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CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS TOWARDS GENDER REPRESENTATION IN ENGLISH TEXT BOOK FOR GRADE XI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Textbooks are one technique that can help to promote gender equality in schools. Textbooks should be created based on the curriculum content, and in Indonesia, there are some principles that must be observed while producing a textbook, one of which is gender equality. Unbalanced gender representation is one of the numerous ways that gender discrimination in textbooks can appear. The qualitative method was used in this study. The source of this study was taken from Senior High School English book for XI grade students used under the title "English for Change." This text book is written based on Merdeka Curriculum. To reveal how exactly male and female were represented in the said textbook visually and textually, this study use CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) approach as the research design. There are four steps in analyzing the data: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion. Based on the analysis result, even though female have more appearance than males in occurrence and pictorial representative but there are still some activities that gender specific such as cleaning, shopping and eating. This also applies to social and domestic roles, where there are still gender specific roles where females have role as watcher not doer.

Keywords: ELT Textbook; Gender Equality; Critical Discourse Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Gender is strongly interwoven in many aspects of our lives, including institutions, families, and schools. Education is frequently viewed as a useful instrument to address gender issues in society, according to Maluwa-Banda (2004). By enhancing their abilities and equipping them to actively engage in social and economic activities, education does, in fact, empower women. The school is a problematic institution because it acts as a conduit for the spread of dominant beliefs like gender and patriarchy, which are both overtly and covertly represented in the curricula (Gramsci cited in Mutekwe & Modiba, 2012)

Masud (Ahmad & Shah, 2019) asserts that education has the ability to shape people's attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours. It is used as a tactic to promote national identity and increase the privilege of some social groups over others, such as men over women. Through education, these privileges in particular, inequality are defined, replicated, formed, reinforced, and promoted in both implicit and explicit ways. One example of implicit methods in advancing privileges particular social groupings favour is hidden curricula.

Textbooks are one technique that can help to promote gender equality in schools. Textbooks should be created based on the curriculum content, and in Indonesia, there are

some principles that must be observed while producing a textbook, one of which is gender equality. Textbook resources, whether visual or written, can influence students' comprehension of gender concepts (McCabe et al., 2011) and English language materials are no exception. Language education not only helps students improve their reading and linguistic skills, but it also exposes them to society standards. When a society engages in gender discrimination, the language used in textbooks may reflect that state. As a result, the materials may contribute to the spread of gender prejudice (Yang, 2011).

Unbalanced gender representation is one of the numerous ways that gender discrimination in textbooks can appear. Cromer & Brugeilles (2009) assert that representation is not a reflection of reality but rather shows the structure and order of reality that may be utilized to justify and explain the current social order. Gender representation can be defined as a collection of common gender knowledge that shapes or establishes how individuals view gender in society. Ariyanto (2018) explained that gender inequality and gender stereotypes are still common in Indonesian ELT textbooks.

The existence of gender stereotype information in the textbook demonstrates the problem with gender representation, which is directly tied to the classic view on female and male dominant regions. The allocation of roles, characters, and activities for both genders is not always equal, and one gender may be underrepresented (Ortega et al., in Rizkiyah et al., 2022). Females are typically portrayed as being in charge of a domestic job and caring for children; nevertheless, their portrayal in textbooks may include some women performing housework, cooking, or looking after children.

In contrast, men are typically depicted as the head of the household and the providers in control of the business. Additionally, according to Ortega et al. (in Rizkiyah et al., 2022) males are strong, rebellious, messy, and aggressive, whereas females are tidy, peaceful, gentle, and delicate. Wu & Liu (2015) explained that women work in fewer occupations and their occupations often have a lower social rank than those of men. Textbooks and other educational resources should be carefully chosen and used in an ethical manner in order to accomplish such emancipatory goals. The result is " that textbooks should be evaluated through a gender lens to ensure a balanced and gender-sensitive education for every child." (Mutekwe & Modiba, 2012)

Gender-biased language in textbooks can have a negative impact on students and create an oppressive environment for them because it is often unwarranted and unfair." (Cameron in Esmaeili & Arabmofrad, 2015). Students undoubtedly engage with textbooks on a regular basis, necessitating a cautious approach to content that avoids any sort of discrimination. As a result, textbooks are more than just a learning resource; they also have an implicit influence on people's behaviours in other areas. The textbooks' material reinforces gender as a social division and perpetuates disparities between men and women. Men and women are as naturally different as if they were distinct species (Ellemers, 2018). This kind of thinking about the differences between men and women has led to gender inequality, which in turn has led to a significant gender prejudice. In this instance, textbooks significantly contribute to gender and cultural prejudices. Teaching young people about gender issues can be a potent weapon for contaminating them with dominant patterns of gender relations and gendered behaviours that might influence them as adults (Leach in Rizkiyah et al., 2022)

Research indicates that exposure to negative gender norms, such as gender stereotypes, can have a negative impact on boys and girls, restrict the range of roles and behaviours that are acceptable, and normalize gender inequality Studies show that exposure to negative gender norms, like stereotypes, can adversely affect both boys and girls, limit acceptable roles and behaviours spectrum, and legitimize gender inequality (Adams et al., 2011). Their job goals, the activities they choose to engage in, and their academic

performance are all signs of its aftermath (Aina & Cameron, 2011). However, no stereotyped book can help both genders reach their full potential and encourage good changes in attitudes, behaviours, and self-concept. As a result, it is critical to create language textbooks with balanced gender representation for students of all ages, especially young learners who are still learning about gender. To elaborate, many scholars have long been concerned about gender issues (Samadikhah & Shahrokhi, 2015). The results are diverse; some of them claimed that the linguistic resources in the textbook, both visually and textually, still displayed unequal representation of both men and women.

Textbooks can be effectively examined from a variety of perspectives, such as gender representation, ethnicity, and cultural aspects. A wide range of criteria, such as age, ethnicity, class, gender, skill levels, or curriculum goals, must be taken into account while designing and developing any textbook, but ELT textbooks in particular. Without a doubt, analysing any textbook can show the pattern by which its information was either included or excluded in relation to a certain factor. Gender bias in ELT materials is one of the issues that has recently sparked a lot of discussion in the educational system.

Many scholars have been drawn to CDA in recent years to study on a variety of industries, including media, newspapers, and textbooks. The relevant literature from earlier research on ELT textbooks for gender analysis will be expanded upon in this section. It is crucial to note that researchers and academics look to critical discourse analysis for direction when analysing textbooks for various objectives. According to Fairclough (2015) this is because critical discourse analysis is a field that aids in revealing both overt and covert sociopolitical norms and values.

As a multi-functional method, critical discourse analysis has a wide range of applications, including education. A notable application of CDA that has substantially captured the attention of numerous academics and researchers in educational contexts is the examination of textbooks overall, and specifically the analysis of ELT materials. CDA has significantly simplified the evaluation of textbooks from multiple viewpoints, including ethnicity, gender representation, cultural elements, and more (Amerian & Esmaili, 2014).

The researcher conducted this study to determine whether gender equality is reflected in English textbooks published by the government. The study also aims to see how gender roles are communicated and how gender equity is reproduced in the textbook. The study used Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model of CDA to fairly describe, analyse, and explain how gender is portrayed in various textbooks. Nine primary features of gender, including frequency of male and female occurrences, female and male characters, female and male pictorial representations, and the social and domestic duties associated with males and female, female and male titles, activities, and the standing of females and males in mixed-gender dialogues, were used in the study's analysis of the textbooks.

However, only four variables from Fairclough's (2015) frame are the subject of this study: the frequency of male and female occurrences, the kind of activities that the two genders engaged in, the pictorial representations of the two genders, and the social and domestic duties associated with males and females. The other five items on the checklist that deal with semantic and syntactic gender analy¬sis were not investigated in this study as they deal with deep¬er issues. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for textbook authors particularly those writing English textbooks to help them incorporate gender equality into their materials. Additionally, this research can provide valuable input for curriculum designers, encouraging the lessons inclusion on gender equality within the curriculum.

METHODS

This study utilized the qualitative approach. According to Bodgan and Taylor (as cited in Moleong, 2014) a qualitative methodology is a research method that collects descriptive data such as written or spoken words from people or activities that can be observed. Ritchie et al., (2003) clarified that qualitative research is an interpretative, naturalistic method focused on comprehending the significance individuals attribute to occurrences (actions, choices, beliefs, values, and so on) within their social settings. Lofland (in Moleong, 2014) described that in a qualitative study, words and actions are the primary sources of data, while extra material such as documents serves as the test.

This research involved no participants, although it examined the dialogue presented in the textbook. Additionally, the book was selected for its capacity to reveal information regarding gender representation that is either balanced or imbalanced in its material. The source of this study was taken from Senior High School English book for XI grade students used under the title "English for Change." This book was supported by Indonesian Ministry of Education Culture Research and Technology. This book is written based on Merdeka Curriculum. The book consists of 5 chapters and 228 pages. The textbook is selected with following criteria: (1) The English textbook is written by Indonesian author who understand about Indonesian ELT context; (2) This book is published by Pusat Perbukuan, Balitbang, Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in 2022; (3) Each chapter consists of basic competence, social function, text structure, language features and four English skills.

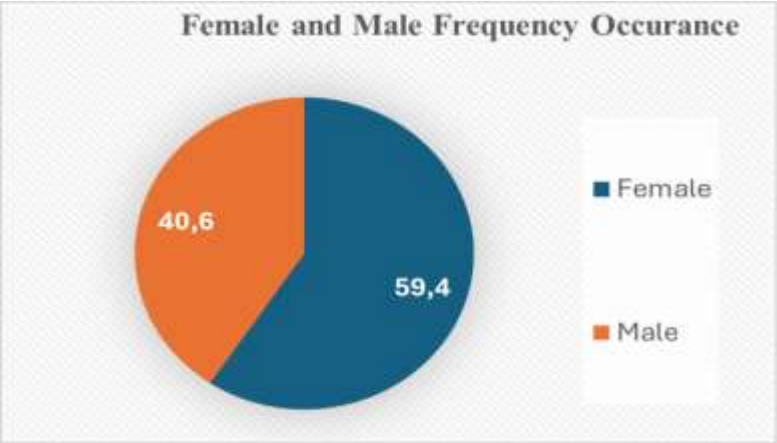
To reveal how exactly male and female were represented in the said textbook visually and textually, this study decided to use CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) approach as the research design. CDA is one of the methodologies appropriately used to investigate social inequality (including gender inequality) which might be expressed, constituted, signaled, legitimized and so on by language users (Wodak-Meyer in Rizkiyah et al., 2022). The procedure in this study was adapted from Amerian & Esmaili, (2014) with minor changes. In their study, they uti¬lized Fairclough (2015) checklist for examining gender power in textbooks. However, this study focuses on only four items from that checklist. The other five items on the checklist that deal with semantic and syntactic gender analy¬sis were not investigated in this study as they deal with deep¬er issues.

There are four steps in analyzing the data: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion verification (Huberman et al., 2014). For data collection the researcher took pictures, activities, conversation and videos which is occurred in the textbook as this research data. The researchers use the documentary technique to obtain the data of this study. The analysis of the description stage was started by analyzing the four aspects: frequency of male and female occurrences, kinds of activity that the two genders engaged in, pictorial representations of the two genders, and social and domestic roles associated with males and females..

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results

This section starts with Fairclough's (2015) first stage of CDA, which is description. This stage begins by reporting and describing the data from textbooks regarding the four aspects mentioned earlier.



Picture 1.
Female and Male Frequency Occurance
Source: Researcher's data, (2026)

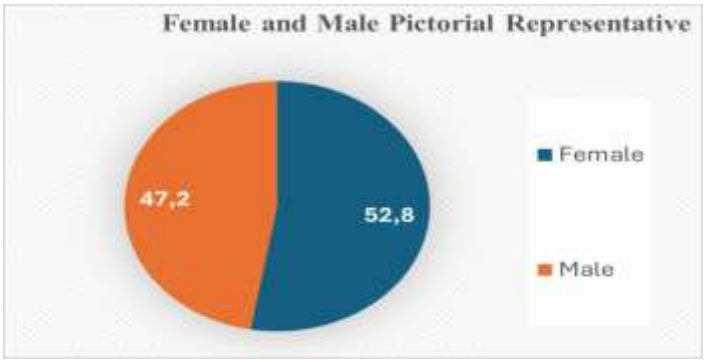
The first aspect analyzed from the textbook was the frequency of female and male occurrences. The female and male occurrences was taken from text, pictures, conversation also video which the links given in the textbook. As shown in Figure 1, Females occurrences is more than the males occurrences. 391 appearances or 59.4% from the total of 658 occurrences are female appearance while the males' appearances are 267 or 40.6%. It is indicate that the book authors have deep concerns about the role of women in textbooks. But it would be better if the occurrences of both male and female could be balanced so that there is no impression of favoring one or the other.

Table 1.
Activity frequency of females and males

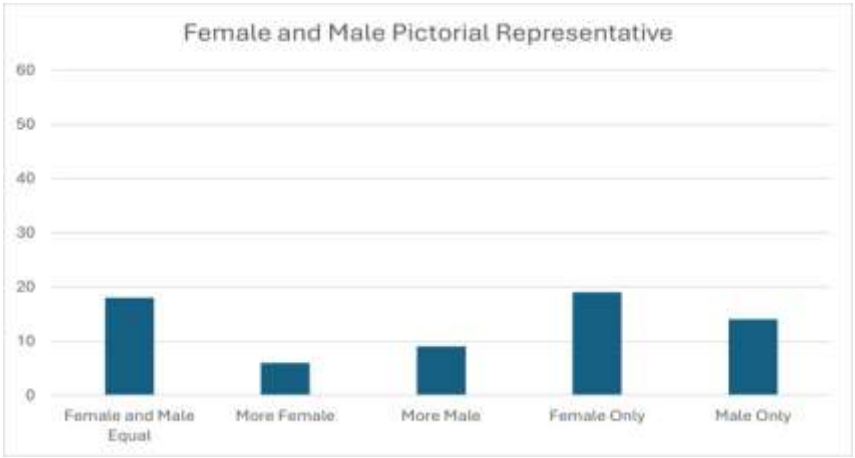
Kinds of Activity	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Studying/ at school	17	17
Engaging in personal activities	10	9
Engaging in social activities	16	14
Writing	1	1
Reading	1	0
Cleaning	23	13
Go sight seeing	1	0
Gardening	3	3
Selling	1	0
Working	1	11
Giving a presentation	2	6
Watch a presentation	30	30
Engaging in sport	8	16
Eating	7	2
Going to the doctor	3	1
Planting	3	5
shopping	6	3
Watching TV	2	2
Giving explanation	3	5
Teaching	1	1
Total	139	139

Source: Researcher's data (2026)

The second aspect examined was the kinds of activity that females and males engaged in. This activities were taken from pictures, texts, videos which links are given in the book, and conversation. As seen in Table 1, we can see that the number of female and male which performing an activity is the same. They have equal number between male and female but after further analysis the researcher found that the activities that the male and female doing were gender specific. In other terms, certain activities are carried out more often by males, such as "engaging in sport", "planting" and "giving explanation" whereas "shopping" and "cleaning" were more connected with females. There were 6 females doing "shopping" activity and only half from it with 3 males doing the same activity. This also happen with "cleaning" activity with 23 females and only 13 males doing it. Male also dominate in taking the lead by giving presentation with 6 males and only 2 females doing the same. There was a big gender imbalance in some activities, such as "working", "giving presentation" and "doing sport" in favor of males. For examples, from the table we can see that 11 male which indicate that they are working and only 1 female was doing that activity. In addition there are also a big gap in the "engaging sport" activities which different kind of sport such as running, basketball, cycling and morning exercise.



Picture 2.
Pictorial representation of females and males
Source: Researcher's data, (2026)



Picture 3.
Pictorial representation of females and males in categories
Source: Researcher's data, (2026)

The third aspect that was discussed in this research using the Fairclough (2015) CDA is pictorial representative of female and males in the book. The total of female and male that represent in picture inside the book is 216 with 114 (52.8%) are female and 102 (47.2%) are male as it is shown in picture 2. The researcher divided the pictorial representative into four categories as it can be seen in picture 3. The categories are picture which have female only, male only, more female, more male, also female and male equal in it. Based on the analysis that the researcher did there are total 66 pictures with human in the picture. There are 18 pictures where female and male have equal number in it. 6 pictures with more female and 9 pictures with more male in it. For male only there are 14 pictures and female only there are 19 pictures.

Table 2.
Social and Domestic Role

Social/Domestic Role	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Parents	3	3
Teachers	2	3
Students	37	44
Doctor		1
Son/Daughter	4	3
Presenter	7	10
Seller	2	2
Athletes	3	5
Housewife	13	
Writer	1	2
Artist	2	
Worker	2	5
Environmental Activist	21	15
Local Legislator		1
Local Waste Management		2
Audience	36	32
Patient	1	
Gardener	1	1
Customer	5	3

Source: Researcher's data (2026)

The fourth aspect that examined in this research was the social and domestic role of the two genders were associated. Like it described in table 2, the same with the activity's aspect, there were some genders specific with the social and domestic roles. In the text book, some roles were stereotypically associated more frequently with female than males, such as "audience" and "customer". On the other hand, other roles were stereotypically associated with males, such as doctor, local legislator, presenter, and also athlete. In terms of the roles performed by both gender, there appeared a significant gender imbalance. For example, there was 1 male doctor but there is no female doctor and the female only depict as patient. Males as "teacher" and "students" also outnumbered female in that role. As a presenter in an event or presentation male also outnumber from female and female outnumbered from male as their role as audience in an event or presentation. Female number also more than male as the role of environmental activist which 21 females are environmental activist and only 15 are males.

Discussion

As shown in Figure 1, Females occurrences are more than the males' occurrences. 391 appearance or 59.4% from the total of 658 occurrences are female appearance while the males' appearances are 267 or 40.6%. From the data we can see that female occurrences (59.4%) in the book is more than male occurrences (40.6%). This mean that the authors of this book have place more attention to the female occurrences but it should remain balanced between female occurrences and male. Even though based on the female and male occurrences analysis, the females have more occurrences but there are still some representation imbalances in some activities and roles. It can be seen from the table 1 above which the female and male have equal number in performing activities, but there are some activities that gender specific. It shows the imbalance in the male and female activities. For examples female is describe doing activities such as shopping, eating, and cleaning. This evidence illustrates the typical portrayal of women linked to their household responsibilities. Even with the recent rise in women's workforce involvement, traditional gender roles continue to persist in numerous communities globally. Many women are frequently required to hold their educational and professional goals to care for their children while their spouse's work. It is also can be seen from the "working activity" where males are more dominant than female in this book.

According to the data gained from picture 3, there are unequal ideology, social, societal, cultural, and religious implications. It could be interpreted as a gender redefinition where the pictorial representation opposed the stereotypes of male dominance However, the writer of this book tended to show the similar occurrence of both genders between females and males that are considered to create gender equity against gender stereotypes and discrimination. The picture is used as society sees the role of both genders, positioning males and females in an equal position. However, there is still slight gender bias in that the activities done by the females in majority are not ones typically also done by the male.

The fourth thing that was analyze is domestic and social roles of the female and male in the book. It is the same with activity before which the data show there are some roles that gender specific such as female as customer and audience. This means that female in this book have roles as "watcher" not "doer". Authors in this book made female as an observant not a person that have main social roles. As for males' roles, they are portrayed as the main character is this book. They have roles such as a presenter, doctor and local legislator. In other roles like students and teacher, males have more role than women in that part. This made a significant gap in the social and domestic role of the female and male in this book.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis result we can see, even though female have more appearance than males in occurrence and pictorial representative but there are still some activities that gender specific such as cleaning, shopping and eating. This also applies to social and domestic roles, where there are still gender specific roles for example customer and audience where females have role as watcher not doer. While males in the book show as a leader in the role as a presenter and local legislator where women are underrepresented in that role.

ELT textbooks can influence students' learning and behaviour. Additionally, the majority of educators rely on textbooks as the main resource for teaching and learning. Gender representation in textbooks refers to the depiction of both genders. The equitable

treatment of gender representation refers to the equality of portrayals concerning balance or imbalance. Inseminating various representation is good to show students that woman can do and be everything they want and do not deserve to be tied by any stereotypical value inflicted by society in general and by gender representation unfair distribution in textbooks particulary. Both genders eventually should be represented equally, they are in the same level and none is more superior than another. In the end, an English textbook with fair gender representation is crucial, because it can aid the students to broaden their idea about gender equality and eliminate gender bias.

With regard to study of CDA and its analyses and results, curriculum developers should consider these studies and provide unbiased content to improve equality between male and female in society. The results of this study can be useful for policy makers, material developers, teachers and students to interpret its findings to find a way to revise or reform the content of the books. In other words, females and males may have the same power to have such roles and activities in society. However the book still presents framing concerning the female depiction which stereotypically in some activities and roles such as shopping, cleaning and eating. Thus, the study recommends school book writers and designers to pay attention and verify their books concerning these two elements in particular which are gender stereotypes and gender equality.

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