

Exploring Gender Stereotypes in 21st Century Philippine Narratives

Pauline Grace P. Casil-Batang

College of Allied Health Sciences: pgpcasilbatang@csu.edu.ph
Cagayan State University – Andrews Campus
Tuguegarao City, Cagayan

Abstract: This study examined narratives in the 21st century Philippine literature. It specifically aimed to determine whether stereotypes are present in the narratives and whether the stereotypes assigned to each gender are positive or negative. These narratives in the form of short stories were written and published within the timeframes set in this paper; 2001-2006; 2007-2012; and 2013-present and won First Prize Palanca Memorial Awards for Short Stories in English served as the corpus in this study. Mixed-method – quantitative and qualitative research design was utilized in the study where gender representations were extracted through the stereotypes assigned to male and female characters. Moreover, these stereotypes were content analyzed; they were quantified and further qualified as positive or negative stereotypes. The results show that stereotypes are present in the narratives of 21st century Philippine literature and bias is given to women for they were assigned with more negative stereotypes as compared to male characters. This presents the reality in the grassroots that despite the efforts of the government and the growing awareness of Filipinos regarding gender equality, issues related to gender still exist in the present time.

Keywords – content analysis, gender stereotypes, 21st century narratives, *The Home of Sierra Madre*, *Turtle Season*, *Zeotrope*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Magna Carta of Women as couched in RA 9710 states that “*discrimination against women refers to any gender-based distinction, exclusion, or restriction... and a measure or practice of general application is discrimination against women if it fails to provide for mechanisms to offset or address sex or gender-based disadvantages or limitations of women.*” The United Nations Human Rights expresses that “*wrongful gender stereotyping is a frequent cause of discrimination against women. It is a contributing factor in violations of a vast array of rights such as the right to health, adequate standard of living, education, marriage and family relations, work, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, political participation and representation, effective remedy, and freedom from gender-based violence.*”

In the Philippines, with its long history of being a victim of gender bias, the existence of RA 9710 reflects the serious campaign against any type of gender discrimination. The presence of active and dynamic women’s movement, numerous organizations and non-government organizations (NGOs) shows that there is a great effort among the Filipino people to promote and support gender equality in the country. Indeed, the Philippine government works hard in changing the status of women in the country.

With all these supports and moves from the people and the government, how far has Philippines gone in terms of gender equality? Based on the latest Gender Gap Report 2021, the Philippines ranked 17th among the 156 countries. In Asia Pacific, the Philippines placed second

next to New Zealand, ranking fourth globally. These figures are based on the four indices, economic participation, political empowerment, health and survival, and educational attainment.

However, these results could be or could not be translated to what really is happening in the grassroots. Literature being considered as the reflection of life, culture, ideals, and beliefs of the people in its time plays a vital role in revealing the unnoticed and the subtle forms of gender inequality in the present time. Also, literature builds nation; nation breeds literature (Perez-Grajo, 2019). This inseparable connection between our nation, its people and culture, and literature, reflection of life and culture of the people, cannot be underestimated. As Mustedanagic (2010) declares that whenever a text is read, an interpretation is made by the reader and meaning is constructed. Furthermore, the reading/learning materials that learners use in school could also become the source of their ideas and concept about the world. And so, literature as an omnipresent material in school can be used to reinforce or weaken governments effort toward the promotion of gender equality. It is therefore important to include literature with a variety of characters that are not tied into stereotypes of race, gender, or socioeconomic status (Chick, 2002; cited by Nebbia, 2016).

With all these information about literature and gender equality, this paper aimed to investigate how men and women are represented in the 21st century Philippine literature particularly in narratives. Specifically, it sought to identify the gender stereotypes present in the narratives. The narratives were selected based on the set timeframe of the study (2001-2006; 2007-2012; and 2013-present), and the awards they won in Palanca Awards for short stories (must have won First prize). This research aimed to study how gender equality is translated in the life of every Filipino through its literature.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research used of the mixed method — qualitative and quantitative research design. The data were content analyzed where stereotypes found in the narratives were quantified. Further, extracts and excerpts where stereotyping surfaced were taken for qualitative discussions.

Sampling Technique

The narratives used in the study are in the form of short stories particularly written in the 21st century. Narratives were selected based on the timeframes in the 21st century literature set in this paper; 2001-2006; 2007-2012; and 2013-present.

From these timeframes, the following short stories were selected, *Turtle Season* by Timothy R. Montes (2001), *The Home of Sierra Madre* by Sigfredo R. Iñigo (2009), and *Zoetrope* by Richard C. Cornelio (2016).

Data Gathering Procedure

The process of extraction of stereotypes found in the narratives was done manually. Further, they were then identified whether positive or negative stereotypes. The researcher had to read each narrative one at a time to give enough focus and time in this stage. This process took her few weeks to finish. After extraction of the data from the narratives, the researcher sought for expertise of other language researchers to validate her data.

Narrative Sample

The narratives selected in this paper were considered based on two (2) criteria. First, they have to be written and published in the 21st century and second, they should have won the First Prize in the prestigious Palanca Memorial Awards for Short Stories in English.

Analysis of Data

The study used content analysis. The data from the three narratives were content analyzed with the use of quantification and qualification of statements. For the quantification, frequency count and percentages were used; whereas for the qualification, statements were extracted as excerpts to serve as corpus for the analysis.

Content analysis was used to determine how females and males are represented in images of females and males which focused on the positive and negative labels assigned to the characters. These labels were then taken and identified in terms of gender stereotypes.

III. RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Content Analysis of the Narratives in 21st Century Philippine Literature

The content analysis for each of the narratives from different timeframes includes labels assigned to the characters. Analyses of these elements are presented in order to show whether gender stereotyping is present in the 21st century Philippine narratives and which gender was assigned with positive and negative stereotypes.

Stereotypes in *Turtle Season*

Bias is seen against women in Figure 1 as there are no positive stereotype present among the female characters and but more of negative stereotypes listed compared to that of males'. In the figure, it is evident that females are put in the bad light because they are represented negatively in the story.

Unlike for males, even though there are negative stereotypes given to them, there are still more positive stereotypes listed and that makes their representation fair. Hence, it can be said that *Turtle Season* favors men more than they do for women.

Among the stereotypes observed for male characters is their being competitive, may it be about work or about personal life. This stereotype is present to Capt. Daza, Lt. Salazar and Prof. Hernandez. Another positive stereotype present is being independent. Independent in a way that male characters show that they could handle things on their own. Like Capt. Daza who refused to accept the help of Prof. Hernandez about his anguish toward his wife's affair with other man. The label hard on the outside and soft inside is very much evident to Capt. Daza. He may be dealing with terrorists and cultists and appears to be a tough man but he is soft when it comes to his wife. In fact, he cried and he knelt down in front of his wife just to beg for her to stay with him. He even said that he is willing to request for reassignment just to keep his wife with him.

However, there are two negative stereotypes present among the male characters. One is having a dominant behavior (Klapp, 1962 cited in Mustapha, 2012) in which Capt. Daza possesses. This is observed when he refused to make outright decision about the film they got from the cultists. Furthermore, another negative stereotype is being sexually aggressive. Despite being impotent, Capt. Daza still shows that he is sexually aggressive toward his wife.

When it comes to the female characters, there is no positive stereotype listed in the table but there are negative stereotypes. The negative stereotypes are observed from Daisy. In the story, Daisy is used as an object that is meant for gaze (Klapp, 1962 cited in Mustapha, 2012). It is the

scene where she is in the beach and she is wearing provocative and revealing clothing (Klapp, 1962 cited in Mustapha, 2012). Also, it appears that she is a jobless woman and that she depends on the income of Capt. Daza. Her being weak is seen when Capt. Daza confronted her about her affair with other man. In the scene, she just cried without telling anything to Capt. Daza which reveals that women tend to be stereotypically emotional (Hartman and Judd 1978) in Stockdale, 2006.

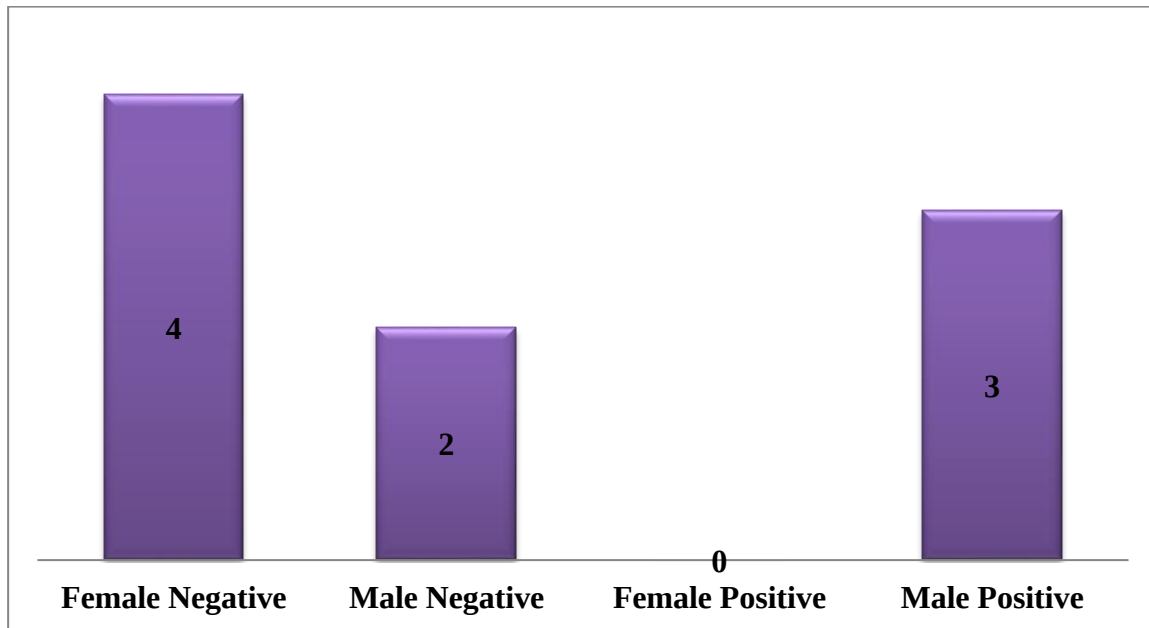


Figure 1. Stereotypes in *Turtle Season*.

Stereotypes in *The Home of Sierra Madre*

Based on figure 2, males' positive stereotypes are more highlighted than their negative stereotypes; while it is the other way around for females'. Though this case is better than that of the first story, still bias against women is present in *The Home of Sierra Madre*.

Emphasizing the negative stereotypes for women and the positive stereotypes for men creates unequal representation of gender.

The father in the story projects the positive stereotype of making decision for the family. In addition, adventurous is observed toward the son who makes life in the farm exciting and thrilling by trying new things.

However, the father is seen as aggressive when he had a quarrel with a drunken corporal in the barracks whom he almost shot and when he suspected someone had stolen their *carabao* and prepared his .45.

For female characters, the positive stereotype listed is their showing support to male characters. The mother for instance, despite her disapproval about her husband's retirement from the army, she remains quiet and supported him with his plans for the family. When the husband bought homestead and built a hut in the mountain, she was there and even stayed there to show support. Moreover, she also supports her son for his dream of attending university. Aunt Binang

and cousin Luzviminda, too supported Anton on his birthday celebration by being the ones in charge of the food.

Nevertheless, negative stereotypes among women that are observed in the story is their incapability to make decision for the family. In the story, the mother knew that the pension of the father as a retired army is not enough to support the family but she was not able to assert her point to her husband. Another negative stereotype is the use of women in the story as objects that dance (Klapp, 1962 cited in Mustapha, 2012). In the line, *“The girls of the village sat on benches and inverted mortars, barefoot and sunburnt like men, their long hair glistening with fragrant coconut oil. I watched them dance with men to the dull rhythm of a guitar that went dyal-dyal teng, dyal-dyal teng, dyal-dyal teng until I fell asleep; the dancing went on till dawn.”* it is observed that the presence of the girls in the dance party are given more emphasis than that of men.

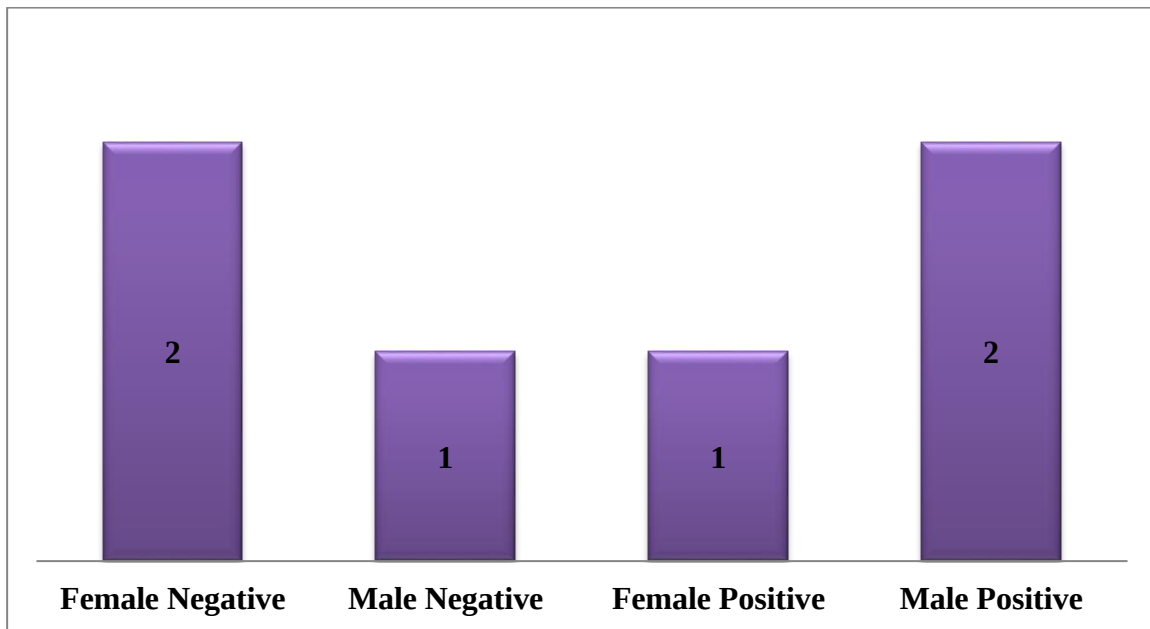


Figure 2. Stereotypes in *The Home of Sierra Madre*.

Stereotypes in *Zoetrope*

Figure 3 indicates that in the last story which is written in 2016, women take the spotlight enjoyed by men in the first two stories. This time, positive stereotypes for women are given more emphasis than their negative stereotypes. However, men were placed behind women as there were no positive stereotypes observed from them but only a negative stereotype.

The table below shows the gender stereotypes assigned to the male and female characters in the story *Zoetrope*. There are no listed positive stereotypes among male characters in the story. However, one negative stereotype is observed from Joaquin. In the lines, *“When I finally decided that I’d Do It, it wasn’t with the man I was going with at the time, someone who I was drawn to intellectually and emotionally and physically, but who believed, to my chagrin and alarm, that the exercise of his sexual will was fundamental to any relationship he had had with a woman. You’d have thought that with a man like that, who always had his hand up my thigh unbelievably immediately when no one was watching, I’d get laid faster than you could say sex.”* it can be inferred that the man in the lines which refers to Joaquin, is sexually aggressive.

While for female characters, there are positive stereotypes presented in the story such as meeting a Prince Charming, wearing a white fluffy dress are a stuff of women's dream, and having filmic imagination. Nonetheless, women in the story are presented as too concerned about their physical appearance is a negative stereotype among women.

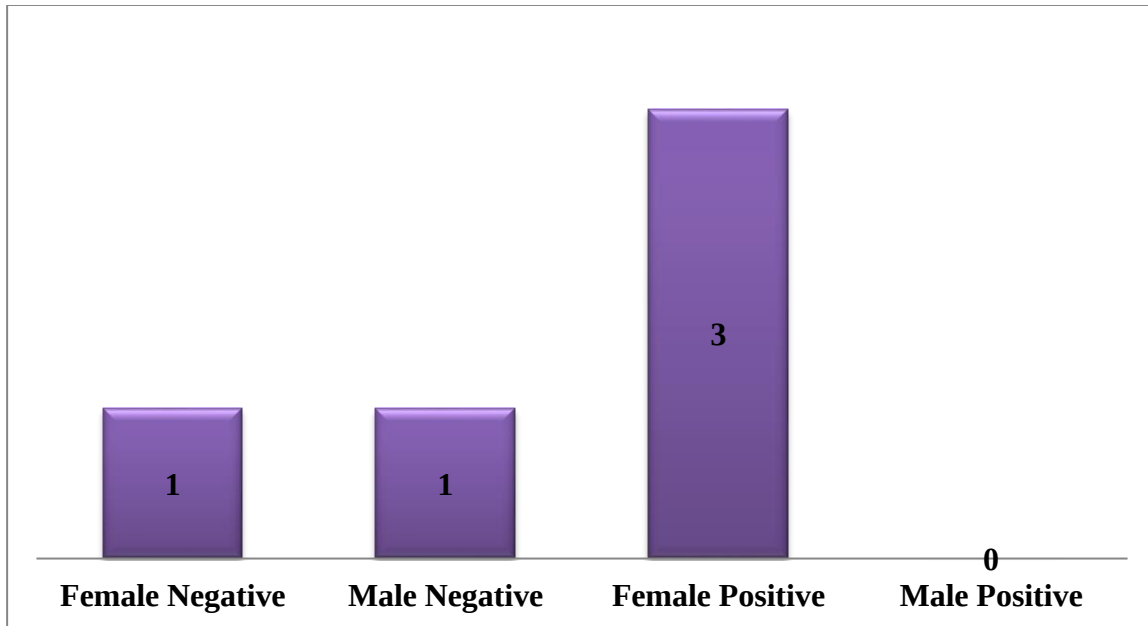


Figure 3. Stereotypes in *Zoetrope*.

Summary of Stereotypes in the Three Narratives

The following Table shows the summary of stereotypes in the three narratives. The results show that both females and males perform gender stereotypical activities (Cincotta, 1978) in Tietz (2007). Based on the table, negative stereotypes toward women are highly emphasized than men's negative stereotype while positive stereotypes are observed more in men than in women.

This result gives a notion that despite the many changes at the present time as regards gender, stereotypes are still very much alive and it appears to be a point of bias between genders. Unfortunately, women remain to be a victim of negative stereotypes.

This finding is parallel with the content analysis on gender representation by Talosa & Temporal (20218) where they concluded that the need to de-gender the English language targeted at making language gender neutral or gender inclusive is quite of imminent importance. Teachers around the globe who reinforce students' learning of English language to make them competent intercultural speakers or skilled language users, should work on giving deliberate reinforcement on the deviation of these stereotypes or sexist structures in the field of language discourse.

Table 4. Stereotypes in the three narratives.

Gender	Negative	Positive
--------	----------	----------

	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Female	7	63.64	4	44.44
Male	4	36.36	5	55.56
T O T A L	11	100	9	100

IV. CONCLUSION

Content analysis as employed in the study generated results which show that stereotyping is still evident in the narratives of 21st century Philippine literature. Further, bias is seen in the stereotypes assigned to women. This implies that gender inequality is still evident in the minute details in the life of Filipinos. The efforts of the government and the awareness of Filipinos regarding gender equality remain challenged as these are not yet completely translated in life of the everyone as reflected in the literature of this time.

References

- Anonuevo, Carlos Antonio Q. 2000. An Overview of the Gender Situation in the Philippines. *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Journal – International Politics and Society*.
- Bordalo, Pedro et.al. 2018. Beliefs about Gender
- Cincotta, M. S. 1978. *Textbooks and their influence on sex-role stereotype formation*. BABEL: Journal of the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Association, 14(3),24-29.
- Collins, L. J., Ingoldsby, B. B., & Dellman, M. M. 1984. *Sex-role stereotyping in children's literature: A change from the past*. Childhood Education.
- Cornelio, R. 2016. *Zoetrope*. Panitikan. Philippine Literature Portal. <https://panitikan.ph/likhaan-the-journal-of-contemporary-philippine-literature-issue-no-10/>
- Croghan, Richard, V. S.J. 1975. *The Development of Philippine Literature in English (Since 1900)* Manila: Alemar-Phoenix.
- Duveen, G. 2000. Introduction: The power of ideas. In G. Duveen (Ed.) *Social representations: Studies in social psychology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Eckert, P. & McConnell-Ginet, S. 2003. *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge Universal Press.
- Eviota, Elizabeth U. 1994. *Sex and Gender in the Philippine Society: A Discussion of Issues on Relations between Women and Men*. San Miguel, Manila, Philippines: National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women.
- Federal Money Retriever. 2001. *Government grants and loans: Women's educational equity act program*. Retrieved from: <http://www.idimagic.com/htmls/grants/84083.htm>
- Fleming, P. M. 2000. *Three decades of educational progress (and continuing barriers) for women and girls*. Equity & Excellence in Education, 5J (1).

- Formanowicz, M. et. Al. 2016. Can Gender-Fair Language Reduce Gender Stereotyping and Discrimination? *Frontiers in Psychology*. doi: [10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00025](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00025)
- Gender Equality Law <https://www.genderequalitylaw.org/gender-stereotyping>
- Gender Mainstreaming Committee 2006. *Promoting Gender Equality in the Philippines*. Makati City, Philippines.
- Gharbavi, A. & Mousavi, S. A. 2012. *A content analysis of textbooks: Investigating gender bias as a social prominence in Iranian High School English textbooks*. *English Linguistics Research* 1(1), 42-49. doi:10.5430/elr.v1n1p42
- Gooden, A. M. & Gooden, M. A. 2001. *Gender representation in notable children's picture books: 1995-1999*. *Sex Roles*, 45, 89-101. doi:10.1023/A:1013064418674
- Hamdan, S. 2010. *English-language textbooks reflect gender bias: A case study in Jordan*. *Advances in Gender and Education* 2, 22-26.
- Hartman, J and Judd, E. L. 1978. *Sexism and TESOL materials*. *TESOL Quarterly* 12,383-393. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3586137>
- Healy, D. 2009. *The representation of women and men in a modern EFL textbook: Are popular textbooks gender biased?* *Memoirs of the Osaka Institute of Technology*, Series B54, 2, 91-100.
- Hellinger, M. 1980. *"For men must work, and women must weep": Sexism in English language textbooks used in German schools*. *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, 3, 267-275. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0148-0685\(80\)92323-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0148-0685(80)92323-4)
- Iñigo, S. 2009. *The Home of Sierra Madre*. World E-book Fair. 2009 Palanca Awards. http://worldebookfair.net/article.aspx?title=2009_palanca_awards
- Jose, F. Sionil. 1981. *Two Filipino Women*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.
- Klapps, Orrin E. 1962. *Heroes, Villians and Fools*. *Englewood Cliffs*: Prentice Hall.
- Khurshid, K., Gillani, I. G. & Hashmi, M. A. 2010. *A study of the representation of female image in the textbooks of English and Urdu at secondary school level*. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* 30 (2), 425-437. Retrieved from: http://www.bzu.edu.pk/PJSS/Vol30No22010/Final_PJSS-30-2-18.pdf
- Lacey, N. 2009. *Image and representation*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lee, L. & Man, T. 2001. *Feminism, post modernism and the politics of representation*. *Women and Politics* 22(3), 35-57. doi:10.1300/J014v22n03_02
- Lee, J. F. K. 2011. *Gender representation - An exploration of standardized evaluation methods (Book Review)* *Sex Roles* 64:148-150. doi:10.1007/s11199-010-9823-1
- Leskin, I. 2001. *Determining social prominence. A methodology for uncovering gender bias in ESL textbooks*. In *Innovation in English Language Teaching*, eds., D. R. Hall & A. Hewing, 275-282. London: Routledge.
- Magna Carta of Women (2009) Philippine Official Gazette <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2009/08/14/republic-act-no-9710/>
- Montes, T. 2001. *Turtle Season*. The Best Philippine Short Stories. <http://www.sushidog.com/bpss/stories/turtle.htm>
- Mustapha, Samuel. 2012. *Gender equality in and through education in Nigeria: Gender Representations in Learning Materials*. Retrieved from <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/5503/>
- Mustapha, Samuel 2012. *Dynamics of Gender Representations in Learning Materials*. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4471/generos.2012.12>

- Mustedanagic, A. 2010. *Gender in English Language and EFL Textbooks*. A term paper submitted to Halmstad University. Hogskola
- Nebbia, C. 2016. *Gender Stereotypes in Children's Literature*. University of Northern Iowa.
- Page, E. & Jha, J. 2009. *Exploring the bias: Gender and stereotyping in secondary schools*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Prez-Grajo, J. 2019. *Locating the Nation in a Sampling of Works from Selected "21st Century Philippine Literature from the Regions" Textbooks of the New High School Curriculum: Nation, Pedagogy, Policy*. Presented at the 12th DLSU Arts Congress. De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines.
- Peterson, S. B. & Lach, M. A. 1990. *Gender stereotypes in children's books: Their prevalence and influence on cognitive and affective development*. *Gender and Education* 2(2), 185-197. doi:10.1080/0954025900020204
- Philippines drops 8 places in gender equality, remains top in Asia (2020) <https://pcw.gov.ph/philippines-drops-8-places-in-gender-equality-remains-top-in-asia/>
- PH ranks 17th in Global Gender Gap Report, 2nd in APAC <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1135541>
- Renner, C. E. 1997. *Women are 'busy, tall and beautiful': Looking at sexism in EFL materials*. Paper presented at the National Seminar: Mind the Language (Rome, 1996) and at the Annual Meeting of TESOL (Orlando, 1997).
- Ross, H. & Shi, J. 2003. *Entering the gendered world of teaching materials*, Part II. *Chinese Education and Society* 36, 3, 3-9. doi: 10.2753/CED1061-193236033
- Stockdale, D. A. 2006. *Gender representation in an EFL textbook*. Paper submitted to the School of Humanities of the University of Birmingham.
- Stromquist, N., Lee, M. & Brock-Utne, B. 1998. *The explicit and the hidden school, In Women in the Third World: An Encyclopedia of Contemporary Issues*, eds. N. Stromquist & K. Monkman, (pp.397-407). New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.
- Sunderland, J. 1994a. Introduction in J. Sunderland, (Ed.) *Exploring Gender: Questions and implications for English Language Education*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Sunderland, J. 1994b. Pedagogical and other filters. In J. Sunderland (Ed.) *Exploring Gender*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Sunderland, Jane 2000a. *Issues of gender representations in textbooks: A state of the art studies*. *Language Teaching*, 33/4:203-223. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800015688>
- Sunderland, Jane 2000b. *New understandings of gender and language classroom research: Texts, teacher talk and student talk*. *Language Teaching Research* 2000 4: 149 DOI: 10.1177/136216880000400204. Retrieved from <http://ltr.sagepub.com/content/4/2/149>.
- Sunderland, J. 2011. *Language, Gender and Children's Fiction*. London: Continuum.
- Talosa, A. & Temporal, C. (2018). *Content Analysis of Sexist Language Occurrence on Written Discourse of Junior Pre-Service Teachers*. *TESOL International Journal* Vol. 13 Issue 4 ♠ ISSN 2094-3938



- Tietz, W. 2007. *Women and men in accounting textbooks: Exploring the hidden curriculum*. Issues in Accounting Education, 22, 3,459-480. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2308/iace.2007.22.3.459>
- United Nations Human Rights
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/women/wrgs/pages/genderstereotypes.aspx>
- Wall, Audrey Nixon 1991. *Gender-Bias in Literature within the High School Curriculum: A Study of Novels used in the Lakeshore School Board*.
- Philippine Commission on Women. Alike that different. <https://pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/.../documents/.../more%20alike%20than%20different..>
- Women's Equity Resource Center. 2002. *What is gender equity?* Women's Educational Equity Act Equity Resource Center. Retrieved from <http://www.edc.org/WomensEquity/about/define.htm>