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**PERCEPTION OF GENDER IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS OF
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF ESTONIA**

Bachelor's thesis

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Kinnitus

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PREFACE

Nowadays, gender issues are becoming more and more topical in today's societies and, hence, education systems. Nevertheless, schools and teachers can still inadvertently perpetuate bias without realizing it. For instance, teachers and schools may use textbooks and workbooks that present gender bias in the context of their assignments and pictures, in such topics, as occupations and household duties. The EFL language textbooks are one of the most essential and valuable tools for creating the worldview, as children often assimilate society's attitudes through learning. The wrong or gender-biased representation might influence children's opinions and values; it also might negatively affect the level of confidence in academic success or make some learners feel demotivated and frustrated. Thus, this research is aimed to explore how gender roles are presented in the context of tasks and pictures of elementary school EFL textbooks and workbooks of Estonia to establish whether there is a tendency towards any kind of discrimination. In addition, the intention is to provide recommendations of how to present gender roles in a more balanced way in the event that gender bias is proven and raise awareness of it in English language classrooms of the elementary school of Estonia.

The bachelor's thesis consists of The Introduction, two chapters, and The conclusion. The Introduction consists of a brief observation of the theoretical framework and literature review. The first chapter, *Methods of Analysis* includes the theory and criteria of textbooks' analyses, discussing the concept of gender and its place in EFL textbooks. The second chapter, *Data Analysis*, includes an analysis of texts, tasks, and pictures in EFL textbooks and workbooks of elementary schools considering such factors as the frequency of occurrence of female- vs. male-gendered characters, the thematic roles they represent, and the kinds of emotional states and activities they experience. *The Conclusion* will provide the research results and present some recommendations on how to avoid gender bias in EFL textbooks.

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INTRODUCTION

The situation in Estonia

European Institute for Gender Equality (2021) states that the percentage of men (66%) who are full time workers in Estonia is noticeably higher than among women (51%). Nevertheless, the duration of working years is almost the same (39 years among women and 40 years among men). Overall, there are more women who are working in education, human health and social work activities than men. Career Prospects Index and ability to take one/two hours off during working hours to take care of personal/family matters among women and men are the same (European Institute for Gender Equality 2021).

According to the Statistics Estonia (2021), there are 633,415 (45,35%) males and 698,381 (54,65%) females in Estonia. It indicates that the number of females in Estonia is significantly bigger: the difference makes 9,3%. Moreover, there are even less women in politics and government. While in 2021 the share of ministers is only with difference in five percent, the difference in the share of members of parliament among men and women is enormous. 26 percent of women and 74 percent of men are in parliament (European Institute for Gender Equality 2021).

European Institute for Gender Equality (2021) shows that overall, women and men in Estonia care for their children, grandchildren, etc. at the same level. However, the statistics show that 76 percent of women do cooking and/or household every day while the percentage among men is only 47. Among workers who do sporting/cultural or leisure activities outside of their home several times a week, men workers — 38%, women workers — 34%. Women and men workers help voluntarily each month to the same degree (European Institute for Gender Equality 2021).

There are considerably more women in Estonia with tertiary education than men while the number of participants in formal and non-formal education is at the same level. Speaking about tertiary education, women are more prone to study education, health and welfare, humanities and arts than men (European Institute for Gender Equality 2021).

Despite all the facts that have been presented above, the monthly income of women is lower than that of men. 25% of women and 20% of men are at risk of poverty (European Institute for Gender Equality 2021). The gender pay gap equals 14,9% (Statistics Estonia 2021). As for the employment rate, the statistics evaluates the ration between employed males and females as 69,5% of men to 64,0% of women.

Although women in Estonia live longer, have less health issues, do household more often than men and considerably have higher education, they still earn less and do not actively participate in political life of the country. Thus, taking into account the Estonian context, it can be concluded that gender inequalities are still substantial.

English is the most widely spoken language worldwide, with 1.5 billion speakers. People of various nations and cultures tend to speak it, making English a global lingua franca, as it is considered the first choice of a foreign language worldwide. People do not only use it for communicating goals but also for such purposes as studying and working.

Nowadays the English language is in the top three most popular foreign languages in Estonia and is spoken by 48% of the population, making it the most widely spoken foreign language in Estonia (Statistics Estonia 2021). Therefore, English is commonly taught at Estonian schools as the first foreign language. The choice of a textbook is justified by its common use in Estonian schools and presence in the national curriculum(Riiklikule õppekavale vastavate õpikute, töövihikute ja tööraamatute loetelu, 2007).The purpose of this research is to analyze English as foreign language textbooks that are used in Estonian schools and determine whether and how gender inequality perpetuates Estonian education system through the educational materials and which actions could be done to prevent it.

Gender as a social construct

The sociology of gender is one of the largest subfields within sociology and features theory and research that critically interrogates the social construction of gender, how gender interacts with other social forces in society, and how gender relates to social structure overall. Sociologists within this subfield study a wide range of topics with a variety of research methods, including things like identity, social interaction, power and oppression, and the interaction of gender with other things like race, class, culture, religion, and sexuality, among others (Crossman, A. 2018).

From the first days of life, people are raised according to their sex. For example, even before birth, parents prepare clothes for their children depending on the ultrasound results or their expectations. Furthermore, children are told that they have a gender that should match their biological sex. There exist specific socially accepted rules of gender. Bornstein (1994: 45), an adaption from Garfinkel (1967), describes them as:

- 1) "There are two, and only two, genders (female and male).
- 2) One's gender is invariant (If you are female/male, you always were female/male, and you always will be female/male).
- 3) Genitals are the essential sign of gender. (A female is a person with a vagina; a male is a person with a penis).
- 4) Any exceptions to two genders are not to be taken seriously (They must be jokes, pathology, etc.).
- 5) There are no transfers from one gender to another except ceremonial ones (masquerades).
- 6) Everyone must be classified as a member of one gender or another. (There are no cases where gender is not attributed).
- 7)The male/female dichotomy is a "natural" one (Males and females exist independently of scientists' (or anyone else criteria for being male or female).
- 8) Membership in one gender or another is "natural" (Being female or male is not dependent on anyone deciding what you are)."

Life in society involves many rules and regulations that coordinate human behavior. A person's life outside of society is hardly possible. However, the environment not only educates a person but also influences the formation of his identity. As West and Zimmerman (1987:126) state:

Rather than as a property of individuals, we conceive of gender as an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society.

Gender from the Sociolinguistic Perspective

The nature of gender has been widely studied. In many research contexts, gender was perceived as a social construct, a marker of difference, and a tool of oppression. (Halberstam 2014:117)

Gender studies developed alongside and emerged from women's studies, which consolidated as an academic field of inquiry in the 1970s. (Halberstam 2014:118) The second wave of feminism triggered it. The second wave of feminism focused on how personal relationships and economic and political roles of women in society were facing inequalities and bias. The transition from women's studies to gender studies was received ambiguously. As Wiegman (2002:19) claims:

When the 2001 NWSA Conference featured a plenary session called "The Future of Women's Studies: Is It Feminist?" It asked us to take seriously such negative effect as it relates to the political imagery of women's studies as a field.

One of the approaches by which sociologists have studied the nature of human relations and in particular gender roles is structural-functional theory, also called functionalism. The founders of functionalism were an English biologist and philosopher Herbert Spenser and a sociologist Émile Durkheim.

Based on works of one of the most influential sociologists of the 20 century Talcott Parsons, who supported and played a significant role in development of the functional structuralism theory, a century ago it was and still is believed that people behaved according to a certain division of roles in society. In a nuclear family, women were supposed to fulfill the expressive roles and men were supposed to fulfill the instrumental roles. People in expressive roles tend to "soothe" the society: regulate conflicts, find solutions, care of others. On the domestic level the distribution of functional roles women, therefore, were expected to act as "caregivers", help their children socialize and provide family members with emotional support.

Instrumental roles, otherwise, imply providing a social group with materialistic resources such as money, victual, and other things to help humanity survive. Hence, according to Parson's "traditional" domestic division of labor, men provide their family with everything necessary, do hard physical work, for example, hunt, and protect the social group they were a part of.

Though now sociologists view this approach as outdated and heteronormal and during wars those gender roles have shifted many times, when the men were at war or just outnumbered by women because significant losses of men's lives in military conflicts, and women, successfully fulfilling "menly" roles, many still agree that both roles described in functional structuralism theory have every reason to be considered applicable to modern society and helpful for regulating its successful functioning.

Another and modern approach of understanding the conception of gender is the theory by West and Zimmerman formulated in the article "Doing gender". According to it, gender is

something "artificial" that is created for better communication and through interaction between people, and as such is an interactional accomplishment (West and Zimmerman 1987: 126). This approach highlights the vulnerability of the conception of gender and shows that it is possible to challenge it.

According to this perspective, people learn how to "do" gender through socialization processes that happen within families, friend groups, and other social institutions and interactions. They learn what behaviors, dress, mannerisms, and attitudes are appropriate or expected of individuals based on their gender, and they then perform these behaviors in order to be recognized and accepted in the society as a particular gender.

For example, someone who identifies as a man may "do gender" by adopting masculine behaviors and dress, such as being assertive and masculine, wearing pants instead of skirts, and playing sports, while someone who identifies as a woman may "do gender" by adopting more feminine behaviors and dress, such as being nurturing, wearing dresses and makeup, and pursuing activities such as dancing or fashion.

Changes in sociology around the question of gender have been studied and analyzed. Thus, Lorber (2006:448) concludes these changes to acknowledge that gender is socially constructed; it is a mutable social category. Lorber (2006:448) claims that feminist sociologists' work on gender has provided the tools for sociology to reconsider how it analyzes power structures and produces knowledge.

Thus, gender socialization occurs by virtue of society and culture. People enter the process of gender socialization from early childhood. One way children get through gender socialization is through the help of parenting and teaching materials. These processes are also the subject of gender studies.

Gender bias and its negative effect on society.

Gender bias is a form of prejudice or discrimination that is based on an individual's gender. According to Eagly and Wood (2012), gender bias refers to "the favoring of one gender over the other, usually resulting in discrimination against the disadvantaged sex" (p. 12). This bias can manifest in various forms, including stereotyping, differential treatment, and societal expectations.

Gender bias can have significant negative impacts on individuals and society as a whole. For example, research has shown that gender bias in the workplace can lead to reduced opportunities for women in terms of hiring, promotion, and pay (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Gender bias in education can also lead to reduced opportunities for girls and women to pursue certain fields of study or careers (Halpern et al., 2007).

Gender bias refers to the preconceived notions or attitudes that society holds about people based on their gender. It is a pervasive problem that affects individuals, organizations, and society as a whole. Here are some common and generally known ways in which gender bias can affect society:

1. **Discrimination in the workplace:** gender bias can lead to discrimination in the workplace, where people may be denied job opportunities, promotions, or equal pay based on their gender
2. **Limited access to education:** gender bias can also impact access to education. This can result in a lack of skilled workers, perpetuating gender inequality and limiting the potential for economic growth.
3. **Social expectations:** gender bias can also lead to restrictive social expectations, where individuals are expected to behave and conform to certain gender roles. This can limit individuals' personal freedom.
4. **Violence and harassment:** Gender bias can also contribute to a culture of violence and harassment, where individuals are subjected to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse based on their gender.
5. **Unequal representation:** Gender bias can also lead to unequal representation in positions of power and leadership, resulting in a lack of diversity and limited perspectives in decision-making processes.

As for children, the negative effect of gender bias on them has been widely studied. One of the most recent research conducted on this topic is "Gender stereotypes in early childhood: a literature review" by Leah Culhane and Andrew Bazeley (2018). The review examines the prevalence and impact of gender stereotypes on early childhood development, as well as the factors that contribute to their formation and perpetuation. According to the report of The Fawcett Society, findings of the research indicate that:

1. "45% of people said that when they were children, they experienced gender stereotyping as they were expected to behave in a certain way.
2. More than half (51%) of people affected saying it constrained their career choices and 44% saying it harmed their personal relationships.

3. Half of all women affected (53%) said gender stereotyping had a negative impact on who does the caring in their own family.
4. 7 in 10 younger women (18-34s) affected by stereotypes say their career choices were restricted" (The Fawcett Society, 2022).

Overall, gender bias can have a profound impact on people and society as a whole, limiting opportunities, perpetuating inequality, and contributing to harmful cultural norms and practices. It is important to address and challenge gender bias in all its forms to create a more equitable and fair society.

Gender neutrality as a concept

Gender neutrality is the concept that language, policies, and practices should avoid favouring or stereotyping any particular gender, and should treat people equally regardless of their gender identity. This means avoiding gender-sensitive language or imagery and using inclusive language that doesn't reinforce gender stereotypes or binary gender norms.

The concept of gender neutrality has been discussed and advocated for by scholars, activists for many decades. During the 1970s and 1980s, the feminist movement in particular stressed the need to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes and create a more inclusive and fair society.

One early example of advocacy for gender neutrality was the publication of the book "Nonsexist Child-Rearing" by Peggy Swallow in 1972, which challenged traditional gender roles and encouraged parents to raise children in a way that did not reinforce gender stereotypes.

Another step in the promotion of gender neutrality was the development of inclusive language and the use of gender-neutral pronouns. In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars and activists advocated for the use of gender-neutral language, including the use of "they" or "ze" instead of "he" or "she" to refer to individuals whose gender identity is unknown or nonbinary.

In recent years, the concept of gender neutrality has gained increased attention and recognition, particularly in the context of gender diversity and transgender rights. The use

of gender-neutral language and materials is seen as an important step in creating a more inclusive and respectful society that values and respects all individuals, regardless of their gender identity.

EFL Textbooks as a Tool for Gender Representation

Children learn and absorb a lot of information through textbooks. Language without culture is impossible, it reflects certain social attitudes and way of thinking of people. It is complicated to totally avoid immersion into society and its standards when teaching and learning a language. This is why the language in textbooks should be correct and polite. "Language is, first and foremost, a tool or vehicle of thought and vocabulary is the foundation of idea conceptualisation offering a map of the concepts, processes and relationships that one wants to convey" (Halliday 1978). Language textbooks contribute not only to delivery of the knowledge of the language structure and vocabulary but also bring information about the rest of the world from different perspectives and points of view. English language textbooks cover various topics ranging from food to relationships helping children quickly adopt different opinions, which need to be balanced and correct.

Gender neutral learning materials and their effect on study results

According to Martin (2005:457), learning materials that are supposed to be inclusive gender-neutral have a strong influence on the development of children's absorption of gender and sexual norms.

Learning materials should promote inclusivity and equality in education. Research has shown that gendered language and materials can reinforce gender stereotypes and limit students' perceptions of their own potential, particularly for girls (Martin et al., 1990).

In contrast, gender-neutral materials have been shown to be more effective in promoting positive outcomes for students. For example, a study by Bian and Leslie (2018) found that children who were exposed to gender-neutral materials were more likely to explore a wider range of interests and less likely to conform to gender stereotypes than those who were exposed to gendered materials.

Furthermore, gender-neutral materials can help to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that respects and values all students, regardless of their gender

identity. This can have positive impacts on student engagement, motivation, and well-being (Good et al., 2012).

Thus, appropriate learning materials should not represent any gender discrimination or dominance.

The bachelor's thesis will review EFL materials and attempt to answer how gender is presented in English language textbooks and workbooks of elementary schools of Estonia and how to encourage a more balanced representation of gender roles in elementary school materials.

CHAPTER I METHODS OF ANALYSIS

1.1 Description of analysis methods

The bachelor's thesis will endeavor to make a qualitative critical discourse on three textbooks used in Estonian elementary schools. The textbooks were chosen based on two reasons. First, they contain many illustrations on all pages. Secondly, they are the most popular books used in Estonian elementary schools. This analysis includes four different sections: character analysis, occupational distribution, language overview, and an illustration outline.

1.1.1 Illustration Outline

Traditionally textbooks and other learning materials contain pictures and photos which illustrate dialogues and serve as an entertaining tool that makes learning materials motivating and engaging for students. They are also used for discussions in different tasks and teaching situations. Without visual elements, "presenting learning materials merely through textual information may not lead to efficient learning demanded by the excessive amount of information." (Kuzu et al. 2007:8).

Visual perception of the world is a characteristic of many living organisms, and humans are no exception. According to Richard Gregory's visual theory, a person interprets what they see based on previous experience and information. The result of the formation of incorrect hypotheses will be the wrong world's perception (Gregory 1970).

Thus, the content not only of illustrations but the complexity of illustrations and texts matter in the forming of children's interpretations of information and perceptions of the world around them. Children with strong visual memory skills, also known as "Visual learners," may proceed with lots of information by looking at the pictures or charts in their study materials. (Fleming 2019)

Furthermore, visual information is kept better in students' minds (Williams 2009). Therefore, visual elements play an essential role in the learning materials. One part of the analysis in this bachelor's thesis will focus on the visual part of English language textbooks.

The first step of the analysis is to count all illustrations that depict humans; this is in order to be able to make statistics of such aspects as to how many of the pictures illustrated

males and how many illustrated females, the number and proportion of females and males depicted as main characters of illustrations, the types of activities which the main characters partake in, and the distribution of those types and activities among female and male main characters.

Sub characters will also be counted and analyzed. If several people are depicted in illustrations, a person located in the center will be considered to be the "main character". This determining helps to understand if the frequency of occurrence of male and female characters is equal or not.

1.1.2 Character analysis

The next step of the analysis is to observe the way male and female main characters are shown in relation to professions, types of activities, and appearances. According to Martin (1998:498), clothes and their color participate in gendering children's bodies and serve as stereotypical identifiers of children's gender. For example, there is a common stereotype of pink being a "girly" color and blue as a color for boys. Thus, the first category to observe is the type and color of clothing characters wear and their correlation with feminine or masculine standards, such as a dress for a woman and a suit for a man.

As David and Kowitz (1994) claim:

Most notably, women tend to be described by such adjectives as busy, beautiful, pretty, and tall. Women are hardly ever depicted as: important, famous, rich, poor, afraid, pleased, or happy. As for men, statistically, they are: poor, rich, young, old, strong, tall, and fat.

The analysis of visual elements of appearance aims to establish whether there is a balance between description and depiction of male and female characters in illustrations.

1.1.3 Occupational distribution

As for jobs the characters do, and professions males and females represent, their importance being de-gendered and neutral cannot be underestimated. Occupations and workforce distribution are some of the most stereotyped aspects in EFL textbooks (Brusokaite 2013:14).

According to Sunderland (1992:86), in cases where females are represented in restricted social roles, there might not be any cognitive and communicative empowerment for female

learners. Thus, engaging sub and main characters in domestic and social activities may also be important in the process of creating the perception of society and gender roles.

Therefore, the professions and genders they are represented by will also be scrutinized in the analysis in terms of getting a clear image of equality in job distribution. Occupations will be divided into two columns (the ones which are represented by males and the ones which represent and counted by females).

As domestic activities play the same important role as social ones (as they do in real everyday life), the type of objects characters possess will also be considered. Several researchers (Sunderland, 1998) revealed that in EFL materials, women are usually depicted as subordinate, surrounded by the household, and engaged in such duties as cooking or caring for the children. Meanwhile, men have a tendency to be depicted in recreational conditions or involved in the public sphere.

1.1.4 Observation of linguistic items in EFL textbooks

The most important criteria for the analysis will be vocabulary. As Fairclough (2003:129) states: "the most obvious distinguishing features of discourse are likely to be features of vocabulary – discourses 'word' or 'lexicalize' the world in particular ways."

Therefore, studying and analyzing language helps people get closer to the "right" perception of reality. Further, Fairclough explains that discourse is "the domain of statements" and claims that he sees it as "ways of representing aspects of the world" (Fairclough 2003:124-124).

Thus, another important focus of the analysis will be on the use of language. The words that could be seen as gendered or de-gendered will be counted, and the result will be calculated in percentage. In order to get an understanding of the authors of textbooks creating positive role models, there will also be an examination of linguistic features such as the "generic he." As Stringer and Hopper (2009: para1) state, the generic "he" is "the use of the pronoun "he" in circumstances of sex-indefinite reference unduly emphasizes men over women, thereby both re-constituting and signifying males' micropolitical hegemony."

The generic usage is often considered to be incorrect. For example, as Baron (2016: para 23) claims:

"the gender politics of the form is settled as well: all the major grammar, dictionaries, and style guides warn against the generic "he", not because it's bad grammar (which it is), but because it's sexist (which it also is). The authorities don't like the coordinates of "his" or "her", either: they are wordy and awkward. The only options left are the singular "they" or an invented pronoun."

Nevertheless, there is not only the usage of the generic "he", but also the usage of such suffixes as "man" in such words as businessman, policeman, and chairman and "ess" in such words as "actress", "waitress", "hostess". Brusokaite (2013) states that women are trivialized and degraded by the ambiguous usage of a man referring not only to humankind but also to a male person as it makes women less important than men. There are the alternatives to avoid this usage but the authors still apply the word man in its generic use.

Therefore, the balanced usage of pronouns and suffixes in EFL materials is one more aspect that will be scrutinized. It is a criterion of the ethical usage of the English language in EFL textbooks.

Another aspect of analysis will be the frequency of occurrence of pronouns. The ratio of "he", "she", and "they" will be observed in order to collect data about equality of appearance female, male and gender-neutral characters. As Nicole Amare (2007:180) states:

"linguistic sexism was particularly prevalent in the male-to-female ratio, where male-gendered words were mentioned almost twice as often as female-gendered ones. Because women are over half of the population of the world, over half of the seats in our writing classrooms, and now over half of the writing instructor population, they should be represented as such in text such as online grammar guides".

Thus, as English as a Foreign Language textbooks also serve as an essential source of information in learning a language, the male-to-female ratio in the texts and tasks is to be considered in the current analysis.

Another linguistic feature called "firstness" is also sometimes an issue in EFL textbooks. According to Healy (2009:96), firstness expresses the prevalence of male pronouns and nouns over female ones in texts. Male nouns tend to occur first in such standard

collocations as "boys and girls", "husband and wife". At the same time, there is a common and generally accepted usage of female and male titles in the English language.

As Brusokaite (2013:22) states: "For men there is only one title, i.e. "Mr." whereas for women there are several titles, e.g. Mrs, Miss. Titles themselves trivialize women while indicating their marital status". The texts and tasks of EFL study books will be examined in an attempt to identify in terms of revealing the presence or absence of these things.

Addressing people by pronouns and titles might be found in dialogues and other kinds of speech. Therefore, special attention will be paid to dialogues and other conversational forms of speech.

Jones et al. (1997: 1-4) claim that textbook dialogues are usually used in different teaching situations. Dialogues can consist of conversations between two people and can be used in three ways in teaching and learning.

First of all, the dialogues help develop knowledge of the language by enriching students' vocabulary, helping them understand the language structure and use. Secondly, dialogues help students understand the culture of the language they learn and understand social context.

Thirdly, dialogues serve as a tool for practicing speech itself and training speaking skills (Jones et al. 1997:1-4).

As Jones et al. state:

Frequent and regular gender imbalances in dialogue roles may thus predispose students to make assumptions about the gendered nature of verbal behavior of native speakers of the second or foreign language, and they may accordingly continue to imitate it in class, probably to the disadvantage of the female students. Male and female students alike may be further misled to the point where they formulate particular gender-imbalanced assumptions about when and how much they should speak outside of the classroom.

Thus, considering the importance of dialogues in the learning process, the analysis will examine the ways male and female characters are presented in the dialogues in terms of establishing the presence or absence of imbalance.

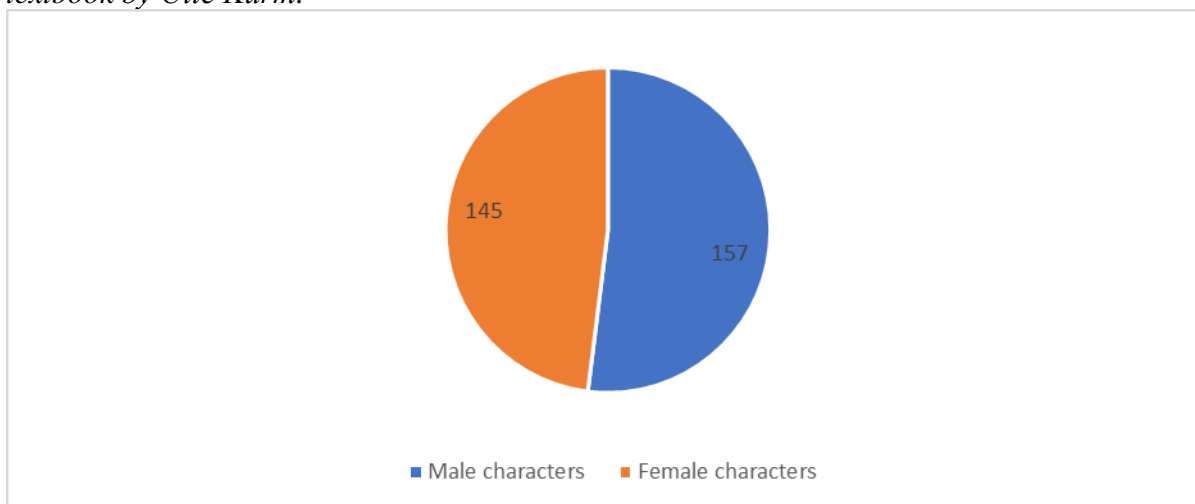
The EFL textbooks will be analyzed according to the criteria listed and described above.

CHAPTER II DATA ANALYSIS

2.1 Analysis of the "I love English 1" textbook for the first grade by Ülke Kurm.

The analysis regarding female and male characters representation in the illustrations, photos, and texts in the EFL textbooks revealed the following results as shown in the tables and graphs below:

Graph 1. The amount of male and female characters in the texts of "I love English 1" textbook by Ülke Kurm.

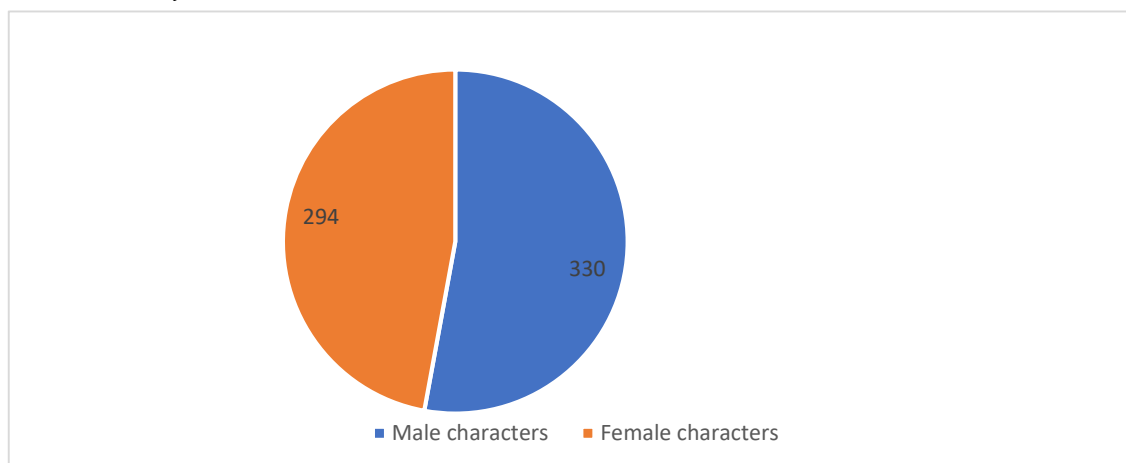


Source: completed by author

The text of this textbook has been analyzed for the subject of mentioning male and female characters in it. As might be seen, male characters appear more often than female ones, but the difference in the frequency of mention is not critical.

The results of analysis of presence of male and female characters on photos and pictures has been presented below (See graph2).

Graph 2. The amount of male and female characters in the illustrations of "I love English 1" textbook by Ülke Kurm.



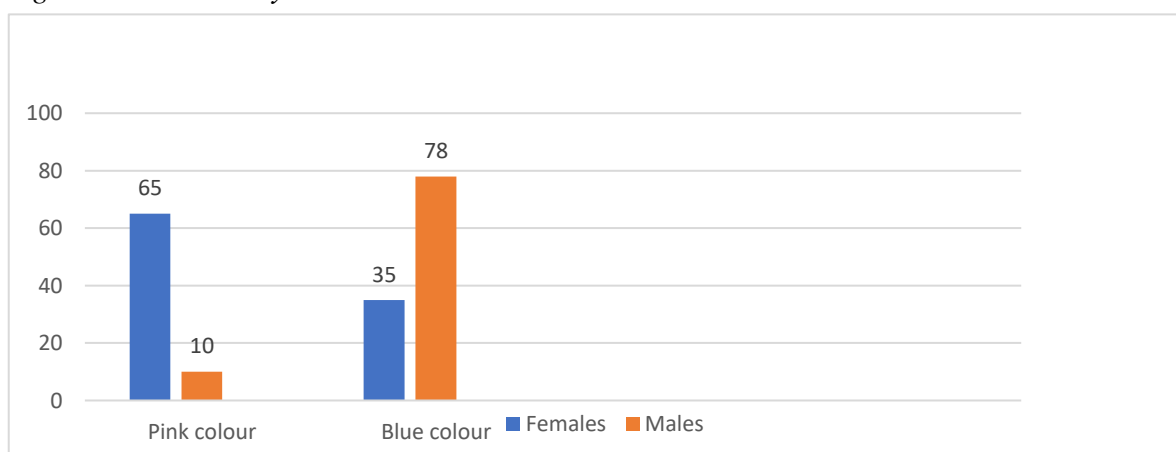
Source: completed by author

According to the results, the male characters were visible 330 times and female characters were visible 294 times.

The visual representation is not balanced; the male characters were significantly more frequent than female characters.

The analysis based on colour-based criterion revealed the following results.

Graph 3. The distribution of colors in clothing of male and female characters "I love English 1" textbook by Ülke Kurm.



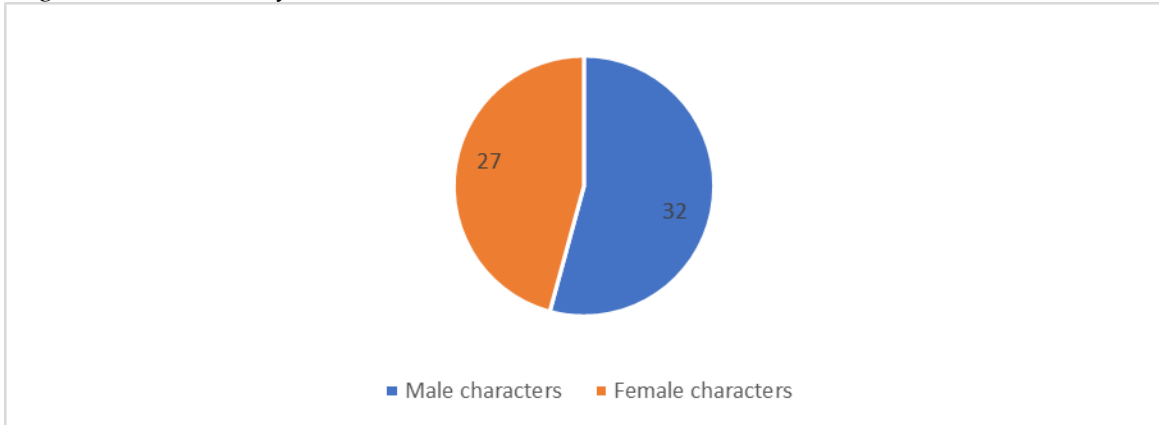
Source: completed by author

As might be seen from the data, female characters tend to wear pink clothes twice more often, than male characters. At the same time male characters are more often dressed in

blue.

As for the firstness of mentioning, the results of calculations are following (See graph 4).

Graph 4. *The firstness of mentioning female and male characters in the texts of the "I love English 1" textbook by Ülle Kurm.*

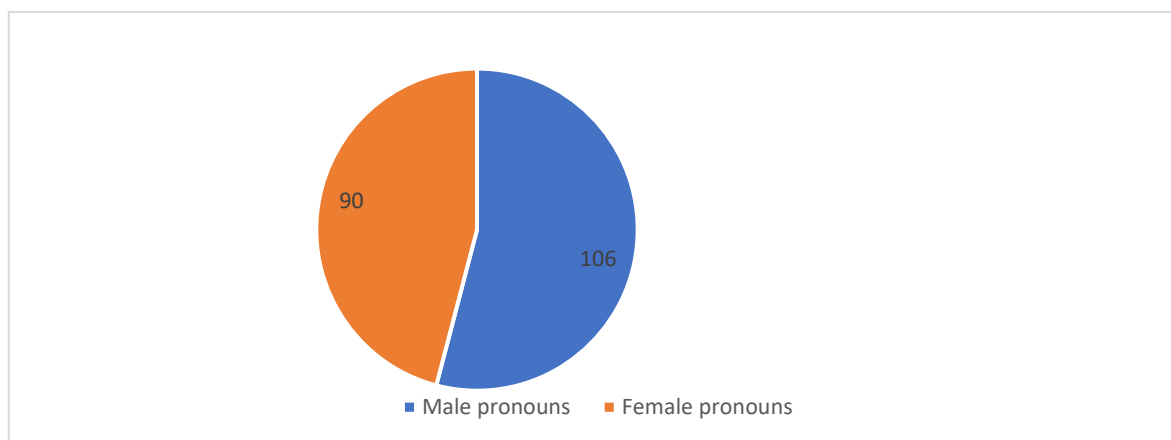


Source: completed by author

As might be seen from the diagraph, male characters were either mentioned or had a chance to speak first in the dialogues first more often. However, the difference of ratio is not critical.

The number of female and male pronouns were also counted (See graph 5).

Graph 5. *The ratio of male and female pronouns in the "I love English 1" textbook by Ülle Kurm.*



Source: completed by author

According to the data, male pronouns are used more often, than female ones. The tasks, instructions and other texts have been analyzed. The ratio of mentioning males and females is 46 to 56.

The result of analysis of gender representation in occupational distribution has been presented in *Table 1*.

Occupation	Male characters	Female characters
Teacher	5	9
Wizard	2	3
Pirate	1	
Shop assistant		1
Gardener	1	
Sailor	1	

Table 1. Analysis of occupational distribution in the "I love English 1" textbook by Ülle Kurm.

Source: completed by author

It can be seen from the table above, that there were only two occupations – teachers and wizards involved both females and males. The males are involved in more active occupations, such as gardener, sailor, and a pirate, whilst the females are mainly depicted as teachers.

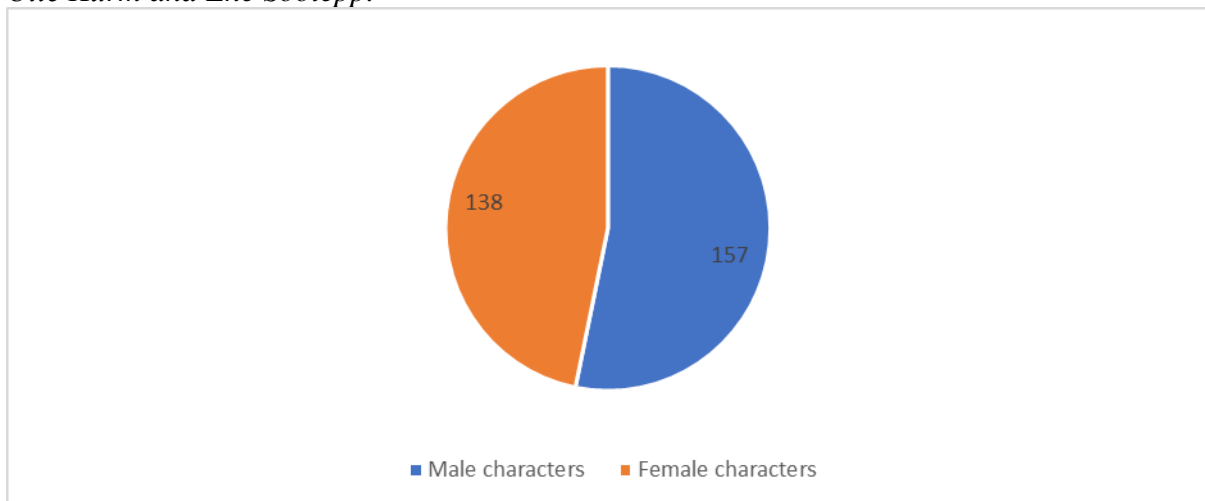
Overall, the gender representation in "I love English 1" textbook by Ülle Kurm is not balanced. In both illustrations and texts male characters appear more frequently, they are mentioned more, and male pronouns are used more often. Female characters are more visible in working, but their main occupation is teaching. Female characters are hardly ever depicted playing football, whilst this is the most common sport to play for the males in this textbook. None of the male characters were shown as a fairy, although there were five of them represented by female characters. One of the fairies, a textbook guide, appeared from

the very beginning to the end of the textbook, denoting audio tasks. The fairy was always female. As for the household duties section, male characters tend to do more active work, for example, sweep the floor, while female characters are depicted washing the dishes. The observation of colors also shows that girls are mainly wearing pink clothes, while boys are dressed in clothes of any colors except pink, and are often dressed in blue. However, this textbook might break some stereotypes, for example, it depicted a grandmother playing computer games.

2.1.1 Analysis of the the "I love English 3" textbook by Ülle Kurm and Ene Soolepp .

The findings in I love English for the third grade written by Ülle Kurm and Ene Soolepp have been presented in the graph below.

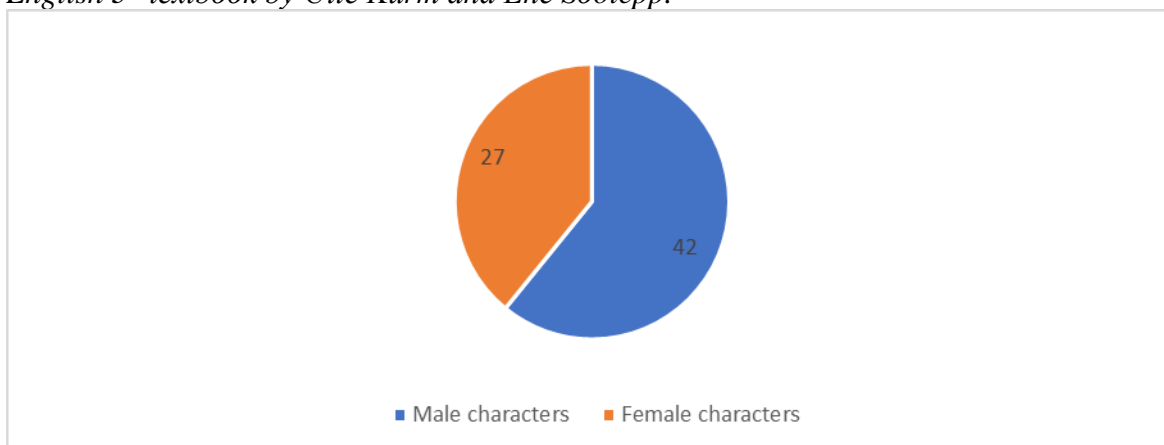
Graph 6. *The amount of male and female characters in the texts of "I love English 3" by Ülle Kurm and Ene Soolepp.*



Source: completed by author

The graph 6 reveals that male characters are more visible in this textbook, as the ratio of frequency of appearance of male characters to female ones is 53% to 47%.

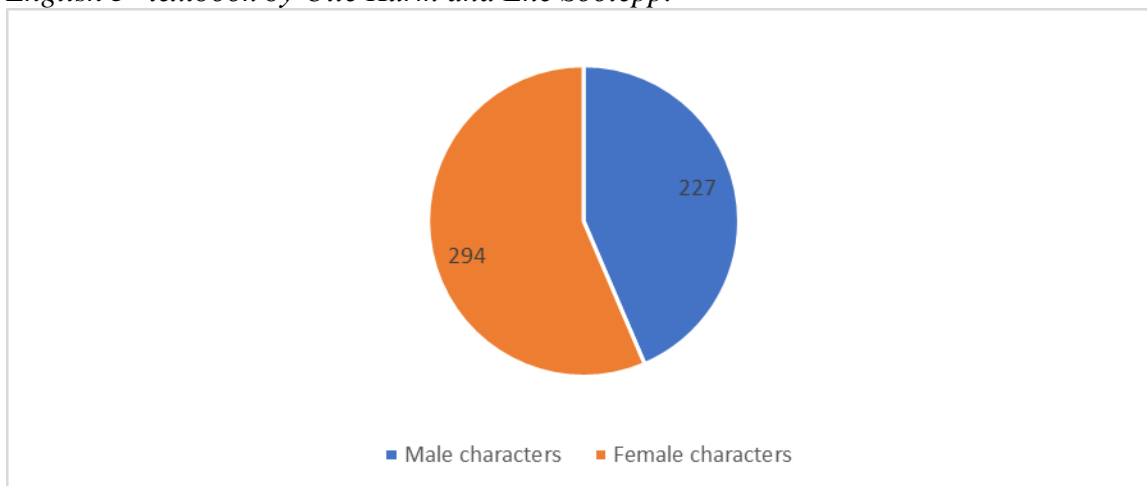
Graph 7. The firstness of mentioning female and male characters in the texts of the "I love English 3" textbook by Ülke Kurm and Ene Soolepp.



Source: completed by author

The graph 7 provides information about whether female or male characters are the first to speak in the dialogue or, if there are no dialogues, who is the first to be mentioned in the text. The ratio shows a significant difference in the firstness of mentioning the characters, as the males outnumber the female ones with a ratio of 61% to 39%.

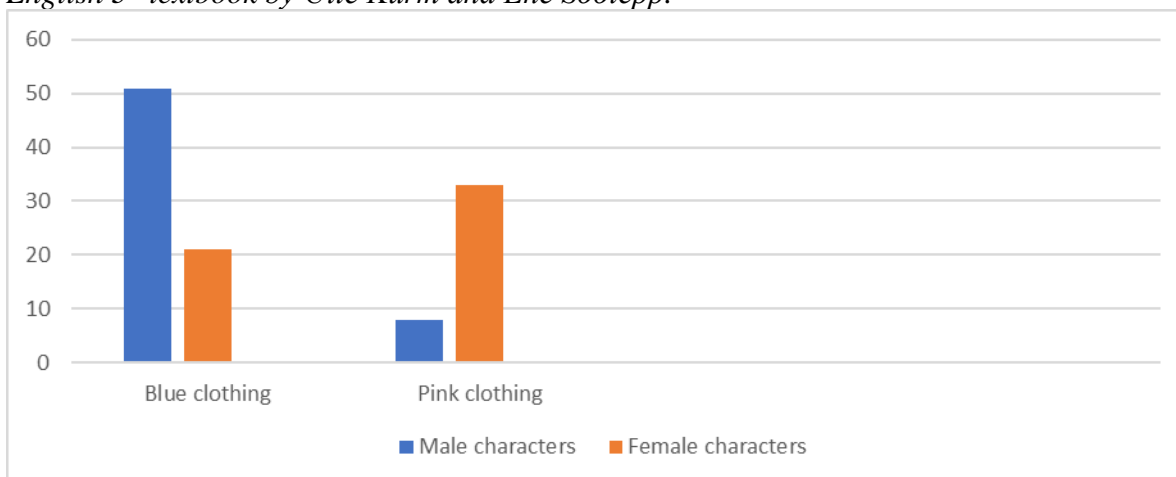
Graph 8. The number of female and male characters in the illustrations of the "I love English 3" textbook by Ülke Kurm and Ene Soolepp.



Source: completed by author

On the basis of the following graph, it can be seen that female characters outnumbered male characters for the first time: there are 294 female and 227 male characters. The characters are presented in photos and pictures with the ratio of 56% of females to 44% of males.

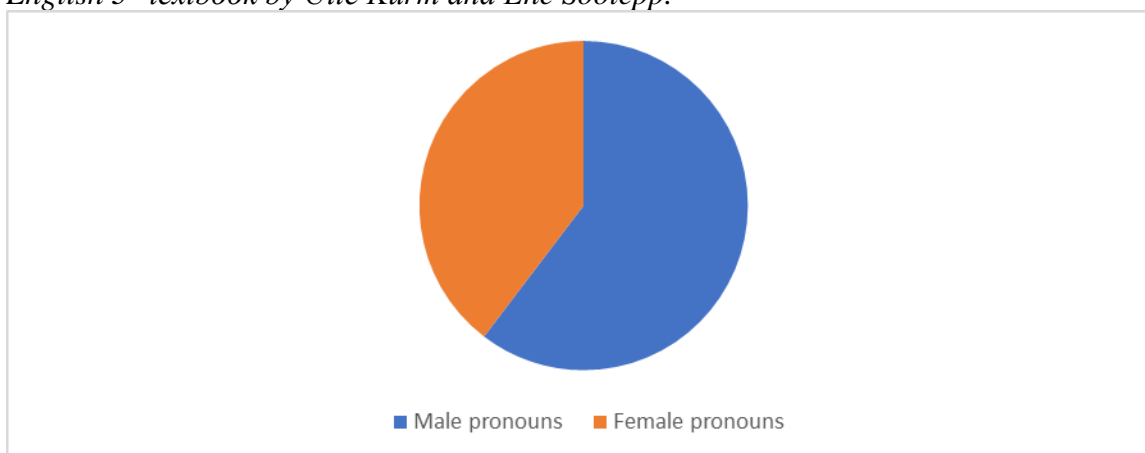
Graph 9. The distribution of colors in clothing of male and female characters "I love English 3" textbook by Ülle Kurm and Ene Soolepp.



Source: completed by author

Based on the results of calculations it can be concluded, that the textbook shows a certain correlation between the colors of clothing and gender of characters. Thus, blue color is worn by 51 male characters and 21 female characters, clothing of pink color is worn by 33 female characters and 8 male ones.

Graph 10. The ratio of male and female pronouns and possessive adjectives in the "I love English 3" textbook by Ülle Kurm and Ene Soolepp.



Source: completed by author

The data reveals that male pronouns and possessive adjectives are used more often than the female ones. He/him/his are more frequent (mentioned 136 times) than her/she (mentioned 91 times) with the ratio of 60% to 40%.

The result of analysis of occupational distribution has been presented in Table 2.

Occupation	Female characters	Male characters
Photographer		2
Teacher	4	1
Mayor	1	1
Cashier	1	1
Farmer		2
Baker	1	1
Coach		1
Doctor	1	1
Fisher		1
Engineer		1
Driver		1
Musician		1
Clown		1
Writer		1
Builder		1
Zookeeper		1

Table 2. Analysis of occupational distribution in the "I love English 3" textbook by Ülle Kurm and Ene Soolepp.

Source: completed by author

As it can be concluded from the table, a wide range of occupations is only presented by male character. The males also tend to do outdoors activities, such as fishing, and work which requires more physical activity. Female characters are mostly presented as teachers. There are two mayors presented by both female and male characters, but mostly the occupational distribution is not balanced.

The calculations and analysis of this textbook show the same disbalance of gender representation, as in the first part of the "I love English" textbook. Male characters are mentioned and shown more often, the main occupation of female characters is still teaching. Only occupations that showed equal number of both female and male characters engaged in work was mayor, baker, cashier, and doctor. All occupations that require physical work such as builder such as a builder were represented only by male characters.

The textbooks tends to show the „traditional“ distribution of colors, such as blue color being mainly worn by male characters and pink color worn by female characters. The only category where female characters outnumbered male characters was the representation of both genders in illustrations of the textbook.

2.1.2 Analysis of the "Insight" Elementary Student's book by Fiona Beddall.

Occupations	Female characters	Male characters
Musician	2	6
Astronauts		5
Photographer		1
Sportsman	4	18
Bus driver	1	
Teacher	2	5
Artists		3
Scientist		1
Engineer		1
Cook	1	
Tour Guide	3	2
Shop assistant	2	
Window cleaner		3
Writer	9	6
Film director		1

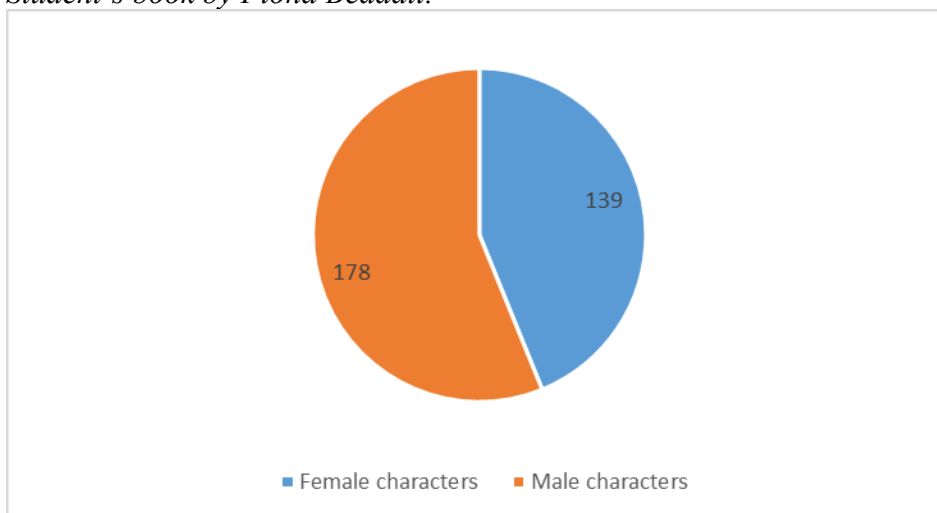
Sculptor	1	
Accountant	1	
Doctor	1	

Table 3. Analysis of occupational distribution in the "Insight" Elementary Student's book by Fiona Beddall.

Source: completed by author

As it can be seen from the table, the textbooks support a stereotype threat and depicts male characters as sportsmen and astronauts, exclusively providing female characters with such occupation roles as a shop assistant and a cook.

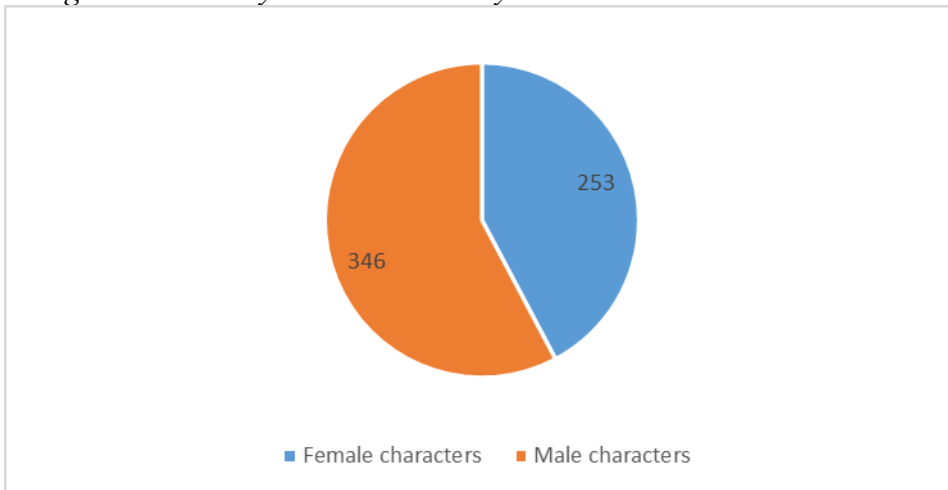
Graph 11. The number of male and female characters in texts of "Insight" Elementary Student's book by Fiona Beddall.



Source: completed by author

Graph 11 demonstrates that male characters are mentioned more commonly in the textbook than female characters. The percentage of male characters is 56%, and the percentage of female characters is 44%.

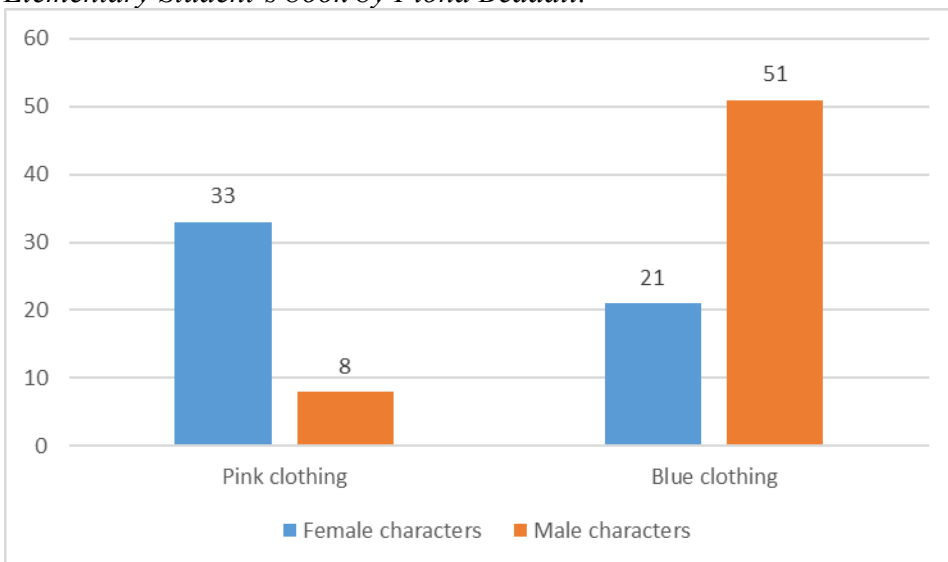
Graph 12. The amount of female and male characters in the pictures and illustrations in "Insight" Elementary Student's book by Fiona Beddall.



Source: completed by author

Graph 12 shows that the number of male characters in the pictures is more common than female characters. Converting the data into a percentage: 42.2% female characters, 57.8% male characters.

Graph 13. Clothing color distribution between male and female characters in "Insight" Elementary Student's book by Fiona Beddall.

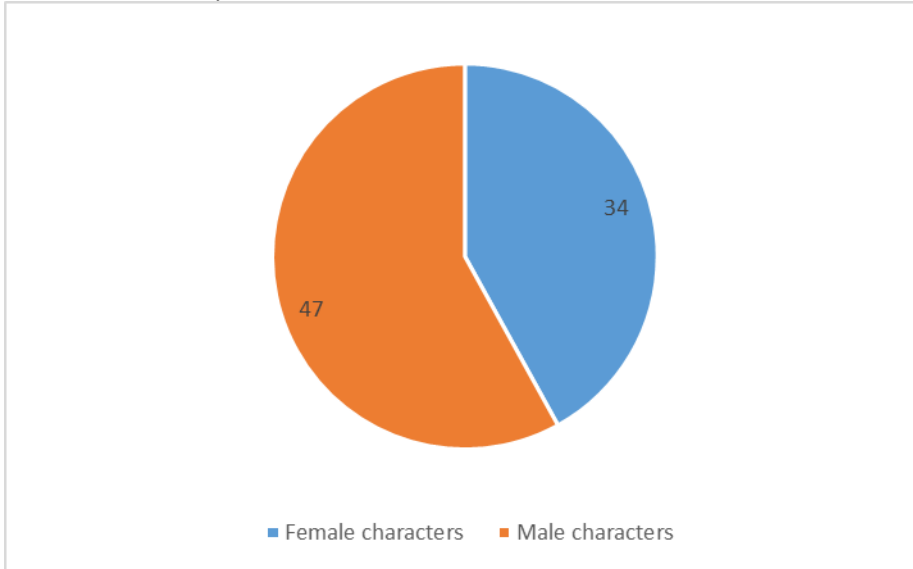


Source: completed by author

Graph 13 demonstrates that male characters are more prone to wear blue clothing and rarely wear pink clothing in the textbook. Female characters wear pink clothing more than

blue clothing, but the difference is not as enormous as with male characters.

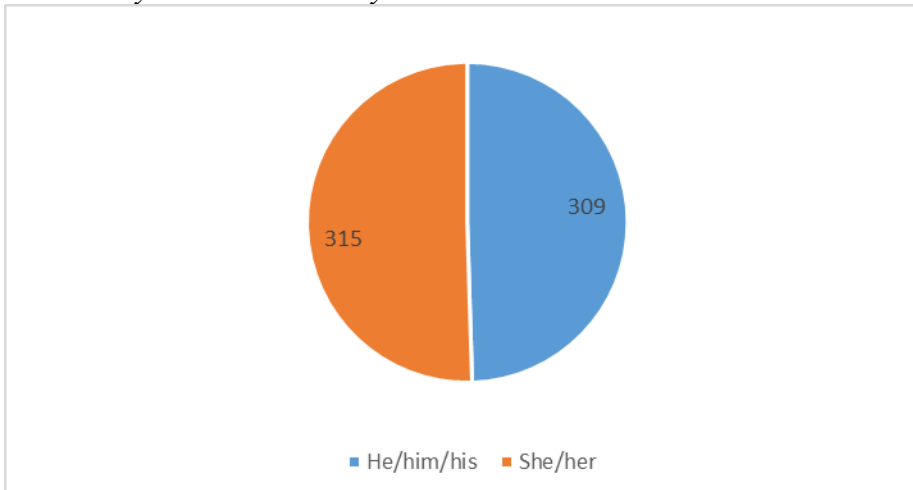
Graph 14. Firstness of mentioning male and female characters in "Insight" Elementary Student's book by Fiona Beddall.



Source: completed by author

Male characters are mentioned firstly more often than female characters. Male characters —58%, Female characters — 42%.

Graph 15. The ratio of female and male pronouns and possessive adjectives in "Insight" Elementary Student's book by Fiona Beddall.



Source: completed by author

The difference in the frequency of usage of female and male pronouns and possessive adjectives is not crucial. Overall, it is possible to say that female and male pronouns are mentioned to the same degree.

In general, according to the calculations and analysis the gender representation of this textbook suffers a significant disbalance. Male characters are mentioned and shown more often, the main occupation of female characters is writing. Male characters involved in sports significantly exceed female characters. There were not any occupations that showed equal number of both female and male characters. Female characters are prone to wear pink clothes, and male characters mostly wear blue colored clothing.

The only category where both male and female characters were shown in the same quantity was the ration of pronouns and possessive adjectives.

CONCLUSION

The topic of the present thesis is "PERCEPTION OF GENDER IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF ESTONIA". The aim of this research to explore how gender roles are presented in the context of tasks and pictures of elementary school EFL textbooks and workbooks of Estonia to establish whether there is a tendency towards any kind of discrimination and provide recommendations of how to present gender roles in a more balanced way in the event that gender bias is proven. To determine how gender roles are shown in textbooks, the texts and illustrations of three textbooks "I love English 1" by Ülle Kurm, "I love English 3" by Ülle Kurm and Ene Soolepp and "Insight" by Fiona Beddall were analyzed.

To sum up, the analysis of the illustration outline, characters and their occupational distribution, and the observation of linguistic items of these three English language textbooks shows that gender perception and representation in them are not balanced. Male characters tend to be referred to and shown more often than female characters. There is a certain discrimination in job occupations, as male characters are hardly ever depicted as teachers, and female characters tend not to do any job that includes physical effort and power. All three textbooks show both male and female characters dressed in traditional pink and blue colors. The indicators of all criteria mentioned and analyzed above allow the suggestion that all three textbooks are gender biased.

Here are some recommendations on how to make ESL learning materials for Estonian children more gender balanced:

- 1) To include equal numbers of male and female characters in stories and illustrations, and ensure they have an equal role in the plot.
- 2) To avoid gender stereotypes: for example, to not only show women in caregiver roles or men in leadership roles.
- 3) To provide equal opportunities for both genders: to ensure that both male and female characters are given equal opportunities to lead in speaking first, answering questions, and participating in activities in the learning materials.
- 4) To use gender-balanced examples: for instance, instead of using an example that only features a male doctor, to use an example that includes a female doctor as well.

Overall, by incorporating the results of this research and these suggestions, it is possible to make ESL learning materials used in elementary schools of Estonia more gender-balanced, inclusive, and representative of all students' experiences.

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Käesoleva bakalauresetöö teema on "SOO TAJUMINE EESTI PÕHIKOOOLIDE INGLISE KEELSETES ÕPPEMATERJALIDES". Õppematerjalid peaksid olema sooneutraalsed, et edendada kaasatust ja võrdsust hariduses. Uuringud on näidanud, et sooliselt määratletud keele ja materjalid võivad tugevdada soolisi stereotüüpe ja piirata õpilaste eneseväärtustamist, eriti tüdrukute puhul (Martin jt, 1990).

Uurimuse eesmärk on välja selgitada, kuidas esitatakse soorolle Eesti põhikoolide inglise keele õpikute ja töövihikute ülesannete ja piltide kontekstis ning tuvastada, kas esineb mingisugust diskrimineerimist ning anda soovitusi soorollide tasakaalustatumaks esitamiseks juhul, kui leitakse soolist kallutatust. Soorollide esitamise viiside selgitamiseks analüüsiti kolm õpikut: "I Love English 1" autorin Ülle Kurm, "I Love English 3" autorid on Ülle Kurm ja Ene Soolep, "Insight" autor on Fiona Beddall.

Bakalaureusetöö koosneb sissejuhatusest, kahest peatükist ja kokkuvõttest. Sissejuhatus sisaldab lühikest teoreetilise raamistiku ja kirjanduse ülevaadet. Esimene peatükk hõlmab õpikute analüüsi teooriat ja kriteeriume, arutledes sookontseptsiooni ja selle kohta üle inglise keele õpikutes. Teine peatükk sisaldab tekstide, ülesannete ja piltide analüüsi põhikoolide inglise keele õpikutes ja töövihikutes, võttes arvesse selliseid tegureid nagu nais- ja meessoost tegelaste esinemissagedus, nende kujutatud temaatilised rollid ning emotsionaalsed seisundid ja tegevused. Kokkuvõtte esitab uurimistulemused ja pakub mõningaid soovitusi soolise eelarvamuse vältimiseks inglise keele õpikutes.

Tuginedes illustatsioonide, tegelaskujude ja nende ametialase jaotuse analüüsile ning keele vaatlusele, võib väita, et nende kolme ingliskeelse õpikuga seotud soopertseptsioon ja sooesindatus pole tasakaalustatud. Meessugupool on sagedamini esindatud nii tekstis kui ka piltides. Ametite osas on teatud diskrimineerimine, kuna meessoost tegelased on harva kujutatud õpetajatena ning naissoost tegelased ei tegele tööga, mis hõlmab füüsilist pingutust ja jõudu. Kõigis kolmes õpikus on nii mees- kui ka naiskujud riietatud traditsioonilistesse sinistesse ja roosadesse värvidesse. Muidugi ei ole see analüüs põhjalik ega näita täielikku pilti selle kohta, kuidas ja mil määral need ingliskeelsed õpikud mõjutavad laste arusaamu soost. Siin on veel ruumi uurimiseks. Siiski lubavad ülaltoodud

kriteeriumide kõik indikaatorid soolise kallutatuse tõttu väita, et kõik kolm õpikut on soolis
-e eelarvamusega.

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