Stereotypes in Textbooks and Teaching Materials in Hong Kong*

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION OF HONG KONG

I n October 1999, the Equal Opportunities Commission had the Centre for English Language Education and Communication Research, City University of Hong Kong, conduct a content analysis of stereotyping in textbooks and teaching materials. The project examined the nature and extent of stereotyping in printed educational materials, including textbooks and examination papers. The major areas of stereotyping include gender, age, disability, single parenthood, and ethnicity. Selected materials were subjected to extensive linguistic analysis to reveal patterns of stereotyping not seen through content analysis. Various stakeholders' perceptions of stereotyping in educational materials were examined through a questionnaire, focus group interviews, and structured interviews.

Multiple Methodologies

This study employed a number of interconnected research methodologies. The integration of a range of different analytical methods provides a comprehensive account of stereotyping in educational materials.

Five methodologies were employed, employing a combined range of qualitative and quantitative methods:
- content analysis of selected texts,
- linguistic analysis of selected texts,
- focus group discussion,
- survey analysis of teachers' perceptions, and
- analysis of structured interviews.

Summary of Findings

Content analysis of selected texts

Content analysis provides an objective, quantified description of the frequency of occurrence of selected social groups, and attributes associated with them, in the sampled educational materials. Occurrence is determined through the quantification of images (pictures, illustrations, photographs) and uses of language (words and phrases/characters). In this study, 69,957 distinct references to mostly human characters were coded from the entire corpus of 289 textbooks and examination papers. The analytical framework allows for the identifica-

tion of four independent variables (subject, level, publisher, and mode); five major dependent variables (gender, age, disability, ethnicity, and single parenthood and childhood); and a range of further dependent variables. The framework also allows identification of stereotyping in one or more of the above areas, actively (by overt reference) and passively (by covert, or lack of relevant, references). The framework also reveals patterns of stereotyping to be revealed through analysis of covariation. The database is extensive enough to allow for analysis of covariance among the variables beyond those reported in this study.

Stereotyping by subject area

Gender. Female characters appear less often than male characters, varying considerably from subject to subject. The variability is such that the subject does not predict the extent of dominance of male over female characters, or vice versa. Nongenderized characters appear more frequently than genderized characters except in Chinese history materials. The extent of the dominance varies from subject to subject. The subject does not predict the extent of the dominance of nongenderized characters.

Age. Old characters appear less often than younger characters in every subject except economics and integrated sciences, where the number references to the two groups is equal. Overall, age does not predict subject, or vice versa.

Disability. Characters with disabilities appear in every subject, but in a greater number and with more variety in some subjects. Their appearance constitutes less than 0.1% of the total number of characters in the corpus (n=73). Given the small numbers involved, the apparently strong link between subject and disability must be interpreted with caution.

Ethnicity. The balance of characters of different ethnicity is highly variable across differ-

ent subjects, just as the number of references to ethnicity is variable across subjects.

Stereotyping by school level

Gender. Female characters appear less often than male characters, varying considerably from level to level. The dominance of male characters is generally much greater in secondary- compared to primary-school materials, although a predictive relationship does not exist between the two variables. Nongenderized characters tend to dominate in secondary-school materials while genderized characters tend to dominate in primary-school materials. The interaction between genderization and level is significant, although the associative relationship is not particularly strong. There is little or no predictive relationship between the two.

Age. Old characters appear less often than younger characters at every level, but there is no systematic difference between primary- and secondary-school materials.

Disability. Only physical disability is featured in primary-school materials, while in secondary-school materials, physical disability as well as sensory impairment, developmental disability, and unspecified disability are represented. Primary-school materials have 35 references to disability; secondary-school materials, 38.

Ethnicity. The balance between characters of different ethnicity is highly variable across different levels, just as the number of references to ethnicity is variable across levels. Unlike subject, level does not predict ethnicity, or vice versa.

Stereotyping by publisher

Gender. Female characters appear less often than male characters, varying considerably from publisher to publisher. The publisher does not predict the extent of the dominance of male over female characters, or vice versa. Nongenderized

characters tend to dominate, although the pattern is reversed among materials from four publishers. The extent of domination varies quite considerably from publisher to publisher. The variability is such that the publisher does not predict the extent of the dominance of nongenderized characters, or vice versa.

Age. Old characters appear less often than younger characters in the materials from every publisher except three. The number of old and younger characters is equal in materials from two publishers, while materials from one publisher only feature old persons. Overall, the balance between references to the two age groups is highly variable across publishers.

Disability. While materials show no simple pattern, a strong associative and predictive relationship exists between disability and publisher.

Ethnicity. The balance between characters of different ethnicity is highly variable from publisher to publisher. Like subject, the publisher predicts ethnicity to a small degree.

Stereotyping by mode

Gender. Female characters appear less often than male characters in the visual mode, and this appearance is even more significantly reduced in the written mode, although neither variable predicts the other. Nongenderized characters tend to dominate in the written mode while in the visual mode, genderized characters are significantly more prominent. The interaction between genderization and mode is significant, and the associative relationship quite strong. A moderate predictive relationship exist between them.

Age. The number of old and younger characters is equal in the visual mode while old characters appear less often than younger characters in the written mode. Neither variable predicts the other.

Disability. Characters with disabilities occur more frequently and in greater variety in written than in visual materials. Only physical disability is featured in visual materials, with one depiction of an unspecified disability. Written materials also refer to sensory impairment and developmental disability.

Ethnicity. There are generally more written references than visual depictions within each category of ethnicity. However, newly arrived Chinese and "others" are not depicted visually at all, while South Asians are depicted more than referred to.

Stereotyping involving other dependent variables

Family role. There is evidence of stereotypical representation involving family role and genderization as well as family role and gender. Specifically, the frequency of occurrence of givers as opposed to recipients of care is related to gender and to genderization. The former relationship is mediated by subject area and educational level while the latter is mediated by educational level and mode of presentation. Another aspect of family role—the monetary as opposed to the nonmonetary nature of care given or received—is not related in any way to the major dependent variables.

Occupation. The frequency of occurrence of blue-collar as opposed to white-collar workers is related to gender, age, and ethnicity but not to genderization. These relationships are all mediated by subject area, educational level, and mode of presentation, except in the case of age.

Economic status. The frequency of occurrence of economically active characters is related to gender, genderization, age, and ethnicity. Subject area mediates all these relationships while educational level does not where genderization and ethnicity are involved. Mode mediates all the relationships except where ethnicity is involved.

Interest. The frequency of occurrence of different categories of interest is related to gender and to genderization. Subject area, educational level, and mode of presentation mediate the relationship between genderization and interest while no such influence exists for the relationship between gender and interest.

- *Attire.* The frequency of occurrence of characters in dresses as opposed to pants is related to gender, genderization, age, and ethnicity. Interestingly, the relationship between ethnicity and attire is statistically significant when Chinese characters are compared with non-Chinese characters, but not when Chinese characters are compared with Caucasians. Subject area, educational level, and mode of presentation all mediate the relationship between genderization and attire, while only subject area and educational level mediate the relationship between age and attire.

- *Social status.* The frequency of occurrence of positive as opposed to negative social status is related only to genderization, but not to gender, age, or ethnicity. Subject area, educational level, and mode of presentation all mediate the relationship between genderization and social status.

- *Achievement.* Where references are made to achievement, the frequency distribution across categories of gender, genderization, age, and ethnicity is skewed. Moreover, subject area relates to genderization and ethnicity but not to gender and age. Educational level is only related to gender while mode of presentation, only to gender and ethnicity.

- *Failure.* Where references are made to failure, the frequency distribution across categories of gender and genderization is skewed. Subject area is related to gender and genderization, while educational level is only related to gender.

- *Public participation.* Where references are made to public participation, the frequency distribution across categories of

gender, genderization, and age is skewed. Only the mode of presentation is related to genderization.

Linguistic analysis of selected texts

Linguistic analysis studies how language use may reflect stereotyping and examines words, phrases, clauses, dialogues, and narratives. As language can be used metaphorically, it is also important to study how such figurative uses of language may reflect stereotypical attitudes and beliefs. Linguistic analysis complements content analysis.

Linguistic analysis is crucial to research, not only providing quantitative information on how characters are referred to, but also allowing speculation on relationships between characters (who does what to whom) and the relationships between characters and material objects (who stands in which relationship to what). Linguistic analysis also focuses on the contextual meanings of individual clauses, that is, the environment in which particular grammatical stretches of language occur. In short, linguistic analysis enables an exploration of the issue of stereotyping as it is manifested through linguistic choice or discourse structure. In this study, six areas of linguistic analysis are explored:

- frequency of occurrence as manifested through language forms and collocations,
- generic nouns and generic pronouns,
- metaphors,
- transitivity,
- turn-taking and interactions, and
- narratives.

Frequency of occurrence

Gender. The data show more male than female references as indicated through pronouns, possessive pronouns, reflexive pronouns, nouns, titles, and first names in the selected texts. In the subcorpus analyzed, 2,591 male reference occur against 1,685 for females, for a ratio of 6:4.

Ethnicity. Textbooks only include a few countries, nationalities, and ethnicities. In the subcorpus analyzed, Europe is mentioned 35 times, America 16 times, Asia 10 times, Australia only once, and Africa not at all. Only a few nationalities are included: Chinese, British, French, and American. Filipinos and Filipinas are not mentioned in the selected texts at all, despite their numbers in Hong Kong. Only a few cities are included: Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai, London, Paris, and Chicago. The word "mainland" only occurs twice. Most Asian countries are absent, except for Japan. Most countries mentioned are developed countries, and the cities are mostly large metropolitan centers.

Disability. The word "disabled" only occurs five times in the subcorpus analyzed while the word "disability" occurs only twice. There are no other references to disability.

Collocation

Gender relationships. Of seven pairs of gender relationship—boy:girl; brother:sister; dad:mum; father:mother; he:she; man:woman; men:women—only one shows that the male occurs more with the female (father:mother), and one pair shows a similar occurrence (dad:mum). The remaining five pairs show that the female occurs more with the male: when females occur in texts, males are more likely to occur with them. However, when males occur in texts, females are less likely to occur them. More females, therefore, are dependent on males than in a balanced relationship.

Generic nouns, pronouns, and marked forms

English-language teaching textbooks in general do not use generic nouns such as using *humankind* (instead of *mankind*) or *police* (instead of *policemen*). In contrast, Chinese history textbooks use many generic nouns, perhaps because such terms are historical and "frozen" in their meanings. Chinese accounts of Chinese history typically exclude women and traditionally used gender-embedded terms.

Man- and *humankind* in Chinese share the same pronoun while *female* has its own pronoun. Thus, stereotypicality is embedded in the language. English-language textbooks refer to persons of unknown gender as *he/she* rather than *he. He* is regularly used in English-language textbooks to refer to a small number of professions such as *president, sportsperson, farmer,* and *thief.* In Chinese-language materials one pronoun character is used for professions that have traditionally been male dominated, and another pronoun character for professions traditionally female dominated.

English-language materials have example of marked forms (affixes such as *-lady, ette, -ess,* referring to women, persons with disabilities, old persons, ethnic groups), which give the impression of deviations from some norm. Women are also identified as being in some way unusual, such as "*the conductor was a woman.*" Similar examples exist for old persons.

Metaphor

Metaphors allow for understanding of how persons relate to each other and to their social worlds. Several examples in English- and Chinese-language materials describe men as *explorers, chief designers, fathers of history, fathers of a country, saint-heroes, persons of strength.* One example describes a woman as a *star.* Idioms typically encode genderized relationships; for example, men are associated with *courage*; old persons, women, and children, with *weakness.* Personification of characters is also typically genderized, especially in Chinese-language materials, although to a smaller degree in English-language materials. For example, *cloud* is female (*cries, causes rains*), while strong and powerful objects (*wind, storm,* and *lightning*) are male. In terms of similes, men are said to be like *monkeys, lighthouses, cheetahs,* and *magicians*; females, like *grapes* and *angels.*

Transitivity

The study of transitivity helps shed light on the relationship between characters, supplementing the focus of content analysis on the separate identity of each character or feature.

The illustrative examination of transitivity shows that in terms of material processes, both genders are shown to engage in *sports games, leisure activities,* and *"move around" actions.* Both genders seem to possess *material goods and fine qualities,* and receive *honors* and *praises* in a fairly distributed manner. Females seem to be portrayed in a positive way more often than their male counterparts. Females and males initiate utterances more or less equally. However, women are sometimes portrayed in a stereotypical manner, especially in terms of behavioral processes, and are said to *cry, behave strangely,* and *not be able to help eating.*

More disappointing overall is the portrayal of persons with disabilities and old persons. Persons with disabilities appear only twice in this sample corpus, where they are in a more passive position than other social actors, *need support and help* from others, and do not perform as fully functioning social actors. Old persons are assumed to be physically less capable than others—*fit to play sports* (but this is *rare*); they *fall on the ground;* they *sleep in the afternoon.* Representation of old persons is determined by a stereotypical perception of age-related behavior.

Turn-taking and interaction

How dialogues are constructed in texts can display stereotypical features. For example, the social roles or discourse roles played by participants may not be well distributed, different participants may not talk equally as much, participants may initiate conversations in different ways, topics may not be equitably distributed, the functions that people mean by what they say may not also be well distributed.

From 1,212 utterances and 257 dialogues drawn from English- and Chinese-language texts, the following were found:

- **Visibility of the social group.** If the category *gender unknown* is removed, women and men are broadly equal in visibility. Only two (0.38%) old persons were involved in all dialogues. The only ethnic group explicitly referred to is Caucasian. Persons with disabilities and single-parent families are not explicitly referred to at all.
- **Dialogue topics.** Both genders engage fairly equally in dialogues concerning *complaints, formal discussion,* and *general conversation.* Women seem to *make inquiries more, talk on the telephone more,* and *make more transactions* (as *service providers* and *customers*). Men are *more likely to interview others* and *to be interviewed* than women. Both women and men are shown *in public domains* even though they engage in different forms of interactions.
- **Social roles in the dialogues.** Gender is associated strongly with the participants' social roles. While gender alone predicts social role to a large extent, the converse is not true. Together with the results shown in genderized topics in dialogues, women *engage in transactions* much more than men, as they are also more likely to work in the service industries than men. Women play *customers* much more than men, while men are more likely to be *reporters* and *journalists.* Women are more likely to play the traditional family roles of *daughter* and *mum* than men are *son* and *dad.* Almost all participants, regardless of gender, play the role of speaker rather than listener, in keeping with the way dialogues are done in classroom.
- **Main function of the utterance.** Gender is moderately associated with the function of the utterance. Both genders use conversation for *initiating* and *orienting,* and *providing emotional support.* Interestingly,

women are more likely than men to *give information*, to fine-tune conversation through *elaborating, evaluating, clarifying,* and *summarizing*, and to *make commands*. Men use conversation to *seek information* more than women do. Gender and function are mildly predictive of each other.

- **Adjacency pairs in the workplace.** Gender appears to be mildly related to the use of adjacency pairs at work. Women and men participate fairly in the range of types of adjacency pairs although women are more likely to engage in *question-answer* types of interaction and men more in *invitation* types. Gender and adjacency pairs do not predict each other.
- **Order of turns.** Gender is mildly associated with order of turn. Men are more likely than women to *elicit interactions,* and women more likely to *respond to an elicitation*. Men are more likely to give "less desirable" answers than are women, that is, they are more likely *to decline an invitation or offer*, *justify a complaint,* and *reject a request*. It may be said that men take on a more proactive conversational role than do women.

Overall, the visibility of the genders is fairly distributed, and although there are differences in participation across various types and forms of discourse, topics, roles, functions, and organization of turns both genders are shown to engage in interactions fairly. The professions and jobs in which men and women engage are still, however, depicted in a traditional and stereotypical manner.

Echoing the findings from content analysis, and other sections of the linguistic analysis, old persons, single-parent families, and persons with disabilities are almost invisible. Ethnic groups are very limited in their representation. The only ethnic group present in English-language teaching materials examined is Cau-

casian. Accordingly, students will have limited or no exposure to other ethnic and linguistic groups who speak English as a first or second language, many of whom are widely present in Hong Kong.

Narrative analysis

Narrative analysis complements the linguistic studies by examining the story themes. The ways that stories are told to children follow a stable and conventional pattern. It defines and reinforces social relations—family relations, in particular. The roles of the characters and the relations among them may correspond to social expectation—that is, students can recognize the roles and the relations without much difficulty. Stereotyping is a means to enable ease of recognition. Although it can work positively in the sense that students can learn languages within their existing world knowledge, stereotyping also inevitably reinforces particular social relations, limits them to a few types, and helps legitimate them. The materials selected for linguistic analysis deal chiefly with family relations. Ethnicity and disability did not feature in these selected texts.

- **Descriptive narrative.** Data from selected English-language teaching and Chinese-language textbooks indicate that materials vary, from reinforcing traditionally gendered family roles (in some Chinese materials) to depicting a more balanced distribution of family roles (in some English-language teaching materials), although old persons appear, stereotypically, as less active and productive. Only one example shows a younger girl taking initiative.
- **Moral narrative.** The teaching of morals is common in Chinese-language textbooks. Of interest here is who is represented as teaching children this moral knowledge. Typically, it is a male family member, although even here there is a gendered distribution in that men teach children and

grandchildren how to behave morally *outside* the home, while women focus on appropriate behavior *within* the home.

- **Knowledge narrative.** Male family members typically teach children about the world. Men serve as a knowledge bank about *world knowledge*, *science, geography*, how to *perform tasks,* and so forth. Women appear to teach *relationship knowledge*, that is, about *interpersonal relationships.*
- **Problem-solution narrative.** These narratives typically address what students can do to help family members. The problems faced are largely stereotypically distributed. *Grandfathers*, *mothers,* and *children have problems*, *fathers* typically *do not.* Where fathers do, they are associated with *work*, and mothers with *housework and the home.*

Focus group discussion

Focus group interviews complement questionnaires by providing a perspective on the perception of stereotyping. Specifically, focus group interviews allow the opinions of various participants to be recorded, extracted, highlighted, and interpreted to obtain as diverse a range of opinions as possible, rather than to gauge the relative popularity of a narrow range of opinions. Although opinions obtained from focus groups do not lend themselves to generalization in the manner of quantitative accounts, the opinions nevertheless provide in detail that deepens understanding of stereotyping.

Primary school student drawings

Students are provided with story themes and asked to draw pictures about them. Students are responsive to nontraditional gender roles, although depicted roles are somewhat linked to the gender of the student. Students seem to be prepared to depart from the storyline of the stimulus in the light of their own experiences at home.

Primary school student stories

Responses vary according to whether students like the stories or not. Again, students' own experiences are the major factor in determining awareness of stereotypicality of roles. For example, students who know of men who do housework are aware of the traditionally gendered distribution of such roles.

Lack of contact with persons with disabilities affects students' willingness to identify with, or indeed to know much about, characters with disabilities in stories, although some small evidence exists of a friendly disposition to blind persons.

Old persons are seen as *needing assistance* and, to some extent, needing to respond favorably to such assistance. This is in itself a marker of how old persons are traditionally stereotyped, as the linguistic analysis above also shows.

Immigrant children from the Chinese mainland are generally negatively regarded, with students seeing no need to help them out, although some students remark on "nice" immigrant children they know while regarding them as curious because of their *language and accent.*

Divorced women are generally viewed as *ill-tempered* and, where students dislike the story, seen as *miserable* and having *psychological problems.* Children of single parents are often regarded as *objects of ridicule.*

Secondary school student drawings

Where blind persons appear they are depicted as *needing assistance.*

Old persons, especially women, appear to be traditionally stereotyped by their *posture* and *dress*, and also as *needing assistance.* This latter perception may be due to feelings of respect which students feel are owed to old persons.

Immigrant children are identified as *different* and as *"other"* either by their appearance or by their dress. They are depicted as *needing assistance* and may be *mocked.*

Secondary school student stories

Persons with disabilities may be evaluated as *lacking enthusiasm* and *confidence*, although the difficulties they face are recognized, especially women with disabilities, and as such they can also be *admired*. Students generally have little personal experience of persons with disabilities.

Notable women (for example Lee Lai San) are to be admired, especially if they go against stereotypical perceptions of what are perceived as female *"limitations."* Women who engage in activities *outside the domestic world* are to be admired.

Conscientiousness is widely seen as a desirable quality, possible to be possessed equally by both genders, and by the rich as well as by ordinary citizens.

Views of primary and secondary schoolteacher groups

Teachers are clearly aware of gender stereotyping, but it needs to be contextualized in relation to the subject matter rather than treated as an absolute, especially in relation to historical and social change in attitudes and practices. Fact needs to be distinguished from (covert) opinion. Nonetheless, history materials could refer more to the achievements of women, and much would depend on how teachers deal with such materials in class.

Teachers felt that *role and task distribution* among men and women, or among old and young, cannot be seen in absolute terms but needs to be appraised in relation to a person's age and strength.

Some teachers said that materials should reflect the actual *distribution of tasks and roles* among genders in contemporary Hong Kong, and as such should portray doctors as male and nurses as female, mirroring reality.

Representation of gendered roles in educational materials is recognized as having changed over the years. Such gendered role distribution in language teaching materials in particular is thought to be a consequence of having to find ways of including a range of prescribed vocabulary. Younger children are thought to be unaware of stereotyping, and students on the whole not to object to stereotypical representations of family roles. Nonetheless, sharply stereotypical materials are recognized. Imbalances in family role distribution are recognized as needing attention as families in Hong Kong share roles, and women contribute to the economy, at work and at home. Teachers thought that working women should be shown more often and the support of female domestic helpers acknowledged. Materials frequently associate women with particular emotions. Stereotypical use of language (for example, in pronominal usage) can be countered by teachers.

The portrayal of *non-Caucasian characters* (for example, Africans) is agreed to be highly topic dependent, either as *needing aid* or as *excellent athletes*. Educational materials thus maintain traditional negative and positive stereotypes.

Where they appear (which is rare), *persons with disabilities* are *never* seen as *making an active contribution* to society. Blind persons, in particular, are normally seen as *needing assistance*.

It is argued that the lack of representation of persons with disabilities in textbooks may be due to an unwillingness of such persons to allow themselves to be so represented, such as in photographs. Teachers may also be unsure how to deal with discussions of disability in class, especially if this may offend children who are familiar with disability through their family members or friends.

Teacher actions in class. A greater balance in pronominal reference and use of gender-free language is needed, especially in English and social studies. Some teachers think that discussion may not be necessary as students are aware of the issues. Others think it best to avoid discussions of gender issues for fear of setting male

against female students, and that it is "safer" to discuss ethnicity and disability. However, such discussions are thought to be needed where students are ignorant, prejudiced, or insensitive, but relying on teachers and students with personal experience in such topics. Discussions could be difficult if they arouse highly personal reactions among students and affect teachers' ability to complete the set work for the class. Nonetheless, some teachers think that having good counter-examples to stereotyping is an important part of their work, and class work could be supported by discussions on civic and moral education and the promotion of core values.

Teacher education. The teachers in the focus groups did not receive any formal training in the treatment of issues of stereotyping and discrimination in curriculums or in classroom practice, although some teachers were introduced to such issues in extracurricular non-teacher-education courses. Formal training would be welcomed where teachers are not already aware of stereotyping issues. Transferring such training into classroom practice is, however, difficult, and more professional development and in-service education should be devoted to this topic.

Survey analysis of teachers' perceptions

The questionnaire complements the focus group interviews in providing a perspective on the perception of stereotyping by teachers. The questionnaire allows quantitative or numeric data to be generated while the focus group yields rich qualitative data in the form of opinions, detailed description, and explanation. Both perspectives are necessary to build a complete picture of stereotyping in educational materials. Both modes of analyses augment textbook content and linguistic analysis.

The first section of the questionnaire is designed to assess teachers' perceptions of the extent of stereotyping in the materials they use

in class, against the results of the content analysis. Teachers' ratings are calibrated against their expected ratings from the content analysis.

Observations concerning discrepancies between the two sets of ratings can be summarized as follows:
- The extent of stereotypicality and counter-stereotypicality in textbooks is not always perceived by the teachers who use them.
- The teachers sampled overestimate and underestimate the extend of stereotyping.
- It is nonetheless perceivable in gender, genderization, age, disability, and ethnicity.

Possibly due to the general preference among parents and teachers to avoid touching on "controversial" or non-traditional issues (such as single-parent families) in the textbooks, teachers appear to have stereotypes especially about single parenthood and ethnicity, which can almost be completely absent from textbooks. Whereas little awareness of age stereotyping appears among the teachers sampled, they are generally aware of disability stereotyping. Gender is generally assumed to be represented in a balanced way, while primary schoolteachers have a better grasp than secondary schoolteachers of the degree to which textbook characters are genderized.

Teaching experience is a fairly accurate but nonetheless imperfect predictor of responses to some of the questions. Not surprisingly, no one-to-one relationship is found between teaching experience and the responses. The same applies to the gender of the respondent, although the predictive power of this variable is not as strong as that of teaching experience. The inability of either variable alone to predict the responses shows how multidimensional the factors are that influence stereotyping in textbooks.

Analysis of structured interviews

Consultations were held with a range of publishers and educational organizations that develop and approve educational materials, in-

cluding textbooks, examination materials, and audiovisual educational programs. The purpose was to assess the organizations' awareness of the general issues raised in the project, and to gauge the extent to which staff were already addressing stereotyping in the educational materials they produced or evaluated. These consultations were also forums to test reactions to a draft set of proposed guidelines to avoid stereotyping in educational materials, and to modify these proposed guidelines in light of these discussions.

All individuals and groups consulted generally support the introduction of proposals to counterstereotyping in educational materials. The proposals aim to balance representation of different communities and interests. To ensure consistency while respecting cultural values, however, textbooks should be appropriate to local conditions and contexts, and reflect differences among audiences.

Guidelines to avoid stereotyping and promote equitable practice could be developed jointly or severally by stakeholders to avoid the arbitrariness of individual exercise of judgement. However, such guidelines need to be supported and augmented by staff training, awareness raising, professional development programs, and public campaigns. Such guidelines have to be easily implemented, and their principles need to be exemplified in particular contexts of the stakeholders.

Educational publishers

Interview with English-language publishers
Publishers of English-language teaching materials do not have any formal code of practice for their editors regarding stereotyping although they are keenly aware of the importance of avoiding stereotyping, especially in gender representation.

Issues other than gender stereotyping—*family roles, disability, ethnicity,* and *culture*—need more attention. Old single persons are generally absent from learning materials. A greater range of occupations can be included, with members of both sexes and different ages and abilities engaged in different occupations (*politicians, police, teachers,* and so forth). Countering stereotyping is not merely a matter of representation but also of promoting diversity and moral and ideological tolerance.

Children should be shown as having equal opportunities within the family—being able, for example, *to make decisions, offer advice, and solve problems,* and not merely as *receiving instruction* or *advice.* Materials generally display an *idealized* and *wholesome* society, imbued by happiness and positive values and peopled by obedient and helpful members.

There is some feeling that in the desirable exercise of careful scrutiny over matters of language in language teaching materials, wider issues of representativeness of participation and other matters addressed in the proposed guidelines may be less highlighted. Balancing representation in text and visualization is partly a matter of editors' and illustrators' English-language competence, which should be enhanced.

Publishers feel that conservative attitudes among some school authorities, or among some textbook selection teacher panels, may work against the inclusivity that publishers believe to be important, and reduce their market share. Teacher professional development and provision of examples of best publishing practice would counter such attitudes.

Interview with Chinese-language publishers
Only one publishing house consulted has a clear in-house editorial policy of avoiding gender discrimination and stereotyping. The general perception is that the avoidance of stereotyping is not identified explicitly by the Education Department as a core value. Publishers acknowledge that the department is alert to stereotyping, especially in gender and family roles.

All publishers believe that a clear statement of policy and guidelines would be desirable. They could be used for in-house guidance

and training but would be adapted to local circumstances.

Discussions with the Chinese-language publishers could help determine guidelines on the following:

Representation of social roles
- Historical accounts will necessarily reflect the social structure of the age; accordingly, bias and stereotyping are historically reflective.
- The distribution of gender-differentiated roles may need to reflect the worldview and degree of social awareness of the students. For kindergarten pupils, it is suggested, women naturally predominate in their school lives, and bias reflects pupils' life experience. The market resists a greater use of male voices in voiceovers for preschool pupils and their parents and teachers.
- Limited space may preclude a full representation of both sexes in occupational roles.
- Avoiding obvious gender stereotyping, for example, including the representation of a male nurse in a textbook, may require an explanatory note.
- Vocabulary lists may make equal treatment difficult. For example, "postwoman" is not an included item. The gender-neutral term "postal worker" may be used instead.[1]

Representation of diverse cultural, ethnic, and social groups
- Although more and more people are aware that different lifestyles, customs, and activities of different ethnic and cultural groups should be included in textbooks, this awareness has not been translated widely into representation in educational materials.
- Publishers believe that different school subjects afford greater or fewer opportunities to display diversity. It would be easier to achieve in social science textbooks than, say, in books on Chinese history.
- Supplementary materials could be recommended and used to emphasize diversity, as could internet material.

Representation of old persons
- Although appropriate representation of old persons is important, publishers feel that it is constrained by pupils' life experiences and the difficulty of determining criteria to identify old persons.

Representation of persons with disabilities
- Publishers acknowledge that they have had difficulty obtaining images of persons with disabilities and believe that social service organizations are reluctant to allow such images to be included in textbooks.
- Textbooks must include more positive images of persons with disabilities to motivate students to be supportive and adopt a nonstereotypical attitude to such persons' potential.

Representation of family roles
- This is a generally difficult area. Teachers and publishers have resisted introducing the subject of divorce or single parenthood. Teachers believe that since adopted and ethnically mixed children are rare in Hong Kong, they need not be represented in educational materials. However, migrant children from the mainland are increasing in Hong Kong schools, and so such children should be portrayed in a positive and nonstereotyped way.

These comments and caveats do not invalidate the appropriateness of the proposed guidelines or the highlighted features listed above. These features apply equally to Chinese- and English-language publishers and authors. The comments could provide useful topics for discussion in seminars and professional development programs.

Hong Kong Examinations Authority (HKEA)

HKEA does not yet have any guidelines but welcomes the initiative as likely to be useful. HKEA is increasingly concerned about inter-

cultural issues, especially following the growth in numbers of mainland Chinese children coming to study in Hong Kong. Other cultural groups long established in Hong Kong but not acknowledged in examination materials—Indians, Pakistanis, Nepalis, and Filipinos—should be represented.

Representation of disability, age, single-parent families, and employment of middle-aged and older women also need to be addressed, although HKEA has acknowledged the need for greater representation of old persons. Representation has particular significance in language assessment, especially in relation to any perceived cultural bias in examination or test items.

Educational Television

Program developers are sensitive to the issues raised in the proposed guidelines, and would welcome its wide circulation. Of particular concern to program developers is the need to portray children as actively and creatively solving problems counter the frequent portrayal of parents and old persons as doing so. Children are stereotyped as not capable of lateral thinking or active problem solving.

The increasingly common phenomenon of separation of family members should be represented accurately. Children whose parents are separated, for work or other reasons, may be embarrassed if family role models presented do not apply to them. It is also important, especially in video materials, not to marginalize children in Hong Kong by representing children living in detached houses with gardens as some kind of norm, or indeed, as an aspiration.

The representation of occupational reference should reflect a broad range of workplaces and jobs and family and work roles of women and old persons.

The portrayal of a range of groups of different cultures and beliefs should not be restricted, provided plurality and representation are maintained.

Publishers and producers of Educational Television materials should act in concert to ensure that children are introduced to the vocabulary that will allow them to understand references to marginalized groups such as children with Down's syndrome or autism, or, more generally, to social issues.

Curriculum Development Institute (CDI)

CDI's stance on stereotyping is governed by the recent discipline-specific consultation documents from the Curriculum Development Council (November 2000) titled *Learning to Learn: The Way Forward in Curriculum Development.* These documents identify the roles of various change agents (school heads, middle managers, schoolteachers, and librarians) and set out their strategies and actions. Central to the documents are the discipline-specific *Appendices* which address *values* and *attitudes* as generic elements in the school curriculum. *"Core"* and *"sustaining" values* are identified. Among these constructs are some that directly impinge on the avoidance of stereotyping and the creation of a more inclusive, plural, and tolerant representation of persons and roles in educational materials.

CDI staff welcome the proposed guidelines and believe they would contribute to consistent incorporation of the above values and attitudes in educational materials. The guidelines should be easily implemented, particularly to facilitate interaction and cooperation among the Education Department, textbook publishers, examinations authorities, and educational media producers.

CDI does not wish to avoid socially contentious or nontraditional issues and representations, and believes they should be introduced into different disciplines and subjects.

As supplementary materials and web-based materials lie outside the Textbook Committee's authority, the proposed guidelines would be especially valuable in reinforcing core values and attitudes.

The avoidance of stereotyping is seen as a key matter for teacher professional development, both preservice and in-service, and should feature strongly in curriculums and programs. This is especially important where teachers are encouraged to develop their own materials. Issues raised in this research should be incorporated into the training of subject panel chairs.

The avoidance of stereotyping in the content of educational materials is important for students' project work, which can encourage students to explore the social, personal, and linguistic aspects of stereotyping in their own environment. In particular, project-related surveys and awareness-raising tasks can enhance understanding of minority groups, new migrants, persons with disabilities, and old persons.

Publishers could include many more photographs in textbooks to balance the overwhelming bias toward graphic illustration. Classroom activities, for example, dramatic and creative work, and use of Educational Television programs can help dispel and counter stereotypes. While gender representation has been addressed by the Education Department and CDI, greater emphasis now needs to be placed on areas such as disability, family structures and roles, old persons, and ethnic and cultural minorities.

Recommendations

1. Educational publishers, authors, and producers should consider and respond to the proposed "Guidelines When Developing Educational Materials" (see below) to modify their current policies and practices on avoiding and countering stereotyping.

2. CDI and HKEA should consider adopting the proposed guidelines to practice writing and designing educational and school assessment materials.

3. CDI and HKEA should convene seminars with publishers' associations to discuss the adoption of the proposed guidelines by relevant organizations and authorities.

4. The Education Department should convene meetings of those who select teaching materials at the school level, with appropriate input from teacher education institutions, to review textbook selection policies in light of the proposed guidelines and the results of this research study.

5. Teacher education institutions should be invited to indicate how avoidance of stereotyping and related teacher practices form part of the curriculums, and how it is presented and discussed with trainee teachers and teachers in professional development programs.

6. The Education Department, through the subject panel chairs, and with the cooperation of teacher education institutions, should establish a series of professional development seminars to promote students' critical thinking and encourage teachers to participate in material writing, material evaluating, and policymaking. Such seminars could also focus on developing model teaching materials and lesson plans to promote themes and tasks/projects that are nonstereotypical or counterstereotypical.

7. The Education Department, with support from the Quality Education Fund and educational publishers, should sponsor the production and distribution of sample educational packages of best practice in nonstereotypical or counterstereotypical textbook materials, both published and teacher-produced, across a range of subjects, levels, and schools, accompanied by sample video material of classroom practice relating to stereotyping.

8. The Education Department, with assistance from the Quality Education Fund, should sponsor research studies on how teachers use stereotyped and nonstereotyped educational materials and how students receive them, and associated studies on how teachers perceive such educational materials.

Proposed Guidelines When Developing Educational Materials

Textbooks, examination papers, and other educational materials are created through the ef-

forts of many people, including teachers, editors, material writers, examination writers, illustrators, producers, and directors. These learning resources influence the ideas and concepts students have of themselves and others. Where practical and appropriate, students should see positive, supportive, and encouraging images of themselves; their families; and cultural, ethnic, and social groups. Good learning resources should also encourage students to be aware of and appreciate differences among themselves and others.

The following should be ensured where appropriate:

Females and males
- are presented with equal respect;
- are illustrated in similar number and importance;
- are shown in a variety of occupations, activities, and careers beyond stereotypical representations;
- are shown as making important contributions to the community;
- are shown as having mentally/physically active, creative, problem-solving roles and displaying both success and failure in them;
- display a broad range of human emotions; and
- are shown as active and responsible parents.

Cultural, ethnic, and social groups
- are presented with respect, as are their customs, beliefs, and activities;
- are represented in proportion to their numbers;
- are seen as active in a range of professions and occupations; and
- are recognized for their contributions to the community.

Old persons
- are presented with respect in a range of activities and occupations;
- are presented in a range of ages (not just young and old); and
- are shown enjoying an active and productive social life.

Children
- are shown as being able to make decisions, offer advice, and solve problems;
- are encouraged to question stereotypes; and
- explore and evaluate social and personal themes and content.

Persons with disabilities
- are presented with respect in a range of activities and occupations;
- are celebrated for their contributions to the community; and
- are presented in the same kinds of activities as persons without disabilities.

Family roles include
- examples of male and female single parenthood;
- adopted children;
- ethnically/culturally mixed parentage and children;
- persons acting as caregivers, decision makers, and homemakers; and
- a broad range of relationships among old persons, parents, siblings, and spouses.

Endnote

1. See *Gender Bias in School Textbooks*, published by Women's and Youth Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat, UK (1995), which contains a useful section on gender-sensitive vocabulary.