance, like "good-looking" (p. 12), "tall" (p. 18), or "beautiful" (p. 45), most of them glorified them in their achievements, describing them as "brilliant" (p. 47), "important" (p. 123), "smart", "articulate" (p. 85), "hard-working" (p. 12), "passionate", "understanding" (p. 18), or "great" (p. 31). There were some adjectives used that depicted emotional state of men, like "angry" (p. 15, p. 88, p. 48), "worried" (p. 35), "desperate" (p. 106), "annoyed" or "depressed" (p. 120), but with these adjectives the authors always have a story which puts the feelings in perspective. The adjective "angry" is used for a father whose child left the house without permission and went missing for a week, an emperor whose daughters got rejected for marriage, and a boy whose parents did not let him play video games. A desperate man wanted to reach his daughter in time for her birthday, and a depressed one had been bullied at work. Although there is a wide range of adjectives used to describe them, there are some that stand out. Adjective "popular" can be found twice (p. 15, 24), along with "famous", which is also used twice (p, 41. 74), "award-winning" (p. 61) and "important" (p. 123). A text on page 125, which focuses on Eugene Cernan, an astronaut, describes him as an "alpha male" and a "celebrity", while his wife Barbara is portrayed as a woman who could not deal with his fame. With the quote "If you think going to the moon is hard, try staying at home", the authors present a picture of a successful, outstanding, "alpha" man whose wife tried to hold him back from everything he could become, and eventually cracked under pressure and left him. A similar sentience is found in the text about a football coach on page 31. While he is still married, he does mention that it is lucky that his wife is understanding of his stressful job, and that she is patient. He also jokingly mentions that he hopes his career will not be the reason his marriage ends. Both of these stories depict men who excel in their careers and in life, and women by their side who can or cannon deal with their success.

On the other hand, women are not described as successful. In accordance with Porreca's (1984) categories, most of the adjectives fall into categories of Physical Appearance: "well-dressed" (p. 12), "young" (p. 15), "beautiful", "pretty" (p. 44), "tall", "slim", "elegant" (p. 104). Some of them depict their personalities, for example "nice" (p. 10), "easy-going" (p. 10), "interesting" (p. 12), "lovely" (p. 31), "patient" (p. 31, 123), "cheeky" (p. 46), "friendly" (p. 83) or "strange"

(p. 127). They are also shown as being "rude" (p. 46, 86) and "admired" (p. 122) which are two adjectives that are similar to the ones used for men. While there are not any adjectives in categories of "Emotionality or State of Mind" or "Environmentally Descriptive" for women, there are definitely categories of "Rapport/Reputation and Intellect/Education" for men.

8.5.4 Discussion

The last step of critical discourse analysis, according to Mullet (2018) is to interpret the data, including "major themes, external and internal relations" (p. 7). Same goes for content analysis, with Mayring (2014) suggesting the "interpretation of the results in relation to the main problem and issue" as one of the last steps of analysis (p. 54). Luke (1997) explains that critical discourse analysis uses different methods of text analysis to "look at how texts construct representations of the world, social identities, and social relationships" and this contributes to describing, analyzing and critiquing social life.

Gouvias and Alexopoulos (2016) concluded that even though stereotypes in school textbooks "vary to a degree with the passage of time", they are still present and have an effect on students and the way they construct the notion of gender identities (p. 1). The analysis of these textbooks confirmed some stereotypes found in previous research, but it has also shown many positive aspects. While *Right on!* textbook fails at the depiction of real people and their achievements, it paints a positive picture in the use of adjectives, and a mostly positive one in the activities being practiced by the characters in the textbook. Sovič and Hus (2015) analyzed illustrations in English textbooks for young learners in Slovenia and found that boys are shown in connection to sports, mainly football, while girls were more static and shown in more domestic roles (such as pretending they were cooking or playing with dolls). While the texts in *Right on!* textbook mostly address men in connection to activities and sports, the textbook shows girls playing different kinds of sports and doing all sorts of activities, which is a positive result. The same cannot be said for *Dip in 8* which shows a more stereotypical picture. While women are shown doing different kinds of activities, I have focused on sports, because even though women can be seen doing some sports, the extreme and group sports are always shown being practiced by men, so the context is very different. This supports Taboas-Pais and Rey-Cao (2012) who discovered that men were often associated with competitive, elite sports and spending time outside, while women were associated with artistic or fitness-related activities. Sadker and

Sadker (2001) pointed out that "despite extraordinary strides made by females" in athletics and other sports, they still exercise less than boys and sports are considered manly. Sovič and Hus (2015) found a positive example in one of the textbooks they analyzed – a girl skating and climbing, which they saw as a "pleasant challenge to gender stereotype" (p. 499). However, it is crucial to portray females in similar situations more often to make it possible to move toward gender equity. Showing men doing different kinds of activities, and women as being passive and mostly staying indoors can "have detrimental effects on the development of children's self-esteem", and cause them to develop a perception of theirs and other's abilities and possibilities under the influence of this kind of information (Peterson, Lach, 1990, p. 186). *Headway* has shown positive results in this category, depicting women and men doing all kinds of different activities, and associating women with sports and activities that used to be more male-oriented.

The depiction of real-life people is a category that has shown negative results in all three textbooks. While *Right on!* has no female role models, *Dip in 8* and *Headway* have some, but not enough in comparison to men. I already mentioned Weninger's (2018) explanation of the influence that popular culture in textbooks has on students, since it makes them easy to identify with. Female role models are needed for female students to feel inspired, empowered and guided in their aspirations. Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada and Ross (1972) emphasize the importance of role models, since children identify with them. Role models "influence child's aspirations and goals" (p. 1139). Seeing only men in roles that also seem appealing to girls can be demotivating and make them feel as if society expects these roles to be occupied by men.

When it comes to adjectives, the results are more positive in textbooks for lower education. Generally, the use of stereotypical adjectives rests on ideas of gender roles typically assigned to women and men by society. While women are expected to be more timid, nurturing and submissive, men are seen as bold, aggressive and dominant. Islam and Asadullah (2018) found that women were mostly represented as having "more passive personality traits" (p. 24). These stereotypical views of women and men can be a source of unequal treatment, and presenting genders stereotypically in school textbooks can cause these views and opinions to become even more embedded in students' minds. By being exposed to certain materials, children "shape their attitudes, their understanding and their behavior" according to them (Peterson and Lach, 1990, p. 195). Sovič and Hus (2015) argue that "many masculine and feminine characteristics are not biological", but learned (p. 496). When men are described as powerful, important, famous, talented and smart, and women as nurturing, quiet, pretty or emotional, the authors portray an unequal picture of these genders, making it seem as the students have a role to fulfil based on

their gender. The real goal should be to present students with all kinds of role models and to make them feel and believe that they can be anything, and that possessing any one of these characteristics is valid and supported by the society. While *Right on!* mostly shows positive results in this category, *Dip in 8* and *Headway* are a downgrade in comparison to it. This shows that with the level of education rising it is paid less attention to how people in the textbooks are described. *Dip in 8* shows many stereotypes by focusing on women's emotions and state of mind, while with men they mostly focus on their importance and success. These results are similar to the ones that Barton and Sakwa (2012) found in their study of English textbooks in Uganda. They concluded that women were more often described in connection to their emotions, often in negative context, while the emotions of men, when mentioned, were often justified with specific situations (p. 183). *Headway* emphasizes the importance of male characters and their success, while women are mostly described physically, and the focus is not put on their achievements or importance.

In Croatia further research is needed on this issue. English textbooks need to be evaluated and gender discrimination in textbooks challenged. There are plenty of aspects of gender bias in textbooks that can be analyzed. Preferably, listening exercises should also be analyzed, since they contain a considerable amount of knowledge and discourse that is presented to students. However, the most important step is the education of teachers on this issue.

Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada and Ross (1972) pointed out the difference in the way girls and boys are raised and treated. They reported that boys are "more highly valued" and taught that they are "active and achieving" gender, while girls are "passive and emotional" (p. 1125). Peterson and Lach (1990) warned that "Parents, care-givers and teachers formulate the social structures that initiate the young into their gender-specific roles" (p. 188). When all the stereotypes absorbed by children in the early stages of their life are considered, the importance of teachers becomes evident. One of their roles is to avoid using stereotypes and transfer onto their students a different view on genders. Islam and Asadullah (2018) mentioned schools as places which enable social change. Through the transmission of knowledge, it is also possible to shift and change social attitudes and opinions. However, the opposite is also possible, with classrooms being places where stereotypes and gender bias are present. Teachers are the main instruments which facilitate social change and decide which knowledge and worldview will be presented to their students. Peterson and Lach (1990) concluded that many teachers use textbooks containing stereotypes because they have no alternatives, since those books are the only one "which presently exist in their teaching environments" (p.195). Do et al. (2010) claimed that the role

of textbooks is important because knowledge conveyed in them shapes "values, attitudes and social skills" (p. 3), and teachers are the ones who must direct that knowledge and interpret it in a way that will make gender equality possible. They must be aware of information that textbooks carry and examine them carefully to make sure that gender discrimination is not present in their classrooms. They can also choose the textbooks they will use and avoid the ones portraying gender stereotypes, making it clear to publishers and editors which content is not acceptable. Teachers can also find help in this area in documents that deal with gender equality. One of those documents in Croatia is called *Gender mainstreaming in education* and it is a memorandum which presents guidelines on avoiding gender bias in education. It consists of recommendations to governments, schools and teachers, and covers school programmes, curriculum, different school subjects and teaching materials, methods and practices. Croatia has also become involved with eight other European countries in a framework called *The Gender Equality Charter Mark*. A Croatian organization called *Forum for Freedom in Education* published *Guidelines for achieving gender equality in schools*, which guides teachers and provides them with advice on how to accomplish gender equality. Another Recommendation (2019) called *Preventing and combating sexism* points out that gender equality is of the highest importance, and gives guidelines on how to achieve it.

Peterson and Lach (1990) argued that children who spend more time exposed to materials which contain stereotypes and biased content become more stereotyped in their attitudes as well, while children who are not exposed to those materials show much less stereotypical opinions (p. 194). Therefore, the first step towards gender equity in education is to evaluate and modify the textbooks so the students are not exposed to gender bias while learning. More research on this subject is needed in Croatia to present a clearer picture on the subject. The next step is to educate the teachers. Teachers in Croatia are not trained to recognize or deal with this issue, and the problem of gender bias in itself is not a common theme for discussion. It is important to introduce proper education for teachers in Croatia and prepare them to deal with possible gender bias and stereotypes in the classroom. Gouvias and Alexopoulos (2016) noticed that the teachers who have had training on gender issues had different attitudes and dealt with gender discrimination in a different way than the teachers without training, who usually did not change their way of teaching when facing these issues, or only made minor interventions (p. 13). With the proper education of teachers, it can be made sure that even when they face gender bias in textbooks, they will have a proper reaction and change their teaching accordingly. Sovič and Hus (2015) also pointed out that "gender perspective must be integrated into teacher education

and training", which can lead to teachers fulfilling their role in creating gender equity and provide "their input for formation of gender equitable curriculum, pedagogy and policies" (p. 501).

9. Conclusion

This thesis was written in an attempt to shed some light on the topic of gender bias in education, specifically in ESL textbooks. This topic is extremely important because gender stereotypes are still present in classrooms, and ESL textbooks play a significant role since English is a dominant foreign language in Croatia and one of the major school subjects at every level of education. To illustrate my argument, I have written about how gender bias affects students and the learning process. The methods used for the research done in this thesis were content analysis and critical discourse analysis. According to the steps of these two types of analysis, the first thing represented in this research was a literature overview. In addition to that, other research on the subject was presented. Content analysis demands for research to be reliable and valid to show its quality (Mayring, 2014). Reliability of this study is achieved by coding the data more than once, to make sure the results are correct. If someone were to code the same data in the same categories, the results would be the same. Validity refers to the fact that the study analyzed relevant data according to the categories and theoretical background, which can be seen in the results of the study.

This study concluded that while there are some gender stereotypes still present in the textbooks, the authors have recognized the issue and have started to deal with it. While all of the textbooks show a wide range of adjectives used and activities in which the characters take part, the textbook for the fifth grade is most free of gender bias in these categories. The textbooks for the eighth grade and the first and second grade of high school do show variety, but also a considerable amount of bias. The category which has shown the most disappointing results was the depiction of real-life people and their achievements. All three of the textbooks focused on male examples, and even the ones which depicted women were often biased. Since this category is very common in ESL textbooks, I would recommend paying more attention to the inclusion of women and their achievements in the textbooks, especially the ones that can be seen as role models for young women and an example that will make them feel secure in their interests and ambitions and shatter the stereotypes which society presents to them.

Another conclusion is that women need to be present in school textbooks in all kinds of roles and professions, so that they can be associated with certain occupations as much as men. Schools and the materials used there are powerful tools which can shape young girls' minds and aim them in the right direction when it comes to their aspirations and interests. When they are presented with role models in the textbooks they use, everything seen there becomes a real opportunity in their minds.

Aydınoğlu (2014) warned that there will always be gender bias in textbooks, at least the implicit kind, until we beat gender discrimination in society. Sexism is rooted in our culture, so it is difficult to completely avoid it. However, that is even the more reason to work on that issue, especially in education. Gender-stereotypes need to be challenged, and the concepts of what women and men could be, should be widened. If women are shown in textbooks working in areas that are now associated more with men, it can help develop girls' interest in those areas and widen the spectrum of occupations that would be considered suitable for women by society, and therefore encourage them to pursue those occupations. This further proves that textbooks are a powerful tool for introducing knowledge but also social change, so that potential should be used to try and eliminate gender bias in education system completely. Aside from textbooks, teachers also play an extremely important role in this process, and therefore it should be made sure that they are well educated on the subject and thinking critically about the textbooks they use in class.

Van Dijk (1993) suggested that teachers should also stimulate a critical perspective among their students and colleagues (p. 280), and on top of making sure that there is no gender bias in their classrooms, try and introduce gender diversity. Every individual in the education system should do their part in the fight against gender stereotypes, and through the education system and the shaping of young minds, it is possible to affect the society as a whole and change the deeply embedded gender bias.

10. References

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