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SEX-FAIR LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

INTRODUCTION

Two theoretical positions on which this paper rests concern *language* viewed as a «social semiotic», and *the school* viewed as a social institution with an ideological obligation to develop pupils as agents for desirable social change. Regarding language as a social semiotic in Halliday's terms (1978), entails focusing on language not as an abstract system of mental representations, but as socially situated human experience. Moreover, it implies that language is not merely considered one aspect of human experience, but an essential resource for its creation. In fact, language is itself seen as essential to creating meaning and intimately involved in the manner in which experience is constructed and organized (Christie 1989: v).

Such a view of language is central to this paper as its stance is that language is crucially involved in the processes by which human beings construct and change social reality (Kress and Hodge 1979)¹ and consequently gender associated reality (Poynton 1989)². Thus, one of the important notions in the present paper is that the way language is used contributes significantly to the reproduction and maintenance of sexist

1. Kress and Hodge (1979: 5) assert that: Language fixes a world that is so much more stable and coherent than what we actually see that it takes its place in our consciousness and becomes what we think we have seen. And since normal perception works by constant feedback, the gap between the real world and the socially constructed world is constantly being reduced, so that what we do 'see' tends to become what we can say.

2. See Chapter 1 of Poynton (1989), «Language and the Social Construction of Gender», pp. 3-20.

values and attitudes. Therefore, interest in changing them necessarily entails concern with sex-free language use. Such interests may be pursued in school which does not and should not merely function as an institution of cultural reproduction — a place where dominant ideologies are imposed on pupils— but as sites where new attitudes and concepts are produced, where new experiences and views of the world are developed. This is in fact a fundamental part of the educational process. And to educate, as Christie (1989) asserts³, is «to develop language abilities of some kind; whatever the subject being taught and whatever the age group, language will be involved.» Hence, the language abilities that are developed in schools are closely linked with the kind of education that is provided; or, otherwise, with how pupils are helped to fashion experience, values and attitudes in general and specifically those which are related to gender identity. The sort of education which is provided in language classes in particular becomes crucial since knowledge about language and language use is the object of study. The language class may become a vehicle through which to arrive at desired levels of sex-fairness.

The concrete concern of this paper is the language education provided in the foreign language classroom since pupils are given an opportunity not only to develop new social experiences with a language other than their own, but also to re-evaluate the social experiences they have acquired through the use of their mother tongue. For foreign language learners unavoidably use the awareness they have developed as native speakers of one language to learn another (Papaefthymiou-Lytra 1987)⁴. Thus, the foreign language course may facilitate a critical appraisal of communicative experiences and the development of a new awareness about language and thus social experience. To achieve this goal, conscious efforts need to be made. Given our preoccupation with the development of sex-fair values and attitudes, our interest/lies in proposing ways for its achievement. To this end, this paper not only discusses the logic of non-sexist language education, but puts forth practical suggestions aiming at avoiding sex-biased practices particularly in language teaching materials.

3. See the back-cover of the series *Language Education* by Series Editor Frances Christie, O.U.P. (1985, 1989).

4. Papaefthymiou - Lytra (1987:15) agrees with others that the use of learner language awareness speeds up the process of learning a language and also discusses it as a component of syllabus design (pp. 114-116).

1. Educational aims and sex role ideology

The role of the school in socializing pupils according to «democratic» ideals is recognized in our European community and it is evinced in the educational aims laid down in national and international statutes, resolutions and agreements. Section 1 of the Swedish Educational Act declares that one of the purposes of instruction in schools is to promote young people's development into competent and responsible members of the community⁵. In a 1981 publication of the Netherlands Foundation for Curriculum Development, the emancipatory role of education is stressed; that is, the emancipation of both social groups and individuals⁶. In a national report from the Federal Republic of Germany one of the aims stated is to enable the learner to carry political responsibility and to contribute to the shaping of society⁷. In the 1986 Document for the Commission of the European Communities it is stated that one of the purposes of education in Greece is «to engender the upbringing of young people as free and responsible citizens» (provision 2 of Article 16 of the Greek Constitution). Generally speaking, education in Europe aspires toward the development of the personality of each individual into its full potential so that each member of society will take an active part in maintaining the cultural heritage but also in changing social conditions (van Ek 1985: 5). These aims which emphasize individuality and self-reliance on the one hand, and social effectiveness on the other, imply that human beings, male or female, should discover and fulfill their own unique potential. Moreover, they entail that the individual's most basic strivings are toward the maintenance, enhancement and actualization of the self. Hence, emphasis is placed on the role of personal growth which is possible with the provision of equal opportunities in school and society. Similarly important is that individuals, female or male, gain a clear sense of their self identity; that is, that they are provided with the chance to discover what they really are and what they want to become. Having gained their sense of identity, men and women may be encouraged toward the development of spontaneity and self-direction. In fact, «democratic» ideals in the west are based

5. *The 1980 compulsory school curriculum*, doc. 1(52), 1980-02-14, National Swedish Board of Education, Stockholm 1980, p.6.

6. *Middenschool in beeld: karakteristieken van middenschoolondrwijs*, SLO/pg DLM, Enschede 1981, p.3.

7. *Rahmerichtlinien, Sekundarstufe I. Neue Sprachen*, publ.: Der Hessische Kultusminister, November 1980, Wiesbaden, ref.: 50124, p. 11.

on assumptions of personal responsibility for one's actions. They are nurtured by the notion that each individual's life is of his/her own making and the whole capitalist ethic is based on the concept of freedom for self-direction and self-determination—freedom as an «emergent» quality in the evolutionary process. Men's and women's unique qualities for self-awareness, their ability to reflect, reinterpret and reorganize their past experiences are recognized, and their ability to be critical and evaluative of their own behaviour is acknowledged. The underlying assumptions are that it is not some unknown forces outside individuals that determine their destiny, but that it is each person him/herself who is assumed to shape his/her own destiny both on individual and on group levels.

A critique of this «Humanist» ethic is not the contention of this paper. However, it is important to stress at this point that, given these aspirations, social practices in schools, expressed linguistically and extralinguistically, are supposed to aim at girls' and boys' emancipation as human beings and as members of a social class. It is understood therefore that practices in schools should not foster gender-stereotyped roles and that males and females should not be restricted into certain familial, social, discorsal and occupational roles, that they should not be arbitrarily assigned certain characteristics, qualities or skills. If the freedom of the individual is recognized, then sex-role stereotyping comes to contradict it. And this because believing in one's individuality involves the freedom of choice for both males and females; it involves recognition of each person's abilities and potentials which have to be developed outside of gender-associated reality. Furthermore, acceptance of human beings' individuality entails that everyone is provided with the same opportunities and that each one makes use of these to the best of his/her abilities. Finally, recognizing one's individuality means that desirable characteristics are assigned to people regardless of sex. For example, if sensitivity, emotionality and warmth are desirable human characteristics, then they are desirable for men as well as for women. If independence, assertiveness and serious intellectual commitment are desirable human characteristics, then they are desirable for women as well as for men. Men and women cannot be stereotyped according to arbitrary definitions.

2. The socialization of males and females

Having discussed above the aspirations of the state concerning socialization, it seems pertinent at this point of the paper to focus on

the discrepancy between the desired goals and the actual socialization practices not only in the home and other social institutions, but also in the school from which one would have expectations for a harmony between goals and practices. Sexism, defined as the ideology of assigning social gender roles to individuals and seeing women as inferior to men in certain respects and vice-versa (see Poynton 1989: 4, Wearing 1984: 16)⁸, is maintained and reproduced in schools and specifically in language classrooms. It is often an unconscious process because educators, materials designers and curriculum developers are themselves social subjects and reproduction agents reconfirming social stereotypes and expressing them in the way that they use language. In fact, as Porreca (1984: 705) points out, linguistic sexism is more deeply rooted and more subtle than other forms of sexism and is therefore reproduced fairly frequently unconsciously.

2.1 Socialization into gender identity

Gender associated ideology is built in very early. Oalkey (1972: 177) notes that «a multitude of studies agree that by the age of four children have a firm knowledge of sex identity and are well able to perceive distinctions of gender role.» As children grow older, stereotyped gender roles are more firmly built in. All of us witness around us young men still being encouraged to exhibit physical and psychological strength, to be decisive, uninhibited, confident, active and independent. The encouragement is given not only by parents but by other important adults who reproduce the power relations in society. These are consequently internalized as values and 'naturalized.' Hence, a study of sex stereotypes and evaluations, cited in Smith (1985: 105-108), reports that behaviours desirable for men and not for women are, among others, to be dominant, to hide weaknesses, to be assertive, tough, to be willing to take risks, to be achievement-oriented and ambitious. The tendency for males not to express their emotions is discussed by Sattel (1983) who connects their inexpressiveness to the social and

8. Poynton (1989: 4) distinguishes biological sex from social gender as the former suggests identification as male or female whereas the latter suggests identification as feminine or masculine. Furthermore (pp. 17-20), she discusses the social inferiorization of women as a consequence of ideological meanings which emerge out of particular power configurations. Wearing (1984: 16) agrees, and she discusses the concept of ideology by including gender «as a basis for the generation of ideology:»

sexual division of labour. Males learn that they have to be protectors rather than dependants, that they should take on the role of leader, innovator, initiator (Dendrinou and Haviara-Kehaidou 1991)⁹. As they grow up, they learn that they are less expected to conform to rules and regulations even in highly institutionalized settings such as the school (Kickbusch and Everhart 1985)¹⁰.

Females, on the other hand, are socialized very differently. The image which is still potent, despite the movement for sex-equitable roles in society, is that of the emotional, dainty, dependent, passive, sweet and cute female¹¹. Girls still grow up finding out that it is alright if they are not assertive, and that if they want to succeed they must try to be pretty; they realize that, unless they can be both, being attractive counts more than being intelligent. In studies investigating epithets associated with women and men, the characteristics positively evaluated for the former are adjectives such as *affectionate, appreciative, attractive, charming and gentle*, whereas for the latter the adjectives positively evaluated are *adventurous, ambitious, confident, courageous, enterprising independent, rational, realistic and stable* (Archer and Loyd, 1982: 38-39).

As boys become young men, they are motivated to take interest and show enthusiasm for professions which are both prestigious and financially rewarding, professions which have career prospects and allow room for success. On the contrary, it is considered natural for girls to pursue dead-end, low paying jobs rather than managerial and reputable professions. Teaching, for example, is still a feminine activity

9. Dendrinou and Haviara-Kehaidou (1991), who investigate the role, function and discourse of two male and two female dramatic characters in four different plays, find that both males intrude in the lives of others as sociomoral leaders and saviours, whereas both females realize an emotional intrusion.

10. Kickbusch and Everhart (1985), who investigate the social consequences of the selection and distribution of school knowledge on pupils, as these were developed in a «traditional» and in a «humanistic» classroom, discuss the practical ideologies created around the conditions of the classroom of «conformist» and «non-conformist» students. It is interesting to note that «non-conformist» students whose 'reactionary' attitudes were taken for granted by the teachers were in all cases boys.

11. A sensitization task assigned by me to an audience of approximately 200 EFL teachers, who were attending a plenary session on «Sexism in ELT» (TESOL-Greece Annual Convention 1986), revealed that these characteristics were frequently attached to women as they were portrayed in advertisements of magazines, all published in 1986.

in most European countries, which provide teachers with low salaries, but not at the level of tertiary education where teaching involves greater prestige and qualifications (Deem 1982: 110-126). In Greece, the feminine model of housewife, wife, mother is still prevalent for both working and non-working women. The work women do outside the home is still considered secondary to the husband's salary and the money that they earn is still considered a means to cover the extras that the husband's salary cannot cover (Kaklamanaki 1984). Thus, it is not surprising that informal conversations with some of the future teachers studying at the school of Philosophy in the University of Athens, ninety percent of which are females, reveal that some young women still view education as a medium to help them find a husband and to allow them to raise their children properly.

Gender identity which is a social construct is developed in the family and in the society at large. Hasan (1986) finds linguistic evidence to support the different treatment by parents of newborn babies, depending on sex. Her research shows that parents give their four-year-olds reiterated messages that women's activities are marginal and trivial. Gleason and Grief (1983) discuss the impact that fathers have on their children's language development, as well as how fathers may be using language to socialize their children in sex-typed ways. Kress and Hodge (1988) examine the visual text published in the *Australian Women's Weekly*, which covered Princess Diana's and Prince Charles's 1985 tour to Australia. Their purpose, in which they succeed, is to illustrate how gender systems in society are maintained and mediated by gender components of logonomic systems. Kramarae (1981: 53), in discussing the issue of male-female humour not only refers to the still prevalent willingness to tell sexist jokes of which there are still plenty, but analyzes the reasons for the popular stereotype that «women often do and say funny, outrageous and silly things, but they are very seldom intentionally and successfully witty». Moreover, she supports that the belief about women not having a sense of humour is unfounded. Fairclough (1990: 132-134) critically analyzes the discourse of a Berlei maternity bra advertisement to show how women are treated stereotypically: the advertisement presupposes and therefore projects that there is a woman and mother in all females (womanhood used in the narrow sense of the woman's sexual attractiveness to men), two roles which are incompatible —until Berlei comes along.

In being socialized as such, yet also confronted with continually growing demands from society, young men and women oftentimes are

faced with internal conflict expressed with frustration and states of anxiety. The success women would wish to attain seems to be conflicting with the notion of the feminine woman (Horner 1979). On the other hand, the need to be protected, taken care of, to be expressive and not always strong, which men often wish, seem to be conflicting with their role as men (Sattel 1983). Yet, these conflicts do not necessarily stimulate struggle for their resolution because the stereotypes are firmly built in and they are generally maintained by the language used in every day interaction outside and inside the school.

2.2 Sexist language outside and inside the school

Language has been considered a very important means for building in and maintaining sexism. As Hartman and Judd (1978: 383) assert, «language learning is necessarily a culture-learning process as well». And, the language of our patriarchal western societies is basically sexist as many studies have shown (Kramarae 1981, Thorne *et al* 1983). And this because, even though «language itself is essentially a neutral vehicle of communication which can be used to convey a wide range of attitudes and values... all speakers tend to use and create language which is flattering and useful to themselves». This is pointed out by Porreca (1984: 705) who discusses the role that the English language plays in maintaining and strengthening sexist values. And she continues: «Those with enough power, authority and influence can standardize language usage». The creation of the dictionaries helped to speed up the process of standardization. Since dictionary writers were male and the social system was a patriarchy, during the time of standardization English received a strong infusion of male-as-norm elements (Miller and Swift 1976). Thus, certain sexist usages of English, which are by no means obligatory, were accepted as normal and standard. Kress (1989) and Fairclough (1990) are also concerned with the issue of standardization and discuss how 'naturalization' of language occurs. Both these scholars, following the theoretical concepts of Foucault (1971), argue that language, which is systematically organized into discourses, entails ideologies that provide a means through which social experience is perceived, creating schemata about realities in life. Discourses configured into texts naturalize dominant cultural values and social conventions. It is within this process that dominant ideology is naturalized and maintained. Critical Discourse Analysis of a variety of texts reveals sex-biased language use, by both men and women. Poynton

(1989), in her effort to show the social construction of gender reality, presents a fairly comprehensive list of what is currently known about differences between men and women speaking English. These differences, which are both assumed and demonstrated, are classified by the author in three different strata: the discourse stratum, the lexico-grammatical stratum and the phonological stratum. She then proceeds to interpret these differences by connecting contextual and linguistic variables and concludes that «power is realized primary in terms of linguistic choices...» And she continues «the greater the inequality between interactants, the more likely it is that their linguistic behaviour will be non-reciprocal».

The same author (Poynton 1989) maintains that one of the major social institutions which has profound effects on youngsters' gender identity is the school because its roles, activities and goals legitimize the inequality between men and women by means of its ideology. Various studies on classroom discourse have indeed confirmed that teachers relate differently to boys and to girls during the lessons. For example, Fichtelius *et al* (1980) found that teachers direct more open-ended questions to boys than to girls, but also explain that this mode of questioning allows the former more than the latter to develop their power of self-motivation and imagination. Spender (1980), on the other hand, who studied female silence in the classroom, reports that this silence is often interpreted as a sign of educational under-achievement. My own observations from data recorded by teacher-trainees of the English Department of the University of Athens, in EFL classes of state schools in Attica, indicate different treatment of boys and girls on a variety of levels to be systematically reported in a future study. To mention but a few examples here: whereas girls are frequently asked to play the role of a boy in a role-play activity, boys are never asked to play the role of a girl; boys are given far fewer tips as to 'proper' behaviour. On certain occasions, when group-work is assigned, with the teacher trying to take learner interests into account, tasks are based on stereotypical notions about what boys and girls are interested in.

One of the main vehicles through which educational goals are attained is the school-textbook. The important role of textbooks and other support materials has been widely recognized as crucially important for the socialization of pupils, by scholars such as Olson (1980), Freebody and Baker (1985), Luke (1988) de Castell (1990) and Apple (1985). Apple in particular has discussed the authoritative role of the school textbook and how it legitimizes messages that influence young

people deeply. Specifically in relation to how important textbooks are for developing gender-identity, there are various studies including that of Edelsky (1977) which discuss how sex-role stereotyping in textbooks influences young people's values and behaviours. Hartman and Judd (1978) have argued that most of the selection in textbook materials is unconsciously sexist and have a definite effect on the readers. Studies such as those by Coles (1977), Hoomes (1978) and Hellinger (1980) have focused on the low visibility of females in the school-textbooks. Others, such as that by Elettferiou *et al* (1983), have focused on the fact that stories and situations are more frequently built around males, while men's accomplishments are mentioned more often than the accomplishments of women. Graham (1975) found that there is more frequent use of adjectives and nouns used to describe males and Moulton *et al* (1978), as well as DeStefano *et al* (1978), detected consistent use of the masculine as generic; i.e., *he* instead of *he or she*, *s/he* or *they*; *man* instead of *person*; *mankind* instead of *humanity*, etc.

In EFL learning materials, which concern us more directly in this paper, sexist attitudes are quite prevalent also. Language exercises seem to make use of the male referent, while they are frequently built around the daily activities and accomplishments of boys and men (Kolokotroni *et al* 1984). Studies also indicate that when nouns are paired-off for sex, there is a firstness in order of priority of the male (Porecca 1984: 706) that both men and women are placed in stereotypical roles (Hartman and Judd 1978: 358-87, Bassea *et al* 1985) and that women seem to be the butt of many jokes (Hartman and Judd 1978: 385).

Despite efforts for the contrary, sexism continues to find its way into many recent publications of EFL materials. *Network 3* (O.U.P., 1982) begins with a unit whose cover page shows a woman doing a «man's job», and the caption is: «A woman could do the job as well as a man». The sex-biased message is clear: the man can do it; it is the woman's ability that is questioned. Linguistically this is achieved through the constituent order of the sentence and the modality of the verb. The cover page of unit 6 in *Profiles* (Nelson, 1981), concerns «occupations» and has a visual text which portrays three young women working as secretaries. Further on, in the same unit (p. 58), there is a visual text of people picketing: four men are at the forefront and the women lag behind. Unit 4 of *Break into English 3* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1987) deals with «catastrophies». The «Practice» page (p. 13) is about Pompeii and below the written text a sequence of two

pictures whose theme is a woman is presented. The caption below the first picture of the sequence is: «Seconds before Vesuvius erupted she had been making bread». Below the second picture the caption is: «Two minutes later she was dead. She had hidden under the table». It is interesting that the page facing it, the «Transfer» page (p. 14), focuses on «achievements» and there are six photographs of famous men that learners are to identify on the basis of verbal cues which underline the achievements of these great personalities.

Sexism is deeply embedded in both men and women authors and it seems that even when they have intentions about being fair to both sexes, their goals cannot easily be achieved because in the effort to bring outside reality in the classroom they are actually bringing in the sexist reality that exists. Moreover, they seem to bring along their own sex-bias which is often below their threshold of awareness. This became evident during a five year ELT research project carried out in Greece, of which I was the coordinator. This project involved a group of twenty teachers working with a team of five experts to design learning materials and pilot them with a sample of pupil population. Though among the basic goals of the group was, right from the start, to promote sex-equity in the learning materials, private study and investigation of the designed materials indicated sex-bias in the two pilot editions. First of all, there was a strikingly low visibility of females. Secondly, males and females were frequently assigned with stereotyped roles. Many of the leading characters, who were in fact males, were assigned with important social and occupational responsibilities. A disproportionate number of women, on the other hand, were secretaries and teachers whereas males were presented as occupying a wide variety of exciting jobs and managerial positions. Most of the times, the few female leading characters were not presented in their professional roles, but at home discussing an issue. The male leading characters, however, almost always in their professional role, were often presented *doing* things rather than *talking* about issues. Boys, rather than girls, were the ones that had vivid imagination and a sense of adventure. Boys, rather than girls or women, were seen performing heroic actions. Their heroism was presented as a 'natural' trait they had. On the contrary, when girls or women were performing heroic actions, their heroism had to be justified. For example, it was pointed out in a specific learning unit that a woman plane passenger who manages to disarm a hijacker had been a judo instructor. Women, rather than men, were responsible for household duties and the bringing-up of children. Generally speaking, efforts to

avoid sexism seemed to be restricted in presenting conversations and texts whose thematic concerns were to talk about the new position of women in modern society.

When the final pilot edition of the learning materials was evaluated by me in terms of sex-fairness, the results were far from satisfactory. It took a lot of conscious effort to recognize all the problems, to present them to the people involved, and to make suggestions for a fairer treatment of the sexes. What involved the greatest effort was to convince the male colleagues because they disagreed with trying to do anything more than had already been done: There were comments such as: «We can't present our kids with an unreal world», or «Let's not go to extremes». Long debates had to be carried out sometimes so as to change elements that had been recognized as sexist and, on some occasions, the change did not take place.

One final product of the project was a three volume textbook-series entitled *Task Way English* which was published by the State Organization for Educational Materials for use in all lower secondary schools of Greece for the teaching of English as a foreign language. As head author of these books, and responsible for all the illustrations produced, I was persistently evaluating and re-evaluating all materials designed in terms of sex-fairness. It seems that the efforts were fruitful. A study carried out by Limniati and Chouliaraki (1991), whose aim was to give an evaluative account of the treatment of women and the portrayal of sexes in *Task Way English 2*, concludes that «on the whole clearly conscious attempts for a fairer portrayal [of the sexes] has been made». The evaluation of the authors of that paper was mainly based on the framework used in the «Guidelines for Inclusive Language» produced by the «Women in Publishing» group (March 1991) but further expanded and elaborated on, by other contributions the topic. As such, the evaluation was developed in terms of 1) visibility, 2) stereotyping and 3) language. The detailed analysis of the materials—texts, illustrations and recordings— did indicate a relatively sex-fair treatment. However, it also revealed some of the remaining sexism which was a result either of unresolved debates or of my own subconscious sex-bias.

3. Sex-fair socialization in school

As discussed earlier, general educational aims in Europe promote the idea that schools should facilitate change toward an ideology which recognizes the individuality of boys and girls, women and men. Educa-

tional practices in schools should systematically contribute to the making of competent and responsible members of society, male or female, and to the development of each individual to his or her full potential, regardless of sex. The structure of the school curriculum, the choice of subjects and the ways of dealing with each subject should also contribute towards achieving the aforementioned goals. All this, of course, implies that the ultimate objectives for each particular school subject should not be restricted to having provided the learner with knowledge of facts and to having developed skilled behaviour. They should also be extended to include specific objectives related to the intellectual, social and affective growth of all pupils, male or female.

3.1 Sex-fair aims in the context of broader socialization objectives

Education as a whole, and each school subject separately, should be contributing to the development of girls' and boys'

- critical faculties which will allow them to judge for themselves and make their own choices
- abilities to be imaginative and creative
- abilities to modify, extend and expand ideas and to thinking convergently and divergently
- strategies of cooperation which will allow them to share and work with others driving toward collateral goals
- skills necessary so as to implement their initiative and to take on leadership roles in order to achieve personal and social goals
- feelings of confidence, of responsibility toward themselves and others, of self-reliance, autonomy and independence
- feelings of empathy, understanding and acceptance of themselves and others

3.2 Consciousness-raising for teachers

Even if curricula and syllabuses have been carefully planned so as to include objectives such as these listed above, they are very likely not to be achieved if teachers themselves have not developed sex-fair attitudes towards their pupils. And this is indeed the case since teacher-training rarely aims consciously and systematically at the development of sex-fair attitudes. Therefore, it is up to each teacher him/herself to become conscious of his/her own sexist attitudes and to make efforts towards eliminating them. Immediately below are some questions that might help the development of teacher awareness:

THE «NON-SEXIST EDUCATION» QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is just to start you thinking. No-one will evaluate your answers.

1. Please rank order (with number 1 as the top priority) as best you can the qualities listed below which you most value and hope to nurture in the girls and the boys you teach.

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
Ability to make decisions	_____	_____
Honesty	_____	_____
Neatness	_____	_____
Ambition	_____	_____
Humour	_____	_____
Intellectual ability	_____	_____
Love	_____	_____
Leadership	_____	_____
Competitiveness	_____	_____
Aggression	_____	_____
Courage	_____	_____
Sensitivity	_____	_____
Self discipline	_____	_____
Ability to compromise	_____	_____
Perseverance	_____	_____
Politeness	_____	_____
Physical agility	_____	_____

2. Do you react similarly to the emotional behaviour (tears, show of affection, anger) of the boys and the girls in your classes?

3. Do you more often comment on the good appearance of girls than of boys?

4. Do you react differently to physical aggression in girls than to physical aggression in boys?

5. Do you think people are more afraid of making a boy a «sissy» than making a girl a «tomboy»?

6. For what activities, duties, games, classes, procedures do you divide your class by boys and girls? Why?

7. If you have a stack of books to be carried somewhere, are you more apt to ask a boy to help you than a girl?

8. If you have some cleaning up to do, are you more apt to ask a girl to help you than a boy?

9. (a) What activities in your class or area are more popular with the girls than with the boys, and vice-versa?

(b) Do you encourage the children to try all the activities?

(c) Do you avoid suggesting that a boy join a game or an activity where only girls are playing and vice-versa?

10. When messages are sent to parents, do you tell the children to give the message to «your mother» or to «your mother and father»?

11. In discussing social roles, do you ever refer to the baker, butcher, store-keeper, doctor, dentist, etc. as «she» or «he or she»?

12. What is the image of males and females in the textbooks and supplementary materials you use?
13. Do you think men should teach young children?
14. Do you have any career options decided by your sex?
15. (a) How many teachers in your school are female and how many are male?
(b) In what areas are the female teachers?
(c) In what areas are the male teachers?
16. In what areas of activity are boys especially encouraged to be good at : music, math, languages, arts ,sports, literature, social studies, science? If other, specify which
17. In what areas of activity are girls especially encouraged to be good at: music, math, languages, sports, literature, arts, social studies, science? If other, specify which
18. Do you think you give more time and attention (calling on children in class, individual help, encouragement, discipline, etc.) to boys or to girls in your class?
19. Have you ever openly discussed the problem of sexism in your class?
20. How well do you feel that boys and girls in your class get along?
(a) Are they friends?
(b) Are they antagonistic towards one another?
(c) Are they cooperative with one another?

In addition to the above, and in order to respond to goals regarding sex-fair socialization in the school, it is important that educational materials should promote sex-fair attitudes. In fact, it is fairly useful to have certain criteria in mind when choosing and designing materials used for the teaching of language in particular.

3.3 EFL learning materials: practical suggestions

A first proposal to be made is that before school textbooks or other language learning materials are constructed and designed, or before they are chosen for use with pupils, they are evaluated with very specific criteria in mind. Below is a list of suggestions:

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR NON-SEXIST EFL LEARNING MATERIALS.

1. Equal visibility of both sexes and equality to the order of mention.
 - 1.1 If there is an equal number of situations and/or communication encounters with males and females as the central characters.
 - 1.2 If there is an equal number of male and female-oriented stories, articles, letters and other authentic or authentic-like texts.
 - 1.3 If there are illustrations (drawings, photographs, sketches, etc.) which include a balanced number of males and females of different ages and physical types.
 - 1.4 If in nouns used to pair off the sexes the masculine or feminine word does not always come first.

2. Avoiding the use of the masculine as generic in cases where, in the English speaking world, it has become socially acceptable to do so.

2.1 If words such as *mankind*, *manpower*, *chairman*, *fireman*, *forefathers*, *housewife*, etc. have been replaced with others that have become acceptable, such as *humanity*, *human being*, *living power*, *chair-person*, *fire-fighter (brigader)*, *ancestors*, *house-keeper*, etc.

2.2 If the personal pronouns «he» or «she» are not used to refer to both sexes but they have been replaced either by referring to both sexes, i.e., he or she, s/he; by referring to people in the plural, or by using «one». For example: «one must live according to one's principles» —not his principles».

3. Treating males and females (in printed texts, recorded materials, illustrations) as individuals with equal abilities, opportunities, aspirations and varied physical appearance and strength, rather than arbitrarily assigning to either sex stereotyped social, economical and/or occupational roles.

3.1 If both males and females are shown to have the same need for and to obtain education and training in all fields at all levels.

3.2 If both males and females are shown to be equally motivated to work and be successful in their jobs so as to earn a living and contribute to society, to their family and to themselves.

3.3 If both sexes are shown to have a variety of choices regarding family and social life. That is, if both men and women are portrayed as free to choose between a career outside the home or contributing by staying at home; if both are portrayed as free to choose between marrying or remaining single, marrying early or late in life.

3.4 If both sexes are shown to have a wide variety of feelings, characteristics, and psychological needs. That is, if it is not males or females but individual men or women, boys or girls that are portrayed as subservient, passive, domineering, strong, overemotional, in need of approval or recognition, dependent, lazy, independent, self-reliant, clever, brave, able to make decisions, able to face and solve problems, unreliable, sly, cunning, beautiful, sensitive, tender, energetic, alert, industrious, enterprising, etc.

3.5 If both sexes are portrayed as having a variety of intellectual and physical abilities and as participating equally in boring or exciting operations, in intellectual tasks, in physical activities.

The choice of a particular school textbook is not always left to individual teachers and in some cases teachers «on the job» are not involved at all in the choice-making process because of the state practices in particular countries. Therefore, people who might be committed to sex-fair foreign language education with their pupils might be confronted with sexist textbooks chosen by others, or with sex-biased texts in «neutral» textbooks. A proposal to be made is to use such texts to sensitize pupils to sexist attitudes and at the same time provide them with useful language practice. Below are some ideas:

I. Work against the sexism in learning materials

Point out sex bias, provide alternative ways of dealing with the same situation or ask learners to suggest alternatives:

a) Deal with sexist language

Provide learners with a consortium of sexist statements from their book and ask them to replace all underlined elements so that the sentences will be sex-fair. (See Appendix: Example 1)

b) Deal with sexist concepts

Provide learners with an exercise where male and female occupations are stereotyped and ask them to change some of the pronouns so as to have males and females in non-stereotypical jobs (See Appendix: Example 2). Alternatively learners could be provided with an exercise where a male and a female are assigned with stereotyped characteristics. (See Appendix: Example 3). They could be asked to change the names of characters and make all other necessary alterations.

c) Invite learners' sex bias to come out

Choose a sexist exercise as a model (such as the one in the Appendix: Example 4) and ask learners to set up a different situation with people of different status and in different occupational roles. In case learners situations are sex-biased, a class discussion could follow aiming at awareness of sexist language use.

II. Provide learners with materials for sex-fair socialization

Another proposal to be made concerns supplementary and support materials with which teachers provide learners, so as to offer them extra language practice and respond to their interests. Aiming at promoting sex-fair values and attitudes, teachers could specifically look for material which directly deals with issues of sexism and the roles of men and women in society and assign tasks for the development of communication skills. (See Appendix: Example 5). Alternatively, teachers could deal with authentic texts which are either strikingly sexist (such as Examples 6, 7 and 8 in the Appendix) and design language learning tasks which invite learners to detect the sexist attitude.



CONCLUSION

A few ideas have been presented above as practical suggestions to teachers and language materials designers as examples of how to deal with the issue of sexism in the foreign language class¹². However, the whole problem of developing sex-fair attitudes in schools is as complex as combating sexism in society. First of all, there is the question that has been posed again and again as to whether one is to provide learners with what is 'reality' (which is in fact sexist) or a sex-fair 'utopia'. Secondly, there is the crucial issue of teachers' and materials designers' sex-bias. Thirdly, there is the important question as to whether indeed aims related to sex-fair socialization are not contradicted by other social aims which serve purposes of keeping the hierarchical structure of society, purposes to which educational policies and practices in Europe seem to be very attentive to. If, however, conscious efforts are to be made to deal with the problem, it is important that they are in fact made in schools and in language classes in particular. To this end, language teacher-training should be catering to the development of the teachers' ability to critically view language and the ways in which it contributes to the construction of gender reality.

12. Makri-Tsilipakou (1987) also provides some useful suggestions, particularly for teacher talk in class.

APPENDIX

Example 1

(Extracts from various advanced EFL textbooks)

1. What is modern is distinct from what belongs to the past and *man* in earlier times must have experienced this sense of distinctiveness. *He* cannot escape, and never has been able to escape, from an awareness of change.
2. The works of Hemingway, Steinbeck and *Miss Buck* were widely read.
3. We had finally been able to overcome the difficulties. We couldn't believe it. We were finally *man and wife*.
4. Gallileo was the astronomer who discovered the moons of Jupiter. Mari Curie was the *beautiful chemist* who discovered radium.
5. It's the vital matter of whether one can resist the *fair sex*.
6. The poetic styles of Emily Dickinson and E.E. Cummings are quite different. *Emily* is best known for her spare, simple style while Cummings is known for having extended the spirit of cubism into verbal media.
7. In New England the typical farm was so small that the *owner* and *his* sons could take care of it by themselves.
8. That's what the strike was all about. And they did abstain from work, men and women. *Men* who considered themselves *free individuals* and women who considered themselves *emancipated*.
9. Andrew Wyeth is considered a fine artist. Georgia O'Keeffe is considered to be an exceptionally talented *woman artist* as well.
10. *Mr and Mrs William Bradburry* had been invited to the party. *Miss Penny Chimples* had not actually received a formal invitation.

Example 2

(From *Kernel Lessons Intermediate*)

Now make sentences in the same ways:

1. He/hope/a dentist *He hopes to take up dentistry.*
2. She/hope/a ballet dancer
3. He/mean/a chartered accountant
4. He/plan/a journalist
5. He/intend/a politician
6. They/hoie/doctors
7. We/intend/actresses
8. I/thinking of/economist
9. He/thinking of/a teacher
10. He/thinking of/a hotel manager
11. They/intend/nurses
12. I/mean/astronomer

Example 5

Reading tasks with selected authentic texts

1) Scan through the article below and try to get the necessary information so as to make up a classified ad for the course C.C. Bucks took. Note that classes are held at Newnhan House, Hampstead Rd., London NW1.

CAR SHARP

Last year I attended a course of evening classes on car maintenance for women only. We were all novices and the thought of saving pounds on future garage bills certainly made us enthusiastic to learn everything mechanical about our cars. Although I still rely on my garage for major jobs, I've gained the confidence to tackle the simple ones myself. And now I am familiar with the engine and know what can go wrong, I drive with more sym-

pathy for the mechanism. I have a good idea what needs repairing when I have to take my car into a garage, and consequently I avoid being charged for unnecessary extra jobs. Even a little knowledge can be an advantage when talking to a mechanic. Now I'm treated as an intelligent adult by the garage mechanics and not just 'a lady driver', and Nervous Breakdowns (February) are a thing of the past.

C.C., Bucks.

From: *Over 21*

2) Skim through the two articles below and try to guess what Amanda Hall's views on «liberated women» were.

From *Just Seventeen*

And still the letters about Amanda Hall's views on «liberated women» flood in. Here's a small selection from the latest batch.

Amanda Jones — your letter about men and their supposed superiority shows just the narrow-minded attitude that has kept the female sex oppressed for centuries. Feminism is not about «macho women» with pulsating muscles trying to be men. It's equality we strive for, the right to equal opportunities, equal pay, and equal rights in the eyes of the law. Since when has physical strength caused much more than violence? It's the other facets of human beings that matter.

And, finally, if we took your attitude about tradition always being right we might as well be living in caves. Wise up! This is the 20th Century, not the Dark Ages.

Michaela Jones, Reading.

We can tell Amanda Hall what has happened to the women of today. We are beginning to fight back. We are sick to death of being treated as inferior and some of us now believe that our opinions, as well as males' opinions, count!

Not all women want to be chained to the kitchen sink and, as you so nicely put it and we quote, «who wants

a wimp for a husband who did just as he was told?» Who wants a husband? Some of us are quite capable of managing by ourselves. We are not saying that we never want to get married, but some of us would like to prove that we exist in the human race, as masters rather than servants.

And why shouldn't a girl ask a boy

out? Why shouldn't we go through the embarrassment that they have to go through? You just want the easy way out!

We're ashamed to think you are also a member of the female sex and it's women like you who have stopped women like us getting anywhere.

Two Very Angry and Liberated Depeche Mode Fans, West Bromwich.

Example 6

Reading task

Read the first couple of lines from a text we selected for you, (From: J.F. Freitas *To Start you Practising* Macmillan, 1974) as they appear below and guess what's to happen immediately afterwards.

The lemon-coloured sports car skids across the road and the woman driver brings it to a sudden halt. She gets out and finds that her front tyre is flat. She knows what to do:

Now check if your guess was right, and read the extract below so as to predict how the whole incident will end.

She looks at the passing traffic as if expecting someone. Recognising this usual sign of a woman in distress, an estate car draws up. The driver sees in a moment what is wrong and says comfortingly: «Don't worry. We'll soon fix that». He asks for her jack. He does not ask if she is capable of changing the wheel herself because he knows —she is about thirty, smartly dressed and made up— that she is not. As she cannot find her jack, he fetches his own, together with the rest of his tools.

Five minutes later the job is done, and the old wheel is put away. His hands are covered with oil. She offers him a handkerchief which he politely refuses. He has a rag for such occasions. The woman thanks him, apologising for her typically feminine awkwardness. She might have been there till midnight, she says, if he had not stopped.

Now check if your prediction was right and make a final guess: How do you think the text is going to be brought to an end?

He makes no reply but politely shuts the door for her as she gets back into the car. Then she drives off.

The man goes back to his car, his hands dirty, his tie undone, and late for an appointment with his manager. As he starts the engine he thinks, «Women! What on earth would they do without us?» But as he puts his foot on the accelerator, he is humming to himself. He feels happy.

And so does she. For what else could a woman do when her car has broken down? She has let a man do the job for her; a very satisfactory arrangement, as all women know. They let the men do the work for them. In fact, they exploit men.

Now find out how it *actually* ends!

Yet since it is men who are supposed to be the more intelligent, why don't they exploit women? Could it be that intelligence is not a qualification for power? Could it be that the world is not being ruled by men but by those human beings incapable of anything else—women?

As a final step to your reading activity, think of an appropriate title for this text.

Example 7

Listening task

1) Listen to Laura and Sandra talking and fill in the opinion table below. Then you shall make your own mind up.

From the *Experimental Material*, Class B)

Laura : I'm not at all sure that things have changed.

Sandra : Of course they have! Just look around you. When I came to Greece 20 years ago, very few women had high-paying jobs. Only few girls went to University. Only boys studied ... studied to be doctors and lawyers.

Laura : Yes, but men are still earning much more money than women.

Sandra : That's true, but they have started to get higher salaries. They have begun to get better jobs; they have entered the world of business, medicine, technology.

Laura : Yes, but there are still a lot of women at home, don't forget.

Sandra : Of course. That's a job too, isn't it?

Laura : It is ... but people have not changed their attitude towards housewives and house ... I mean that they didn't see it as a profession 20 years ago, and they don't see it as a profession today!

Sandra : Naturally. That's because housewives don't get a regular salary. But people have realized the importance of things that women offer when they stay at home.

Laura : Look Sandra ... you and I do not see eye to eye concerning men and women. Maybe I have expected too much all along. Let's just drop this subject.

Sandra : Ok. ok. Laura. But I want to give you a piece of advice. Keep your eyes open to the changes that are taking place. Don't take a negative attitude to things.

Opinions	Laura	Sandra	You
Many women have high-paying jobs nowadays	_____	_____	_____
Men have higher paying jobs than women	_____	_____	_____
Women have more prestigious jobs nowadays	_____	_____	_____
Many women are still housewives	_____	_____	_____
Being a housewife is a full time profession	_____	_____	_____
Women offer a lot when they stay at home	_____	_____	_____
Many changes have taken place in the last 20 years	_____	_____	_____

Example 8

Speaking task

Work in groups and choose one of the situations below. Decide which two members of your group are going to act it out, and help them prepare themselves.

(a) A young man has applied for a job in a nursery school along with three other females —one middle aged lady and two young women about as old as he is. All four applicants have the same qualifications except the young man has not been given a chance to acquire experience in working with young children. Interviewed by the nursery-school head, he is trying to convince her that he would be better at the job than the women.

(b) A young married couple of graduate students are about to have their first child, and they're discussing which of the two is going to be responsible for the baby after nursery-school hours, until evening, when they are both at home anyway. The woman thinks that they should take turns, while the man thinks that its the woman's responsibility to care for a newborn baby. «It's a woman's natural role» he says.

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