

Have Japanese English Textbooks Really Improved?: Reexamination of Gender Representation in Current Textbooks

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate how the registered high school English textbooks in Japan have improved in terms of gender representation in both literal and visual components by partially duplicating Nakai (2000; 2001; 2002) which explore these two components of the two older versions of the textbooks used in the late 1990s to the early 2000s. The results still show mixed realities including some improvements and a number of chronic problems such as female invisibility or omission, male chauvinism, and gender stereotypes in social status and occupations, which are basically the same weaknesses revealed by the precedent studies about fifteen years ago.

Keywords: EFL, textbook, gender

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I. Introduction

I.1 Purpose

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the sex and gender representation of the publicly registered senior high school English textbooks currently used in Japan, focusing on the chronological change or shift in the gender representation of the textbooks over these fifteen years. Methodologically, the precedent studies on the same issues (Nakai, 2000; Nakai, 2001; Nakai, 2002) are partially duplicated and the results are compared with those of the former ones.

The goal of this paper is threefold. First, the contents of the textbooks, both topics and central characters of the lessons, are examined in terms of sex and gender because what and how the current textbooks deal with in their units or lessons supposedly affect the students and teachers who

use them. Secondly, the visual images, both photographs and illustrations, included in the textbooks are investigated in that they help the learners to comprehend the contents of the lessons, and also their relationships with the literal texts they are attached to are examined because those visuals sometimes provide more information and so affect the readers more than their literal counterparts. Finally, the results of the present study are compared with those of the former research stated above and discussed on whether any difference exists between the two and, if so, how different or how better, or worse, in terms of gender representation.

I.2 Rationale

Almost two decades ago, I examined several high school English textbooks made in Japan including the ones I wrote as one of the authors. I was just curious how those textbooks would turn out to be in the perspective of sex and gender studies which were just budding out as a distinctive discipline in the field of education. The results were quite disappointing for me because the examined textbooks were very male-centered or sexist and often chauvinistic although we the authors had seriously tried to produce the best textbooks as we could. Since then I have continuously examined how the registered textbooks in Japan deal with sex and gender issues and problems (Nakai, 1999; Nakai, 2000; Nakai, 2001; Nakai, 2002; Nakai, 2005). And now, after twenty years, it seems very feasible to investigate how the registered Japanese textbooks today have improved because such gender issues came to be better recognized all over the country.

In order to do this, I choose textbooks, as a research subject, because of two major advantages. One is that they are one of the most tangible, the most accessible, and the most concrete elements to single out of the various school components including teachers, students, physical settings, and administration: They are visible, handy, and available for everyone. The other one is that textbooks tend to be far more authoritative and so more influential over the users than the other elements of classroom learning/teaching. Especially in Japan, it holds true because the main textbooks are produced based on the national course of study named *Gakushushidojouryo* (GSY, hereafter) and authorized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology (MEXT, hereafter). From my own experience as an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher of secondary education in Japan, I have learned that textbooks are so revered that both learners and instructors tend to depend on them as a reliable information source as well as solid teaching tools and learning materials.

The examination of the textbooks, hopefully, will lead us to better understanding of the realities, at least partly, of the English education in Japan in terms of sex and gender representation.

I.3 Review of literature

I.3.i Course of study

As stated above, the English education in Japan, both at its primary and secondary levels, is basically administered by MEXT, which issues GSY as the main guidelines to public education and usually renewed it every decade since the first version appeared soon after World War II. The current version for senior high schools was notified in 2009 and enacted in 2011.

As for foreign language education in Japan, reflecting the international trends and the

domestic demands in favor of globalization, MEXT officially chose the subject of English as a requirement in 1998, and they started to place the major focus on promoting more practical linguistic communication skills. In the current version of GSY, such emphasis is quite explicit; for example, some of the new courses have titles such as English Communication I, II, and III and English Expression I and II.

I.3.ii Gender in education in Japan

Along with the worldwide rise of feminism and anti-sexist movements in the 1970s through the 1980s, the national government of Japan has carried out quite substantial legal reforms in the pursuit of gender equality or fairness as seen in the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (1985) and the Basic Act for Gender Equal Society (1999). This socio-political wave has reached the field of public education. The national course of study has reflected such global trends especially in the school subjects closely connected with people and society such as Home Economics, Civics, Geography and History, and Health and Physical Education. Home Economics, for example, used to be taught only to girls at secondary schools, but it came to be learned by both sexes in 1993.

In academia, Ito *et al.* (1991) conducted a comprehensive survey on the gender representation of the elementary school textbooks of *kokugo* or Japanese Language, Social Studies, Home Economics, and Moral Education, and reported a multitude of problems such as female invisibility, gender stereotypes, fixed gender roles, and male chauvinism.

In addition, a number of contemporary scholars and practitioners point out male-female inequality and sexist practices that still prevail at school as well as in society. Hoonoki (1999), for example, argues that school education actually reproduces gender problems as a model of the fixed gender roles in society and claims that the subject of Home Economics will be the key to solve such gender problems by reexamining the contents and methods of the course. The Japanese Association of University Women or JAUW (2014) also investigated the textbooks of Home Economics and their past and present users including both students and teachers and maintains the need of better understanding of the importance of gender equity education on both school administrators and class teachers.

I.3.iii Gender in ESL/EFL textbooks

With regard to the sex and gender representation in ESL (English as a Second Language) materials, Hartman and Judd (1978), Porreca (1984), and Lesikin (1995) point out that their contemporary textbooks portray women in a problematically unbalanced and stereotyped way, and suggest that ESL teachers make efforts to reduce the pervasive gender biases or sexism in the field.

Sunderland (1992) takes a comprehensive overview of the gender issues in language education and categorizes them into three types: The English language, Materials, and Processes. The first one includes linguistic sexism such as the generic use of masculine nouns and pronouns and semantic derogation in male-female equivalency; the second one refers to pedagogic grammar, course books, and dictionaries which contain a variety of gender-related problems and their handling by the course teachers who use them; the final one “refers to what happens in the classroom because of people’s gender” (p. 87).

In the field of EFL education, Narisawa (1992), Sasaki (1994), and Nakai (1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2005) mention that the junior and senior high school EFL textbooks in Japan present

problematically stereotyped and prejudiced images of males and females, which may have a long and profound effect on the future of the users. Farooq (1999) also takes an extensive overview of the gender issues in EFL education, specifically, in Japan and claims the importance of examination of the problems at the sentence and discourse level as well as at the word level of the language.

Recent studies on EFL instructional materials, however, report contradictory results. Togano (2009) claims that MEXT-approved high school writing textbooks still show gender imbalances such as female invisibility and gender stereotypes in occupations and activities. On the other hand, Pihlaja (2008) maintains that the Japanese high school textbook he evaluated “provides clear positive presentations of men and women” (p. 9).

I.3.iv Visuals: Photographs and illustrations

With regard to the role of illustrations in reading comprehension of linguistic texts, some claims that visuals attached to written materials facilitate language learning (Peeck, 1974; Levin & Lesgold, 1978) while others maintain that such pictures even hinder the readers’ understanding (Vernon, 1953; Samuels, 1970). Schallert (1980) argues that the effectiveness of visuals depends on how to combine illustrations and texts as well as on the type of information expected to be learned. Wright (1989), as an author of ESL resource books using pictures, claims that language learners comprehend visually as well as verbally so much that the pictures of places, objects, and people contribute to learning by means of providing “a sense of the context of the language” (p. 2), for example.

As for the negative effects of visual components of instructional materials, Hartman & Judd (1978) point out the drawings might be more harmful than photographs because gender stereotypes in society are reinforced by simplistic and symbolic strokes of drawings. Ito *et al.* (1991) also claim that visuals of the textbooks made in Japan are likely to even distort the reality of men and women in society by their misrepresentation.

I.3.v Teachers’ role and responsibility

As for other influential aspects at school, Grossman & Grossman (1994) argue that schools and teachers are responsible for “the creation and maintenance of gender differences in students’ school participation and achievement” (p. 73) and claim that many of the instructional materials bring societal gender biases into school. Gollnick, Sadker, & Sadker (1982) also claim that the teachers play an important role in selecting non-sexist textbooks, and propose that teachers cope with different types of gender biases in the textbooks by encouraging students to recognize and think critically of them. As for the attitudes of class teachers today, Yoshihara (2013) maintains that EFL students are ready to learn about gender issues while teachers are reluctant to teach them even though they know its importance.

II. Method

II.1 Materials

Six textbooks are examined. They are all bilingual, English and Japanese, textbooks published by Japan-based companies according to the current GSY, officially authorized by the MEXT, and started to be used nationwide in 2014 and 2015. For reference, in the precedent studies, the first

versions were used from 1994 to 1996 or 1997 and the second sets replaced the former ones and were used up to around 2000.

The choice of the textbooks is mainly based on their large market shares and accessibility. According to Watanabe (2012; 2013; 2014; 2015), the top five titles of the best-selling books list of *English Communication I* textbooks, for example, account for nearly 60% of the whole national market. Among them, I select three series which have been on the lists for all these three years and among the most widely-used textbooks in the field. As you can see in **Tables 1 to 3 of Appendix 1**, they account for 30.4 % of the entire market. In addition, I make it a rule to choose only one series from the same publisher in order to collect as many different types of data as possible and also to avoid overlaps or redundancy in the themes, topics, contents, and editorial principles, even though more than one series by the same company are on the list. Following are the examined textbooks.

- 1) *Crown English Communication I* (CR1)
- 2) *Crown English Communication II* (CR2)
- 3) *All Aboard! English Communication I* (AA1)
- 4) *All Aboard! English Communication II* (AA2)
- 5) *Vivid English Communication I* (VV1)
- 6) *Vivid English Communication II* (VV2)

These six textbooks are composed of three pairs. Two books with basically the same names, for example, *Crown English Communication I* (CR1) and *Crown English Communication II* (CR2), are designed to be used in succession, usually for two consecutive years; English Communication I, first and English Communication II, second.

Why the textbooks for *English Communication I* and *English Communication II* are chosen is because the two courses are supposed to be taught at most high schools in Japan. In the current curriculum, out of four courses named *English Communication*, Basic English Communication, English Communication I, English Communication II, and English Communication III, some schools teach the first three courses while others the last three. So, the middle two courses are more likely to be taught at almost every high school and to be the core of the seven English courses, including English Expression I, English Expression II, and English Conversation.

In general, the structures of the older textbooks published two decades ago were similar to one another. More than a dozen lessons or units composed a single textbook. Typically, each lesson contained four major constituents: 1) an introduction; 2) a reading text followed by a comprehension-check part (hereafter a reading text); 3) visuals; 4) post-reading activities and other components (hereafter post-reading activities).

Today, the compositions of the textbooks are more varied and different to one another. However, all the examined textbooks still employ reading passages as the main body of the lessons because reading English has been one of the most essential linguistic skills for students to learn as well as for teachers to teach.

II.2 Data collection and analysis procedures

II.2.i Reading texts:

First, all the main lessons and units, except for sporadic small columns and brief articles, of

the textbooks are examined in terms of genre or category of the topics and themes. I focus on the reading section of each lesson of the textbooks because it is very likely to be the main body of the lesson in a traditional way of teaching in Japan even though the new GSY by MEXT officially declares that English should be taught more communicatively with far more focus on oral skills. For genre classification, I base my model on the Nippon Decimal Classification though I sometimes modify it when the types of the reading passages are often interdisciplinary and so very difficult to identify in a single category.

Secondly, the main characters in the reading texts of each lesson, if any human being appears in them, are also examined in terms of sex and gender. If the texts do not feature any people but personify animals or inanimate objects, they are treated as humans and categorized into one of the three groups: Male, Female, and Mixed (meaning both male and female included). Otherwise they go into Neutral group which indicates unspecified gender. The numbers of the four categories are counted by the group. Then, the numbers and the male-female ratios are compared and analyzed in relation to one another.

Thirdly, the relationships between the lesson topics/themes and the sex/gender of the main characters are examined in terms of relevancy.

II.2.ii Visuals: photos & illustrations

The visual components of the textbooks are examined, focusing on how photographs and illustrations help the users' comprehension of the themes and the topics of the literal texts they are attached to.

In general, textbooks include a variety of visuals such as photographs and drawings of people, animals, plants, and other inanimate objects, as well as different types of illustrations including charts, graphs, and maps. This holds true of EFL materials. Here, for the sake of sex and gender investigation, all the visual components of the textbooks are categorized into four groups according to their contents: Male, Female, Mixed, and Neutral. Pictures and illustrations exclusively portraying one or more male characters fall into the Male category; if photographs and drawings exclusively portray one or more female characters, they fall into the Female category. Pictures and drawings dealing with both sexes equally belong to the Mixed category. All the other visuals, which have no special reference to either human beings or personified objects, are categorized into the Neutral group. The number of the items in each group is counted and analyzed. The contents of the first two groups, Male and Female, are examined from the perspective of male and female equality or gender fairness. The numbers of the first three categories dealing with human beings are also examined later in relation to the findings in the reading texts reported above.

II.2.iii Comparison and discussion

Finally, the data of the examined two sections of the textbooks are compared and analyzed in terms of the mutual relationships. The correspondence of the main reading texts of each lesson and the visual images, drawings and illustrations, are investigated in terms of how closely the two components are related.

In addition, the results of the present study and those of the former studies conducted about fifteen years ago are compared and analyzed in order to learn whether or not, and how, the current English textbooks have improved in the light of gender-equal or non-sexist education.

III. Results

III.1 Reading texts

III.1.i Quantitative analysis

As EFL instructional materials, all the reading passages of the six examined English textbooks seem to appreciate the cross-cultural diversity by covering an extremely wide range of topics and themes from world history to science to art, reflecting the new course of study which advocates reforming the national education in favor of globalization. Advanced technology, environment, philanthropy, and pacifism are among preferred topics and themes. In terms of race and ethnicity, the reading sections describe people and objects from different countries and districts as well as cultures. No lessons, however, explicitly deal with gender issues as a topic or a theme in any way. See **Tables 4 to 9 of Appendix 2** for the details.

In terms of sex and gender, however, the main characters of the reading texts, as shown in **Tables 7-1 to 7-4 of Appendix 2**, are quite male-dominant in numbers. Out of 76 lessons, 32 have male central characters while 16 have female; 42.1% and 21.1%, respectively. Among 56 human characters, male characters account for 57.1% while females 28.6%.

Looking closely at each of the three pairs of the textbooks, CR1 and CR2 show an extremely unbalanced male-female ratio: Out of 26 lessons, 19 are male while four are female; 73.1% and 15.4%, respectively. Among 25 human-centered lessons, males represent 76% while females 16%. *Vivid English Communication* series (VV1 and VV2) show a similar, though a little softer, tendency: Out of 23 lessons, 7 are male (30.4%) while 4 female (17.4%). In contrast, *All Aboard! English Communication* series (AA1 and AA2) turned out as the opposite. Out of 27 lessons, 6 are male while 8 are female; 22.2% and 29.6%, respectively. The two series other than CR1 and CR2 have more neutral lessons than those in the other three gender categories.

III.1.ii Qualitative analysis

Looking at the social status and occupations of the main characters, 24 of the 32 male main characters have explicitly described occupations while ten of the sixteen female main characters do. CR1 and CR2, for example, introduced the male characters of quite exceptional occupations such as astronaut (Lesson 1 of CR1), photojournalist (Lesson 8 of CR1), *shogi* player (Lesson 2 of CR2), and robot scientist (Lesson 8 of CR2) besides more traditional jobs including pianist and scholar, but only a few females on relatively common jobs such as novelist (Lesson 3 of CR1) and doctor (Lesson 4 of CR2). Rather rare ones for females are environmentalist (Lesson 6 of CR1) and science writer (Lesson 7 of CR2).

In the case of AA1 and AA2, as mentioned above, they have the highest ratio of female characters (8 of 27; 29.6%), but five of them are high school students and only three have jobs such as gardener (Lesson 8 of AA1), musician (Lesson 8 of AA2), and animal therapist (Reading 2 of AA2). This paucity of paying jobs also holds true of VV1 and VV2: Three of four females have jobs such as blogger (Lesson 3 of VV1), singer (Lesson 6 of VV1), former United Nations staff (Lesson 9 of VV1).

Another case to mention is Lesson 9 of CR1, which tells a story of *Hayabusa*, an autonomous space navigation system and also includes a listening comprehension check question on a girl who

speaks of being an astronaut as her future profession. This is a good example of the measures to compensate the hazardous female omissions in the current English texts.

In addition, when the female characters appear, they are more frequently described as girls, not adults, and so are jobless figures or even war victims (Lesson 8 of CR1; Reading of VV1). One of the most problematic materials is the lesson 9 of CR2, where the *Activities* section deals with occupations as the topic, including two lists of the jobs high school boys and girls want to become in the future. Although the lesson introduces the aforementioned girl who speaks of being an astronaut as her future profession, the job names on the two lists along with the corresponding illustrations on the same page are so conventional or even outdated to handle in favor of gender equity that the materials would just reinforce gender stereotypes in society. This matter will also be discussed later in the section on the visual components of the textbooks.

III. 2 Visual components

The visual components in language textbooks are very “helpful in presenting more abstract, conceptual, and complex vocabulary at higher levels” (Seal, 1991, p. 301) when learners comprehend the textual and contextual message more effectively through the concrete images of the important elements of the materials. Especially, for cultivating the learners’ cross-cultural understanding in favor of globalization, they are powerful in dealing with new and unfamiliar people and objects inside and outside the earth.

III.2.i Quantitative analysis

The examined six textbooks contain 1,286 visuals in total: 730 photographs (56.8%) and 556 illustrations (43.2%). Among them, 786 (61.1%) depict people in some manner though 500 (38.9%) have no reference to human beings. Out of the former group, 335 are male-exclusive, 206 are female-exclusive, and 245 are gender-mixed pictures: 42.6%, 26.2%, 31.2%, respectively. Male to female ratio is approximately 3 to 2, which is about the same ratio as Nakai (2002) reports.

Looking closely at each series, AA1 and AA2 have 525 photographs and illustrations, the largest number of all the three titles. Out of them, 130 are male-exclusive, 130 female-exclusive, 120 gender-mixed, and 145 neutral pictures. The male to female ratio is one to one: They have exactly the same number of pictures.

In contrast, CR1 and CR2 have 419 visual images, and out of them 145 are male-exclusive, 36 female-exclusive, 68 mixed, and 170 neutral: 34.6%, 8.6%, 16.2%, and 40.6%, respectively. The male to female ratio is 4 to 1.

Out of 342 photographs and illustrations VV1 and VV2 contain, 60 are male-exclusive, 40 female-exclusive, 57 mixed, and 185 neutral visuals: 17.5%, 11.7%, 16.7%, and 54.1%, respectively. More than half of them are gender unspecified pictures though the series has still more male-exclusive visuals than female-exclusive counterparts.

As for the photograph and illustration ratios, among the 1,286 visual images are 730 photographs and 556 illustrations: The ratio is approximately three to two. As for each of the three pairs, CR1 and CR2 have 304 photographs and 115 illustrations (72.6% and 27.4%), AA1 and AA2 have 190 (36.2%) and 335 (63.8%), and VV1 and VV2 have 236 (69.0%) and 106 (31.0%). The AA pair is the only one series that utilizes more illustrations than photographs and also the equal

numbers of male and female visuals. The other two series have more photographs than illustrations: Approximately 70% are photographs in both two titles. For the details, see **Tables 11–1 to 11–4 of Appendix 3.**

III.2.ii Qualitative analysis

Looking more closely at the photographs and illustrations attached to the literal texts, how to handle visuals in lessons is varied with each series. AA1 and AA2, for example, not only have the largest numbers of pictures but also they utilize more illustrations than photographs. Among them, Word Box 2 of AA2 titled “Various Jobs” presents 50 drawings describing 19 males, 29 females, and two gender unspecified people with 50 different occupations including males as mechanic, pilot, carpenter, security guard, and construction worker as well as females as announcer/broadcaster, travel agent, graphic designer, teacher/instructor, and receptionist. Although many of them are very traditional, common trades for each sex, some are relatively unusual jobs for females as well as males: females as businessperson, judge, architect, politician, and professor; males as secretary, sales clerk, server/waitperson.

Along with male and female pictures of various occupations, AA2 contains a lesson on a restaurant run by local high school students, including five photographs of boys and girls cooking and serving food together. The textbook also has an illustration of a cooking boy in Word Box 1 (p. 28).

In contrast, CR1 and CR2, whose reading texts deal with far more male main characters, contain more photographs and illustrations of males than females. Most of the photographs portray some sorts of great figures such as astronaut, physically challenged pianist, world-famous cartoonist, top popular musician, and *shogi* champion; they are all men. Females are very few and depicted in stereotyped manners; for example, the illustration in Sound Studio 4 of CR2 (p. 119) draws a woman serving food to a boy though it has seemingly no connection with the content of the section. In addition, women tend to be presented in a supporting role or even as the weak. Lesson 4 of CR1, which tells a success story of a visually-impaired pianist, shows some photographs of the hero with his mother on the side or in the back. This seems unproblematic in itself, but it can become rather influential when those pictures are among the few that portray real women in the textbook.

Since VV1 and VV2 have the smallest number of visuals of the three examined titles and more than half of them are neutral pictures, photographs and illustrations depicting people are relatively few, though it is the only one series that employs photographs of people on the covers. Among the few pictures, Lesson 3 of VV1 shows a number of young people on streets in a wide variety of clothes including a young man in a skirt. However, when they differentiate people’s physical attributes such as sex/gender, race/ethnicity, and age/generation in drawings, they tend to become stereotyped: Sex/gender is typified by hairstyles and eyelashes as with race/ethnicity by skin colors, and age/generation by wrinkles and lines.

III.2.iii Comparison and discussion

After more than a decade, Japanese high school textbooks do not show so many significant differences, or improvement, from the older versions, either quantitatively or qualitatively.

With regard to the frequency of appearance of male and female characters in the reading texts, compared with the results of Nakai (2000) and Nakai (2001), both of which examined the then contemporary English textbooks, the current versions of textbooks are more androcentric or more

male-centered in terms of gender appearance or frequency. The previous studies report that the male-female ratios are 38.4% and 24.6% in 2000 while 34.1% and 21.7% in 2001. In a numerical sense, the current high school English textbooks do not show any improvement in the female visibility or frequency of appearance of female characters in the main reading texts. Women are still invisible or omitted from the scene.

However, in the range of occupations and social status, the current textbooks introduce a few but quite new and unprecedented occupations for females such as medical worker for NGO and disarmament/peacemaking coordinator for the United Nations and Japanese government, which were not seen in the older books and very likely to widen the future visions of boys as well as girls.

In terms of visual images, as shown in **Appendices 3 and 4**, the six examined textbooks contain 1,286 pictures; i.e. 214.3 per book. The former versions include 2,519 in the twenty books in total; i.e. 126.0 per book. The newer textbooks have twice as many pictures as the older ones. This difference may be related to the fact that the current textbooks deal with more cross-cultural themes and topics that are often unfamiliar to the young and inexperienced learners and so more information are necessary for them. In terms of gender representation, no special improvement is discovered here.

As for the percentage of photographs and illustrations, the current textbooks contain 730 photographs (56.8%) and 556 illustrations (43.2%) while the older books have 59.0% and 41.0%. The number of illustrations has slightly increased. As stated above, illustrations sometimes add another kind of information which literal texts do not provide: The race/ethnicity of the characters, for example, are apparent in visuals even though it is not referred in texts (Nakai, 2002). Moreover, drawings are inherently simplistic and symbolic, and so they are more likely to “portray easily recognizable clichés” (Hartman & Judd, 1978, p. 387) in very stereotyped or even sexist manners. This holds true with the current textbooks as already mentioned on the results of VV1 and VV2. However, no such extremely sexist drawings as reported in the older textbooks, e.g. a personified female mosquito wearing underwear, high-heeled shoes, and red lipstick and a girl skating in a skirt, are found in this examination.

From a large number of research studies in the past, we have already learned that no single textbook is perfect in every sense. Then, all we have to do as a researcher and a practitioner, as Gollnick, Sadker, & Sadker (1982) and Grossman & Grossman (1994) claim, is to make the best and critical use of it as well as to create as good materials as possible if students are ready to learn (Yoshihara, 2013). It is our responsibility to teach them what gender really is and why it is important to learn.

IV. Conclusion

IV.1 Summary

The exploration into the registered high school English textbooks currently used in Japan, focusing on the degrees to which such EFL textbooks have improved in terms of sex and gender representation over these fifteen years, by means of duplicating and comparing with the precedent studies, has revealed a very complicated and mixed reality at this moment. In a numerical sense,

the examined textbooks are still androcentric and sexist in their representation of men and women. They have more male main characters with a wide variety of occupations and social status than the female counterparts in a narrow and limited range. In quality, some of the lessons and units challenge the gender stereotypes and chauvinism by introducing some untraditional types of people such as a female medical expert working overseas, a female UN official for peacekeeping, and a cooking schoolboy, which were seldom described fifteen years ago.

IV.2 Limitation

There are a number of limitations to this study. One of them is that the present paper deals with textbooks, which is just one of the three research areas in the EFL education: the English language, Process, and Materials (Sunderland, 1992). The other types of materials as well as the two other areas are also important in order to understand hidden phenomena happening in English lessons every day. Another limitation is that the number of examined textbooks, six, might not be large enough for a comprehensive investigation, although the book selection was conducted very carefully on the basis of the market share data. Still another is that the present paper analyzed only two of the seven courses officially offered by the current GSY. A more extensive investigation of the textbooks for the other five courses including English Expression I & II and English conversation might reveal completely different faces of the materials.

IV.3 Future research suggestion

On April 30th in 2015, MEXT issued, according to the law enacted in the previous year, a highly important notice that schools take more careful and sensitive measures to treat all the pupils and students of sexual minorities including those with sexual identity disorders (MEXT, 2015). The notice suggests that, even though not explicitly mentioned in the current course of study, gender is now one of the indispensably important issues to deal with at schools as well as in society of Japan. Then, the language textbooks are now expected to urgently follow such new current of thought when they cope with sex and gender issues along with other contemporary problems. In order to produce such improved textbooks, more comprehensive and extensive research should be conducted on these ongoing phenomena at school in more carefully controlled ways.

List of Examined Textbooks

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 Kiyota, Y. *et al.* (2015). *All aboard!: English communication II*. Tokyo: Tokyo shoseki.
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Appendix 1

Table 1 Market share of English Communication I textbooks

Book title	Publisher	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	Total 1
All Aboard!	Tokyoshoseki	125441	144136	158116	427693
Vista	Sanseido	99711	113617	112070	325398
Crown	Sanseido	108527	107115	108427	324069
My Way	Sanseido	69404	76951	79527	225882
Vivid	Daiichi	67269	71718	75604	214591
Whole market		1220673	1276758	1277214	3774645

Table 2 Market share of English Communication II textbooks

Book title	Publisher	2013-2014	2014-2015	Total 2
Crown	Sanseido	111456	109833	221289
All Aboard!	Tokyoshoseki	87254	106592	193846
My way	Sanseido	69115	80594	149709
Vista	Sanseido	66699	73886	140585
Element	Keirinkan	70569	68707	139276
Vivid	Daiichi	65055	70589	135644
Whole market		1080229	1126881	2207110

Table 3 Market share of English Communication 1 & II

Book title	Publisher	T1+T2	Share%	Ranking
Crown	Sanseido	545358	9.1	2
All Aboard!	Tokyoshoseki	621539	10.4	1
My way	Sanseido	375591	6.3	4
Vista	Sanseido	465983	7.8	3
Element	Keirinkan	343156	5.7	6
Vivid	Daiichi	350235	5.9	5
Whole market		5981755		

Appendix 2

Titles and contents of registered H.S. English textbooks in Japan

Table 4 Crown English Communication I (Sanseido, 2013)

L.	Title	Genre	Main Character	Ethnicity
1	Going into Space	Space travel/ Pioneer	Male: Astronaut	Asian: Japanese
2	A Forest in the Sea	Landfills/Ecology	Mixed: Ecologists	Asian: Japanese
3	Waters without Borders	Foreign languages & cultures	Female: Novelists	Asian: Mixed
4	Playing by Ear	Biography/ Physical challenge	Male: Pianist	Asian: Japanese
5	Food Bank	Welfare/NPO	Male: Philanthropist	Caucasian: American?
R1	Wisdom of a Fool	Literature/Fables	Male: Sage	Asian: Middle Eastern?
6	Roots & Shoots	Biology/Wildlife, Conservation	Female: Envi- ronmentalalist	Caucasian: British
7	Diving into History	History/African Archeology	Male: Archeologist	Caucasian: French
8	Not So Long Ago	Photojournalism/ Pacifism	Mixed: war victims & Photojournalist	Mixed: Asian & American
9	Paddling a Log?	The Internet/ Information technology	Male: Mixed	Caucasian
10	Good Ol' Charlie Brown	Culture/Cartoon	Male: Cartoonist	Caucasian: American
R2	The Luncheon	Literature/Humor	Male: Writer	Caucasian: French?
O	Two Dreamers, One Dream	History/Freedom	Male: Politician & reformer	Mixed: Afro- American

Table 5 Crown English Communication II (Sanseido, 2014)

L.	Title	Genre	Main Character	Ethnicity
1	A Boy and His Windmill	Biography/Social reform/Self-help	Male: Inventor	African: Malawian?
2	Into Unknown Territory	Biography/Celebrity	Male: Top <i>shogi</i> player	Asian: Japanese
3	Paul the Prophet	Wonder/Animal prophecy	Male: Octopus	Caucasian: German
4	Crossing the border	Biography/NGO/Medical volunteer	Female: Doctor	Asian: Japanese
5	Txtng-Language in evolution-	Culture/Language & technology	Neutral	Mixed
R1	Sun-Powered Car	Literature/Humor	Male: TV news reporter	Caucasian: American?
6	Ashura	History/Buddhist art	Male: Scholar	Asian: Japanese
7	Why Biomimicry?	Science/Sustainability	Female: Science writer	Caucasian?
8	Before Another 20 Minutes Goes By	Technology/Humanitarianism	Male: Robot scientist	Asian: Japanese
9	The Long Voyage Home	Science/Space exploration	Male: Space scientist	Asian: Japanese
10	Grandfather's Letters	Biography/Family bond	Male: British army officer	Caucasian: British
R2	A Fall Before Rising	Literature/Mountaineering	Male: Mountaineer	Asian: Indian
O L	MJ	Biography/Celebrity	Male: American pop musician	African: American

Table 6 All Aboard! English Communication I (Tokyo Shoseki, 2015)

L.	Title	Genre	Main character	Ethnicity
1	Hello, Everyone!	Cross-culture/Introduction	Mixed: H.S. Students	Mixed: No African
2	A Letter to Australia	Cross-culture/Letters	Male: H.S. students	Caucasian: Australian
3	Kawaii Culture	Cross-culture/Dialogue	Female: H.S. Students	Mixed: Asian & Caucasian
4	A Symphony of Soup and Noodles	Culture/Food	Neutral	Asian: Japanese
5	Lifelong Friends	Cross-culture/Language learning	Male: Comedians	Mixed: American & Japanese
R1	Short Stories in English	Literature/Humor	Mixed:	Mixed
6	A Funny Picture from Edo Period	Culture/Art	Female: H.S. Student	Asian: Japanese
7	Living on Ice	Biology/Wildlife	Neutral	Unspecified
8	A Garden in Hokkaido	Biography/Nature	Female: Gardener	Asian: Japanese
9	Pigs from across the Sea	History/Humanitarianism	Neutral	Asian: Japanese
10	Memories on Trees	Cross-culture/Lifestyle	Neutral	Caucasian: Finnish
11	A Window on the Universe	Science/Astronomy	Neutral	Hawaiian & Japanese
R2	The Kite	Literature/Fable	Male: Animals	Unspecified

Table 7 All Aboard! English Communication II (Tokyo Shoseki, 2015)

L.	Title	Genre	Main character	Ethnicity
1	My Friend in Hawaii	Cross-culture/ E-mail	Mixed: H.S. Student	Mixed: Japanese & Hawaiian
2	Streetcars in my City	Culture/ Environment	Neutral	Mixed: Japanese & American
3	Crossing Language Barriers	Cross-Culture/ Show business,	Male: Ventriloquism Performer	Asian: Japanese
4	The Spirit of the Forest	Biology/Wildlife	Neutral: Animal	Asian: Japanese
5	Girl with a Pearl Earring	Culture/Art (Painting)	Female: H.S. Student	Asian: Japanese
6	Grandchildren's Restaurant	Business/ Restaurant	Mixed: High School. Students	Asian: Japanese
R1	Mujina	Literature/Fable	Male: Merchant	Asian: Japanese
7	A Microcosm in the Sea	Geography/ World Heritage/ Environment	Male: H.S. Student	Caucasian: Australian
8	Wings of Music	Biography/ Profession	Female: Musician	Asian: Japanese
9	Magic of the Cotswolds	Geography/ Travel abroad	Female: H.S. Student	Asian: Japanese
10	Bunraku	Culture/Art	Female: H.S. St	Caucasian?
11	Bitter Truth about Chocolate	Economics/ Fair-trade	Neutral	African:
12	Hayabusa's Present from Space	Science/ Astronomy, Space exploration	Neutral	Asian: Japanese
R2	Olivia	Literature/	Female: Animal therapist	Caucasian: American

Table 8 Vivid English Communication I (Daiichi Gakushusha, 2015)

L.	Title	Genre	Main character	Ethnicity
1	Voices from the World	Cross-culture/ Lifestyle	Mixed: H.S. Students	Mixed:
2	Stories behind Names	History/Custom, English names	Neutral	Caucasian: British? American?
3	Look Cool on Your Streets	Culture/ Street fashion	Female: Blogger	Asian: Japanese
4	Our actions Can Make Electricity	Technology/Ecology Clean energy	Male: Scientist	Asian: Japanese
5	Being Cute to Survive	Biology/Survival	Neutral	Unspecified
6	Take a Chance on You	Biography/ Challenge	Female: Singer	Mixed: Japanese & American.
7	Japanese Dish from Abroad	Economics/Food miles, Ecology	Neutral	Asian: Japanese
8	The Sphinx in Danger	History/Geology Environment	Neutral	African: Egyptian
9	The Dream of a Young Japanese Girl in Ghana	Biography/Social reform	Male: Overseas volunteer	Asian: Japanese/ African
R.	Misako's A-bombed Piano	Literature/ Pacifism	Female: A-bomb survivor	Asian: Japanese

Table 9 Vivid English Communication II (Daiichi Gakushusha, 2015)

L.	Title	Genre	Main character	Ethnicity
1	Pictograms-Useful Signs on Streets	Culture/ Communication	Neutral	Unspecified
2	Fun with Pakkun	Biography/Life abroad	Male: Comedian	Caucasian: American
3	Origami Is Not a Piece of Paper	Culture/Art, Paper craft	Neutral	Asian: Japanese
4	The Real Top Player in the World	Biography/Sports & Handicap	Male: Wheelchair tennis player	Asian: Japanese
5	The Doctor in the Stomach	Science/Medical technology	Neutral	Unspecified
6	Nature for the Next Generation	Geology/ Ecotourism	Neutral	Asian: Japanese
7	A Young Man in the Sea Who Made a Change	Biography/ Historical figure	Male: English translator pioneer	Asian: Japanese
8	Streetcars in the 21 st Century	Economics/ Ecology	Neutral	Asian: Japanese
9	The Challenge of Disarmament	History/Pacifism, Disarmament	Female: U.N. staff	Asian: Japanese
10	Hayabusa-With Our Hopes and Dreams	Science/ Astronomy, Space exploration	Neutral	Asian: Japanese
R.	1,000 Winds and 1,000 Cellos	Literature/ Human bond	Mixed: a boy and a girl	Asian: Japanese
FR 1	A Retrieved Reformation	Literature/	Male	Caucasian:
FR 2	The Joker	Literature/		Caucasian:

Table 10-1 Gender ratio of main-characters of textbook lessons

	male	female	mixed	neutral	lessons
Crown I	9	2	2	0	13
Crown II	10	2	0	1	13
All Aboard I	3	3	2	5	13
All Aboard II	3	5	2	4	14
Vivid I	2	3	1	4	10
Vivid II	5	1	1	6	13
Total	32	16	8	20	76
%	42.1	21.1	10.5	26.3	-
%/56	57.1	28.6	14.3	-	

Table 10-2 Crown English Communication I & II (Sanseido)

	male	female	mixed	neutral	lessons
Crown I	9	2	2	0	13
Crown II	10	2	0	1	13
Total (%)	19 (73.1)	4 (15.4)	2 (7.7)	1 (3.8)	26
%/25	76.0	16.0	8.0	-	-

Table 10-3 All Aboard! English Communication I & II (Tokyo Shoseki)

	male	female	mixed	neutral	lessons
All Aboard I	3	3	2	5	13
All Aboard II	3	5	2	4	14
Total (%)	6 (22.2)	8 (29.6)	4 (14.8)	9 (33.3)	27
%/18	33.3	44.4	22.2	-	-

Table 10-4 Vivid English Communication I & II (Daiichi-Gakushusha)

	male	female	mixed	neutral	lessons
Vivid I	2	3	1	4	10
Vivid II	5	1	1	6	13
Total (%)	7 (30.4)	4 (17.4)	2 (8.7)	10 (43.5)	23
%/13	53.8	30.8	15.4	-	-

Appendix 3

Numbers of visuals

Table 11-1 Crown I & II

	male	female	mixed	neutral	total (%)
photograph	116	27	45	116	304 (72.6)
illustration	29	9	23	54	115 (27.4)
total (%)	145 (34.6)	36 (8.6)	68 (16.2)	170 (40.6)	419

Table 11-2 All Aboard! I & II

	male	female	mixed	neutral	total (%)
photograph	25	27	27	111	190 (36.2)
illustration	105	103	93	34	335 (63.8)
total (%)	130 (24.8)	130 (24.8)	120 (22.9)	145 (27.6)	525

Table 11-3 Vivid I & II

	male	female	mixed	neutral	total (%)
photograph	40	25	36	135	236 (69.0)
illustration	20	15	21	50	106 (31.0)
total (%)	60 (17.5)	40 (11.7)	57 (16.7)	185 (54.1)	342

Table 11-4 Total

	male	female	mixed	neutral	total (%)
photograph	181	79	108	362	730 (56.8)
illustration	154	127	137	138	556 (43.2)
total (%)	335 (26.0)	206 (16.0)	245 (19.1)	500 (38.9)	1286

Key:

- 1) male stands for male-exclusive visuals;
- 2) female stands for female-exclusive visuals;
- 3) mixed stands for visuals of mixed sexes;
- 4) neutral stands for sexually neutral or unspecified visuals.

Appendix 4

Data of the older textbooks from Nakai (2000)

Table 12-1 Numbers of visuals of the second editions (1997)

	male	female	mixed	neutral	total	%
photograph	149	89	264	268	770	60.3
illustration	118	70	138	184	508	39.7
total	267	159	402	452	1278	100
%	20.9	12.4	31.5	35.4	100	

Table 12-2 Numbers of visuals of the first editions (1990)

	male	female	mixed	neutral	total	%
photograph	139	89	218	270	716	57.7
illustration	136	77	152	160	525	42.3
total	275	166	370	430	1241	100
%	22.2	13.4	29.8	34.6	100	

Table 12-3 Numbers of visuals (1990 & 1997)

	male	female	mixed	neutral	total	%
photograph	288	178	482	538	1486	59.0
illustration	254	147	290	344	1033	41.0
total	542	325	772	882	2519	100
%	21.5	12.9	30.6	35.0	100	

Key:

5) male stands for male-exclusive visuals;

6) female stands for female-exclusive visuals;

7) mixed stands for visuals of mixed sexes;

8) neutral stands for sexually neutral or unspecified visuals.