

Gender Representation in English Language Teaching Materials: A Descriptive Case Study

Melany Agudelo García

Felipe Eduardo Sánchez Jacome

Licenciatura En Bilingüismo Con Énfasis En Ingles Facultad De Bellas Artes Y

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Melany Agudelo García

Felipe Eduardo Sánchez Jacome

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Asesor

Dr. Enrique Arias Castaño

Licenciatura En Bilingüismo Con Énfasis en Ingles, Facultad De Bellas Artes Y

Humanidades

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Abstract

This research explores gender practices in English Language Teaching (ELT) settings, particularly in the Colombian context. While gender dynamics in education environments have been discussed internationally, there is a need for further exploration in Colombia to foster an inclusive society. This qualitative case study with a content analysis methodology observed and reflected on the practices and materials used by two experienced C1-level language teachers in an ELT classroom at a public university in Pereira, Risaralda. Data analysis involved transcribing and categorizing the information collected from the classes observed. It was found that gender practices and stereotypes were presented in the material, however teachers acknowledged these biases and promoted a space for reflection and a critical analysis of the material. On this way the teachers promoted an inclusive space for interaction that intended to diminish the impact of these biases on their classes.

Keywords: ELT material, Gender Dynamics, Gender Biases, Teaching, Stereotypes, Inclusiveness

Resumen

Este Proyecto de investigación explora las dinámicas de género en entornos de enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en el contexto colombiano. Aunque se ha debatido ampliamente acerca del tema a nivel internacional, es necesario explorarlo en el contexto colombiano para fomentar una sociedad inclusiva y en paz. Este estudio de caso cualitativo, realizado con una metodología de análisis de contenido, observó y reflexionó sobre las prácticas y materiales utilizados por dos profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera, cuyo nivel de lengua es superior a C1, en un instituto de inglés ubicado en Pereira, Risaralda. El análisis de datos implicó transcribir y categorizar la información recopilada de las clases observadas. Se encontró que las prácticas y estereotipos de género estaban presentes en el material utilizado; sin embargo, los profesores reconocieron estos sesgos y promovieron un espacio de reflexión y análisis crítico del material. De esta manera, los profesores fomentaron un espacio inclusivo de interacción que pretendía disminuir el impacto de estos sesgos en sus clases.

Palabras Clave: Material para la Enseñanza de Lengua Inglesa, Dinámicas de Género, Sesgos de Género, Enseñanza, Estereotipos, Inclusividad.

Statement of the Problem

Throughout the years, language teachers had used materials in ELT classrooms as a source to promote students' use of English in an authentic way. However, according to Blumberg (2008) materials used in class can perpetuate some bias related to gender roles and stereotypes presented in a culture or person indirectly. Also, as materials are not isolated elements in the classroom, the teacher can reinforce these judgments with his own belief or behavior as is presented in Durán (2006) when the teacher's treatment towards students was favorable to boys unconsciously. Therefore, developing an analysis of the discourse presented in ELT settings is mandatory as it can be used to find these practices and reflect upon workable solutions.

Colombian policies include several provisions that supply legal protections for women and guarantee their rights, including the right to education, health care, and employment, such as Law 823 from 2003. The spectrum of gender in Colombian society is often reflected in language, which can often be exclusionary or reinforce gender stereotypes. Nevertheless, in recent years, there has been a growing trend toward the use of gender-inclusive language in the media, public institutions, and the private sector. This can be distinguished in "Guide for the Inclusion of the Differential and Intersectional Approach" [translated] (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2020) and "Recommendations to be Inclusive from the Language" [translated] (Vicepresidencia de la República de Colombia, Equidad de la Mujer, 2018), "Re-reflecting about words: Inclusive and non-discriminatory handbook" [translated] (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2020); despite these efforts, these papers resulted in reducing the gender biases to man and woman, excluding non-binary and transgender communities.

Gender research in ELT materials in Colombia is an area that needs further exploration. While there has been some research conducted on the representation of gender in ELT materials

in Colombia, there is a need to dig even more into this matter to ensure that gender is equitably represented in textbooks and to promote a fair classroom environment. According to Durán (2006), male characters in books are more likely to be presented as protagonists, while female characters were more likely to be presented in passive, and supportive roles. This study also found that there was a lack of female role models in the textbooks, which could have a detrimental effect on the self-esteem of young female students. To ensure that gender is represented equitably in ELT textbooks in Colombia, there is a need to raise gender awareness in the educational field. This can be done by conducting research on gender representation in ELT textbooks and making sure that the workbook being published contains characters of different genders in positive roles. Finally, teachers in Colombia should be encouraged to discuss gender representation in their classrooms as this can help students to become aware of the importance of gender equity in society. Therefore, a fairer gender representation in ELT textbooks can ensure an advance in gender equality in Colombia.

This research proposal aims to explore how language teachers and materials interact with gender-based communication in ELT classrooms. The research will examine how gender discourse is manifested in verbal and nonverbal communication and how this affects teachers' interaction with the class when teaching a language. So, this proposal will use qualitative techniques such as stimulated recall, observations, and textbook analysis to collect data from material and teachers. The findings from this research will be used to develop strategies for ELT classrooms that promote fair and inclusive language use. This research will supply a deeper understanding of gender discourse in the ELT classroom and its implications for teaching and learning.

Finally, research about gender is an emerging topic in Colombia, especially in the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira. Thus, this research proposal aims to enrich the academic and linguistic field to spread information about gender effects to further investigations. As future pedagogics and linguists, an analysis of the ELT material used in the classroom and how the teacher interacts with it will provide us with information about how neutral-gender expressions can be a strategy to avoid gender biases in the discourse inside and outside the classroom, as it is presented in Lindqvist, A., Renström, E.A. & Gustafsson Sendén, M. (2018) who tell that the use of neutral-gender words will have a positive impact on the speaker's perception.

Based on the above-mentioned, the following research questions and objectives are formulated.

Research Question

What gender practices can be presented in ELT material and ESL teachers in a language institute in a public university?

General Objective

To analyze, in terms of gender practices, the material, and discourse used by teachers in a language institute at a public university.

Specific Objectives

1. Describe gendered dynamics that currently take place in an English institution in Pereira.
2. Explore the teacher's perception regarding their gender pedagogical practices.

Conceptual Framework

The denominations presented in this theoretical framework are especially important to provide a contextualization of the terms that will be mentioned through this research project's development. Constructs such as Gender, ELT Material, and Discourse are of critical relevance since they are the main corpus of the project. By realizing a deeper analysis of each construct that conforms to the corpus of this theoretical framework, it is important to mention that each of them contributes to the main purpose of this research, which is to find suitable strategies that transgress the traditional use of language to one that is inclusive with the speakers. As the last aspect, it is mandatory to know the gender thoroughly since it is a kaleidoscopic phenomenon and cannot be delimited easily.

Discourse

Discourse analysis

To continue developing this research, it is paramount to address the term Discourse Analysis. As Davis and Elder (2004) mention, discourse analysis is crucial to applied linguistics research, taking into consideration that applied linguistics' main concern is the study of language in use as a goal and means of education and as an instrument of social control and change, which can be evidenced through the discourse analysis practice. Additionally, as mentioned in Murcia and Coronado (2017) the speaker-learner makes modifications to their discourse while they become aware of their linguistic problems that can create misunderstandings in the communicative process. If a learner modifies their linguistic productions, this individual will tend to be more open to the strategic development of [...] their linguistic competence. These actions highlight the importance of how discourse analysis can play a crucial role in research that intends to examine the discourse practices that are now executed at an English institute in Pereira, to further suggest if it is not necessary to consider a modification in the language used.

Gender

Grammatical Gender

Gender as a grammatical category has adjusted its form during the past years. Some languages have eliminated this classification, while some have established new gender subcategories. This concept is one of the most puzzling ones, especially in linguistics. This is because gender does not implicate only a noun, a pronoun, or an article, but it is a whole group that includes other grammatical figures such as syntactic, morphology, and phonology. This category is essential to understand the foundations of gender and its representation in linguistics.

Grammatical gender is a system of attributing a noun class found in most of the languages in the world (Corbett, 1991). This classification often indicates a real-world distinction of sex, yet sometimes it is attributed arbitrarily to objects in the world. In language, it establishes a relationship between the gender and the noun to which it is attributed. Sato and Athanasopoulos (2018), state that learning to associate gender with a word allows the speaker to draw imaginary features to a more typical category. The above explains the origin of language biases regarding the relationship between gender and language as those are the main elements to be researched in this project.

Functions. Gender has distinct functions in language, the most frequent one is to distinguish male and female in the semantic assignment system (Corbett, 1991). There are languages in which this distinction is also related to human and non-human characteristics, as is the case of English, which expresses gender only to animate objects (humans/animals). Different from other languages in which the assignment of a role is also related to the existence of gender. It is indispensable to place these functions in the classical perception of gender which was

focused on the distinction of the biological or role differences between males and females. As the concept of gender has evolved, most of the functions exposed in this paragraph have changed and may not be valid for some speakers that do not agree with the distinction between male and female.

Gender-Neutral language

Gender-neutral language is a concept defined by many organizations and authors who propose different perspectives of it. From the sociolinguistic perspective, this concept implicates the consequences of its use in a social group. From the grammatical point of view, this concept is a phenomenon that helps to avoid linguistic bias. Thus, several investigations will be presented to clarify the concept of gender-neutral language.

According to the European Parliament (2008), gender-neutral language was a type of language created to be free of sexism and inclusive among the members of a speaking community. Its purpose is to use a vocabulary that does not promote both sexism and stereotypes and does not perpetuate gender inequality. Additionally, Ansara and Hegarty (2014; as cited in Gustafsson Sendén, M., Bäck, E. A., and Lindqvist, A., 2015), proposed that language has the power of transforming the current gender perception to make it inclusive and functional while deleting the dichotomy around binary gender. However, authors such as Formanowicz et al. (2015; as cited in Sczesny, S., Formanowicz, M., and Moser, F., 2016), discussed that implementing a gender-neutral language in a non-neutral language can be complicated and generate controversy, as evidenced in the case of Spanish and its pronoun 'Elle.'

Origin. The term 'gender-neutral language' was proposed in the 1970s, while the second wave of feminism started its fight against sexist language, especially, from the excessive use of a

male-focused version of words, as in the case of firemen instead of firefighters. This imposition of the male-focused language, nowadays known as neutral or non-marked language in some languages, contributed to perpetuating gender roles in many speaking communities. Along with this, Baron (1986) and Bodine (1975); as cited in Hord, 2016), produced a series of epicene pronouns to assemble a gender-neutral language. In the case of English, a natural-gender language, it was proposed as a solution to this situation the use of the pronoun “they” as the singular neutral gender. Baron stated that “they” “is widely used in speech and writing, and despite the stigma of ungrammaticality that has become attached to it since the eighteenth century, the construction shows no signs of dying out.” (Baron, p. 193, 1986). Furthermore, Bodine (1975) stated that the use of singular neutral “they” could be simply accepted and transmitted through the speakers of English.

According to Sendén et al. (2015), the concept of gender-making language presents two phenomena: feminization and neutralization. Sendén says that feminization “implies the use of gender-appropriate forms, and more often used in languages with grammatical gender” (Sendén et al. p. 2, 2015). It can happen in languages such as German and Spanish, in which a feminine version of a male title appears (e.g., Lehrer/Lehrerinnen, Contador/Contadora). On the other hand, neutralization is a linguistic phenomenon usually evidenced in neutral languages such as English, and it is referred to as “gender-neutral forms that are preferred over gendered forms.” (Sendén et al. p. 2, 2015)

As mentioned above, gender-neutral language is a linguistic phenomenon that emerges from the necessity of visualizing social groups undistinguished in the gender dichotomy/binary (Hord, 2016). However, when this phenomenon happens, it is crucial to consider the linguistic community in which it takes place since there are two types of languages: Natural and Gender-

making languages. Based on that, the receptiveness of gender-neutral language can be widely accepted or not due to the variety of grammatical conventions that languages have.

Application. As gender-neutral language is a linguistic phenomenon caused by a political situation rather than a lexicon-grammatical one, it is common to involve controversy from the speakers of a language. In their research, Sendén et al. (2015) reviewed the trajectory of the neutral Swedish pronoun *hen*. The results proposed that 95% of the speakers were related to the application of the pronoun *hen* since Swedish is a natural-gender language, as in English. Nonetheless, the participants recognized the dominance of the traditional binary system and expected that it decreases its importance when referring to a group of non-binary or neutral-identified groups. On the other hand, Hord (2016) makes a similar research study presenting that the speakers of languages such as German and French, which are specifically gender-making languages, had difficulties accepting and identifying themselves with epicene pronouns due to the grammatical conventions of their languages. Hence, this could be one of the main reasons why speakers of Spanish have problems while accepting and implementing a gender-neutral language.

Based on these considerations, it is relevant to mention that implementing neutral-gender language nowadays is a process with a political characteristic that aims to include all the social groups and branches in its discourse. The previous article contributes to our project in the sense that it promotes gender-fair dynamics/strategies that teachers can use as an alternative to biased language during their classes.

Gendered Language

Gendered language can be defined as the languages which have a linguistic burden towards gender. Usually, this linguistic system can also be called the ‘natural gender system’ which is defined by Corbett (1991) as the system in which gender is attributed to a noun according to its social and physical characteristics. The above explains how gender has a linguistic burden since it encapsulates a noun into certain characteristics to define its gender. To sum up, a gendered language system is one in which there is a gender agreement and a linguistic burden toward gender.

There is a controversy across gendered languages since they perpetuate gender biases. This is because of the cognitive processes that a speaker has when they speak a gendered language. The process starts when a language user acquires the language, after that, they establish the use of gender agreement and with it, some social and physical features that they assign to a certain gender. To explain in detail this idea, Eckert, P., and McConnell-Ginet, S. (2013, p.36) proposed “The gender order and the social categories -male and female- on which it rests exist in virtue of social practice.” This means that the speaker's cognition is shaped by the indirect meaning of the discourse employed in social practices.

To exemplify this term, Spanish provides some information about linguistic biases related to gender. In Spanish, it is common to refer to a man with his professional status (Ph.D., Magister) while when it comes to talking about a woman, who can also be a professional, people prefer to refer to her by her nickname or only her name without even mentioning her professional status. Another example can be found in expressions such as ‘boys don’t cry’ or ‘that is for girls’ which are not explicitly related to article noun gender agreement but with gender biases perpetuated by gendered language.

This concept is crucial to the development of this research project since it explains why gendered languages perpetuate gender biases through their use of language. It also allows us to better understand the linguistic dynamic this type of language has and the nature of the language itself. Knowing this, we can infer that the possible implementation of a gender-neutral figure in gendered languages that have a strong linguistic bias toward gender remains difficult. We concluded that this concept has a strong influence on the social spectrum of the speakers, so to implement a neutral grammatical figure, this social perception of gender must change so the speaker community can perceive the mentioned figure as acceptable and necessary.

Genderless Language

Now with a clearer idea of what gendered languages are, it is easier to provide some insights about what genderless languages are as they are the opposite of gendered languages. They are opposite because, even if they have a specific name that establishes the condition of gender, the words in this language system do not have gender; therefore, gender is not a relevant category. Some genderless languages are Bengali, Persian, English, Armenian, and the Sorani dialect of Central Kurdish, among others.

To develop a contrast between gendered languages and the perception of linguistic biases, it is important to mention some experts on this concept, such as Singh, S. (2021) who states that words that have a gender implicate a linguistic burden that contributes to the perpetuation of gender biases. And the author Mavisakalyan, A. (2015) who's a study about the regular inclusion of women in the labor market due to the discourse used in these spaces. This contributes to the possibility of genderless languages having a greater receptivity to a gender-neutral language that does not affect, attack, or make invisible communities that are not considered in the category of men and women only.

To explain in more detail the above, Mavisakalyan, A. (2015) researched how gendered words have effects on society, concluding that the discourse which emphasizes gender class, in some languages such as Spanish, causes women to be disadvantaged. With this, it can be declared that the discourse can affect people's quality of life, participation, and recognition. It is necessary to start implementing an equitable and neutral figure for those social groups that are not visualized nowadays.

Gender Identity

To understand gender, besides a linguistic perspective, it is important to define what gender identity is in the psychological and social aspects. Gender identity is an individual conception of being male, female, no binary, and others. According to Butler (1999), it is the notion of the person based on social characteristics and attributions of a certain gender structure. Gender identity is not necessarily attached to a person's assigned sex and can be different from their gender expression or behavior since this identity is built based on subjective experiences and characteristics that suit the person.

Origin. The concept of gender identity is presented by different authors in the early 1900s, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, a sexologist and neurologist, was one of the first persons to use it when referring to the feeling of being a man or a woman. In his book *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Krafft-Ebing believed that gender identity was a personal and inseparable part of everyone that could not be changed. He also stated that gender identity was not only determined by biological factors but also by social and psychological influences. After Krafft-Ebing's statements, in the 1950s, John Money further developed the concept of gender identity by proposing that gender identity was formed in early childhood and could be changed if the individual were given the correct environment. Also, a person's gender identity could be influenced by things such as their

upbringing and environment, as well as their biological sex. In present times, the concept is not distant from these definitions. Butler (1990) argues that gender identity is a social construct, which is developed based on historical and cultural power structures and social norms. The above shows that this topic has been a subject of interest since long ago, and yet, there is a necessity for further investigation into this matter.

Application. As mentioned before, gender identity is the way each person can present themselves in terms of gender, for example, attitudes, physical and mental characteristics, and dynamics. However, this can also reinforce gender stereotypes by classifying common expressions presented in the same society these individuals live in. After considering how gender behaves in society, this research project can easily identify various biases presented in the discourse of the object of study, in this case, ELT material and teachers, about its context. Finally, after some insights are developed based on the context, the participants, and the representations of gender identities, the researchers can promote strategies that challenge biased behaviors imposed on society.

Gender Stereotypes

Having explained the above, and digging more into this research matter, the authors Broverman, I., Vogel, S., Broverman, D., Clarkson, F., and Rosenkrantz, P. (1972) define gender stereotypes as sex-roles stereotypes not only related to sexual orientation, but they are also related to persons' socioeconomic status, religion. The author's idea expresses how gender stereotypes are perceived as a cross-subject area, as they can be evidenced in different real and non-real-life scenarios. Additionally, authors Remi J. Kadem and José M. Cortina assert that “gender stereotypes are beliefs about the characteristics, abilities, and behaviors of men and women.” (2020, pp. 687-710) which provides more insights about what we can perceive of

gender stereotypes. Therefore, gender stereotypes continuously affect social dynamics since those are the representation of society's expectations and beliefs towards gender identities.

Having defined gender stereotypes, it is relevant to mention that, as Broverman et al stated, insofar, as conceptions of sex roles vary because of an individual's experience, social sex-role stereotypes may also alter. The above explains that gender stereotypes can change according to the social dynamics that one culture can have and opens the possibility of change if that culture decides to. Based on the previous, finding out if there are biases and stereotypes in ELT material from a Colombian institute, can be a step forward to proposing gender-fair dynamics to be incorporated in the classroom to avoid stereotypes.

ELT Materials

To start understanding the corpus of this project, it is important to clarify the object of this analysis, as it is ELT Materials. As Hutchinson and Torress (1994) stated, ELT material is a universal component of language instruction. Besides, the authors also remark that ELT material makes teaching 'easier, better structured, more convenient,' and learning 'easier, faster, better' by saving time, providing direction to classes, guiding discussions, and facilitating the assignment of homework. One advantage of ELT material in language learning is exposed in Nahrkhalaji (2012) as they provide the learners with a great feeling of security and form the foundation of much of the language input and practice. Indeed, students have a course roadmap; they are aware of what to expect and what is required from them. For some learners, ELT materials serve as comforters. Both perceptions highlight the Strong presence of material in the ELT context, and how they through the years have contributed to the development of language teaching.

Considering the above, ELT materials are seen as a center or starting point for teachers and language education in general, as they serve as guidance while designing lessons or creating new elements to use in the classroom. As mentioned in Amin, M. Nawawi, N. and Biao, S. (2021) Gender bias in the material can have long-term detrimental effects on students' social and academic behavior. In case they are present on the varied materials, they illustrate to students' different situations in which social interactions are mostly the goal, as they are intended to teach language and therefore how social dynamics work now of communicating. If it is the case that material used in an educational context is carrying gender-biases, the biased way that sexes are portrayed affects how learners see their gender identities as well as how they perceive some other sex as being inferior or superior (Davis in Brusokaite, 2013).

Literature Review

The literature review presented in this research proposal aims to provide an overview of the current research related to gender discourse in ELT material and classrooms. Thus, it attempts to provide an analysis from different contexts, national and international. The review considered a range of scholarly sources, including journal articles and dissertations, to present the current state of knowledge. It is important to mention that the studies collected used different methodological approaches related to discourse analysis. Four studies were relevant to our research proposal. The first one is a dissertation by Díaz and Cortéz (2020), the second one by Mojica (2017), the third one is by Amin et al (2021), and the last one is by Ahmad and Shah (2019). The first two studies are developed in a Colombian context while the other two are from an international context. All studies considered that gender bias is an ongoing phenomenon in textbooks that should be addressed by teachers and students. Nonetheless, these studies do not go

beyond identifying gender biases even though they mentioned teachers should follow recommendations to avoid gender biases.

To begin with a deep analysis of the different research collected, we are going to discuss a study named *An EFL Textbook Content Analysis: Gender Stereotypes and Gender Equality* developed at the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional by Díaz et al. (2020), intended to analyze under a critical feminist perspective the content presented on ELT textbooks used by Colombian Educational Ministry and the consequences of it in the classroom. Using a mixed paradigm methodology, the study concluded that Colombian ELT textbooks reinforce typical gender stereotypes such as clothing, professions, attitudes, and expressions; as well as reinforcing gender binarism. However, this study suffered from a major limitation, and it was experience. The authors mentioned their lack of skill in doing discourse analysis methodology, so some of the problems and situations might not be addressed correctly. Regardless of this situation, this study was a major benefit since it provided a good contextualization of Colombian educational materials as well as recommendations for future research proposals that enriched our perspectives and relation with the topic.

A similar study was conducted by Ahmad et al. (2019) named *A Critical Discourse Analysis of Gender Representations in the Content of 5th Grade English Language Textbook in the Government College University Faisalabad*. Using Fairclough's tridimensional method to analyze discourse, this study discovered gender bias in ELT Textbooks by representing men in a more positive way compared to women on aspects such as power relations, attitudes, behaviors, and occupations. Also, this study concluded by suggesting authors and teachers be aware of gender effects in the classroom to reduce biases. However, this study suffers from one limitation: textbook isolation. Even though the teacher's role is mentioned, the authors do not suggest nor

interact with the 5th-grade teacher. Considering the previous, this study was beneficial for this research proposal in the aspects of discourse analysis and bibliography; since the information presented enriched our knowledge of the topic and gave us some routes to investigate the phenomenon.

Similarly, another study developed by Amin et al. (2021) titled *Analysis of English Language Teaching Materials on Gender Representation* presented a comparison between two ELT Textbooks to analyze whether they had any type of gender bias. To achieve the main objective, the authors used a descriptive qualitative method to describe the phenomenon and its characteristics. The study's conclusions demonstrated that both textbooks still include gender biases. Stereotyping, linguistic bias, imbalance and selectivity, cosmetic prejudice, fragmentation, and isolation were among the several types of bias discovered. Also, to further indagate on this topic, the study states that the outcome was to increase awareness of gender bias in ELT textbooks and to provide the materials designer, author, instructor, and students with a better understanding of how gender is represented in the book that is presently being used in educational contexts. Regarding the present research, it is important to explore how this study has increased the attention toward gender biases presented in educational contexts and materials.

As a final reference, Mojica (2017) in *Learning How to Make Room to Gendered Practices in Contexts of Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Multiple Case Study* provided more insights about the matter that is going to be explored in this research. The author implemented this study in Bogotá, Colombia with English teachers from a state university to raise awareness about gender learning for instructors as a process of being aware of how practices and discourses in the language classroom may reinforce gendered meanings vital for students' gendered subjectivities. Mojica's study led to some conclusions that can be highlighted,

such as pedagogical practices related to gender equality or what she calls in her study *pedagogical gendered practices* do not emerge spontaneously from teachers in the classroom, but rather they need to reflect.

To summarize the previous conclusions, all the studies presented are remarkable to our project, since they provide some insights into discourse effects in the ELT context. Some interesting discoveries explained above are how ELT Textbooks can be involved in the gendered pedagogy, the perpetuation of discriminatory attitudes in ELT classrooms, and ESL Textbooks such as “Way to Go” also a model and perpetuate binarism and gender discrimination. Our purpose with this research project is to find some discernment about gender in ELT educational environments because we evidenced the existence of linguistic inequalities regarding the representation of gender in educational materials, especially in the inclusion of the feminine figure and the visualization of a neutral figure to recognize non-binary groups or gender fluid communities, among others. The above practices in language perpetuate the imposition of gender roles and the discrimination of a variety of social groups that may not feel identified with the pronoun they are attributed to which cannot be accepted in the ESL Classroom. Based on the above, this research aims to identify if materials and discourse used by ESL teachers contain biases. Then, a reflection among the teachers will take place to promote these conversations in classrooms.

Methodology

The following part of this dissertation was conducting a research study that aimed to analyze the content of ELT materials and how teachers react to it in terms of gender roles and gender-inclusive language. To start, it will be described the type of research, and the type of study, supported by Creswell and Creswell (2018). Also, the context, the institution, and the

participants are going to be explored. Finally, the data collection methods will be described and argued to accomplish its objectives.

Type of Research

After deciding which aspects of the language, we wanted to analyze, it was necessary to select which type of research we wanted to implement. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the qualitative method of research is used to analyze texts, images, journals, and graphic information. As this project attempted to analyze a variety of ELT material, which contain not only text but images, it was necessary to implement a qualitative type of research. As videos were analyzed too. This type of research is appropriate since it supports the analysis of graphic information.

Type of Study

This qualitative research is a descriptive case study. As described in Merriam (2009), descriptive case studies systematically analyze facts and characteristics of a specific phenomenon and its relationship with an event. In this study, material from the two highest English courses in an English Institute in Pereira contributed to the construction of this research. Besides, 15 classes were observed to establish a relationship between the content and its instruction in the classroom in terms of gender biases, inclusive gender language, and gender itself. Besides, this study was divided into three phases, observation, material analysis, and reflection, which is why using a descriptive case study approach was appropriate.

Context

This research project was conducted at a language learning institute in a public university. This is a public university in Pereira, Risaralda, with a population of around 18.000

students with bachelor's degrees, M.A., and PhDs. This university offers different careers such as engineering, medicine, languages, and arts, among others to the community. Every career has some requirements for the students to get a bachelor's degree, among them, the certification of the English level. To accomplish the above, the university developed a partnership with a language institute to guarantee language education for its students.

The language institute operates according to the bilingualism policies that the University demands, which are the Common European Framework (CEFR) policies. The institute's functions are to validate language proficiency, offer courses in different languages such as English, French, German, and Chinese, and design bilingualism programs for different educational institutions. Nonetheless, this research is going to be focused on English language education developed in university courses. The English courses are divided into two formats: Regular and Intensive. The regular course has a duration of 64 hours (about 2 and a half days), divided into 4 weekly hours, and those are divided into two hours for two days. The intensive course lasts 64 hours (about 2 and a half days) divided into 10 weekly hours, divided into two hours 5 days per week. It is relevant to mention that the English course is free for university-active students. Based on the above the researchers considered that this Institute is appropriate to develop the study since it works with the English language and ELT material, which will be described in the next section.

Setting

As it was mentioned before, this research intended to analyze the discourse employed in ELT material and their instruction in English classes. Therefore, the institute has a wide variety of material from different publishers. This material is distributed throughout the different English courses offered by the institution. So, the curriculum was analyzed to identify which courses

were suitable for the research. Based on this, the researchers selected some courses to do the analysis, not all the courses accomplished with the requirements for the research. Therefore, the courses defined for this study were courses seven and eight, which are the highest at the center, because the students from these courses tend to have more advanced linguistic proficiency.

It was also relevant to this matter to observe some classes, as this project focuses on the content of the courses and how it is instructed in the classroom. For doing that, the researchers observed the content instruction, analyzed them and reflected with the teachers' participants upon it. The facilities for doing the above were online and they were provided by the language institute, as well as all the multimedia resources needed for the classes. Besides, the classrooms were expected to have about 15 students from different careers and semesters from the university, contributing to the variation of population taking the classes.

Participants

During an investigation, researchers and the population researched function together. Nonetheless, they have distinct roles. For these sections, it is mandatory to describe the participants and the researchers' roles.

Teachers

The participants of this case study are two teachers from a language institute at a public university. Both teachers have a certificate of C1 in English as well as a bachelor's degree in teaching languages. They are middle aged, they do not have any disabilities, and have several years of experience teaching.

Researchers

The researchers are two students from the tenth semester of the Licenciatura en Bilingüismo con Énfasis en Inglés, from a public university. Both researchers oversee, analyze, and identify the content presented in ELT textbooks and the discourse used by the teachers through the content-analysis methodology. In addition, during the observation process, the researchers were considered complete observer participants. According to Merriam as cited in Vanka (2022) in this type of research, the researcher's observer activities are known for the participants, having access to a wide range of information but controlled by the participants. After the observation process is done, researchers are going to reflect on the data collected with the teachers. As Given (2008) mentioned "The researcher takes a more directive role in challenging participants to consider topics that they had typically neglected or by helping them learn to critically analyze a situation." (p.678) So, the researchers' role transitioned to an active agent who disturbs the original setting to accomplish the research purpose which was to analyze gender practices within the institution.

Data Collection Methods

For this part of the research, the data collection methods will be described by mentioning the artifacts, methodology, and aspects that were suitable for the investigation. To obtain the information needed for the first part of the study, which was gathered from the curriculum and material, the content-analysis method was applied. For the second part of the study, which was observations and recordings from the class, the observation method was selected. For the third part of the study, which was the researchers' and teachers' co-reflection, stimulated recall was implemented.

Sampling

The population for this research was selected by using non-probabilistic sampling (Merriam, 2009), which is based on beliefs that the researchers desire to discover, analyze, and reflect on. Therefore, instructors from the language institute were taken into consideration for the research since the idea is to analyze gendered practices in ELT contexts. To receive permission to observe the classes for the research proposal, a formal request was presented to the institute director in November 2022, and the approval was received the same month. So, every language teacher in this investigation has a language proficiency certificate of B.2+ to teach in the institute. There are a total of 6 teachers that belong to courses 7 and 8, previously remarked as the highest language proficiency courses, and they conduct their classes with the methodology that fits the best for them. However, only two of the six teachers decided to participate.

Artifacts

Curriculum

The curriculum is a set of courses, and their contents, offered by an institution. In Colombia, the curriculum is considered as an overall plan of studies which includes topics, purposes, and assessment processes. In this research, the curriculum was selected to be analyzed to identify which English course was adequate for the investigation. The idea was to find a course that does not have any topic that included personal judgments, so the investigation did not interfere with biases. By having this parameter, the courses selected were 7 and 8, which are the higher levels with language proficiency of B2.

Materials

Materials are essential for our project as they will provide us with invaluable information about gender practices in ELT materials. This includes textbooks, educational software or

websites, worksheets, and activities used in class. In addition, our objectives involve comparing the analysis of the material with the discourse used by the teacher to ascertain the relationship between the two phenomena. The information collected from the materials will be used in the final reflection with the teachers.

Stimulated Recall

To reflect on the teacher practices within the classroom, it is important to consolidate a space in which the participants can comprehend, analyze, and discuss their decisions in the ELT context. For this, a stimulated recall is defined by Mackey and Gass (2021) as an introspective process that accesses participants' cognition by making them recall information prompted by a video or audio recording. Thus, this research intends to observe some of the classes, record them, and do a reflection. This is the last part of the methodology since it is necessary to gather enough data for consolidating a space in which the teachers can reflect and decide on future ELT teaching practices regarding gender.

Data Analysis

For this research, three instruments were used for the collection of data: stimulated recall, observation, and artifacts. The content-analysis was used to categorize, interpretate, and reflect all the elements that worked as variables during the research.

1. **Transcription:** To collect all the information that was analyzed, the classes observed were recorded. After concluding each class, researchers transcribed the data that fits into their research purpose. It is important to clarify that the artifacts (materials, images, activities) were recorded and photographed as well. Only the

data that involved the teachers and the material was included. Students from the class were not analyzed nor considered when doing a transcription.

2. **Codification of the data collected:** After doing all the transcription in relation to the teachers and material, each element was codified and assigned with statements that express a general idea of the information attributed.

Stimulated Recall: SR1; T1; 16/03/2023, in which “SR” refers to the stimulated recall sample collected and expressly mentioned by the teachers in their discourse with their corresponding number of the entry. “T1” where T refers to Teacher and 1 the specific teacher. Finally, the date when the situation happened is included.

Materials: M1; T1; 16/03/2023, in which M refers to materials used in class, such as presentations, activities, etc. with their corresponding number of the entry. “T1” in which T refers to Teacher and 1 the specific teacher. Finally, the date when the material was used.

Reflection: R1; T1; 16/03/2023, in which “R” refers to the information presented during the reflection process with the teacher with their corresponding number of the entry. “T1” in which T refers to the teacher and 1 to the specific teacher. Finally, the date when the reflection was made.

1. **Grouping:** There was a process of comparing and contrasting all the statements and codes into groups that shared information. Each group was assigned with a title that embraced all the statements included in it. When statements were not able to fit into that group, another group was created to synthesize the information and effectively analyze it. However, groups that did not contain enough

information were eliminated. Finally, a revision of all the groups was done to select which ones align the most with the research purpose.

2. **Delimitation of Categories:** This process involved making a second table with the same purpose and structure but this time analyzing again all the information that was grouped before. This table categorized all the statements and their codes into two big categories, which were named based on the general similarities of the statements grouped. Two categories emerged from this process, category number one that was named under this statement: *“Gender Stereotypes and its Representation in ESL classroom Interactions”* And category number 2 that was named *“Promotion of Gender Equality and Awareness in ELT settings”*
3. **Writing Theory:** Glaser and Strauss (1967) state that during this stage, the information is synthesized in a structured and coherent manner, enabling others to easily access and comprehend it. The objective is to present the information in a more organized and comprehensible format.

Ethical Considerations

This section of the project focuses on the ethical considerations considered to develop and implement this research study. It must be clarified the ethical principles that guided the researchers' actions to ensure the safety of the participants and the validity of the research itself. According to the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL, 2017) some elements should be considered when conducting linguistic research such as confidentiality, consent forms, voluntary participation, and reducing risk of harm.

Confidentiality

It is necessary to guarantee the anonymity of participants throughout the research, as it is part of the guidelines to conduct ethical linguistic research. In this sense, participants were named with a code, instead of their real names. To build on the above, according to the AAAL (2017), this dynamic protects the participants' private identities from possible adverse effects of the research. Also, the institute where the research was carried out was not named, to include it in this principle of ethical research. The accomplishment of this ethical consideration shows the ethical conduct of the research, as well as the integrity and credibility of the study.

Consent Forms

To conduct the research, the participants' material and classes were observed, as well as their opinion about them in a reflective session afterward. As this information is private, and both the participants' voice and language institute policies must be protected, the language institute where the research took place received a consent form that stated all the procedures that were implemented in this case study. Following the ethical considerations proposed by the AAAL (2017), this consent form asked for explicit consent to implement the investigation, including access to the curriculum, teaching team, and materials used by them. Subsequently, participants in the investigation received the invitation to participate in the project and they were asked to sign a consent form to participate. By following this principle, it was possible to confidentially use participants' information, safeguarding not only their privacy but also the language institute respectfully and responsibly.

Voluntary Participation

Throughout the course of the research, no form of coercion or inducement was observed or offered to encourage participation. The institute follows its ethical guidelines by opting to not

execute any type of pressure on the teachers to engage in research activities. In this sense, participants retained complete autonomy to decide whether to participate in the study or not, and they were also free to leave their involvement at any point in the research. By following this principle, researchers guaranteed participants the genuine choice to participate in this study, reinforcing its validity and integrity throughout its development.

Reducing the Risk of Harm

Finally, it was essential to avoid any type of discrimination or violence that could have affected the development of the research. According to AAAL (2017), researchers should maintain an open mind to all the possible outcomes and opinions from participants. Therefore, there were no judgments nor prejudices towards the participants or the data collected during this research. Based on this ethical consideration proposed by the AAAL (2017), fairness, respect, and non-discrimination were elements that contributed to this study in terms of fostering an environment where participants' voices were valued, and their experiences were listened to and respected.

Findings

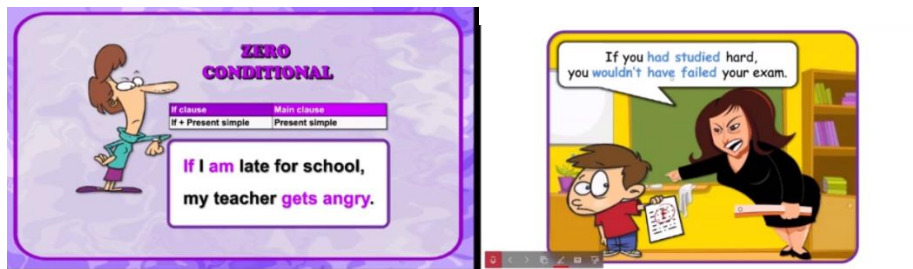
Gender Stereotypes and their Representation in ESL Classroom Interactions

Perpetuation of gender representation and stereotypes can be presented in ESL material and discourse used in the classroom. The present study comprehends a diverse range of empirical evidence that supports this notion, consisting of various categories of data. These data categories involve reflective input derived from teachers, visual representations employed during classes, classroom activities, and other resources. The inclusion of this comprehensive information offers insights into the main objective of this research, which aims to scrutinize gender dynamics in

English Language Teaching environments. Considering the foregoing, this investigation will explore the elements comprising this finding.

Gender stereotypes with occupations were found in one of the teacher's discourses and materials. Considering the objectives stated in this project, the information collected is aligned with the main one, which is to analyze gender practices in ELT settings. The information that will be presented is an example of gender dynamics that took place in one of the classes observed by the researchers. These images were collected during a class observed on March 28th, 2023. The images depict the representation of women in various roles. Specifically, they portray women as teachers and mother figures, exhibiting similar emotions, clothing, attitudes, facial expressions, and contextual settings. This occurrence was not an isolated incident but happened three times within the same class.

Artifact No. 1



To begin with, it is important to analyze the images used in class as they can provide us with some insights regarding which stereotypes are often presented in class. In picture number 1, we can see a woman angry about the time because her students are going to be late. Also, we can evidence that she is wearing a skirt with some sandals, both purple colors. Finally, the animation

of the woman is about the text that is presented, which describes the zero conditional. The text says, "If I am late for school, my teacher gets angry," establishing a relation between the text and the portrayal of the woman, being a teacher and being angry.

In picture number 2, it is evidenced by another teacher, wearing a black dress and a pair of heels, and in the same way as in image number 1, she is complaining about one student who got a bad grade. A zero conditional is presented too. Finally, in picture number 3, it is noticeable that in this case is not a teacher but a mother. She is wearing a purple dress, with a pair of sandals, and is angry at her children too, even with her face red and yelling at him, and the use of a zero conditional is presented as well.

As it was mentioned before, these images were not presented as isolated items but were used several times during the same class. It is possible to perceive a pattern regarding clothes, emotions, job roles, colors, and situations. In both images 1 and 3, the use of purple color is presented, which culturally is associated with women. In all three images, the women are wearing the same type of clothes, dresses or skirts, heels, or sandals. Also, women in the images are pictured in roles that are often connected to women such as teachers and mothers. It must be mentioned that all the women presented were shown as angry and hysterical persons. These elements contribute to narrowing the stereotypical representation of women in professional settings. It is possible to say that this contribution can affect students' perception regarding women's role in society as the three of them are presented in the same situations.

Based on the above, the use of this material in class can perpetuate the stereotypes related to women in society. This material not only can affect the women seeing it but also all the students' perceptions about women in general. As D'Addio, A. (2022) mentioned in UNESCO (2022), gender stereotypes and biases are built in people's minds as early as childhood and can

be reinforced but also challenged by school programs, curricula, teaching materials, and teaching that learners are exposed to in the classroom. It is necessary to reflect on the interaction between gender stereotypes and the classroom environment, as the material used can reinforce discourses but the way the teacher uses it can diminish or maximize the impact of it.

Presenting classroom materials that contain gender biases can reinforce behaviors that negatively impact certain social groups, resulting in limited opportunities and a sense of exclusion. These biases are ingrained within the cultural environment during childhood. Consequently, it is crucial to acknowledge that classroom materials and media representations can perpetuate and amplify these biases. Therefore, it is essential to examine and address these biases within teaching materials and reflect on teachers' perceptions regarding their influence and usage. In addition, gender stereotypes about clothing and colors were also explored during one of the teacher's reflections with the researchers.

Sample No. 1 R2T2IN1:26/04/2023

“Specifically, about colors or clothes. Let's say skirts, jeans, t-shirts, and others. Well, I cannot think of a particular case, but I'm sure that sometimes I use pictures, and vectors.

And yeah, they tend to have that kind of typical stuff, like women always have dresses and things like that.”

The previous dialogue was extracted by one of the teachers based on the question “So maybe do you consider that representations of both women and men in relation to clothes and colors are presented in ELT material?” It can be mentioned that the teacher has evidenced the presence of biases in ELT material throughout their teaching experience. Also, the teacher can indicate some of their own biases by stating that their material “tend to have that kind of typical stuff, like women always have dresses and things like that.” By acknowledging the presence of biases in ELT materials based on their teaching experience, the teacher demonstrates a critical

awareness of the issue. However, it is still crucial to address and challenge biases, even if they are unintentionally present in one's teaching materials or perceptions.

Based on the previous information, the relation between biases and reflection in ESL material is presented in the teachers' exercise multiple times. The objective of the reflection of the biases is considered by the teacher to mitigate stereotyped discourses that can affect the students.

Sample No. 2 R4T1IN4:02/05/2023

“I do not think that it normalizes sexualizing behavior. And yes, I do think that it could be suitable to show it as part of ELT materials if there's a critical and conscious analysis of the implications.”

Sample No. 3 R2T2IN1:26/04/2023

“For example, with that video, I mentioned before, not with that group but with a different one, I asked them after the video, hey guys, did you watch anything wrong in this video? So, we talked about that.”

Both teachers share the idea that there could be sensitive content in the material they use for their ESL classes. However, they constantly remark on the importance of critical analysis and reflection with the students about this material, to not replicate those biases. This dynamic allows for reflection and awareness-building among students, promoting a more inclusive and responsible learning environment.

A striking contrast arises when considering both teachers' positions regarding consciousness of gender violence in materials used in ELT settings. First, one teacher advocates that there should be no political correctness in the material used in class, and they prefer to use them and reflect upon it. On the other hand, the other teacher states that indeed they use biased material, and that motivates them to reflect upon them with the class while raising awareness about it.

Sample No.4 R4T1IN4:02/05/2023

“What would be a sexualizing behavior? I was trying to show the material as a warning of the dangers that could potentially take place if the AI were conscious. So no, I do not think that it normalizes sexualizing behavior, and I do think that it's a proper material because I don't want to get to an extent of political correctness in which Let's say cartoons or humors or literature must be so politically correct that it can that it could be censored. So, I'm totally against that. So yes, the answer specifically, no, I do not think that it normalizes sexualizing behavior. And yes, I do think that it could be suitable to show in as part of ELT materials if there's a critical and conscious analysis of the implications.”

The previous dialogue is the answer to one of the questions related to the material used in class. In this material, a Simpsons episode was used to present the AI interaction with the family in the distant future. However, the AI presented aggressive behavior to one of the characters (Marge, specifically). Based on this, the researchers asked the following *“Do you consider that presenting this material would normalize or find funny like the attitudes presented?”*. The teacher wanted to emphasize that presenting this kind of material does not disturb the classroom, only if a critical analysis is attached to it. In this sense, the teacher used this material as a starting point for reflection and discussion.

This approach in the classroom can encourage critical thinking and analysis This dynamic might focus on encouraging critical thinking and analysis of the content, allowing students to engage in discussions and develop their perspectives without censoring any type of material. Liang, W and Fung, D. (2021) emphasizes the significance of cultivating critical thinking in English-as-a-second-language classrooms. Their research not only proposes practical implications for teaching, such as contextual problem analysis and fostering vocabulary relevant to student’s daily lives but also contributes to the scholarly understanding of social dynamics and issues. By engaging students in critical analysis of the materials used, this approach enables them

to challenge existing thought patterns and enhance their language proficiency, which can be proved to be beneficial to the ELT classroom such as the ones observed in this project.

Sample No. 5 SR12T2S8:16/03/2023

“Again, when you're teaching, many times examples from your daylight come to your head. And I remembered a relative who had who had this problem when he was drinking so I don't know. I think the example came to my mind and so I wanted to emphasize that this can happen to everyone.”

This extract was taken from one of the reflections made with one of the teachers and it refers to one idiom “keep an eye on your drink,” and was shared after the following question: *“Why did you mention “sometimes we think that is only for women” while referring to be careful about your drink? You added that it happens to men as well. Why was it, what motivated you to make that clear?”* The teacher answered that they wanted to emphasize that everyone should be careful and take care of themselves regardless of their gender. This dynamic shows a use of a gender-inclusive discourse and adds some insights about its usage of it in terms of reflection on one’s ELT material that may be biased.

In the strength of the previous information, some findings can be drawn around gender dynamics in both teachers’ material and discourse in an ELT learning environment. This category focuses on gender stereotypes, and both teachers affirm that the material they have used so far can have gender biases, especially the older ones. Nevertheless, through a reflective process and critical analysis, not only in an inner way but also an external exercise that involves the students, the impact that these stereotypes and biases have can be reduced. They also consider that the analysis and the reflection about the material have effects on the students, as it can reduce it’s spreading in a stereotyped way, but more as a resource from which you can learn.

Taking into consideration the findings presented above, it is imperative to address each of them in a meticulous way to find its impact in the classroom as well as in the teacher's professional development. The identified gender stereotypes and biases that are, particularly, prevalent in older material can affect the classroom environment by reproducing discourses with cultural negative connotations; however, its impact can be redirected if it's addressed by teachers in a meaningful and reflective way.

To develop a significant response to these biases, teachers must foster open discussion and inclusive dialogues between their students and them. This could be evidenced in some of the samples presented before, in which we notice that the teacher asked students to think about the situation and if they found something wrong with the material. By doing so, the teacher creates a safe and critical space to explore the impact of the material, as well as improve language proficiency by making students express their opinions in the L2. As Teacher 1 declared, the idea is not to censor every material that can have a bias or trigger a negative reaction but use them in a way that is not directed to reproduce a message that affects the classroom environment.

Addressing these problems not only benefits students and the classroom environment but the teachers as well. Raising awareness of these problems through reflective processes empowers teachers to start implementing and designing material that can be inclusive and free of gender biases. However, these reflective processes should be made over time, so they can be internalized and effectively executed to foster a more balanced representation of gender and diminish the stereotypes related to one or more genders. All of this can be developed if the teachers constantly involve themselves and students in addressing these problems, so a broader perspective can be raised from discussions.

By acting based on these conclusions, we can strive towards creating an ELT learning environment that not only recognizes and challenges gender biases but also promotes equality, diversity, and empowerment for all students. Gender stereotypes and their implications vary depending on several factors, such as cultural attributions, or individual opinions, especially in a critical sense. Even though the material itself can contain a discourse that leads to interpretations, it is necessary to analyze it more dynamically as the discourse used in class can modify the understanding of the material presented. This discourse might contain biases consciously or unconsciously due to the internalization of gender biases.

Discussion

In the same way, as in this project, some dissertations have found similar outcomes about gender dynamics in the ESL classroom. In this part of the project, it is crucial to highlight the outcomes presented by the authors in the Literature Review and contrast their findings with those of our research. By comparing various research articles, we can gain a deeper understanding of the project and expand upon the existing knowledge derived from data analysis. This integration of contributions enhances the relevance of our study and fosters future discussions related to the topic. Therefore, in this section, we will present the findings of each article and engage in a comprehensive discussion, aligning them with our research proposal.

To begin with, Díaz et al. (2020) in their project "An EFL Textbook Content Analysis: Gender Stereotypes and Gender Equality" analyzed the discourse used in ESL textbooks and materials in a Colombian context. Based on their analysis, the textbooks evidenced some manifestations related to gender stereotypes. The presence of gender stereotypes in the textbooks is related to power relations and binarism, which means that non-binary communities and others are often neglected, with implications for the development of students' identities. Finally, their

research stated that equality and gender equality are not presented in EFL textbooks designed for Colombia.

As evidenced during our analysis, the materials designed and used by teachers often represented stereotypical behaviors. An example of this can be seen in the images of angry teachers or the television material presented by the teachers. This reinforces the idea presented by Díaz et al. about the presence of stereotypes in ELT material. However, unlike a discourse analysis, which was the focus of Díaz et al., in this project, teachers had the opportunity to reflect upon these practices when teaching in an ESL environment. By doing so, teachers had the chance to analyze their curricular proposals, as stated in sample 3, ensuring that students' identities would not be negatively affected. So, by addressing the presence of gender stereotypes and promoting inclusive teaching practices, gender equality can be fostered through education.

Regarding gender equality dynamics in the classroom, Mojica, C. (2017) conducted a research study titled 'Learning How to Make Room for Gendered Practices in Contexts of Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Multiple Case Study.' This study shared a similar focus, data collection, and data analysis approach with our research. However, Patricia's analysis encompassed not only the material and discourse used by the teachers but also the curricular proposals, classroom dynamics, interactions between students, and other variables. Her findings revealed different approaches to promoting gender awareness in the curriculum and fostering an inclusive environment through a reflective process.

In comparison to our project, it is important to acknowledge that Patricia's research included a wider range of variables beyond the material and teacher discourse. While our focus was primarily on these aspects, Sample 4 highlighted that teachers are aware that gender dynamics extend beyond specific behaviors or representations in material and encompass a

spectrum of patterns and paradigms related to social dynamics that can arise during a critical analysis. By considering this element, we can analyze the teacher's dynamics within the ELT context without necessarily evaluating external factors such as the curriculum or social relations within the class. The insights developed by Patricia's study are valuable to our project as they provide a broader analysis of the issue and contribute to a deeper understanding of how gender biases manifest not only in materials but within the complete teaching setting.

Following the idea of gender representation and stereotypes in ELT settings, Amin et al. (2021) in their research project named “*Analysis of English Language Teaching Materials on Gender*” provide us with more insights into the topic such as the evidence of gendered expressions and words that reinforces biases in ELT materials. Through semantic and syntactic analysis, they classified the linguistic content into various categories based on its usage. This procedure allowed the researchers to provide insights in terms of visibility, firstness, feminine/masculine generic construction, occupation, activities, and classification of biases in ELT textbooks used in ELT classrooms in Indonesia.

As different from Amin et al. (2021), our investigation develops a critical discourse analysis of the expressions and words that contain possible bias by making relations between the use by the teacher and the cultural attributions. This research project can draw some similarities regarding the above in the aspects of Feminine/Masculine Generic Construction, and occupations. As mentioned in Amin et al. (2021) the feminine/masculine generic construction is argued around the use of female and male pronouns; however, in this research project the topic is addressed in a whole concept, in which both the material and how it is used was analyzed, as it can be evidenced in Artifact No. 1 and Sample No. 1. Both studies found out that there is still a generic construction around feminine and masculine figures in the ELT classroom and its

material. Finally, based on Artifact No. 1, and as described by Amin et al. (2021) in their finding named Occupations, there is a portrayal of conventional stereotypes regarding occupations that limit students' identity to be developed.

Adding to the discourse, Ahmad and Shah (2019) in their work "*A Critical Discourse Analysis of Gender Representations in the Content of 5th Grade English Language Textbook*" explore the concept of reflection and awareness about biased presented in ELT Textbooks. In the same way, some of the findings that must be mentioned are discrimination through stereotypical representation, and pictorial representation, which refers to the representation of male and female figures in images. Considering the stereotypical and pictorial representations that are addressed by the authors, it was concluded that there is a representation of males in a powerful position and shown as saviors; different from that perspective, our research project addresses the topic not from a comparison between male and female, but from an interpretative approach of both materials and its implementation in the classroom along with the teachers' reflection. The two analyses could find that the representation that women have in professional profiles is through teaching, and is not enough portrayed in other professional fields, as exposed in Artifact No. 1.

After conducting a thorough analysis of the collected samples and artifacts, it becomes evident that gender stereotypes and biases exist in teachers' materials and their discourse within ELT classrooms. However, through reflective processes and inclusive dynamics, these biases can be mitigated. Teachers play a crucial role in creating a safe space for students to engage with the material and promote gender-balanced representations through critical analysis. By addressing this issue, not only do students benefit, but the entire educational environment is empowered to foster an inclusive perspective on gender.

To analyze gender dynamics in the ESL classroom, we referenced prior dissertations. We compared their outcomes with that from our study to highlight connections and variations. Our analysis focuses on the presence of gender stereotypes in ESL textbooks and materials, the impact on students' identities, and the promotion of inclusive teaching practices. Another similarity between both, our findings and the ones from other authors, is the portrayal of traditional gender roles, representing occupations, and remarking the importance of reflection and awareness to diminish gender biases and stereotypes. This integration of contributions enhances the relevance of our study and provides a broader understanding of gender dynamics in the ESL classroom.

Implications

The subsequent section of the research aims to analyze the identified implications and offer recommendations to future researchers who are interested in exploring this topic. While this study primarily involved observation without direct classroom interventions, it focused on discussing research implications exclusively. Therefore, aspects such as methodology, approaches, objectives, and other relevant considerations will be thoroughly examined and discussed.

Research Implications

For future researchers interested in this topic and its associated societal and educational problems, it is imperative to provide detailed recommendations for conducting research in this area. Therefore, a comprehensive overview of the key elements that compose research will be presented. Firstly, when gathering enough research articles and resources that can enhance your investigation, it is essential to develop an exhaustive evaluation of the material, by emphasizing the linguistic approach employed, as well as ensuring that the purpose and methodology align

with your research objectives. Given the potential influence of subjectivity on this topic, it becomes necessary to carefully delineate the impact of various approaches that may affect the research outcomes.

Second, it is crucial to provide comprehensive recommendations when selecting a setting for conducting research, as it may be the case that personal previous knowledge or experiences can interfere with it. Researchers should not assume the behavior of an environment. There are emerging situations that can disturb the way a context behaves. In this case, the classes' methodology (virtually or face-to-face), the participants willing to be part of the project, the material implemented during classes, and so on are elements that can vary from day to day in the study, which lead to changes during the process. Therefore, when selecting a context, you need to carefully analyze what can be potential situations that can alter the research process.

Finally, as subjectivity and personal beliefs can interfere with this topic, the analysis of variables must be a constant process as it contributes to overriding your personal experience or judgments. During this research, we faced the situation that samples collected from the teachers often were re-analyzed and their contribution to the project changed. In this sense, it is suggested for future research to consider not only two participants, as this project did, but a wider group of participants or artifacts so personal beliefs are excluded and do not interfere with the results and interpretation of the research as well as providing you with a wider perspective of the topic.

Limitations

This project initially aimed to conduct a systematic review of various research articles. However, over the past few months, our interests changed significantly, and it transformed into a research study with a case study methodology. This shift in the approach impacted the time expected and effort required for the research. Certain complications in time management and

planning resulted in prolonged periods of overwork to complete this project. When developing a research project, it is crucial to establish specific goals within a defined timeframe to ensure the project's quality and the desired outcomes.

Another limitation we encountered during our project implementation was related to the institute. When we submitted the consent form for the research project, the institute went through some administrative changes, particularly to the individuals responsible for granting permission to access the classrooms, teachers, and the curriculum. These changes significantly delayed the data collection process and the implementation of our chosen methodology by several months. Thus, as we highlighted in the implications, future researchers should exhaustively analyze the selected context and take measures to ensure that such situations are avoided.

Furthermore, we were expecting a greater number of teachers to volunteer for the research. Although a case study could be conducted with only two teachers, we believed that involving more participants would result in deeper findings and facilitate the examination of different gender dynamics beyond those reflected in the materials and discourse utilized by the teachers.

Since we had spent several years studying how to conduct a systematic review, adopting this new research approach required more time than initially anticipated for comprehension. We encountered unfamiliar concepts and methodologies, which resulted in several doubts and a sense of insecurity regarding the project's execution. To address these issues, we organized study sessions and explanations from our thesis advisor to ensure the project's quality.

Despite these limitations, this research project was successfully implemented and achieved its objectives in terms of describing gender dynamics in ESL contexts. There remain additional aspects to explore and reflect upon in this subject, and we encourage future

researchers to continue pursuing this approach while taking into consideration the limitations we have identified, thus allowing for timely resolution.

Conclusions

This research project intended to describe the gender practices in terms of material and discourse used by the teachers in a language institute in Pereira, Risaralda. To accomplish the above, the researchers analyzed materials presented in class and teachers' dialogues to establish relationships between images, words, and meanings through a methodology of critical discourse analysis and content analysis. After establishing relationships relations revealed the insights presented in the findings section regarding stereotypes, gender biases, and inclusive processes inside the classroom. Finally, by having a space of discussion among the teachers, they were able to identify and reflect on these practices in their pedagogical practices.

It was revealed by the material and teachers that ESL tended to have gender biases, especially older materials. Nonetheless, these biases did not interfere with the classroom safety or students' perception if a reflective discussion was attached when using it. This allowed us to reflect on the importance of the teacher to diminish the impact of these biases on their immediate environment. Also, it revealed to us that the teachers are open to the discussion of this topic and that they are open to reflecting on their own beliefs and perceptions to evaluate their teaching exercise and the gender practices surrounding them.

Even though we could establish these relationships, the discussion is still open for future researchers and teachers that are interested in reflecting on their gender practices. These practices can be presented in our daily life but tend to go unnoticed because of their cultural influence and attachment to people's cognition. It should also be remarked that despite that there were few samples and participants, the information that was presented was enough to describe some of the

gender practices that can be seen in the ELT classroom, opening the possibility for future researchers to dig even more into this topic.

To summarize, gender practices related to stereotypes, inclusiveness, gender roles, and the relation of power were analyzed. This research also highlighted the potential for the transformation of gender practices in ELT settings through reflective discussions and critical self-reflection. It was also aimed that this research encourages exploration, and dialogue, and fostered inclusive gender practices in ELT and beyond.

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