



Gender Bias in the Books *Persian of Iran Today* and *First Step*: A Corpus-Based Study

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1. Introduction

The misrepresentation or non-representation of the role of both genders in language teaching materials reflects gender bias and can reproduce gender stereotypes in language learners. The present study investigates how gender is represented in AZFA educational materials, written by authors outside Iran and authors inside Iran.

2. Materials and methods

In this study, the book *Persian of Iran Today - Introductory Course of Persian Language Teaching, Volume 1* written by Shahsavari and Atwood (2015), from AZFA educational materials published outside Iran, was examined. To compare with this book, the *First Step - in learning Persian*, beginner level (1938) written by Sahraei, Marsous And Malekloo, from the AZFA educational materials published in Iran, was analyzed. Both books were selected at the same beginner level to ensure a valid comparison.

The questions aims to answer the following questions to examine the representation of gender in these AZFA educational materials:

1. In *Persian of Iran Today* and *First Step*, what are the representations of gender in the use of names for the males and females?
2. In the books *Persian of Iran Today* and *First Step*, what are the representations of gender in the related words used for males and females?
3. In the books *Persian of Iran Today* and *First Step*, what are the representations of gender in related jobs used for both males and females?
4. What are the representations of gender in the images of the books *Persian of Iran Today* and *First Step* and how gender-based are the images?
5. What is the ratio of male to female participants in conversations in *Persian of Iran Today* and *First Step*, and to what extent are these conversations genderized?

First, the raw texts, images, and audio/video content text of each book were processed using Microsoft Word 2019. A list of required labels was created based on the research objectives. The two constructed corpora were then labeled using defined

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codes. Tables were generated from the corpora prepared to answer the research questions using Astrogrep 4.4.7 and Lancsbox 5.1.2 software.

Items that distinguish this study from previous studies are as follows:

- Using the corpus-based approach in gender assessment in AZFA educational materials
- A comparison of gender representations in two types of AZFA educational materials (published outside and inside Iran)

3. Results and discussion

Based on the tables and diagrams extracted from the corpora of the two books, as well as an analysis of the relevant data, the results are summarized in Table (1).

Table 1
Comparison of gender bias in two books

Indicators-Book	Persian of Iran Today		First Step	
	Bias Type	Bias Intensity	Bias Type	Bias Intensity
Names of People	In favor of females	1.3	In favor of males	2
Related Words	In favor of males	1.25	In favor of males	2
Jobs	In favor of males	1.7	In favor of males	2.8
Images	In favor of females	1.5	In favor of males	3.5
Participants (total occurrence)	-	1.06	In favor of males	1.34

As shown in Table 1, *First Step* displayed a gender bias in favor of males in 4 out of the 5 indicators (with an intensity of greater than 2). The average intensity of bias in these 4 indicators for *First Step* was approximately 2.6. In contrast, *Persian of Iran Today* exhibited bias in 2 of these 4 indicators (names of people and images), with an average intensity of 1.4. The remaining two indicators (related words and jobs) showed a bias in favor of males, with an average intensity of 1.5.

At first glance, it can be claimed that *Persian of Iran Today* is in a better situation in terms of gender bias, as the bias intensities of 1.4 and 1.5 effectively neutralize each other, while the average intensity of bias in the book *First Step* is 2.6.

The findings align with the conclusion reached by Ebadi and Ebrahimi Morjal (2015) in their research entitled "The need for serious review of AZFA educational materials in terms of gender components" and confirms their results. Ebadi and Ebrahimi Marjal (2015) emphasized the role of AZFA educators in eliminating and reducing gender stereotypes in AZFA educational materials. They also consider the role of AZFA institutions and centers in holding various workshops and educational seminars to educate AZFA instructors on gender stereotypes and their impact on Persian language learners.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm the necessity for teachers to be knowledgeable about gender issues and underscore the crucial role of AZFA instructors in this area.

In particular, the analysis of the "images" indicator emphasized the importance of this role. The researchers of this study believe that, given the increasing global demand for learning Persian language and literature, the authors of AZFA educational materials should pay more attention to how gender-related stereotypes and beliefs are represented.

Keywords: gender; gender bias; gender maps; gender identity; socialization