

## GENDER REPRESENTATION IN AN INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT-ENDORSED ENGLISH TEXTBOOK

Moh Irwansyah<sup>\*1</sup>, Anandayu Suri Ardini<sup>\*2</sup>  
[18322114@students.uii.ac.id](mailto:18322114@students.uii.ac.id)<sup>\*1</sup>, [173220501@uii.ac.id](mailto:173220501@uii.ac.id)<sup>\*2</sup>  
Faculty of Psychology and Social Sciences<sup>\*1,2</sup>  
Universitas Islam Indonesia<sup>\*1,2</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the representation of gender in Indonesian government-endorsed English textbooks. Specifically, the representation of gender in the textbook was essential because it depicted how society treats gender in a certain region. This study is based on a content-analysis investigation of gender representation in *When English Rings the Bell SMP/MTs Kelas VII* that the Indonesian government endorsed under the ministry of education. The whole data was collected through the instrument and was specified based on the need for gender representation that was made by Porrecca and was analyzed using Krippendorff's framework. This study reveals that man's representation was depicted as a strong character by depicting man as an outdoor worker with more choices of type of work. The woman's representation is depicted as a domestic worker, such as a chore. In addition, the male gender is represented as a masculine character, which is associated with types of nouns that were frequently associated with strength, wildness, and activeness, while the female gender was presented with typical nouns that were associated with beauty and passivity. The study still needs more exploration with other approaches to discover how gender is represented in the textbook.

**Keywords:** *content analysis, gender representation, Indonesia, textbook*

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### INTRODUCTION

The discussion of gender bias in the educational domain has been an issue for years, (Davies, 1989). In several contexts, gender is not represented equally in school textbooks. For example, Baghdadi and Rezaei (2015) reported that the tendency of gender position in the English textbook specifically was unbalanced. Additionally, the representation of gender in the textbook was essential in shaping gender roles in society (Tyarakanita, Drajadi, Rochsantiningasih, & Nurkamto, 2021). Hence, dozens of research studies have been carried out to expose the impact of how gender bias in textbooks culturally impacted gender roles in society. In addition, stereotypes which were often found in English textbooks tended to emphasize the dominance of male roles over female roles in the educational workplace (Sunderland, 2019). Barton and Sakwa (2012) revealed that the textbook reinforced gender stereotyping in several developing countries in how society commonly treated males and females. The bias in gender representation has been constructed in children's early education through the curriculum. The curriculum even categorized the textbook design that girls love math and sciences lessons and boys love social lessons. Meyer (2010) stated that the textbook embodying gender bias have influence on children's cognitive and affective development in accordance with the level of education. The aspect of

gender (occupation, character's behavior, position, etc.) that leads to an imbalance treatment in the textbook crystallized in children's development behavior. As a consequence, policymakers and material developers proposed a new approach on designing the textbook for the educational domain (Tyarakanita, et. al 2021).

In English as Second Language (ESL) context, especially in Singapore, Gupta and Yin (2009) highlighted that the design of the whole textbook concentrated on raising gender awareness. It was influenced by the government's policy wherein Singapore has non-sexist rules in many sectors. However, in English as Foreign Language (EFL) context, gender stereotype still occurred in textbooks. Lee (2018) revealed that the Japanese were exposed to gender bias in endorsed-English textbooks. Although the government has programmed gender equity through language education, the bias could be found in written text and captured in the visual description. In Hongkong, Lee and Collins (2010) revealed that public awareness of gender bias in written materials for primary and secondary school had raised. Women have been described in various occupations in Hongkong. Furthermore, in Indonesia gender representation in English textbooks has been a topic of interest as a research carried out by Tyarakanita, Drajadi, and Rochsantiningsih (2021). The study revealed that gender was served mostly through images in the government-endorsed English textbook. The textbooks were dominantly biased in presenting gender in written text as Indonesian still deal with gender stereotyping, in which men were considered more suited in the strong work field while the women were in a domestic place. However, the representation of gender in Indonesian textbook still requires more research to understand the whole portrayal of men and women. Therefore, to enrich the discussion of gender in Indonesian context this study aims to investigate gender representation in government endorsed English textbook for secondary education by implementing Porreca's (1984) model.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Gender in the Indonesian Context**

In the educational context, gender has differentiated male and female access to education in Indonesia. Gardiner (1991) reported that during the 1980s and 1990s, Indonesian children were restricted by their family's income resources to access education. As a result, families tended to prioritize sons if the resources were limited and offered daughters in other fields. Furthermore, during this period, female students enrolment in public schools was quite problematic. Parents used to allow sons to access more distant schools than daughters. This research has shown how gender bias in Indonesian education environments during those periods was culturally and politically partial.

Those issues affect educational discourse at school. Srimulyani (2007) highlighted that several schools had separated female students' classrooms and public facilities. Male dormitories were exposed to more complete facilities for sports and were more accessible than female dormitories. This separation was related to traditional Islamic institution called madrasah. Madrasa is traditional Islamic school system that adopted a co-educational system (privately operated), which possibly placed male and female students in different placements based on traditional Islamic values. Additionally, Maliki (2018) stated that there was a gap in learning facilities between male students and female students in rural areas.

Female students were mostly enrolled in low facilities schools, while male students tended to receive better treatment from their parents in term of education. As Indonesians still live dominantly in patriarchal norms (Setyono 2018), the issues of gender in the educational context have been exposed widely by the researcher. As Widodo and Elyas (2020) argued, the most common gender related fields that were discussed are locations, classroom settings, and discourses. The discourse on gender in the educational field aimed to raise equity through the educational system that the government designed. As gender discourses has practically influenced the classroom setting, the research of gender equity has planned to pursue the same portion of men and women in the teaching and learning system, which specifically means there was no specification of gender in certain documents at the schools. Besides, Setyono (2018) asserted that it was important for language teachers, as well as other teachers, to normalize the equality of gender in the classroom during the teaching process that concerned teachers' teaching delivery. It is because language teachers also have an important role to in spreading the misconception of gender stereotyping through English that most English-speaking countries have grown the concept of gender. In addition, language material developers were required to design documents that exposed gender representation equally.

#### **Gender Representation in EFL Textbook**

Gender can be represented through various ways in English textbooks, such as through dialogues, pictures, or expression, adjectives, title-address words and phrases. Barton and Sakwa (2012) stated that the stories in the textbooks were still male-oriented as it was conducted in Uganda and that there were 9 to 12 stories in English textbooks that were gender biased. The omission of girl characters in the local stories was a sign of how the country still provoked male dominance. This ironic since women population is actually higher in number in the country. This orientation depicted how wives still depended on their husbands in several matters. Once the male-oriented story was depicted in the form of employment in how the woman needed affirmation from a man to make a decision, another significant aspect of gender representation in the textbooks, especially in the stories, is a profession. Based on Ghajarieh (2016), Iranian textbooks highlighted three professions that were frequently occupied by male roles. It was explained in the medical field, the role of doctors and nurses was still imbalanced. Most of the doctors were men in the stories that adopted the local values of Iran. In the teaching profession, it was implied from several stories that men and women were separated in the educational profession. In other professions, women were depicted as administrators for police officers instead of working outdoors. Furthermore, the main focus of the research was the role of gender that commonly occurs over the world, which was a male-oriented phenomenon.

Furthermore, in Indonesian context, English textbooks were published by non-government and nationally endorsed governments in various versions depending on the function. The content was closely adapted from local values in Indonesia that were relatively based on Indonesian gender construction in society (Setyono, 2018). Existing research recognizes the critical role of gender in recent English textbooks. Suwarno, Triyono, Ashadi, and Sahayu (2021), through critical semiotic analysis, investigated the textbook published by the government and was

used for junior high schools and represented the whole portrayal of gender construction in the textbooks in Indonesia. The research likewise resulted in the domination of male depiction in several parts. As male students were more interested in non-academic activity, some evidence showed through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that males were depicted in the form of images as active in outdoor sports. The men were especially members of football sports. Female students were not expected to participate in outdoor sports and hobbies. Inevitably, gender stereotyping in the textbook still occurs in a specific way. The author exposed the dominance of males through dialogue, speech boxes, and pictures. In other methods of analysis through language sexism that relates some words or sentences analyzed to gender relation, and picture narrative representative model, Trayakanita, Drajadi, Rochsantiningsih, and Nurkamto (2021) found the same male phenomenon in the textbooks that were used in junior high school. The study asserted that gender stereotyping even occurs in the recent publication of English textbooks, in which men were more dominant in social roles. In contrast with that, another investigation carried out by Setyono (2018) through CDA analysis showed different results. The male phenomenon did not occur in this textbook that was commonly used in senior high school. There was no gender stereotyping that led to gender misconceptions. The images of women in the government showed that women could participate in political discourse and were depicted from several images in the textbook. Both Setyono's (2018) and Suwarno's et al (2021) studies implemented CDA analysis to analyse the pictures and texts in the textbook, which distinctly resulted in both glorifying men in the society and positive portrayals of female positions in social discourse.

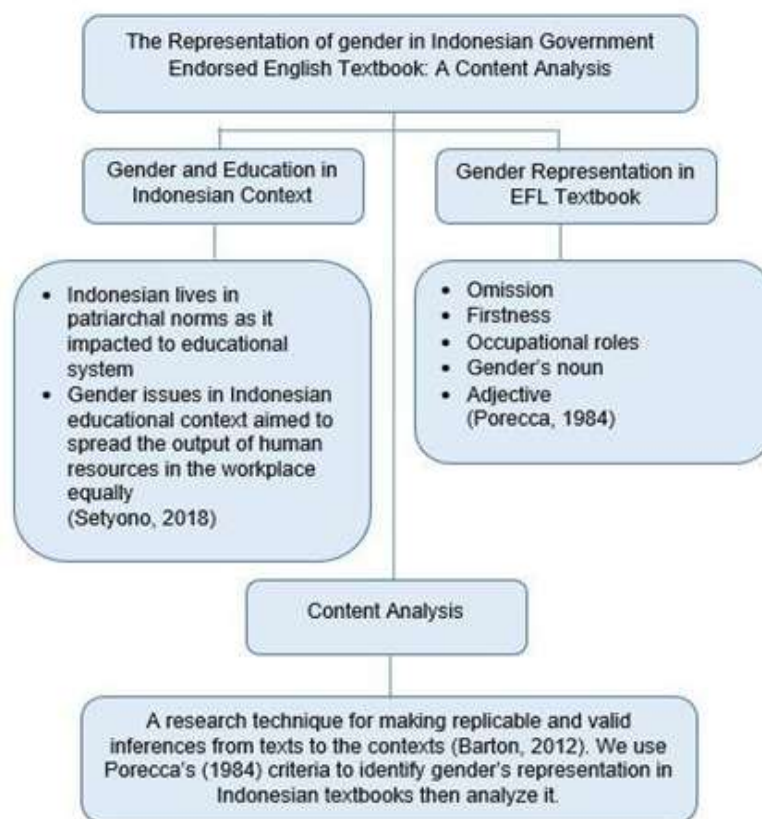
As this current study also aims to analyse the representation of gender the textbook, Porreca's (1984) model was implemented as a framework of analysis. Porreca's (1984) concept can possibly identify how gender is represented through the presence of a single item of gender in the texts and pictures, the number of occurrence between male and female representation was counted. It was called "omission". The number of sexism between male and female occurrences was counted and then analyzed through the average ratio. The presence of men and women in the textbook was also counted through what is called "firstness," which identified the representation in how the author prioritized "firstness" between men and women in the texts, tasks, and sentences. Representations of gender are also counted in "occupational roles". This model tried to represent society's view on how men and women were represented in the texts or pictures in the form of occupational roles, which commonly appeared in textbooks. "Gender's noun" that designated men and women are also counted to know how those words represented gender construction in the textbook (for example, son/daughter). In addition, the "adjective" that represents gender construction is counted, in which the adjectives that modify male or female characters.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The framework of this study is that gender in education cannot stand with the educational system only. It actually involves other problematic issues that are commonly related to both economic and cultural problems. In economics, low rate income was the common reason gender bias occurred because men were supported to get higher education as active income in the workplace after finishing the educational stage (Gardiner, 1991). In culture, the patriarchal norm

was the most exposed case in developing countries as it impacted how the society presumed gender in education (Setyono, 2018). The issue of gender discussed in this study was the representation of gender in an Indonesian English textbook viewed through Porreca's framework. Porreca (1984) categorized the representation of gender in the form of several gender existence in English textbooks (omission), how the author put the gender in the text (firstness), how genders were employed (occupational role), how the author used nouns that were paired to gender (gender's noun), and how the author used adjectives that implied gender's meaning (adjective).

**Figure 1. Theoretical Framework**



## RESEARCH METHOD

### Design of the Study

This study used a qualitative research method that uses content analysis. Krippendorff (2019) characterized content analysis as a research technique to infer the texts and pictures of contents and interpret them.

### Data Preparation

The main source of data in this study was a book entitled *When English Rings a Bell (WERB) SMP/MTs Kelas VII* written by Wachidah, Gunawan, Diyantari, and Khatimah (2017). It was published by Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan, Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan, Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. The first publication was in 2016, then was revised in 2017. Therefore, the researcher decided to use the latest version of the book. The book contained texts, pictures, dialogues, exercises, and symbols. It enriched the type of data that will be analyzed in this research. This book has mostly been used for the

seventh grade of junior high school in many schools in Indonesia (Tyarakanita et al. 2021). The use of this book for English learning at schools was endorsed by the official government of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

**Data Making**

The data were collected through the book WERB as the main resource of this research. The researcher did a close reading throughout the book and highlighted, categorized, and captured several potential data in the textbook using the instrument that was developed by the researcher, which relied on Porecca's component in identifying the representation in the textbook. The components were required to be applied in coding the visual and non-visual artifacts.

**Table 1. Reading Checklist**

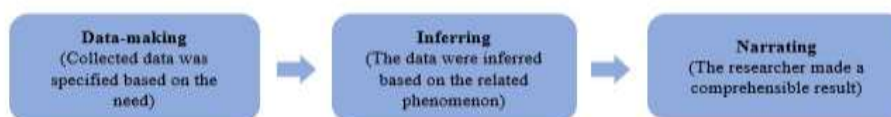
<b>Porrecca's Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Location/ Page</b>	<b>Tally</b>	<b>Representation</b>
Omission	The number of occurrences of males and females in the books, both text, and illustration			
Firstness	The number of times that males or females were presented first in exercises, examples, or sentence			
Occupational Roles	The total number of occasions in which women and men were portrayed in occupational roles in both the text and illustrations was tabulated, as was the total number of different occupations for women and men			
Gender's Noun	The total number of occurrences of every noun designating a male or a female			
Adjectives	The adjectives used with females and males in the books. These adjectives were then categorized under the following 11 headings: Physical Appearance (e.g., tall, beautiful); Intellect/Education (e.g., bright, stupid); Emotionality/State of Mind (e.g., sad, calm); Physical State/Condition (e.g., strong, tired); Personality Traits (e.g., friendly, disagreeable);			

	Age (e.g., old, young); Environmentally Descriptive (e.g., rich, poor); Rapport/Reputation (e.g., great, unpopular); Normality/Device (e.g., normal, strange); Ability (e.g., capable, incapable); and Environmentally Induced (e.g., lucky, restricted).		
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**Data Analysis**

The analysis of this research was conducted using content analysis. It consisted of data-making, inferring, and narrating (Krippendorff, 2018). The whole data was collected through the instrument and was specified based on the need for gender representation that was made by Porrecca (data-making). The representative data were inferred based on the related phenomenon in the context of the researcher's interest (inferring). The researcher made a comprehensible result and related it with relevant previous studies (narrating).

**Figure 2. The Steps of Analyzing Data**



**Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of this research relied on three criteria of content validity analysis. To determine the closeness of categories, the researcher ensured that the definition of each category relied on Porrecca's framework. Moreover, in drawing the conclusion, the result of the research has correctly followed the data of the research. The result also can be explained by other related phenomena in different contexts in the same local value. Last, to establish the generalizability of the result to a theory, the categories have used a clear definition using Porrecca's criteria in determining gender representation, specifically male and female, in the textbook.

**FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

**Findings**

The number of findings in the selected textbook were found through various forms of words, pictures, and symbols. The representation of gender that existed in each chapter of the whole book, which included each criterion of Porecca's item, such as omission, firstness, occupational role, noun, and adjective, was different in the total number of occurrences between men and women. "Omission" obtained 1063 occurrences, consisting of 550 male representations and 513 female representations. The representations were found in text, such as the name of a character, third-person pronoun, and title address. Besides, gender representation appeared mostly in the form of pictures, including four main characters of the book, parents figures, and educational administrator staff. In addition, the representations were also a symbol that consisted of male and female accessories. The second aspect of gender representation, firstness, obtained 16

occurrences, which consisted of 9 male representations and 7 female representations. This criterion can be treated under three headings: text, dialog, and exercise, which occurred mostly in the short dialog, in the short descriptive text, and in students' exercises. Gender represented in occupational roles appeared 18 times in the textbook. It consists of 8 male representation and 10 female representation. Most of male occupations were teachers with portion 7 of 8, and 1 profession was a farmer. Furthermore, women were mostly represented as teacher in the textbook, but there were also other occupations, such as housewives, nurse and surgeon. The number of nouns that were designated to gender totaled 19 occurrences in every chapter, including man with a total of 9 words and woman with 10 nouns. Those men's nouns consist of sport, farmer, kite, cow, goat, badminton, dog, snake, football, and the woman's nouns consist of cupcake, cooking, nurse, housewife, park, market, flower, kitchen, rabbit, butterfly. The adjectives that were associated with gender compiled 29 occurrences: 11 words associated to men and 18 words associated to women. The adjective associated to women are yellow, blue, pretty, colorful, clean, tidy, pink, cute, neat, well organized, kind, polite, impressive, beautiful, chubby, slim, smart, and friendly. The adjective associated to men are large, big, dark, brown, red, sporty, black, messy, smelly, sweaty, and bad.

**Table 2. Data Findings**

Item	Tally		Representation
	Male	Female	
Omission	550	513	<i>Text, picture, symbol</i>
Firstness	9	7	<i>Text, dialog, exercise</i>
Occupation	8	10	<i>Male: teacher, farmer., female: housewife, teacher, nurse, surgeon.</i>
Noun	9	10	<i>Male: sport shirt, farmer, kites, cows, goat, badminton, dog, snake, football., female: cupcake, cooking, nurse, housewife, park, market, flower, kitchen, rabbit, butterfly.</i>
Adjective	11	18	<i>Male: large, big, dark, brown, red, sporty, black, messy, smelly, sweaty, bad., female: yellow, blue, pretty, colorful, clean, tidy, pink, cute, neat, well-organized, kind, polite, impressive, beautiful, chubby, slim, smart, friendly</i>

## Discussion

### 1) Unequal Number Representation of Men and Women

The whole chapter showed that the representation of man was more dominant in each chapter of the book. Although the quantity of gender representation could not represent the way gender was represented as other previous findings concluded the same argumentation (Porreca, 1984), it could be an early consideration for gender representation that will be discussed later in other criteria. However, the gap between men and women appearance was 37. This gap was quite significant, and it might indicate unequal representation. However, other criteria (firstness, occupation, noun, and adjective) did not have



that much of a gap. The gap showed that a woman's accomplishment was not too important as part of the book, which also can be inferred that a woman's existence in real life was not counted in several settings of society (Borton & Sakwa, 2012).

## 2) Gender Placement

The number of representations of both male and female characters that appeared first in chat, dialog, and exercise indicated a certain tendency. As Porreca (1984) stated the importance of gender's placement in a conversation, it can be interpreted that the author tried to address or infer certain meanings by putting them first in a dialog. One of the examples can be seen in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3.**



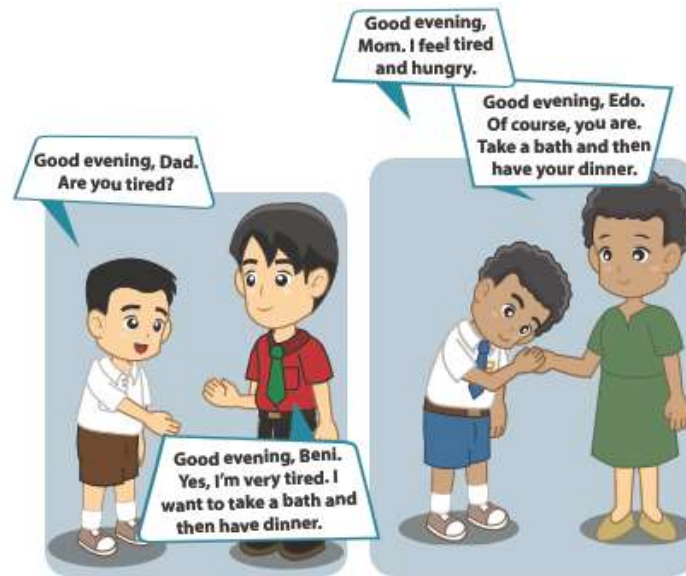
The picture showed how a local couple tried to greet the foreigners using the source language titles "Mr " and "Mrs" in the bubble chat. The foreigners also greeted the local couple using English "Mr " and "Mrs' ". In English-speaking countries, it is common for a woman to be addressed with her husband's surname after getting married. In the picture, the bubble chat showed the use of "Mr and Mrs. Smith " to address the couple with blonde hair. It means that "Smith " was the husband's surname. This kind of addressing omitted the wife's name and somehow acknowledge patrilineal system in the society. The other bubble chart also showed the firstness of male representation in a text. In the Indonesian sociocultural setting, the woman will be called by her husband's name after marriage. It is common to call the husband's name first rather than the wife's name. It only occurs in Indonesian daily interaction, not as it was legalized as in foreign cultures. In my opinion, the author should mention the Indonesian wife's name in the conversation and not follow the Western rule, which is omitting the wife's name. The author should present the portrayal based on Indonesian value. Lee (2018) stated that the EFL textbook should be presented based on local practices and culture in the society rather than following the source language culture. Therefore, it is important to depict man and woman based on the referred culture in the society.

## 3) Stereotyped Portrayal of Men's and Women's Occupation

The portrayal of gender occupational roles has frequently been discussed in many gender textbook research as some findings stated that women's

occupations were still in domestic services (Porreca, 1984; Barton, 2012; Setyono, 2018; Trayakanita, 2021). In this textbook, most of the occupations were teachers for both men and women. The women were still placed in domestic roles as in Fig 5 located in Chapter 1 (Page 7).

**Figure 4.**



It can be seen that the male character was depicted as a teacher, and the female character was depicted as a housewife. The picture showed the same condition where the child tried to shake hands with the parents. Interestingly, the dialog showed a different perspective on gender construction in society. In the first dialog on the left, the child was asking he father, "Dad, Are you tired?" That means the father was working all day. It can be seen from his clothes that he worked outdoors.

On the contrary, in the right picture, the child was complaining to the mother by saying, "Mom, I feel tired and hungry." instead of asking how she was doing at home. The way the child shared his discomfort once he arrived at home implied that the mother is a kind of safe-haven for him. It is in contrast with what was depicted on the other picture. The left picture tells us that fathers are commonly working in formal sectors such as coporates or government offices. Therefore, it is normal to ask the father condition after he works. While the picter on the right tells us the opposite. The woman was not asked the same question such as 'how are you doing' because she was implied to be staying at home all day. Hence, instead of asking how his mother was doing, the boy came with his personal complaint. The illustration above portrayed how women were still stereotyped based on their roles and choice of occupation. Barton and Sakwa (2012) stated that women's representation at work was limited to domestic roles and certain occasions in the textbook. As a result, the author set up the dialog as if the woman did not feel exhausted as long as she worked at home. It means that if the women were not working at a professional job, women were still not categorized as workers (Suwarno, et al. 2021).

#### 4) Stereotyped Association of Gender with Animals

In the context of English textbooks, the use of nouns represented a different gender interpretation (Porreca, 1984). There were indeed several types of nouns which used to be closely associated with particular gender, and thus created stereotype (Suwarno et. al 2021). In this study, most of the gender associated nouns were found in the bubble chat that pop up on the character. As in Fig 4, which is found in Chapter 6 (page 141), the noun in the bubble chat showed a gender stereotype that depicted a boy with masculinity and strength and a girl with visual beauty.

Figure 5.



On the upper left side, the girl showed a butterfly as an animal of her choice to be described, while the boy on her right showed a snake. In addition, the other boy showed a cat. Those animals can incline a gender-bias construction in society, in which girls are commonly associated with beauty and boys are associated with wildness or something more neutral, as shown in the middle of the picture. Moreover, the author resented a similar illustration that depicted the characters with their animal pet, as in chapter 5 (Page 111). The boy was implied to pet a dog, and the girl was implied to pet a rabbit. It can be seen from the character of those animals that rabbits and butterflies are tame and more passive compared to the other animals mentioned. Although cats and dogs are also pets, they are genuinely predators and more active than rabbits and butterflies. The other animal that used to be associated with masculinity is snake. Snake is considered as a wild animal, which means it is not only active but also dangerous. It indicated that the author asserted that women are identical with something visually beautiful, tame, and passive. The author has been involved in girly things ever since they were in their childhood. As a result, it could lead to unfair comprehension about boys and girls characteristics. It is important to build gender awareness for Indonesian students as the Indonesian government supports gender equity in the educational system (Trayakanita, et al. 2021). In addition, men were stereotyped as wild and active. It is in line with the previous research finding that male characters possessed outdoor tools and female characters possessed knives, spoons, and vases that were used in domestic activities (Gebregeorgis, 2016).

##### 5) Constructive Portrayal of Gender with Adjective

Stating adjectives that tended to fall into woman or man could lead to stereotypical reactions as Barton and Sakwa (2012) asserted that sometimes the author of English textbooks put a negative adjective just to describe a woman's physical appearance. Interestingly, in the present study, the findings showed how the female associated adjectives has positive implication. Besides, the adjectives that stated cleanliness sometimes designated men. As in figure 7, Chapter 5 (page 100), the picture showed the difference in portrayal adjectives that popped up in the dialog.

**Figure 6.**



The boys on the left told their friends using the adjective "clean" to assert that they have to pay attention to cleanliness. The second boy also told other friends using the adjective "beautiful" to state that the park was beautiful. Interestingly, it can be seen that the textbook author tried to avoid a stereotypical characteristic of males, which was considered not to be associated with cleanliness and beauty. It was supported by the fact that the boys started the conversation, and the topic was about the park. As the previous finding showed that the girls were associated with the "park," in this picture, the author avoided it instead of putting boys to start the conversation and addressing something beautiful. It indicated resistance of gender stereotyping as Porreca (1984) highlighted in former English textbooks that the textbook mostly reflected traditional stereotypes, such as for male expression in the dialog was constructed based on local values and was integrated into a textbook. The female characters in the picture above expresses their positive feeling towards the beauty around them. It can be inferred as an expression of politeness, tidiness, and beauty. It continued the same stereotyping of the female gender as Indonesian society still put the woman as emotional creatures in several contexts that loved loveliness (Setyono, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the representation of men and women in the textbook WERB for 7th grade. This study found that male representation was depicted as a

strong character by depicting man as an outdoor worker with more choices of type of work. The female representation is depicted as a domestic worker, such as a chore. In addition, men is represented as masculine character, which is associated with types of nouns that were frequently associated with strength, wildness, and activeness. In contrast, women were presented with typical nouns associated with beauty and passivity.

As Indonesian society lives in patriarchal norms, there will always be a need for critical study related to textbook material. It is necessary to conduct a textbook analysis of gender representation using other theories that cover wider and deeper criteria of gender representation. This study only covers five criteria of gender representation in English textbooks that relied on text analysis and picture analysis. The study analyzed the representation based on sociocultural theories, not language sexism theory. Further research may analyze gender representation through pictures and written material that relies on language sexism theories.

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