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GENDER REPRESENTATION IN THE IMAGES OF THE *INTERCHANGE* SERIES (THIRD EDITION)

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IN THE NAME OF GOD

Declaration

I Somayeh Bakhtiari (880240) – an M.A student of English Language Teaching at the Faculty of Literature and Humanities, hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own research, and that I have provided exact references wherever I have quoted someone. I also declare that the topic of my research is an original one and has not been worked upon before. I hereby promise not to publish the findings of this research and not to make it accessible to others without the permission of Shiraz University. Shiraz University holds the copyright on this research.

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Gratefully and affectionately

Dedicated to:

My holiest angel, my beloved mom,

And

The greatest hero of my life, my dear dad.

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Abstract

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This study aimed at exploring gender representation in the photographs of *Interchange (Third Edition)* series. To this end, four photographs were randomly selected from each of the volumes (totally sixteen photographs) to be analyzed in terms of the three metafucntions of representational, interactive and compositional meanings as proposed in Kress and van Leewen's (2006) social semiotics framework. Results of the analysis were compared to Goffman's (1979) *Gender Advertisement* categories to investigate whether or not Goffman's categories are visible in the images under investigation. Quantitative data analysis revealed gender equality except for (1) analytic-conceptual category in which men were depicted more frequently than women, (2) offer-demand structures in which women appeared more frequently in offer structures rather than demand structures. However, some stereotypical portrayals of each gender were found through the qualitative data analysis: (1) women as consumers, in contrast to men as consumers, were depicted as known and part of the culture (two images), (2) women were separated from men through framing (eight images), (3) women were portrayed as belonging to the context of home (one image), (4) getting a driver's license and taking part in a sit-in were realized as connected with men (two images), (5) compared to women, men's taking part in a sit-in was represented as already known (one image), (6) a woman was represented as being shy (one image) and (7) compared to women, men as cooks were represented as detached from the viewer's world (one image). Comparison of the results with Goffman's categories indicated that Function Ranking, Feminine Touch and Licensed Withdrawal were partially visible in the photographs under study. However, since this study primarily focused upon how Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotics model may be applied to analyze some of the images in *Interchange (Third Edition)*, results may be generalized to the whole textbook only with caution.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introduction

The present chapter is comprised of four sections. The first section briefly introduces the topic of the current study discussing its major issues. Statement of the problem is presented in the second section. The objectives of the study and significance of the study will be explained in sections three and four, respectively.

1.1. Visual mode and multimodal texts

In recent decades, concurrent use of modes in multimodal texts and "visualization of communication" have received more attention (Renkema, 2004, p. 76). The term *text* does not exclusively refer to written pieces of communication, but rather anything used to convey a message can be regarded as a text. "Texts do not need to be linguistic at all; any cultural artifact – a picture, a building, a piece of music – can be seen as a text" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 4). According to Kang (1997), images as well as linguistic texts express meanings and both visual and linguistic texts are composed of symbols constructing "multi-leveled" messages (p. 980). In the social context, "whether we engage in conversation, produce an advertisement or play a piece of music, we are simultaneously communicating" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 13). Textbooks, especially ELT textbooks, which use various modes of making meaning (such as verbal and visual modes) are categorized as multimodal texts. Verbal and visual semiotic modes can be used to express particular meanings which can be conveyed either by one mode but not the other one or by both modes; however, the message will be represented differently and undergo some changes in each mode (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Sometimes a concept cannot be expressed exactly by one mode (e.g., written mode) requiring taking recourse to another mode (e.g., images) to explain and elaborate on its meaning. Regarding the limitation of the semiotic mode and the distribution of realization, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) state

> This is not to say that all the relations that can be realized linguistically can also be realized visually – or vice versa, that all the relations that can be realized visually can also be realized linguistically. Rather, a given culture has a range of general, possible relations which is not tied to expression in any particular semiotic mode, although some relations can only be realized visually and others only linguistically, or some more easily visually and others more easily linguistically. (p. 64)

When one mode is used as an illustration elaborating on the message depicted in the other accompanying mode or is used to contribute some additional meaning to it, omitting one mode or substituting it by another alternative mode will harm the intended message. With respect to multimodal texts, Iedema (2003, as cited in Bohlke, 2006) refers to the significant role of other modes and their contribution to the meaning which is not complete and is fully conveyed only by the use of the linguistic mode and regards language as dependent on the other accompanying mode. Regarding the important role other semiotic modes of communication play in making meaning, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) assert that "Discourse therefore includes language (written and spoken and in combination with other semiotics, for example, with music in singing), nonverbal communication (facial expressions, body movements, gestures, etc.) and visual images (for instance, photographs, film)" (p. 38). Jaworski and Coupland (1999) also assert that discourse is far beyond language in itself and is composed of such non-linguistic as painting, sculpture, photography, design, music and film which are used along with or either instead of language in the context of communication.

The significance of visuals and particularly images as a mode of semiotics in textbooks as multimodal media that use both verbal and visual modes to realize meanings is not less than the importance of the verbal text. Bezemer and Kress (2008) maintained that

> Frequently writing is no longer the central mode of representation in learning materials- textbooks, web-based resources, teacher-

> produced materials. Still (as well as moving) images are increasingly prominent as carriers of meaning … and writing is being displaced by images as the central mode of representation. (p. 166)

In a multimodal text, a photograph not only is the first contact established with readers but also puts the text in a particular context of situation (Martínez Lirola, 2009). According to Berger (1972), language is preceded by visual ability and children look and recognize before they acquire speaking. Images can talk for themselves and communicate with the viewer even if they are used in combination with linguistic texts. Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001) maintain that "Images may be analyzed without any recourse to the verbal or written information which may accompany them (for example, the catalogue of an exhibition or the introduction to a book of artistic photography" (pp. 6-7). The visual mode, especially images and photographs, are more eye-catching than the verbal text and, therefore, are of high importance. Visual salience (weight) of the nature of images draws the readers' attention earlier than the linguistic text (Pinto-Coelho & Mota-Ribeiro, 2009). Sometimes, images are made in a way that they can convey some concept without taking recourse to any other mode of communication and they can be used in various contexts such as much contemporary fine art and classic photojournalism (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001). Although images are superficially thought of as trivial illustrations of the accompanying verbal text whose omissions make no difference, they are intended to play a more significant role in the learning process and meaning making so that their absence may make the intended meaning deficient. "we might call these relations between writing and images 'unequal', and treat the images as 'subordinate' to the writing, since we would still be left with a 'cohesive' text" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976 as cited in Bezemer & Kress, 2009, p. 252). In a multimodal text, if we omit one mode either verbal or visual, the text will become incohesive (Bezemer & Kress, 2009) due to the complementary relation between the two modes. Different fonts (capital, bold, etc.), the size, the colors, and how elements are arranged in multimodal texts influence the way meaning is created and our attention is drawn while reading

(Martínez Lirola, 2009). Even when the visual mode is used as subordinate to the verbal mode, still, it contributes partially to the whole meaning. Jewitt and Oyama (2001) assert that images are not sole illustrations and explanations of the verbal text, but rather, they may also convey messages which contradict the meaning of the accompanying verbal text. "Like words, images are symbols that are building blocks of persuasive messages. Images communicate in ways that words cannot" (Borchers, 2002, p. 165). The fact that most images have been intended to have a subordinate role to writing does not signify lack of influence exerted on the linguistic mode by images (Bezemer & Kress, 2009).

In any case, textbooks as a part of the social context shape their audiences' world views. "The curriculum, and its associated pedagogy, puts forward a set of cultural, linguistic and social resources which students have available as resources for their own transformations in relation to which (among others) students constantly construct, reconstruct and transform their subjectivity" (Kress, 1996, p. 16). Visual mode, especially photographs and images, as a major part of textbooks expose learners to particular ideologies either intentionally or unintentionally. What is realized in the visuals is not innocent reproduction of the reality but is motivated and influenced by the interest of the social institutions and, therefore, they comprise a deep semantic dimension (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Rose (2001) maintains that transmitting the world into visuals, various kinds of visual "technologies - photography, film, video, digital graphics, television, acrylics, for example - and the images they show us - TV programmes, advertisements, snapshots, public sculpture, movies surveillance video footage, newspaper pictures, paintings" offer their viewer's views of the world (p. 2). Texts are, therefore, as Baldry and Thibault (2006) state, parts of activities with which people are involved and constitute the contexts in which these activities are used and shape people's concept of reality. That is to say, as a part of our (social) context, texts play a crucial role in shaping our views of the world and ideologies. As for linguistic texts, visuals of a multimodal text make sense in the social context in which they take part and the way they are designed is intended in such a way to convey the intended meanings and control what the viewer should see first (Martínez Lirola, 2009). Visual texts are not innocent and neutral in picturing the world

but they are chosen from a wide range of other sights so as to represent the fact as it is preferred to be displayed not as it really is. Hartman and Judd (1978) refer to the significant role pictures play in reinforcing traditional images. Rose (2001) states that the even photographs do not depict the world neutrally, instead of being "transparent windows onto the world", they interpret and show it in a special way (p. 2). In fact, photographs reflect the way the photographer sees the world rather than a mere mechanically photographed scene and they are chosen from among an infinite number of possible sights (Berger, 1972). As Fyfe and Law (1988, as cited in Rose, 2001) believe "a depiction is never just an illustration … it is the site for the construction and depiction of social difference" (p. 7). Jewitt and Oyama (2001) state that photographs are able to establish symbolic equal relation between the viewer and the represented participants who have more power over the viewer and vice versa. This refers to the power implicit in the visual mode in influencing the viewers' views. Therefore, images contain more than what can be conceived of them shallowly. To fully understand the exact meaning of an image, the viewer needs to consider how such social categories as class, gender and race are represented and offered in the images (Rose, 2001). Van Dijk (1995) asserts that "ideologies are typically, though not exclusively, expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication, including non-verbal semiotic messages, such as pictures, photographs and movies" (p. 17). The hidden ideologies embedded in the visual text as well as those in the verbal text influence the viewer's worldviews. Long time exposure to advertisements and commercial texts influences consumers' gender-identities (Fairclough, 2003). Like advertisement, textbooks including visuals may contribute to stereotypical roles and identities.

Ways of representing gender identities are among ideologies and worldviews hidden in the text of the textbooks (either verbal or visual). There have, most of the time, been male biased gender representations in the mass media shaping the beliefs and definitions of their audiences. Men are represented as being both physically and intelligently superior to women (Dietz, 1998), while women, on the other hand, are portrayed as related to roles which focuses on sexuality (Milkie, 1994, as cited in Dietz, 1998). Linder (2004) refers to the

power of images in manipulating the concept of what men and women are and its influence on the viewers' attitude and asserts that

> This is a rather surprising finding considering the changes in the actual roles women occupy in real life that have occurred since the Women's Movement and the subsequent trends toward equality, especially with regard to the business world. Women's progress in gaining social power is thus counteracted by disempowering women in visually subtle ways. (p. 419)

A standard textbook neutrally portrays men and women to lessen gender inequalities and, as a result, to decrease the potential offensive effects on the textbook users from learners to teachers and to decrease the potential effect of the stereotypical portrayal of each gender on the attitudes of the textbook users. Döring and Pöschl (2006) refer to *Cultivation Theory* as a justification to account for the influence, regarding gender stereotypes, the media exerts on its audience. According to Cultivation theory, as Döring and Pöschl (2006) explain, the stereotypical portrayal of each gender via media tend to be reflected and mirrored in its audiences' real lives and in fact people alter their ideas and conception of the reality according to those depicted in the media.

Many studies have been conducted to investigate gender representation in the verbal mode of the ELT textbooks (Ansari & Babaii, 2003; Bahman & Rahimi, 2010; Davatgarzadeh, 2007; Mineshima, 2008; Stockdale, 2006) but, regarding the visual aspect, either a small number of studies have been done or they have focused on the frequency of male/female occurrences but not on the how of each gender occurrences. To run deeper visual analysis which investigates visual elements more precisely and in terms of the how of representation, one may employ Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996[2006]) social semiotics model which does not merely stick to the formal and quantitative dimensions of images. Drawing upon Halliday's systemic functional linguistic, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996[2006]) claim that visual structures have three major metafunctions, i.e. representational, interactive and compositional metafunctions. In their book, *Reading Images,* they explain that the elements

of each metafunction can be applied to any visual structure to describe how the visual elements are represented. However, as Jewitt and Oyama (2001) maintain analyzing images merely through visual social semiotics would not suffice. In order to interpret the results, one has to employ other relevant social theories and even explain the results in the light of the findings of earlier research on the way images help gender construction. Following the study conducted by Bell and Milic (2002), the present study compares the results of the visual analysis based on Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotics with Goffman's (1979 as cited in Bell & Milic, 2002; Pawlowski, 2007) categories of gender relations.

Goffman (1979 as cited in Kang, 1997), one of the most prominent researchers in the field of gender representation, analyzed the images of almost 400 print advertisements and, based on his findings, he proposed five patterns (Relative Size, Function Ranking, Feminine Touch, Ritualization of Subordination and Licensed Withdrawal) which signify stereotypical portrayal of gender relations. The subtle indicators of these categories on which Goffman's (1979 as cited in Döring & Pöschl, 2006; Linder, 2004; Pawlowski, 2007) model concentrates are eyes, knees, facial expression, hands, finger sucking and biting and positioning. Based on these five categories, women appeared to be depicted as subordinated with respect to their relation to men. To explain and clarify female subordination in the visuals of print advertisements, Goffman (1979 as cited in Bell & Milic, 2002, p. 204) proposed the idea of "infantalization" of women which argues that women are depicted as infantilized in relation with men. In fact, according to Goffman's (1979 as cited in Kang, 1997) theory, the relation between men and women in the images of advertisements is realized in a way that it can be compared to the relationship between parents and children, respectively. In other words, as Goffman (1979 as cited in Bell & Milic, 2002) asserts parent-child relation functions as a semiotic resource for male-female relation in advertisement images.

With respect to the above discussion and the importance of gender representation in the visual mode of ELT textbooks, the aim of this study is investigating the 'how' of each gender representation in the images of the ELT