



The Representation Of Female Roles In The Recommended Indonesian English Language Teaching (ELT) Textbook For 10th Grade Students: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

In spite of numerous investigations conducted on the portrayal of gender in language textbook, in Indonesia gender representation exploration using ELT textbook for senior high school is still relatively under-researched especially in social context such as domestic chore, careers, academic achievement and participation, hobbies and interests. To fill this gap, this research is designed to examine the representation of females in the mandated ELT textbook for senior high school especially for 10th grade students using critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a research approach. The aim of this study is to reveal the representation of female roles in the English foreign language (EFL) textbook reflects and reinforces gender stereotypes and expectations in society. By using Theo Van Leeuwen's (2008) theory, it was found that gender representations are still found in this ELT textbook. The representation of female roles in it are still portrayed in traditional forms. This research provides recommendations for textbook publishers, authors, and teachers to pay more attention to gender equality in the design and use of ELT textbooks.

Keywords: *Critical discourse analysis (CDA), Female roles, and Gender representation.*

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INTRODUCTION

Gender equality in school is essential for our youth. The Presidential Decree (Inpres) No 9/2000 on Gender Mainstreaming in National Development Planning and Programming and Permendiknas No 84/2008 on Guidelines for Implementing Gender Mainstreaming in Education require the Indonesian government to promote gender equality and end all forms of gender discrimination. Education is the first step toward gender equality and eliminating gender prejudices. Education can reduce the gender gap (Maesaroh, Asih, & Suhatmady et al., 2022). Textbooks, which are used in classrooms, can promote gender equality.

Stockdale (2006) found that the ideal EFL textbook should balance men and women. Both male and female students may find gender stereotypes in textbooks, which affects their social behavior. The textbooks will guide students' actions. Widodo (2018) argued that textbooks operate as cultural mediators and encourage students to write value-laden writings that reflect their thinking, acting, and judging. Thus, textbooks are crucial since they teach students morals and vital concepts. Many textbooks now teach character education, which can encourage gender equality. The English textbook being researched in this research can help teachers

and students comprehend the importance of gender equality. Due to their considerable impact on English teaching, the recommended textbooks' content, especially their portrayal of women, must be carefully examined. Yasin (2012) noted that researchers continue to study gender equality in textbooks. Prastikawati and Yonata (2022) also noted that women are commonly discriminated against in many social situations.

Researchers have done various investigations on this topic such as; Prastikawati and Yonata (2022) reported that female characters were not well-represented in the textbook. The analysis also revealed that female characters were portrayed as having home and family careers, being sensitive introverts, being involved in low-risk activities, and wearing islamic-based attire. Similarly, Lestariyana et al. (2020), in the two textbooks of junior high schools found that the representation of male were more dominant rather than women, the proportion are about 62.8% for male and women are about 37.2%. In Japan, Lee's (2019) found that the presence of females were covertly underrepresented. In other words, rather than female, male characters were portrayed as more active and educated in the textbook. Then, Ariyanto (2018) found that the gender representation in the prescribed junior high schools text was portrayed differently. Moreover, from the feminist perspective, Setyono (2018) implied that The findings indicated that certain gendered narratives conveyed by female characters and social figures in the analyzed textbooks perpetuated existing gender biases and stereotypes.

All previous research on gender representation in English textbooks show a disparity in representation between males and females. Males dominate gender roles. Thus, more research on textbook gender representation is needed to confirm earlier findings. According to prior study, senior high school ELT textbook gender representation exploration is understudied. This study uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to investigate the depiction of women in the mandatory ELT textbook for senior high school, particularly for 10th graders, to fill this gap. This research aims to explore how the representation of the female characters in the English foreign language (EFL) textbook for the 10th grade students reflects and reinforces gender stereotypes and expectations in Indonesian society.

METHODS

The study is designed to investigate gender issues represented in the English language textbook recommended by the Ministry of National Education and Cultures (MoNEC) and in line with the applicable curriculum (Merdeka Curriculum), specifically regarding the portrayal of female roles in a social context. To analyze this qualitative study, the researcher uses document analysis as the method of the study. Bowen (2009) cited that document analysis is a systematic procedure used to review or evaluate various types of document material in a structured manner, both digital and printed sources.

Considering the chosen textbook is not only as a curriculum tool but also as a social artifact, utilizing critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the most effective approach to reveal how a text represents and shapes social realities associated with specific values both implicit or explicit messages (Widodo, 2018). Moreover, CDA uncovers how texts and social practices can shape or transform the system of values and ideology within society, highlighting specific values that are emphasized or

abandoned (de los Heros 2009; Setyono and Widodo 2019). Critical discourse analysis model by Theo Van Leeuwen (2008) selected as a model in this study. The author focuses on analyzing gender bias in the text by examining the depiction of female roles through dialogues and pictures that are found in the textbook.

This study examined the English language teaching (ELT) textbook entitled “Bahasa Inggris for Senior High School Grade X” which was published by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoNEC) in 2017. The textbook was authored by a team of ELT textbook writers who have a deep knowledge about ELT practices in Indonesia. It is easily accessible and can be downloaded for free from the MoNEC website and google because the textbook is widely used nationally.

To guarantee the accuracy of the EFL textbook, the experts in the field of English as a foreign language reviewed the textbook. It was screened according to the standards established by BSNP (Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan) to determine the feasibility of generic structures, the suitability of activities that promote student-centered learning, meta-cognitive and critical thinking abilities, and also language accuracy (Direktorat Jenderal Peraturan Perundangan-undangan 2016).

In this study, the analysis is directed towards social context that comes from the EFL textbook for the 10th grade recommended by the government. Based on Setyono and Widodo’s (2019) research, here are several reasons the textbook was chosen as a research material:

1. The textbook is being utilized extensively across the entire country.
2. The textbook has written to apply a scientific approach based from the guideline of national curriculum;
3. It contains social values represented in verbal and non-verbal texts.
4. The gender representation values in this textbook needs to be critically assessed because the textbook is a curriculum product that is ideologically laden from a social perspective; and
5. The writer of the EFL Textbook are the selected people who have a deep knowledge and experience in the ELT field.

The writer exclusively examines the chapters that contain gender biases and stereotypes, especially the visibility of female roles in the textbook. The selected chapters that depict female roles within the social context are found in chapters 1,2,3 and 15. This situation implies that any other verbal and visual depiction beyond gender matters are not taken into account.

The analysis are classified based on four themes, there are : (1) The portrait of female roles in the domestic chores (family) in the textbook was appeared in the unit III page 41, (2) The portrait of female roles at careers in the textbook was found in the unit II page 32, (3) Female roles in the academic achievement and participation in the textbook were appeared in unit I page 1 and unit II page 24, (4) Female roles in the hobbies and interest in the textbook were showed in unit II page 34, and unit XV page 193.

In this study, the data was collected by using document analysis. The author focused on analyzing the depiction of female roles in the textbook, using both visual and verbal text. The data collection process was carried out step by step. In this research, the author’s primary objective is to analyze visual and verbal text that

illustrate female roles in the textbook. The selected text about female shows their roles in the society through dialogues and pictures.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results

Female Roles in the Domestic Chore (family) in the Textbook

The dialogue text (fig. 1) in the chapter III page 41 reflected a conversation between three students named Bayu, Santi, and Riri.

Santi : Uhm, I'm not sure. I don't have any idea yet. I think I might stay at home.
Bayu : Stay at home? Well, you could do something more interesting!
Santi : So, what about you Bayu? Do you have any plans?
Bayu : Definitely! **My dad and I are going to** go fishing.
Santi : Fishing? Are you going to go fishing in the river near your house?
Bayu : No. We plan to go fishing in a lake near my uncle's house. **Would you like** to come with us?
Santi : Fishing? That sounds great. But I would rather stay at home than go fishing.
Bayu : What about you, Riri? **What would you like** to do on the long weekend?
Riri : I have made a plan with my mother about what to do on this long weekend. We **are going to** practice baking cookies.
Santi : That sounds like a very good plan!
Bayu : **Are you going to** bake choco chips cookies like the last time?
Riri : Well, yes. That is my favorite. But we will also try to make ginger cookies.
Santi : Lucky you. Your mom is a real baker, isn't she?
Bayu : Ha ha, ha. Do you still want to stay home alone?
Riri : Or, **would you like** to join me to learn baking cookies? You can come to my house.
Bayu : It's a good idea! Or will you go fishing with me and my dad?
Santi : I think I **would like** to bake cookies with Riri. Thanks for inviting me, Riri.
Riri : No problem. I will tell you the time on Friday.
Santi : Thanks a lot. I can't wait to join you.
Bayu : Have a nice long weekend, everyone.
Riri, Santi : You too.

Figure 1. A dialogue illustrated female roles in the domestic chore

They talked about their plans in order to spend their free time on holiday soon. Based on the dialogue, Bayu said that he wanted to go fishing with his father near his uncle's house. Meanwhile, Santi is going to join Riri in spending her long weekend soon. Santi and Riri are planning to bake cookies together in Riri's house. Also, Riri's mother is going to help them too.

Female Roles at Careers in the Textbook

Rahmi : Hello. How are things going on, Sinta?
Sinta : Hi. Good, and you?
Rahmi : I'm feeling great today. How was your weekend with your family in Batu?
Sinta : Excellent! We had a lovely time there. You should have gone there with us.
Rahmi : Really? Hey, what a beautiful skirt you are wearing. It matches your blouse.
Sinta : Thanks a lot. My sister bought it for me last month.
Rahmi : Wow! That's wonderful.
Sinta : Oh, Rahmi, can I ask you something?
Rahmi : Oh, sure. Please.
Sinta : Have you finished writing the book we discussed two months ago?
Rahmi : Yes. Come to my room. Look at this. What do you think?
Sinta : Terrific. I like the cover. Let me see the contents. This book is excellent. You really did a great job.
Rahmi : Thanks a lot. You've inspired me to do this.

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Sinta : Your publisher should send it to all bookstores here.
Rahmi : Yes, you're right. The publisher will do it for me.
Sinta : Well, that's great. I am proud of you, Rahmi. By the way, I've got to go now. Have a nice day!
Rahmi : You, too.

Figure 2. A portrait of female roles at career context

The following data (seen fig. 2), the dialogue text in the chapter II page 32 represents a dialogue between Shinta and Rahmi. In the dialogue, Sinta have a small conversation with Rahmi. After checking on each other's condition, Santi asked about the progress of the book that Rahmi is currently working on. After Rahmi revealed her book, Sinta shows a satisfied expression with the result. Rahmi also confirmed that the book she worked on will be published in the bookstore soon. In the other words, Rahmi is depicted as someone who works as a writer.

Female Roles in Academic Achievement and Participant in the Textbook

Following figure 3 in chapter I page 1, a female student named Khansa appears with her neat uniform and wears a headscarf that matches her school skirt. She also holds several books in her hands, with bright smiles on her face.



Figure 3. A Portrait of female in academic participation

Text 2

Cita has won the first winner of the story telling competition in her school. Her best friend congratulated her.

- Ditto : Cita, congratulations for being the first winner of the school story telling competition! Excellent. You really did it well.
Cita : Thanks, Ditto.
Ditto : I heard that you will be the representative of our school in the story telling competition of our regency. Is it true?
Cita : Yes, you're right.
Ditto : I hope you will win as well in the next competition.
Cita : I hope so. But I'm nervous.
Ditto : Don't worry, you're a very good story teller. Good luck.
Cita : Thanks. I'll do my best. Wish me luck.

Figure 4. A dialogue of female representation in academic achievement

The figure 3 and figure 4, in chapter II page 24, presents a conversation between two best friends, Ditto (male student) and Cita (Female student). The depicted text above tells about Cita's successfully winning first place in the storytelling contest. As her best friend, Ditto congratulated her on her achievement

Female Roles in the Hobbies and Interests in the Textbook



Figure 5. A conversation illustrating stereotyped of female



Figure 6. An activities illustrating stereotyped of female

The pictures and dialogues are shown in chapter II page 34 (Fig. 5). Some females wear colorful and fashionable dresses, such as in yellow blouse and black skirt, red dress and white waist band, a yellow skirt and brown sweater, and also

long dresses with white color on it. The stylish hairdos, including both straight and curly hair falling on their shoulders and straight hair tied with a rubber band, showcase the elegance of a female's appearance. The pictures also illustrated how females praise each other's outfits.

The case is found in figure 6, chapter XV pages 193. The figure 6 depicts a brown haired girl singing with a microphone on her right hand. The smile on her face implies how much she enjoys the activity. This non-sport activity is often regarded as having a feminine connotation in society.

In addition, based on the two figures above about female roles in hobbies and interest, the textbook writers depicted females in traditional roles and limited in their roles. Such as complimenting someone's clothes and portraying female common hobbies.

Discussion

Based on the research findings in the ELT textbook used in 10th grade students in Indonesia, the author found that the gender representation through verbal and textual using Theo van Leeuwen theory are represented imbalanced. The purpose of the discussion is to describe and interpret the significance of the findings. The author divides the discussion into four points to answer the research question.

Firstly, female roles in the domestic chore (family) in the textbook. In this case, female characters are presented doing activities that reflect stereotype and gender bias. The gender bias in this dialogue text (seen fig.1) is obviously presented. Bayu is going fishing, while Sinta and Riri are going to bake. Males are doing activities outside and females are doing activities in the house, especially in the kitchen. The "practice baking cookies", "bake choco chips cookies like the last time", and "make ginger cookies" are the expressions of stereotyped gender activities that are required to be possessed by female. These kind of activities are what society represents about what male and female usually do. This revealed that the textbook presented female characters, but their activities were highly stereotyped and confined to traditional feminine roles, such as doing household chores in the kitchen. This finding is in line with previous research conducted by Prastikawati and Yonata (2022), Lestariyana et al (2020), Lee (2019), Ariyanto (2018) and Setyono (2018) said that based on sociocultural, women or girl are entrusted to play traditional domestic chore.

Second points, representation of female roles at careers in the textbook. In this case (fig.2) the dialogue text depicted a female works as a writer. Being a writer is considered undervalued by society. This is due to the lack of career advancement, low interest in reading among the public, and unstable income. As a result, writers are often underpaid and undervalued as their work is socially underappreciated. This occupation is depicted as one that does not require significant physical strength, leadership, etc. Therefore, since being a writer is a job that requires less physical work, this occupation is usually dominated by female. Similar statements where females are gender stereotyped are also conducted by Prastikawati and Yonata (2022), Lestariyana (2020), Lee (2019), Setyono (2018) men are typically assigned physical labor while women are expected to work without using a lot of physical use.

Third, female roles in academic achievement and participation in the textbook. The figure 3, illustrates a diligent student's attitude in the school, and also

what people commonly expect from females when they are in the school area. Then, In the next picture, the victory of Cita as the champion of the storytelling competition serves as evidence that women are portrayed as highly capable in academic fields (fig.4). This implies, the textbook writer seems to realize that female participation in the school needs to be present in the textbooks. They also may hold the belief that females students achieve academic success in school. Additionally, the two figures portrayed above serve to reinforce academic stereotypes, potentially influencing the perceptions of teachers and students regarding the expected performance of both genders in academic domains. This findings also mentioned by Prastikawati and Yonata (2022) and Lestariyana (2020) females are generally more hardworking and achieve greater academic success compared to males.

Last, female roles in the hobbies and interest n the textbook. The pictures in the figure 5 implies the social practice of complimenting each others choices such as praising someone's dress or expressing admiration (e.g "what a nice dress" and "you look gorgeous") is a common behavior for female. However, these actions, such as complimenting physical appearance and engaging in unnecessary gossip, are another interest of female stereotype. Then, in the figure 6, revealed activities where people can express their emotion, feeling, thought. Due to this reason, singing is a hobby that is commonly dominated by females. In addition, based on the two figures above about female roles in the hobbies and interest, the textbook writers depicted female in a traditional roles and limited in their roles. Such as complimenting someone's clothes and portraying female common hobbies. The statements are supported by Prastikawati and Yonata (2022), Lestariyana (2020), Ariyanto (2018) and Setyono (2018).

CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate the representation of the female roles in the English foreign language (EFL) textbook for the 10th grade students entitled "Bahasa Inggris". Based on the findings, gender representations are still found in this ELT textbook. The representation of female roles in it are still portrayed in traditional forms. Such as cooking, singing, complimenting someone's clothes, a job that takes less physical strength, and a positive image in the school. Furthermore, the textbook strongly embraces gender stereotypes, where the appearance of male characters dominates over the female characters. According to the study covered in earlier chapters, the 10th grade textbook's depiction of female roles affects numerous stakeholders. In the textbook, writers must avoid preconceptions and reflect varied female roles fair and accurately. Publishers promote gender equality by critically examining and approving textbooks with positive and inclusive representations. Teachers can also create an inclusive learning environment by critically reviewing textbook content, adding different materials, and fostering gender representation dialogues. Further research can examine how gender portrayal affects students' perceptions and offer evidence-based solutions to improve textbook gender representation. For implementation, based on the author's personal experience during the research process, various limitations were encountered. The limitation of this study is that it only covers one class which cannot affect the generalizability of the findings to a larger class.

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