



Teacher Voices of Gender Representation in EFL Textbook: A Case Study in a Senior High School

Persepsi Guru terhadap Representasi Gender dalam Buku Teks EFL: Studi Kasus di Sekolah Menengah Atas

Elvia Wilfitri¹ and Sonya Puspasari Suganda²

¹²Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

Email: elvia.wilfitri@ui.ac.id

Permalink: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24036/ld.v17i2.126204>

Submitted: 29-11-2023

Accepted: 06-12-2023

DOI: 10.24036/ld.v17i2.126204

Published: 10-12-2023

Abstract

This research investigated teachers' perceptions regarding gender representation in two government-mandated English language textbooks used in Indonesian senior high schools. This research aims to examine the perceptions of teachers as users of textbooks regarding the existence of gender bias and stereotypes. This research used a qualitative method with a case study design. The research involved 2 participants, the English teachers who teach in grades 10 and grade 11. Semi-structured interviews were used as the instrument in this research. Analysis of interview data was transcribed manually and then interpreted critically in accordance with Creswell (2015) theory. The findings from this study showed that both teachers expressed awareness of the gender bias and stereotypes present in the textbooks they used. Male representation is more dominant than female. Female roles tend to be placed in stereotypes constructed in society. The existence of certain ideologies is also the cause of unequal gender representation in textbooks. There is a need for continuous development and improvement of textbooks in order to promote equal gender representation. The pedagogical implications of the findings in this research proposed recommendations to educational institution sectors and language policy makers to prepare and publish textbooks that support the achievement of gender equality.

Keywords: *Gender Representation, Gender Issues, EFL Textbooks, Teachers Perceptions, Gender Bias and Stereotype*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menginvestigasi pendapat Guru terhadap representasi gender dalam dua buku teks Bahasa Inggris yang dimandatkan oleh pemerintah untuk sekolah menengah atas di Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat persepsi guru sebagai pengguna buku teks terkait adanya bias serta stereotip gender. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Penelitian dilakukan dengan melibatkan 2 orang partisipan, yaitu guru bahasa Inggris yang mengajar di kelas 10 dan 11. Wawancara semiterstruktur digunakan sebagai instrumen dalam penelitian ini. Analisis data wawancara ditranskripsikan secara manual kemudian di

interpretasikan secara kritis sesuai dengan teori Creswell (2015). Temuan dari studi ini menunjukkan bahwa kedua guru menyatakan adanya kecenderungan bias dan stereotip gender dalam buku teks yang mereka gunakan. Representasi laki-laki lebih dominan dibandingkan perempuan. Perempuan cenderung ditempatkan pada stereotip yang berlaku dalam masyarakat. Adanya ideologi tertentu juga menjadi penyebab tidak seimbang representasi gender dalam buku teks. Perlu adanya pengembangan dan perbaikan berkelanjutan terhadap buku teks agar dapat merepresentasikan gender dengan setara. Implikasi pedagogis dari hasil penelitian ini memberikan rekomendasi kepada lembaga serta pemangku kebijakan dalam bidang pendidikan untuk menyusun dan menerbitkan buku teks yang mendukung tercapainya kesetaraan gender.

Kata kunci: *Representasi Gender, Isu Gender, Buku Teks EFL, Persepsi Guru, Bias dan Stereotip Gender*

INTRODUCTION

The discussion of gender representation, especially the stereotypes attached to it, is an ongoing point of talk in language learning. Menegatti and Rubini (2017) stated that differences in language use then become one of the factors in sexist discrimination which creates issues of gender inequality. Issues surrounding gender inequality seeped into various domains, causing significant challenges, particularly in language teaching (Widodo & Elyas, 2020). The issue of gender inequality in language context is a sensitive matter that is still being debated. In terms of teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL), gender issues are crucial. Gouvias & Alexopoulos (2018) explained that gender and language are intertwined entities, with language use often mirroring the gender distinctions. The essentiality of gender representation in English language teaching has to be further considered and researched. It needs to be taken into account because gender itself related to the way girls and boys are placed in certain roles based on the rules and norms established in a community or society. Schudson et al. (2019) explained that rather than making assumptions based on biological categories, gender construction based on social context can provide a more in-depth picture of differentiating between the roles of male and female.

In the context of foreign languages in Indonesia, EFL teaching and learning cannot be separated from social and cultural knowledge. Social and cultural values also include the understanding of gender construction and its role. Lindqvist et al. (2020) suggested that gender constructions are fluid, evolving, and shaped by shifting viewpoints and societal factors. For that reason, equipping students with global awareness, including gender representation, is necessary for their success in the competitive real world beyond school (Izzuddin et al., 2021). Gender representation is also an important point to acknowledge because it is closely related to acculturation and language learning (Gu et al., 2022). The representation of gender roles are mostly obtained from media used in learning. Thus, different types of media in teaching need to be investigated and analyzed as they give impacts on shaping students' perceptions of gender roles. One of the teaching media that can help and influence students in shaping their perceptions of gender is the EFL textbook used in learning.

Ariyanto (2018) stated that social consciousness of gender issues can be enhanced through the use of English textbooks. However, there are still ongoing issues and deficiencies in the way gender is represented in EFL textbooks. It happens because textbooks are considered a medium used to represent and voice issues surrounding gender (Suwarno et al., 2021). Lestariyana & Sulistiyo (2020) explained

that gender issues in textbooks need to be discussed in EFL context because it can influence students' views in finding their true selves, constructing identity, seeing the world, and responding to individual differences. EFL textbooks, both from a textual and visual perspective, contain illustrations displaying context related to social and cultural values that can influence students' understanding of gender representation. Li (2016) explained that certain visual illustrations in textbooks contain symbolism that shows how power is operated and the effects it causes. Therefore, the message contained in each illustration certainly provides interpretation and influences students' mindset in interpreting gender.

Furthermore, in EFL textbooks, gaps in how male and female represented, are still widely found. Gender content in textbooks is also placed more in line with role stereotypes constructed in society (Canale & Furtado, 2021). Agha & Shaikh (2023) stated that the ideal textbooks should contain and display appropriate cultural and social values, including equal representation of gender. Ideally, textbooks should showcase a diverse array of gender roles and positive models both in public and domestic domain, displaying positive and empowering examples that challenge traditional stereotypes and promote inclusivity (De la Torre-Sierra & Guichot-Reina, 2022). However, imbalanced gender depictions in textbooks are still dominantly discovered. It might be attributed to various factors and influences across a spectrum of aspects. One of the affecting factors is the more significant dominant belief in the prevailing political, social and cultural ideology (Xiang & Yenika-Agbaw, 2021). So, there needs to be a more critical and in-depth review of gender issues in EFL textbooks.

Moving on to critical review, the users of the textbooks also involve in this part. Users of the textbooks are not only students but also include teachers who act as implementers. Vu & Tham (2022) suggested that teachers as implementers and knowledge mediators of the textbooks must have sensitivity and awareness of gender issues contained in the textbooks. Van Leent & Spina (2023) stated that highlighting the need for extensive efforts, including transferring knowledge of textbooks, are inclusive attitude that should be owned by the teachers in order to give positive impacts to the students. Mohammed & Mohammadzadeh (2022) explained that the influence of textbooks may not just come from their content, but it might also originate from the teachers as the implementers. Teachers' roles in mediating the textbooks, either traditional or progressive, affect students understanding in perceiving the depiction of gender (Sunderland et al., 1997; 2000). Hence, identifying teachers' perceptions on the textbooks are necessary because they influence the way teachers present the material and instill awareness of the global issue related to gender equality to the students.

Several previous studies have been conducted related to gender issues in various types of EFL textbooks from different contexts of EFL teaching and learning. Aljuaythin (2018) and Ait Bouzid (2019) conducted their researches to look at gender representation by analyzing English textbooks for primary school level in Saudi Arabia and secondary school level in Morocco. Aljuaythin's study, employing a Critical Discourse Analysis approach, analyzed EFL textbooks from the Smart Class series. The analysis focused on the frequency of male and female characters, their activities, pictorial representations, and social roles. Ait Bouzid's study, utilizing content analysis, examined three English textbooks, assessing the frequency, visibility, occupations, and priorities of male and female characters. Aljuaythin's study found that men were more frequently depicted than women, engaged in more diverse activities, and portrayed in more prominent roles. Ait Bouzid's study yielded

similar results, revealing an underrepresentation of women in both texts and images. These findings suggest that traditional gender stereotypes are being perpetuated in these EFL textbooks.

Other studies by Ariyanto (2018), Lestariyana et al. (2020), and Tyarakanita et al. (2021), have examined gender representation in the Indonesian EFL textbook for junior high school "When English Rings a Bell". These studies, which employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), found that the textbook perpetuates gender stereotypes. For instance, speech bubbles in one image depict boys using enthusiastic language, while girls appear passive. Similarly, in another chapter, male students are portrayed as dominant, expressive, and active, while female students are depicted as more domestic and passive. The result also revealed that visual texts often reinforce traditional gender roles. Female characters are more frequently depicted engaging in self-reflective tasks, while male characters are portrayed as more egocentric. The authors' preferences influenced the depictions of gender roles. Additionally, these materials often present tasks that reinforce gender-based stereotypes.

Similar studies by Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei (2020) and Mohammed & Mohammadzadeh (2022) further investigated gender representation in EFL textbooks for primary and junior high school levels, as well as incorporating teachers' perceptions as textbook users. Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei study indicated similar findings to the previous studies. Employing a combination of manual and computational analyses, the study revealed a bias towards male characters and stereotypical gender roles, attributed to the influence of Islamic culture. While some authors make efforts to employ gender-neutral language and provide equal dialogue opportunities for both genders, the overall representation of women remains limited. Notably, teachers' interviews revealed concerns about the gender inequality portrayed in these EFL textbooks. They stated that the representation of female still unequal in terms of social status and activities. Similarly, Mohammed & Mohammadzadeh study, employed Content analysis and teacher surveys, revealed that males were more prevalent in texts and illustrations, reflecting cultural norms. Females were depicted in passive and domestic roles, aligning with traditional gender ideology. These findings suggest a need for gender-neutral textbooks and policies to promote a gender-free society.

From all the previous studies, the results consistently indicated the existence of gender bias and stereotypes in EFL textbooks. Moreover, research on gender representation in EFL textbooks has basically conducted in primary or junior high school, but limited attention to senior high school levels. Also, only a few research that put their attentions into teachers opinion as the users and implementers of the textbooks. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by focusing on exploring teachers' perceptions of gender representation in EFL textbooks for senior high schools. Moreover, by examining teachers' views, this study provides a deeper understanding of how the representation of gender are perceived and addressed in the classroom. Hence, this research aims to look at teachers' perceptions regarding gender representation in EFL textbooks for students in senior high school. The discussion in this research focused on answering two questions:

1. How do teachers perceive gender representation in EFL textbooks?
2. Are there differences between the two teachers on perceiving gender representation in EFL textbooks?

METHODS

This research employed qualitative method with case study design (Creswell, 2014). The study design was chosen because it allows researchers to view and interpret the data in depth. Qualitative research also offers a way to explore and interpret meaning related to socio-cultural problems (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, by applying this method, researchers can provide a more specific picture of the phenomenon and explain the results in detail.

This research was conducted at an Islamic-based senior high school in Kerinci Regency, Jambi. This school is a school in a rural area that does not have much exposure to English. Students who study at this school on average come from the same village and surrounding villages, so they tend to be homogeneous and there are not many opportunities for interaction with outsiders or native speakers from different socio-cultural backgrounds. Due to the lack of interaction with people from different socio-cultural backgrounds, sensitivity to global issues, one of which is gender issues, may not be deployed and widespread in this school. Apart from that, this school is also an Islamic-based school. The implementation of gender role construction is also likely or has the possibility to be predominantly taught and influenced by the prevailing Islamic ideology. Therefore, it is important to look at the current perceptions and opinions of teachers regarding gender issues. Teachers' opinions need to be reviewed to find out whether they have demonstrated a form of awareness of gender issues that is in line with global efforts to promote and achieve gender equality.

This research involved participants consisting of 2 teachers who teach different grade levels. The participants involved in this research were EFL teachers in grades 10 and 11. This school only has 2 English teachers, 1 female and 1 male. The EFL textbooks they use is the 2017 revised edition of the English language textbook mandated by the government and published by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud). This school is under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag), and it still uses and implements the 2013 Curriculum (K-13). Kemenag has its own authority to set and implement its own curriculum. Also, this school has not shifted and employed the new curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka). So, the main instructional materials they use are the mandatory textbooks published by Kemendikbud.

This research used 1 instrument, a semi-structured interview. The interview questions were developed based on teachers' view of gender representation in EFL textbooks by Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei (2020). The following are some questions that were asked and used as the guidelines when conducting interviews with the teachers.

1. What do you think about gender?
2. What is your opinion regarding the concept of gender equality?
3. In your opinion, is the representation of male and female in the textbooks already equal?
4. Do you think the EFL textbook contain bias and gender stereotypes? If yes/no, give reasons.
5. In your opinion, does the representation of gender in textbooks require changes in the future?

After the data was collected, analysis for the results of the teachers' perspectives was carried out in two steps. Interview data was analyzed by manually transcribing the recordings that had been obtained from the teachers, and then the data was interpreted critically according to the researcher's reasoning abilities (Creswell, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data of interviews conducted with the teachers, the results were obtained. In response to the inquiries that were presented to them, the grade 10th and the grade 11th teachers have provided the following answers. The findings and discussions elaborated as follows.

Results

Question 1: What do you think about gender?

“In my opinion regarding gender, male and female are the same. Actually in the learning process, both boys and girls is the same. Well, depending on their activeness in accepting what is called...the learning process that I carry out in class is either in the form of text, or composition, or writing, or reading.”

(10th grade teacher)

“This gender problem has actually existed since the beginning of human creation. In Islamic law, which we understand and also believe in our holy books, it is clear why Adam and Eve were not created directly, but Adam was created first. Then, how Eve was created, Eve was created when Adam needed a companion (female). Continuing until the apostolic era, gender problems continued and were inherited. It turns out that the thing called gender equality continues to be a polemic that a man is far more optimal in everything than a woman. This happened in BC. Even in the Caliphate era after Rasulullah Muhammad died, it turned out that gender equality was still a big problem. Even though at the time of the Prophet he had begun to raise the status of women, but it was not complete. It continued even after the Messenger of Allah had died, and the time of the Caliph Ummar bin Khatab began. Ummar bin Khatab once buried his daughter because he thought that daughters were no better than sons. In fact, the daughter will pass on some family burdens, tribal burdens, etc. At that time, strong boys were needed in order to maintain life, both as a tribe, family and nation. What's more, at that time, girls were considered a burden because they couldn't be invited to fight in a war. Then, we move on to the time of Greek philosophers, Aristotle and so on, and it also turns out that the highest level of girls was only a palace dancers. Then, after the philosophers developed their thinking, this is gradually becoming minimal and we are starting to realize that gender equality must be improved. Century after century until now it is still true that boys are more dominant in all kinds of professions even though this concept has been around for centuries. Therefore, nations everywhere throughout the world are now striving for gender equality. Boys and girls have to be equal. However, that ‘dominant’ mindset is always there. DNA of ‘dominant’ is always present in the nations of the world. Efforts to improve gender equality have always existed, but this has not been completed until now. Even though we can see that the problem is no longer as big as it used to be. We see in Indonesia. If we look at the history of Indonesia, girls during the kingdom era on the island of Java were always more respected if they just stay at home. However, now there has been a change where the dominant professions for boys can now be done by girls. And some jobs are no longer considered taboo. So that, any gender can do this profession. Thus, in general, we can say that the gender problems of man

and women began centuries before Christ and began long before that. This is because there is a mindset that men are considered much better than women. However, developments over time always try to improve to minimize it, and always try to achieve gender equality even it is not yet complete.”

(11th grade teacher)

From the transcriptions, it can be seen that both teacher gave their point of you that genders are the same. The 10th grade teacher explained that boys and girls are the same, should be treated equally. The 11th grade students added and elaborated his arguments that gender inequality has been a pervasive issue across various eras and cultures for centuries. He explained Early Islamic law, as interpreted in some traditions, placed women in a subordinate role, with Adam being created first and Eve created as a companion. This sentiment continued through the Caliphate era, exemplified by Umar bin Khatab's burial of his daughter due to the perceived burden daughters placed on families. Despite this awareness, the dominance of men in various fields continued for centuries. This dominance still lingers in the DNA of many societies, hindering the complete achievement of gender equality. Efforts to address this inequality have been ongoing, albeit with varying degrees of success. In Indonesia, for example, cultural shifts have allowed women to enter professions previously considered exclusive to men. While significant progress has been made, the problem of gender inequality persists. This historical context helps us understand the long and complex journey towards achieving true equality between men and women. It also highlights the importance of continued efforts to dismantle outdated beliefs and create a society that values both genders equally.

Question 2: What is your opinion regarding the concept of gender equality?

“In my opinion, gender equality is a must. Both male and female must be equal in the learning process... gender equality must be the same. We must include gender equality in language, both in the use of sentences and texts, or other things. Male and female must be the same. In essence, there must be equality and no discriminations between genders.”

(10th grade teacher)

“I will give a simple reference from a song by Roma Irama about emancipation of women. Quoting from the song whose lyrics are "women are welcome to be anyone, but remember a woman is a mother". Well, the problem are the words of 'Mother' that are still stuck in our minds, are those women who only stay at home and do chores. So, women are indirectly placed in the social stereotypes that apply in society. So I think we need to broaden our definition of mother. A mother who only takes care of the household is no longer a relevant statement. Mother should be given the same rights and opportunities in jobs and social lives. However, it is also important to highlight that mother should remember their nature being”

(11th grade teacher)

According to the statements, both teachers understood and agreed that gender equality must be achieved. The 10th grade teacher stated that equality must extend to language, ensuring that the words, the sentences, and texts reflect and promote inclusivity and fairness. She also suggested that discriminations between genders

must be eliminated. In addition, 11th grade teacher explained his view by giving examples from a song lyrics. He argued that the traditional stereotype of a ‘mother’ should be declined. Mothers deserve equal opportunities and rights in both the workforce and social spheres. A mother's essence is inherent and multifaceted, encompassing both nurturing abilities and the potential for broader societal engagement. Mother as a woman must strive towards a world where gender is not a barrier to access, opportunity, or respect. This requires a conscious effort to dismantle harmful stereotypes and biases, and to create an environment where everyone feels valued and empowered. Ultimately, achieving true equality is not just a matter of fairness, but a necessary step towards building a more just and equitable society for all.

Question 3: In your opinion, is the representation of male and female in the textbooks already equal?

“Based on the textbooks I use, whether textbooks or worksheets (LKS), there are still differences in the use of gender there. Yes, most of them are dominant in textbooks...like the example from our material yesterday, narrative texts; there are lots of stories, male stories that are presented there, and only a little of female. That's from a reading part, yes. In terms of composition, a lot of females appear there, a little bit dominant, not the same as in reading. However, from all the materials and contents of the textbooks I use, the dominant ones are mostly males, especially on the 10th grade textbook from Ministry of Education and Culture.”

(10th grade teacher)

“Well, that's it. So in using textbooks we don't just look at the material textually. But you must also pay attention to its moral content. I see that there are still discrepancies in the material in the textbook. I don't know whether the book was written by a feminist or a patriarch, so the dominant direction is towards patriarchy. Without us realizing it, this will influence the mindset of our students. In the division of dialogue, for example, indeed it gets the same share, but the speaking capacity; let's say the jobs that are quite heavy and quite challenging are given to boys. While we see girls in dialogue conversations in textbooks, usually the girl expresses feelings of complaint, while the boy is the one who tries to solve the problem.”

(11th grade teacher)

Based on the answers, both teachers stated that gender imbalance is presented in EFL Textbooks. The 10th grade teacher explained that male figures are dominant in most areas, particularly in reading materials and dialogues, females appear more frequently in composition exercises. Then, the 11th grade teacher added that boys are often portrayed as problem-solvers, tackling challenging tasks, while girls typically express emotional feelings. Overall, males are still significantly overrepresented in the content, especially in the textbook provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Question 4: Do you think the EFL textbook contain bias and gender stereotypes? If yes/no, give reasons.

“Yes. It could be pointing to a specific gender here. The reason may be the author there. The problem may be the author. The author preferences may be more towards the male gender.”

(10th grade teacher)

“Yes, I say yes. Because it is there, we see contextually that it exists. There are gender politics there. There is a certain ideology. What is still worrying is whether gender equality will actually happen in Indonesia. He/she (the author) infiltrates the literacy of our students. It is implicitly inserted into the material even though the student does not currently understand it. In terms of text, students only understand the subject matter that they have to master. But behind that, there has instilled a certain ideology in the mindset of students. Okay, this is a textbook provided by the government, but when you get to school, teachers have to be smart enough to understand it. So bias and stereotypes exists. There still are.”

(11th grade teacher)

It can be seen that both teacher agreed and noticed the existence of gender bias and stereotype in the textbooks. Both teachers believed that certain preferences of the authors contributed to the imbalance of gender depictions in textbooks. This is further compounded by the presence of gender politics and specific ideologies within the Indonesian context. While the text may appear neutral on the surface, it can subtly instill harmful stereotypes and hinder the advancement of gender equality. This is especially concerning for students who may not be aware of the underlying biases and may unknowingly internalize them. While the government provides these textbooks, teachers play a crucial role in identifying and mitigating such biases, ensuring that students receive a balanced and inclusive education.

Question 5: Do you think the EFL textbook contain bias and gender stereotypes? If yes/no, give reasons.

“Yes, clearly there must be changes. The representation of gender in books, especially as we provide the transfer of knowledge, we must equalize gender equality there, meaning that every gender, both men and women, must participate in order to get maximum results of their study... and teachers can convey knowledge information to their students by giving the same material and providing gender equality for both male and female. Male and female must be given equal opportunity. Actually, everyone can be a leader, both male and female. Only here maybe, if most of the top ranking here are mostly females, but in real life practice, males are the leaders.”

(10th grade teacher)

“Yes, very necessary. That's why I always say that the textbooks that we teach to students are actually the contents of the teacher's own brain (mindset). How the textbook is implemented for students, adjust the moral content to the students. Students come from different islands and places. One place and another place are not the same. The social environment in a place greatly influences students. There are several points that I feel need to be improved from the first textbook, always trying to include gender equality, and secondly there is no need to insert ideology/political elements.”

(11th grade teacher)

Referring to the given answers, both teachers strongly agreed that current EFL textbooks require significant improvement in terms of gender representation. This is

crucial because the content of these books shapes not only students but also the teacher's mindset and ultimately the values they transmit to students. Also, students come from diverse backgrounds and environments, and imposing a single moral code can be detrimental. Therefore, the content needs to be adaptable and sensitive to different social contexts. The 11th grade students proposed two key improvements: firstly, ensuring gender equality in representation and secondly, eliminating ideological and political biases. This will create a more inclusive and impactful learning experience for students.

To sum up, both teachers provided their arguments based on their years of experiences as the users and mediators of the EFL textbooks in their own classrooms. They acknowledged and noticed the existence of gender bias and stereotype in the textbooks. Both teachers also emphasized the crucial role of balanced gender representation in these materials. They expressed their hope for continuous improvement in this area, seeking materials that showcase greater gender equality.

Discussion

Research question 1: How do teachers perceive gender representation in EFL textbooks?

The findings showed that both teachers have a fairly adequate understanding of gender. Based on the first interview question, both teachers explained their understanding of what they know about gender and the issues surrounding it. However, the 11th grade teacher provided broader and details information about the initial concept of gender based on the chronology of human creation which is rooted in Islamic law and continues with the concept of civilization and history centuries ago. Meanwhile, the 10th grade teacher emphasizes gender concepts related to the learning process and environment.

Furthermore, for the second interview question, both teachers explained that gender equality must be obtained by every male and female. The 11th grade teacher elaborates by giving examples of traditional stereotypes about the role of a mother quoted from a piece of song lyrics "*women are welcome to be anyone, but remember a woman is a mother*". The findings is consonant to previous studies (Aljuaythin, 2018; Ait Bouzid, 2019), were women traditionally portrayed as typical mother figure with limited social roles than men. The concept of a mother, who only stays at home, taking care of the household and children, is not the right concept to describe gender equality. According to the teacher, the concept of motherhood must be expanded further. In fact, apart from being mothers, women can also do many other things, including working in professions that are considered taboo. Women can do more than just doing chores such as washing, cooking, and ironing at home.

Next, both teachers answered the third interview question with similar answers. They stated that there was an imbalance in gender representation in the EFL textbooks used. They explained that male representation is more dominant than female. In some material texts, such as narrative texts, men appear more often than women. Apart from that, the representation of men and women in conversational dialogue is also different. Even though they get the same dialogue, men tend to get the portion that is oriented towards solving problems while women are more focused on expressing feelings and complaints. This imbalance in gender depiction certainly has an impact on students' mindsets. This finding is in line with Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei (2020) study regarding to result of teachers' perceptions part. It revealed that there is textual imbalance in portraying social activities. Teachers highlighted two examples found in the textbooks; conversation of female intended to lose weight

while male portrayed as a skilled interpreter. These two circumstances are deniably concerning. It is implicitly implying that female is less significant than male. Textbooks basically should promote equal gender representation to align with global efforts and movements for gender equality.

Then, regarding the fourth interview question, both teachers gave similar answers that there was gender bias and stereotyped in the EFL textbooks they used. They argue that this may have been influenced by the book's author. They also explained that perhaps the author had ideological preferences towards one specific gender, feminism or patriarchy. The outcomes of this study also in line and support the findings of some previous studies carried out by (Ariyanto 2018; Lestariyana et al, 2020; Tyarakanita et al, 2021). They found that strong ideological of the authors influence the depictions of gender in the textbooks. Specific cultural beliefs and attitude, originating from misinterpretation and misconceptions, may lead to an unchangeable rigid ideology. Despite societal progress, certain textbooks still perpetuate outdated gender bias and stereotyped. The portrayal of male is superior than female showed that equality in gender in textbooks has not yet achieved. The superiority of 'dominant' DNA as mentioned by the 11th grade teacher in the interview is one of the contested factor contributed to unequal depictions of gender in the textbooks. The teachers' responses indicated that the language used, and cultural values and materials regarding gender in the textbooks have to be improved. The authors of the textbooks also have to attempt to neutralize and balance the gender representations in the textbooks.

For the last question, the fifth interview question, each teacher believes that there needs to be changes regarding the representation of gender in EFL textbooks in the future. Every male and female has the same rights. So, the depiction of each gender in textbooks must also be balanced. According to them, EFL textbooks play a very important role in shaping students' mindsets. What is taught through textbooks must have significant implications both in theory and in practice. The 10th grade teacher explained that the existence of inequality in practice hinders the achievement of gender equality. By realizing the need to achieve gender equality, the teachers suggest for comprehensive revisions to the textbooks. The changes aim to enhance students' preparations and engagements for real world experience. Policy makers, textbooks publishers, and teachers have to collaborate to address and evaluate gender bias and stereotype in order to promote students' understanding of the world on their own potentials.

In short, each answer reflects the perceptions of the teachers as users and implementers of the EFL textbook. They acknowledge and aware about the existence of bias and stereotypes of gender in the books. They also highlight the importance of equal gender representation in the textbook. This is because what students learn from textbooks will influence their social practices in real life outside of school. Because equal gender representations, means equal right and opportunities for the students.

Research question 2: Are there differences between the two teachers on perceiving gender representation in EFL textbooks?

The interview transcriptions summarized responses to a series of questions. The responses are generally similar, but there are some key differences between the views of the 10th and 11th grade teachers. The 10th grade teacher immediately defined gender in terms of gender equality, while the 11th grade teacher began by explaining the traditional Islamic concept of gender based on the creation of Adam and Eve. The 11th grade teacher relied on Islamic law to support his views, suggesting that his

understanding of gender is strongly influenced by Islamic ideology. This difference in perspective also reflects the varying degrees to which the teachers understand gender, its roles, and its representation.

Moving to the next question, the 11th grade student expressed his answer with a statement "*It is also important to highlight that mother should remember their nature being*". Even though the 11th grade teacher shows his support for gender equality for women, the statements given still indicate that there is distrust towards women in choosing their path in life. Despite advocating for gender equality, the 11th grade teacher statement suggested a lingering distrust of women's ability to make independent decisions about their lives. This underlying skepticism stems from the outdated notion that women's careers conflict with their maternal duties. The perception that women who prioritize their careers are neglecting their families is a misconception that impedes gender equality. Such stereotypes hinder women's professional advancement and limit their potential. To address this issue, individuals must engage in self-reflection and actively challenge biases, while society as a whole must foster an environment that supports and empowers women. Women deserve unwavering trust to assert their rights and fulfill their responsibilities seamlessly. Such doubts impede the progress of gender equality.

Related to interview question point number four and five, the 10th grade student believed that the dominant preference of the author/s is toward male character, while the 11th grade teacher raised concerns about the potential presence of gender bias and political ideology in EFL textbooks. He noted that the preferences of authors and the influence of institutions can subtly inject gender bias and political elements into these materials. This, in turn, can hinder the promotion of gender equality in education. To address this issue, the 11th grade teacher emphasized the importance of adapting textbook usage to the specific needs of the learning environment and students. Teachers, as the key implementers of textbooks, play a crucial role in ensuring that gender roles are taught in a way that aligns with prevailing moral and social norms. So, adapting to the needs of using textbooks and teaching gender roles according to the moral and social context is the obligation of the teachers. By carefully considering the context and adapting teaching approaches, teachers can foster a more equitable and inclusive learning environment.

Overall, there are only slightly different perceptions from the teachers on the gender representation in EFL textbooks, but they both agree and support the importance of achieving gender equality. The 10th and 11th grade believes constant improvement of the textbooks will provide insights in assisting the balance representation of gender. Although there are some slightly differences, it can be concluded that both teachers support the movement of gender equality as in line with the global goal.

CONCLUSION

The teachers involved in the study recognized the importance of gender representation in EFL textbooks and acknowledged the existing gender imbalance in the materials they use. They emphasized the influence of textbooks on students' perceptions and the need for balanced portrayals of gender roles. The study revealed a significant gap between male and female representation in the textbooks, with male characters dominating the narratives. Additionally, female characters were often associated with traditional gender stereotypes, primarily limited to domestic roles and emotional expression, while male characters were typically associated with more complex and problem-solving occupations.

Despite efforts to achieve gender equality in EFL textbooks, the teachers note that the portrayal of gender is still influenced by the author's personal biases and ideological leanings. This can undermine the effectiveness of EFL textbooks in promoting gender equality. Additionally, the teachers express concern about the potential for political agendas to be embedded in EFL materials, further hindering the pursuit of gender equality. To address these concerns, the teachers advocate for ongoing improvements to EFL textbooks, emphasizing the importance of balanced gender representations. They urge the government to prioritize this aspect in textbook development, enabling teachers to effectively promote gender equality through EFL instructional materials.

To conclude, both teachers recognized the significance of equal gender portrayal in EFL textbooks mandated by the government. While their responses varied slightly, both teachers concurred on the necessity of balanced gender role representations in EFL textbooks. The study's findings are intended to offer recommendations to authorized language policy makers and textbook publishers, enabling them to produce and create instructional materials that promote gender equality. This research is also limited to a small scope study, necessitating a broader investigation involving EFL teachers from various state and private schools at various levels and different regions. This would allow for a more thorough examination of how teachers perceive gender representations in EFL textbooks.

REFERENCES

- Ait Bouzid, H. (2019). Gender issues in select moroccan ELT textbooks: A review. *Research in English Language Pedagogy (RELP)*, 7(2), 209-231.
- Agha, N., & Shaikh, G. (2023). Teachers' perceptions of gender representation in textbooks: Insights from sindh, pakistan. *Journal of Education (Boston, Mass.)*, 203(4), 891-900. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220574221097596>
- Aljuaythin, W. (2018). Gender representation in EFL textbooks in saudi arabia: A critical discourse analysis approach. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 7(5), 151. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.7n.5p.151>
- Ariyanto, S. (2018). A portrait of gender bias in the prescribed indonesian ELT textbook for junior high school students. *Sexuality & Culture*, 22(4), 1054-1076. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-018-9512-8>
- Canale, G., & Furtado, V. (2021). Gender in EFL education: Negotiating textbook discourse in the classroom. *Changing English*, 28(1), 58-71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2020.1812377>
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed). SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed). Sage publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Educational Research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (5th ed). Pearson Education, Inc.
- De la Torre-Sierra, Ana María, & Guichot-Reina, V. (2022). The influence of school textbooks on the configuration of gender identity: A study on the unequal representation of women and men in the school discourse during the spanish democracy. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 117, 103810. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103810>

- Gouvias, D., & Alexopoulos, C. (2018). Sexist stereotypes in the language textbooks of the greek primary school: A multidimensional approach. *Gender and Education*, 30(5), 642-662. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2016.1237620>
- Gu, M. M., Chiu, M. M., & Li, Z. (2022;2021;). Acculturation, perceived discrimination, academic identity, gender and chinese language learning among ethnic minority adolescents: A structural equation modeling analysis. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 25(7), 2454-2468. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2021.1920882>
- Izzuddin, Dalimunthe, R. P., & Susilo, S. (2021). The portrayal of women in arabic textbooks for non-arabic speakers. *SAGE Open*, 11(2), 215824402110141. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211014184>
- Lee, J. F. K., & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, V. (2020). Gender representation in instructional materials: A study of iranian english language textbooks and teachers' voices. *Sexuality & Culture*, 24(4), 1107-1127. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-020-09747-z>
- Lestariyana, R. P. D., Widodo, H. P., & Sulistiyo, U. (2020). Female representation in government-mandated english language textbooks used in indonesian junior high schools. *Sexuality & Culture*, 24(4), 1150-1166. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-020-09752-2>
- Lindqvist, A., Sendén, M. G., & Renström, E. A. (2021). What is gender, anyway: a review of the options for operationalising gender. *Psychology & sexuality*, 12(4), 332-344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2020.1729844>
- Li, J. (2016). The transmission of cultural values via EFL textbooks in china. *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society*, 8(2), 128-144. <https://doi.org/10.3167/jemms.2016.080207>
- Menegatti, M., & Rubini, M. (2017). Gender bias and sexism in language. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*.
- Mohammed Ismael Ismael, S., & Mohammadzadeh, B. (2022). Gender representation in EFL textbooks used in state schools in northern iraq and teachers' perceptions of gender role stereotypes. *Interactive Learning Environments, ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print),1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2022.2029495>
- Sunderland, J., Rahim, F. A., Cowley, M., Leontzakou, C., & Shattuck, J. (1997). Gender in language textbooks: Looking beyond textual imbalance. *Lancaster Centre for Research in Language Education, Lancaster University*.
- Sunderland, J., Cowley, M., Abdul Rahim, F., Leontzakou, C., & Shattuck, J. (2000). From bias "In the text" to "Teacher talk around the text": An exploration of teacher discourse and gendered foreign language textbook texts. *Linguistics and Education*, 11(3), 251-286. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0898-5898\(00\)00034-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0898-5898(00)00034-6)
- Schudson, Z. C., Beischel, W. J., & van Anders, S. M. (2019). Individual variation in Gender/Sex category definitions. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 6(4), 448-460. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000346>
- Suwarno, Triyono, S., Ashadi, & Sahayu, W. (2021). Gender construction in the indonesian government-distributed english textbook: Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. *Sexuality & Culture*, 25(6), 2158-2175. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-021-09870-5>
- Tyarakanita, A., Drajadi, N. A., Rochsantiningsih, D., & Nurkamto, J. (2021). The representation of gender stereotypes in indonesian english language textbooks. *Sexuality & Culture*, 25(3), 1140-1157.

- <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-021-09813-0>
- Van Leent, L., & Spina, N. (2023). Teachers' representations of genders and sexualities in primary school: The power of curriculum and an institutional ideological code. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 50(3), 683-700. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-022-00515-6>
- Vu, M. T., & Pham, T. T. T. (2022). Gender, critical pedagogy, and textbooks: Understanding teachers' (lack of) mediation of the hidden curriculum in the EFL classroom. *Language Teaching Research : LTR*, , 136216882211369. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688221136937>
- Widodo, H. P., & Elyas, T. (2020). Introduction to gender in language education. *Sexuality & Culture*, 24(4), 1019-1027. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-020-09753-1>
- Xiang, R., & Yenika-Agbaw, V. (2021). EFL textbooks, culture and power: A critical content analysis of EFL textbooks for ethnic mongols in china. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 42(4), 327-341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2019.1692024>