



Gender Representation in EFL Textbooks of Bengkulu Junior High School

Ela Putri Yanti
University of Bengkulu
elaputriyanti16021998@gmail.com

Abstract

The representation of gender in ELT textbooks has been the subject of many studies. Images are an important aspect of ELT textbooks and how they are represented from the author's point of view. The aims of this research were to investigate the male, female, and mixed characters were equally represented in the visuals of the textbook 1 and textbook 2 used in junior high school in Bengkulu and to investigate the male, female, and mixed roles depicted in terms of occupations in the textbooks. A mixed method was used in this research. Quantitative was used to calculate the frequency of male, female, and mixed characters while qualitative was used to describe the roles of each character depicted in terms of occupations in the textbooks. The result showed that there was no equivalent character representation in the two textbooks. In terms of illustration, males were the biggest frequent than females and mixed character. While in terms of photos, it was the same as the illustration. Similarly, roles were also described in the two textbooks. However, the role of males was more than females and mixed character. It can be concluded that male characters still dominated most frequently among female and mixed characters. There was no equality in gender representation in the two books.

Keywords: Gender Representation, EFL Textbook, Textbook Analysis

Introduction

In EFL education, textbooks are playing the most important aspect. It is used to input language as language learning (Richards, 2001). It means that textbooks are necessary for teaching and learning and cannot be avoided. Textbooks certainly provide appropriate learning and a comfortable way of learning for a number of teachers and students. Ahmad & Shah (2014) proposed that in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the students are introduced to foreign languages through these textbooks and teachers have considered that textbooks are the basic foundation used as material for teaching. The textbooks are certainly expected to be neutral, indiscriminate and non-bias of learning or knowledge in terms of content (Bruegues & Cromer, 2009). In achieving this goal, based on the Indonesian government has published a policy governed by the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 8 of 2016, article 2 paragraph 2, which specifies that school textbooks must contain positive norms and values that apply in society. It means that the contents in the textbook must not show anything related to pornography, radicalism, gender bias, extremism, and all forms that contain deviations. However, it can be seen from some previous studies, such as; Craeynest (2015), Awayed (2015), Amerian & Esmaili (2015), Yang (2016), and Gebregeorgis (2016), said that there were still detected biases in textbooks. The textbooks studied



were books used by schools from year to year. One of the most frequently occurring biases was gender bias.

Gender-biased textbooks may affect female students' perceptions of social, observable, and grammatical roles (Amini & Birjandi, 2012). Besides, Hamilton et al (2006) argued that gender stereotypical portrayals of children might have an impact on their career goals and personal improvement. In another opinion, Sunderland (1992) propose that there are three ways that the language of students and language users can influence gender representation, such as: the subconscious affect of females' social roles, behavior, and limited linguistics. Based on these statements, it can be said that gender in a text can affect several aspects of students in the learning process, especially in schools.

In fact, textbooks in schools are part of the discourse on EFL material in the form of teaching materials designed for the purpose of the school, especially for students. It was unavoidable that most of the male gender was more than female in the learning text. When the students read the texts in books, surely, they will be confronted directly with gender discourses such as female and male gender. This can indirectly shape their ideas about gender. When female characters and pictures in textbooks were not equal to male characters, it limited female's opportunities to determine their gender and establish how they should behave in society. This certainly reduced their motivation in learning and hindered the student learning process.

Therefore, it was important of producing and maintaining gender-equal EFL textbooks for all ages, especially among young students. It means they still have thoughts and understanding that can develop rapidly about the world including gender roles. Thus, the research objective was to investigate gender representation in two EFL textbooks used in the process of learning English for junior high school students, focusing on 2nd and 3rd grades. Based on these objectives, the researcher made research questions as below:

1. Are male, female, and mixed characters equally represented in the visuals of textbook 1 and textbook 2?
2. How are male, female, and mixed roles depicted in terms of occupations in the textbooks?

Research Methodology

Instrument

This research used the instrument of checklist. Riduwan (2012) proposed that a checklist was "a list" that contains the subject and aspects to be observed. In this research, there were two kinds of checklists. The first checklist was in the form of male, female, and mixed characters contained in the



pictures in the textbook. This checklist was used to calculate how many characters each gender has. The second checklist contained the checklist for male, female, and mixed roles of occupation. The function of this checklist was to know the type of work each gender has in the textbook.

Research Design

In this research, the researcher used mixed methods; quantitative and qualitative approaches. This method was used to investigate the visual representation of males, females, and mixed as well as gender occupational roles depicted in the illustrations in two books on the ELT textbooks. Quantitative analysis was used to determine the male, female, and mixed characters seen in the textbook based on illustrations and photos. Illustrations were images with color or only black and white in books, magazines, and others while photos were images produced from a camera. Then, qualitative analysis was used to find out the gender occupational roles of both males and females that fit in the picture.

Materials

This research used two types of EFL textbooks from junior high school (2nd and 3rd). These books were used to evaluate the representations and depictions of males and females used by public schools, especially in Bengkulu, as materials for learning English. The first book was published in 2017. Then, the second book was published in 2018. The researcher chose textbooks 1 and textbook 2 with the same publisher but at different levels.

Table 1: The Types of Textbook 1 and Textbook 2

Title of Book	Grade	Publisher	Year of Publication
1. When English Rings a Bell	VIII	Center for Curriculum and Books, Balitbang, Ministry of Education and Culture.	2017
2. Think Globally Act Locally	IX	Center for Curriculum and Books, Balitbang, Ministry of Education and Culture.	2018

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher used two procedures to acquire data in this research: data on the frequency of male and female character representation in textbooks and data on male and female occupational roles in textbooks. In the first part, data were collected based on their respective visual categories such as illustrations or photos contained in the entire book. Each book had a different chapter, textbook 1 contained 13 chapters, and textbook 2 contained 11 chapters. Then, the researcher calculated and added the frame rate of each gender. This was done per chapter in each book, and the total amount was calculated. After that, the researcher obtained the proportion. Besides, for the second part, the



work roles of males and females were analyzed through the visuals contained in the book. In this case, the researcher looked at the character of each gender described in the textbook.

In textbook 1 and textbook 2, photos were used to convey each unit and present the topics to be discussed, while illustrations were used to explain conversations in lesson activities that were relevant to the topic in each chapter. In the photo, there were three characters that appear, such as: female, male, and mixed gender. In the illustration, there were several gender characters including the adult human gender. In the illustration section, some of the same characters occur repeatedly in several chapter. In this research, the researcher examined the visual representation of male and female characters in illustrations and photos using content analysis. In this case, the researcher calculated the frequency of each male and female character that appears in each chapter used the theory by Sudijono (2008). Thus, this research involved the frequency of characters in illustrations and photos and then compared how gender socialization was in each book. In other words, the researcher also used some steps to analyze the qualitative by using an interactive model (Saldana et al., 2014). There were three components to conduct the data analysis, such as: data condensation, data display, and conclusion (drawing or verifying).

Findings and Discussion,

Findings

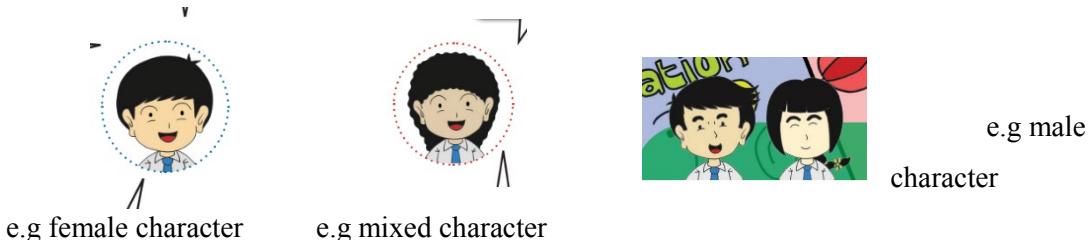
Gender Representation in the Visuals of Textbook 1 and Textbook 2

The results showed that there were differences among males, females, and mixed characters in EFL textbooks. It can be seen from the data that there were differences in each character was often used in the category of illustrations and photos. The results were presented in table 1, below:

Table 1. Textbook 1 (VIII, When English Rings a Bell),
Frequency of Male, Female, and Mixed Characters

Chapter 1-13	Frequency of Male and Female Characters					
	Illustrations			Photos		
	Males Characters	Females Characters	Mixed Characters	Males Characters	Females Characters	Mixed Characters
Total	201	171	56	127	109	17
%	47%	40%	13%	50%	43%	7%

Based on the table above showed that female, male, and mixed characters in textbook 1 have different frequencies between illustrations and photos. There were an example pictures of each character that was included in the **illustration** in textbook 1, as below:



Based on the picture above, there were examples of illustrations of male, female, and mixed characters. The character depicted a male who illustrates himself talking on a phone. Table 1 showed that male characters were depicted 201 times with a frequency of 47%. In addition, male characters in the illustration category certainly have the highest frequency compared to other characters. Meanwhile, the female character had the same illustration as the female character, which was picking up the phone. Based on the table above, the female characters were described 171 times with a frequency of 40%. Illustrations of female characters in textbooks have a lower frequency than male characters. Then, the mixed character as shown in the illustration above illustrates that the teacher was explaining to his students among males and females in the classroom. In this character, there were 56 times with a frequency of 13%.

Besides, the researcher also found the results of photo analysis. There were some examples of each character that was included in the **photos** in textbook 1, as below:



Based on the picture above, there were examples of photos of male, female, and mixed characters. The photo of male character described that he was a student. Based on the table above, it was found that males were depicted 127 times with a frequency of 50%. It means that male characters also have the biggest frequency in the category of photos. While female also had the same character as male in the photos. Based on the finding, females were depicted 109 times with a frequency of 43%. It can be said that the visibility of male characters in illustrations and photos in textbook 1 had a higher

frequency than female characters. Then, mixed characters as shown in the photo above were described between male and female students. In this character, there were 17 times with a frequency of 7%.

Table 2. Textbook 2 (IX, Think Globally Act Locally),
Frequency of Male and Female Characters

Frequency of Male and Female Characters						
Chapter 1-11	Illustrations			Photos		
	Males Characters	Females Characters	Mixed Characters	Males Characters	Females Characters	Mixed Characters
Total	71	48	14	97	76	11
%	53.4%	36.1%	10.5	52.7%	41.3%	6%

Meanwhile, the table of textbook 2 above also had different frequencies between gender representatives (female, male, and mixed characters) based on illustrations and photos. There were some examples pictures of each character that was included in the **illustration** in textbook 2, as below:



e.g Male Character



e.g Female Character



e.g Mixed Character

Based on the picture above, there were examples of illustrations of male, female, and mixed characters. The pictures above were an example of each character that was included in the illustration category. The male character in the picture above was illustrated as peers who were talking about the race they have done. In this textbook, the illustration of male characters had bigger frequency than female character. There were 71 times with a frequency of 53.4%. The illustrations of female characters also have a lower frequency than male characters. It can be seen from table 2, that female illustrations were 48 times with a frequency of 36.1%. Meanwhile, the female character in the picture above depicts that they were talking about the cake has been sold out. Then, the mixed character as shown in the illustration above depicted a peer who was planning to make something. In this character, there were 14 times with a frequency of 10.5%.

Besides, the researcher also found the results of photo analysis. There were some examples of each character that was included in the **photos** in textbook 2, as below:



e.g Male Character



e.g Female Character



e.g Mixed Character

Based on the picture above, there were examples of photos of male, female, and mixed characters. The male photo character above was laughing. That male has his own character when photographed. As shown in Table 2, males character had a larger frequency than females. There were 97 times with a frequency of 52.7%. Besides, female character also was laughing. In this character, there were 76 times with a frequency of 41.3%. It can be said that the illustrations in this book have the highest frequency for females, while in photos, males still have the highest frequency. Then, mixed characters as shown in the photo above were described between male and female students. In this character, there were 11 times with a frequency of 6%.

Gender Occupational Roles in the Visuals of Textbook 1 and Textbook 2

Table 5 below showed that the findings revealed the role occupation of males and females were described in two kinds of textbooks.

Table 5: Male and Female Characters' Occupations

	Male roles	Female roles
Textbook 1	Teacher (16) Cook (1) Police (1) Indonesian Red Cross (2) Tour Guide (1) Cleaner (4) Animal keeper (2) Animal Cleaner (2) Carpenter (1) News Anchor (1) Driver (3)	Teacher (25) Cook (1) Veterinarian (1) Chef (1)
Textbook 2	Jury (1) Teacher (20) Chef (1) Seller (1)	Teacher (4) Seller (1) Cook (1) Craftsman (1)

Overall, there were two findings that can be illustrated in the table above. **First**, the visualization of males' occupations was depicted in larger numbers than females. It can be seen in textbook 1 that there were 11 occupations related to males and only 4 occupations related to females. There were some pictures of roles occupations in textbook 1, as below:



Chapter 1 (Teacher)



Chapter VIII (Cook)



Chapter XI (Carpenter)

The pictures above were some examples of role occupations found in textbook 1. The first picture was about the role of a woman who was a teacher. In this book, the role of female teachers was more dominant than that of male teachers. The second role was a man who cooks. It can also be seen that cooking was not only done by women, but the visual role of men can also do it. The third picture depicted the role of men as carpenters. It can be said that the role was indeed a men's work in general.

Besides, in textbook 2, there were 4 occupations that were related to male and female respectively. There were some pictures of roles occupations in textbook 2, as below:



Chapter 1 (Teacher)



Chapter IV (Chef)



Chapter VIII (Seller)

Those pictures were an example of role occupation in textbook 2. In the first picture was a male as a teacher. In this textbook, male character was the most dominant than female. There were 20 visuals of males, while females were 4 of roles occupation. The next picture was a man as a chef. In this role, the male was portrayed as the chef serving the food and not the female role. The last picture was female as a seller. It can be seen from the visuals displayed that there were several types of goods on display for sale. In the picture, the role of women was shown.

In other words, there were only two mixed characters describing the role of occupation found in the two books. Here is an example:



Chapter 1 (Male Teacher & Female)



Chapter VII (Tour Guide & Animal Keepers)

Based on the pictures above, it can be seen from the picture of chapter 1 that there was a mixed role occupation which described both teachers between male and female who were having a conversation.



Then the second mixed role occupation was about tour guide and animal keeper at the zoo. From the pictures above, it was explained that they were carrying out their respective roles.

Second, only three occupations, which were teacher, cook, and veterinarian, both involved male and female. However, in detail male was more concerned with teaching than female. Not only that, male roles occupations include cook, police, Indonesian red cross, tour guide, cleaner, animal keeper, animal cleaner, constructor, news anchor, driver, jury, chef, and seller. While female roles occupations were also described as cook, veterinarian, chef, seller, cook, and craftsman. The results also showed males were more active as cleaners and drivers, which means that men were dominant in their part of occupations. Meanwhile, female occupations like cooking, do explore with women. Then, the veterinarian was also checked with the women and the police goes with the men.

Discussion

First, the discussion was about male, female, and mixed characters represented in the visuals of textbook 1 and textbook 2. Each character had a different frequency in each book. In textbook 1, the terms of illustrations and photos showed that male characters have the biggest frequency than female characters, while mixed characters have the lowest frequency. Similar to textbook 2, male characters also have a higher frequency in the terms of illustrations and photos compared to female characters and mixed characters.

The first question was about the male, female, and mixed characters represented in the two textbooks of junior high school in Bengkulu. Based on the findings above, the total gender of textbooks 1 and textbook 2 which have the most characters lies in the male character. It can be said that male characters were more dominant than female characters. This was due to the fact that female and mixed characters still have fewer opportunities than male characters to participate in many programs and other activities in society, particularly in textbooks. This restriction arises from social ideals and practices that restrict women's movement in comparison to men. Therefore, gender inequalities often occur. This finding was backed up by Cook's (2015) assertion that there were still more male characters in language textbooks than female ones. Because the graphics and images in the two textbooks under consideration reflect the majority of the visuals used in all of the books' activities, they make up the majority of the volumes. Another finding, Bahman & Rahimi (2010) also in his findings said that gender inequality of men and women does not only occur in illustrations and pictures but also occurs in exercises, sentences, and question instructions contained in the books analyzed in his research. This is similar to the study by Azad (2020) regarding men being described as playing more roles than women. However, women were mostly described as reactive and purposeful participants. Not only that, his research also reveals that men are often portrayed as looking at the



audience while women are mainly illustrated as looking away from the viewer. It may be inferred that gender differences exist in the English Teaching textbook studied in this study, whether male, female, or mixed.

The second question was about the roles of males, females, and mixed described in terms of work in textbooks. Based on the findings above, the role occupation contained in each textbook had a different amount. In textbook 1, there were 16 total roles occupations that describe females and males. While in textbook 2, there were only 6 roles occupations that describe the roles of male and female. Then, only two role occupations described mixed characters between male and female in a picture. Overall, the role of male was more than female and mixed. This finding was also supported by the opinion of Mkuchu (2009) argued that in terms of authority and leadership, males were more represented than females. Besides, Wiasti (2017) in his research showed that men are seen as more flexible because they can carry out activities and are stronger than women. It can be concluded that the work presented in the textbook showed traditional perceptions of gender and stereotypes. The roles of females were as a teacher, cook, veterinarian, chef, seller, dan craftsman. Meanwhile, the roles of males were as a teacher, cook, police, Indonesian red cross, tour guide, cleaner, animal keeper, animal cleaner, carpenter, news anchor, driver, jury, teacher, chef, and seller. Based on findings and discussion, it can support that there were gender stereotypes in the two textbooks studied. In the status of leadership in work in the example above, female was positioned as not having a role to lead an activity. It can be concluded that man was placed as leaders. This male leadership was manifested through his role as a carpenter, animal keeper, and others. Through this role, man appear to occupy a position as strong person in carrying out the work compared to those carried out by women. This is in accordance with the Gender Role Theory which explains that gender creates social role expectations of how men and women women should behave (Innayah & Primary, 2019). For example, men are considered more suitable as leaders, intellectual, analytical, able to think abstractly, and able to solve problems, where women are considered warmer, kind, expressive, more friendly, and polite. This theory then influenced people's perceptions of the workplace. Based on this theory, the view of gender automatically tend to think men are better at doing leadership versus women (Dawar & Anand, 2017). The results of this study were also in accordance with the theory presented by Sumar in his journal that female were creatures who have an emotional, gentle, and loving nature that was seen as be a leader. Therefore, in the world of work, it was often the position of women placed under the position of men (Sumar, 2015). Males have superiority in terms of status or position in some activities that were carried out in the substance of this book. The visible advantages were depiction of leadership and its role in terms of work.



Conclusion and Suggestion

Gender representation in two EFL textbooks used in junior high schools in Bengkulu was investigated in this research. The book is used to be analyzed from different grade levels (2nd and 3rd) with the same publisher. From the first question (Are male and female characters equally represented in the visuals of textbook 1 and textbook 2?), the results showed that there was not a balance between male, female, and mixed representations in both illustrations and photos in the two books. Males character were featured further often than females character in the illustrations in the two books. In addition, in terms of photos, the result also revealed that male characters were also often displayed rather than female or mixed characters. Then, regarding the second question (How are male and female roles depicted in terms of occupations in the textbooks?), the results showed that male characters appeared in more role occupations than females and mixed characters in both books. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the EFL textbooks used in schools, especially in Bengkulu, still have gender inequality. This was very unfortunate because the textbook was one of the important parts to be used as learning media for students. To promote gender equality in the classroom and decrease gender bias in textbooks, ELT teachers must be aware of the use of language and gender representation in EFL materials and teaching techniques. Some things that can be done are: reducing the stereotype of reports and images, balancing the representation of males, females, and mixed characters in reports and images, and equally involving males, females, and mixed characters in any context such as economics, politics, culture, ethnicity, and others. Based on the research that has been done, the researcher suggests to the authors of the books to equalize the gender representation in the text images and readings in the book. It is done because there is no difference between female and man. Then, the further researcher can conduct new research on EFL textbooks at a higher level.

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