

TRADITIONAL GENDER STEREOTYPES: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF VISUAL REPRESENTATION IN INDONESIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL EFL TEXTBOOKS

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DOI : <http://dx.doi.org/10.30983/educative.v9i2.8852>

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Submission: November 30, 2024

Revised: December 21, 2024

Accepted: December 29, 2024

Published: December 31, 2024

Abstract

This study explores the portrayal of gender roles, gender stereotypes, and gender activities in visual representations within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks used in Indonesian senior high schools. Using a Critical Feminist Discourse Analysis (CFDA) approach, investigates how these visual depictions promote or challenge existing gender stereotypes. The analysis focuses on textbooks used in Grades X and XI, identifying patterns in the representation of male and female characters. Key themes explored include the alignment of these portrayals with societal expectations of masculinity and femininity, especially in the contexts of professional roles and domestic roles. The findings reveal that, while traditional gender norms continue to dominate, there are emerging trends where gender roles are more diversified, particularly in the representation of women in career roles and men in caregiving or domestic settings. These results suggest that EFL textbooks gradually move toward more balanced gender representations, though traditional stereotypes remain prevalent. It emphasizes the need for a more inclusive and equitable approach to gender representation in educational materials.

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Keywords: Content Analysis, Critical Feminist Discourse Analysis, Educational Policy, EFL Textbooks, Gender Representation

Abstrak

Studi ini mengeksplorasi penggambaran peran gender, stereotip gender, dan aktivitas gender dalam representasi visual dalam buku teks Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) yang digunakan di sekolah menengah atas di Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan Analisis Wacana Feminis Kritis (CFDA), menyelidiki bagaimana penggambaran visual ini mempromosikan atau menantang stereotip gender yang ada. Analisis ini berfokus pada buku teks yang digunakan di Kelas X dan XI, mengidentifikasi pola dalam representasi karakter laki-laki dan perempuan. Tema-tema utama yang dieksplorasi meliputi keselarasan penggambaran ini dengan harapan masyarakat tentang maskulinitas dan femininitas, terutama dalam konteks peran profesional dan peran domestik. Temuan ini mengungkapkan bahwa, sementara norma gender tradisional terus mendominasi, ada tren yang muncul di mana peran gender lebih beragam, terutama dalam representasi perempuan dalam peran karier dan laki-laki dalam pengasuhan atau pengaturan domestik. Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa buku teks EFL secara bertahap bergerak menuju representasi gender yang lebih seimbang, meskipun stereotip tradisional tetap lazim. Hal ini menekankan perlunya pendekatan yang lebih inklusif dan adil terhadap representasi gender dalam materi pendidikan.

Kata Kunci: Analisis Konten, Analisis Wacana Feminis Kritis, Kebijakan Pendidikan, Buku Teks EFL, Representasi Gender

Introduction

In recent years, feminist scholars have extensively explored how visual media play a significant role in reinforcing gender stereotypes.

For instance,¹ revealed that these depictions can profoundly influence societal perceptions about masculinity and femininity. Textbooks, one of the

¹ Habib et al., (2020)

visual media, have been recognized as powerful tools for transmitting cultural norms and shaping societal perceptions, including those related to gender roles². Educational resources, such as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks, play a crucial role in forming students' understanding of gender expectations by depicting specific roles and activities associated with male and female characters³. These representations often reflect, but at times challenge, traditional gender stereotypes, influencing the ways students internalize concepts of masculinity and femininity⁴. Therefore, examining the portrayal of gender in textbooks is essential for understanding the broader social implications of educational materials⁵.

In Indonesian high school EFL textbooks, such as *Work in Progress* and *English for Change*, the visual representations of male and female characters are pivotal for teaching language skills and reflect underlying cultural attitudes toward gender⁶. These textbooks, widely used in Indonesian classrooms, often depict male characters in professional and authoritative roles, while female characters are shown in more passive or domestic activities⁷. Such depictions mirror traditional gender norms where men are typically associated with leadership, intellect, and public spheres, whereas women are relegated to

domestic and caregiving roles⁸. These portrayals reinforce societal expectations and limit students' perceptions of what roles are available based on gender⁹.

Critical Feminist Discourse Analysis (CFDA) provides a valuable lens for uncovering these gender biases, as it allows for a deeper examination of how visual and textual elements in textbooks shape gendered understandings¹⁰. By analyzing how male and female characters are visually represented, researchers can identify implicit and explicit gender stereotypes that may go unnoticed by students¹¹. In addition to CFDA, quantitative content analysis offers a systematic approach to assess the frequency and distribution of gendered roles in textbooks, providing empirical evidence of gender imbalances¹². Together, these methodologies enable a comprehensive understanding of how gender is constructed and represented in educational texts¹³.

Several studies have highlighted similar trends of gender stereotyping in educational materials, with male characters consistently shown in more active and influential roles. In contrast, female characters appear more passive or subordinate¹⁴. This pattern has been observed not only in Indonesian textbooks but also in textbooks used in countries like Morocco, Greece, and Malaysia, where visual representations of gender roles contribute to the reinforcement of traditional gender expectations¹⁵. Despite efforts to reduce gender bias in educational materials, many

² Zia Tajeddin and Mostafa Janebi Enayat, 'Gender Representation and Stereotyping in ELT Textbooks: A Critical Image Analysis', *Tell*, 4.2 (2010), 51–79.

³ Rahmah Fithriani, 'Gender Stereotypes in Educational Texts: A Comparative Study of Indonesian and International Primary English Textbooks', *Discourse and Interaction*, 15.2 (2022), 53–76 <<https://doi.org/10.5817/Di2022-2-53>>.

⁴ Anja Sovič and Vlasta Hus, 'Gender Stereotype Analysis of the Textbooks for Young Learners', *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 186 (2015), 495–501 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.080>>.

⁵ Stamatiou Papadakis, 'Gender Stereotypes in Greek Computer Science School Textbooks', *International Journal of Teaching and Case Studies*, 9.1 (2018), 48 <<https://doi.org/10.1504/ijtc.2018.10011123>>.

⁶ Agustina Tyarakanita and others, 'The Representation of Gender Stereotypes in Indonesian English Language Textbooks', *Sexuality and Culture*, 25.3 (2021), 1140–57 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-021-09813-0>>.

⁷ Habib, Putra, and Setyono.

⁸ Sugeng Ariyanto, 'A Portrait of Gender Bias in the Prescribed Indonesian ELT Textbook for Junior High School Students', *Sexuality and Culture*, 22.4 (2018), 1054–76 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-018-9512-8>>.

⁹ Hassane Benla, 'Gender Stereotypes in Moroccan EFL Textbooks' Illustrations: Content and Critical Image Analysis', *Arab World English Journal*, 14.1 (2023), 183–98 <<https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol14no1.12>>.

¹⁰ Sovič and Hus.

¹¹ Fithriani.

¹² Papadakis.

¹³ Ariyanto.

¹⁴ Kazi Md Mukitl Islam and M. Niaz Asadullah, 'Gender Stereotypes and Education: A Comparative Content Analysis of Malaysian, Indonesian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi School Textbooks', *PLoS ONE*, 13.1 (2019), 1–24 <<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0190807>>.

¹⁵ Habib, Putra, and Setyono; Papadakis.

textbooks still reflect outdated stereotypes, resulting in limited portrayals of women in leadership, professional, and public roles¹⁶. The lack of diversity in these portrayals restricts the potential for textbooks to challenge gender inequality and promote more balanced representations of both genders¹⁷.

The findings from these analyses are significant because they underscore the role of textbooks in shaping students' views on gender and their future aspirations¹⁸. As educational resources, textbooks influence how students perceive gender roles and can reinforce or challenge societal norms¹⁹.

In countries like Indonesia, where traditional gender roles remain prevalent, the visual representation of men and women in textbooks significantly shapes young people's understanding of their potential and societal roles²⁰. An analysis of Indonesian EFL textbooks reveals a strong prevalence of traditional gender stereotypes, with male characters predominantly depicted in professional and authoritative roles, while female characters are often shown in passive or domestic settings. Although there are some emerging trends towards diversification, such as a few female characters represented in career-oriented roles and males occasionally depicted in domestic contexts, traditional portrayals still dominate. These visual representations play a crucial role in influencing students' perceptions of gender roles, either reinforcing limiting stereotypes or promoting more equitable views²¹. Additionally, the inclusion of traditional attire for female characters emphasizes gender-specific roles and cultural identity, linking femininity to caregiving and heritage. Overall, the findings underscore the urgent need for revising educational materials to challenge existing gender biases and foster more

inclusive practices in education, ultimately contributing to more equitable and inclusive educational practices.

Research Method

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating Critical Feminist Discourse Analysis (CFDA) with quantitative content analysis to explore the portrayal of gender roles in Indonesian senior high school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks. CFDA allows for an in-depth examination of how gender is represented through visual and textual content, uncovering implicit power dynamics, and examining how these portrayals align with or challenge traditional gender stereotypes (Ariyanto, 2018).

In parallel, quantitative content analysis is used to systematically categorize and count the frequency of gendered roles in a sample of 200 images from two widely used textbooks, *Work in Progress* (Grade X) and *English for Change* (Grade XI). These textbooks are widely used in Indonesian senior high schools, making them significant for examining gender representation in educational contexts. The focus on these textbooks allows for a comprehensive investigation into how visual and textual representations contribute to the construction of gender traditional identities and roles in the educational materials used by students.

Work in Progress was authored by a team of three individuals: Budi Hermawan, Dwi Haryanti, and Nining Suryaningsih. Whereas *English for Change* was authored by a team of six individuals: Puji Astuti, Aria Septi Anggaira, Atti Herawati, Yeyet Nurhayati, Dadan Dayang, Suriani. Published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (MONEC) in 2022, this comprehensive educational resource *Work in Progress* includes six units spread across 169 pages and *English for Change* comprises five units spread across 254 pages. The images in the textbooks were coded based on the gender of the characters, the type of role they portray (e.g., professional, domestic, or passive), and the context in which

¹⁶ Tajeddin and Janebi Enayat.

¹⁷ Tyarakanita and others.

¹⁸ Fithriani.

¹⁹ Benla.

²⁰ Ariyanto.

²¹ Solomon Melesse Mengistie and Mulugeta Yayeh Worku, 'Gender Representation in Educational Materials: A Focus on Ethiopian English Textbooks', April, 2021, 599–611 <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95687-9_137>.

they are placed (e.g., professional, or domestic settings). The combination of these methods provides a comprehensive understanding of gender representation, allowing the study to assess both the frequency of gendered portrayals and their underlying cultural implications.

Finding and Discussion

Finding

Activity Context

The types of roles assigned to male and female characters reveal significant differences:

Table 1. Types of Roles Male and Female

Types of Roles	Male	Female
Professional	24	13
Domestic	-	1
Recreation	6	4

Male characters, such as doctors and teachers, are more frequently depicted in professional roles (24 males vs. 13 females).



Figure 1. Professional Roles

Male characters dominate professional contexts, with 24 depictions vs 13 for females. This pattern reflects deeply ingrained societal norms in which men are primarily associated with authority and intellectual expertise, as previously shown in studies of gender representation in Indonesian textbooks. Male characters are frequently shown as doctors, engineers, and teachers, but female characters, while present, are underrepresented in high-status professional positions.

This indicates a gender bias towards male in professional, high-status roles, suggesting that males are more associated with authority and

expertise. Female representation, although present, remains lower, subtly reinforcing traditional views of men as dominant in professional settings. Only one image depicts a female character in a domestic role, with no male characters shown in such settings.



Figure 2. Domestic Roles

Interestingly, female characters overwhelmingly occupy domestic roles, albeit with limited frequency—only one depiction in this study. Male characters are completely absent from such settings, reinforcing the stereotype that caregiving and household responsibilities are inherently feminine tasks. This limited portrayal of domestic roles may suggest a minimal emphasis on traditional caregiving roles, though it aligns with stereotypes that assume domestic responsibilities are typically female-oriented. Males are also depicted more frequently in recreational activities, with 6 males versus 4 females involved in sports or hobbies. While this difference is minor, it indicates a slight gender preference, associating males more with physical and active pursuits.



Figure 3. Male and Female Sports Activities

In recreational contexts, there is a modest gender imbalance, with 6 male portrayals compared to 4 females. These portrayals include sports and leisure activities in which masculine characters participate more actively. While this implies some inclusivity for female, the gap reflects fundamental biases that equate athletic and active pursuits with male.

Activity Locations

The settings where activities occur further emphasize gender associations:

Table 2. Setting Locations Male and Female

Activity Locations	Male	Female
Work	24	13
House	-	1
Public Area	6	4

Most professional activities are set in workplaces, with male characters (24) outnumbering females (13), reinforcing men's association with professional environments and leadership positions.



Figure 4. Male as a Leader Role

Only one female character is shown in a home setting, highlighting the absence of male characters in domestic roles reinforcing the stereotype that the home is primarily a female domain. Recreational activities occur in public areas, where 6 males and 4 females are depicted. This setting offers a relatively balanced representation of genders, indicating some openness towards females in public and recreational roles.

From the CFDA’s perspective, these patterns highlight deep-rooted societal expectations about gender roles. The dominant portrayal of men in the workplace and public spaces is consistent with patriarchal norms that position men as leaders and providers, while

women are relegated to supportive or domestic roles. These implicit messages not only shape students’ perceptions of gender roles but also limit their aspirations by presenting a narrow scope of what men and women can achieve.

Role Functionality

The analysis of character functionality in terms of active and passive roles provides insight into gender portrayal:

Table 3. Character Functionality

Active/Passive Character	Male	Female
Active	60	50
Passive	2	2

Both male and female characters are predominantly depicted in active roles, with males (60) slightly outnumbering females (50). This active depiction for both genders suggests some progressive representation, including females in dynamic roles, not confined to passive or supportive functions. Although less frequent, passive roles show a disparity with 5 females and only 2 males depicted in passive contexts. This imbalance hints at a traditional stereotype associating females with passive or less assertive roles, contrasting with the dominant, action-oriented portrayal of males.



Figure 5. Female as Supporting Roles

Male characters are predominantly depicted in active and leadership positions, such as public speakers, decision makers, and initiators in professional settings. This is in line with traditional constructions of masculinity, which emphasize authority, assertiveness, and agency. Female characters, while sometimes depicted in active roles, often occupy supporting positions that complement male leadership. These roles

include nurturing, facilitating teamwork, or assisting with household activities, which subtly imply a secondary status despite their activity. This imbalance not only reflects but also perpetuates societal expectations that female excels in nurturing or subordinate roles while men lead.

Females are more often associated with passive depictions, such as observers or individuals awaiting direction. In contrast, male is rarely depicted in passive roles. This imbalance creates a gender narrative in which assertiveness and control are male traits, while passivity and submissiveness are associated with femininity.

Further categorizing roles by leadership, dependency, and assertiveness reveals more profound insights into gender dynamics:

Table 4. Gender Dynamics

Role	Male	Female
Leadership	7	3
Dependency	3	4
Assertiveness	6	5

Male characters appear more frequently in leadership roles (7 males vs. 3 females). This suggests that leadership is often attributed to males, aligning with traditional norms that position men as leaders or authority figures. Females are depicted in slightly more independent roles (4 females vs. 3 males), reinforcing stereotypes of females as more reliant on others, which may subtly imply a need for male support or authority. Assertive behavior is almost balanced, with 6 males and 5 females showing assertiveness in interactions.



Figure 6. Interactions between Male and Female

This relative balance reflects some level of progressive portrayal, as it acknowledges

assertiveness as a quality applicable to both genders. Males are predominantly portrayed as leaders, with their opinions and decisions driving the narrative in the text. Female, when depicted in dependent roles, are often dependent on men for guidance, reflecting traditional patriarchal constructs where men hold social and familial authority. However, there is an emerging trend that challenges these stereotypes. This suggests a gradual shift towards more inclusive representation, although such depictions remain the exception rather than the norm.

Cultural Representation in Traditional Gender Roles

Cultural attire in the textbooks also reinforces gender-specific roles and expectations. Two images depict female characters dressed in traditional garb: one shows a grandmother in an old-fashioned Javanese kebaya, and the other features a female character in conventional attire from Borneo.



Figure 7. Female Wearing Traditional Attire

These depictions suggest an adherence to traditional gender expectations, linking femininity with heritage and cultural identity. The focus on women in traditional clothing may imply that cultural roles are more explicitly associated with females, potentially reinforcing the stereotype of women as the primary bearers of tradition. In contrast, no male characters are depicted in traditional attire, emphasizing this association of cultural heritage predominantly with female characters. A grandmother wearing traditional Javanese clothing is depicted, symbolizing the cultural expectation of women as preservers of tradition. Additionally, no male characters are shown engaging in domestic tasks, reflecting a cultural norm where household duties are often seen as female responsibilities. This lack of male

involvement in domestic settings supports traditional stereotypes that associate home-based roles exclusively with women, reinforcing conventional gender roles within the cultural context.

In Javanese culture, traditional gender expectations are embedded in social norms, rituals, and clothing, which are strongly influenced by a patriarchal structure that assigns distinct roles to men and women. This cultural context plays a crucial role in shaping how gender is depicted in educational materials, reinforcing the perception of women as the primary custodians of cultural heritage. The depiction of female characters in traditional attire, such as the *kebaya* (a form of conventional Javanese dress), symbolically ties women to cultural preservation and domestic roles. This visual representation suggests that women are culturally responsible for upholding and transmitting heritage, historically linked to domesticity and family values.

On the other hand, the absence of male characters in traditional attire within these textbooks reinforces the notion that men occupy more dynamic and modern roles in society. In Javanese tradition, men are often seen as public figures, leaders, and breadwinners, roles associated with authority and independence. This divergence in representation—women as cultural bearers in traditional attire and men in professional or active roles—underscores a gendered division that limits the perception of women's roles in broader societal contexts, potentially restricting young female students' aspirations to roles confined to the family and cultural sphere. Moreover, the lack of male characters in domestic scenes suggests a cultural bias that views household responsibilities as inherently female tasks. Traditional Javanese values such as *gotong royong* (community cooperation) and *rukun* (harmony) are taught within the family structure, primarily by women. By excluding men from these portrayals, textbooks may inadvertently perpetuate the stereotype that caregiving and household management are incompatible with male roles,

reinforcing a narrow interpretation of masculinity that values public and professional achievements over family involvement.

This analysis reveals a gap in progressive gender portrayals, as the textbooks fail to depict men in nurturing or culturally embedded roles, such as family caregivers or participants in heritage activities. Although there is a move towards including assertive and active female characters, this representation is limited and often needs more complexity than male roles. For a more inclusive portrayal of gender, educational materials should include men in traditional and domestic settings and present women in leadership and public roles. This balanced approach could challenge entrenched stereotypes, supporting broader social goals of gender equality by presenting diverse role models that reflect cultural values and modern gender dynamics. By critically analyzing these depictions, we gain insight into the implicit messages conveyed to students, shaping their understanding of gender roles. Addressing these stereotypes in textbooks is essential to fostering a learning environment that reflects the evolving roles of men and women in Javanese society and beyond, aligning educational content with contemporary values of gender equality and cultural inclusivity.

Cultural Context of Gender Representation in Indonesian Education

Indonesia's gender norms are deeply intertwined with the country's diverse cultural and religious values, which shape societal expectations around gender roles. Javanese culture, one of the most influential within Indonesia, traditionally embodies a patriarchal structure where men are seen as leaders and providers. At the same time, women are associated with domestic responsibilities and nurturing roles. This cultural perspective is mirrored across various ethnic groups in Indonesia, each having unique but often similar values concerning gender.

In Javanese society, concepts like *rukun* (harmony) and *gotong royong* (cooperation)

emphasize social order and mutual support, typically positioning men in visible, authoritative roles within the community and women in supportive roles that maintain family and social cohesion. As a result, these cultural expectations can lead to educational materials, including textbooks, reflecting these roles, potentially reinforcing stereotypes by showcasing male figures in public, professional, or leadership contexts and female statistics in more passive or relational roles. Additionally, religious beliefs—primarily Islam, but also Christianity, Hinduism, and indigenous practices—further shape gender norms in Indonesia. Spiritual teachings often reinforce traditional roles, contributing to the portrayal of men and women in ways that align with societal ideals of masculinity and femininity. For example, men may be depicted as scholars, leaders, and decision-makers, while women may be shown in caregiving or supportive positions. Understanding these cultural nuances is critical, as they influence how educational materials represent gender roles, often reinforcing rather than challenging existing stereotypes.

By analyzing gender representation in Indonesian EFL textbooks within this cultural framework, this study highlights how educational resources may perpetuate traditional gender roles or offer opportunities to promote more progressive and balanced portrayals. Such an analysis is vital for developing educational materials that encourage inclusivity and align with global movements toward gender equality while being sensitive to Indonesia's unique cultural landscape. The acceptance of these portrayals among students is also shaped by cultural context. Students raised in environments where traditional gender roles are deeply entrenched may internalize the stereotypes presented in textbooks without questioning them. For example, male students may see public roles and leadership as their natural domain, while female students may feel limited to domestic roles or less authoritative. These risks reinforce existing gender gaps in education and career aspirations. Recognizing the cultural specificity of these

depictions is critical to fostering a more inclusive and equitable education system. While it is important to respect cultural heritage, there is also a need to challenge and evolve traditional norms to align with contemporary values on gender equality. Future textbook designs should strive to balance cultural representations with progressive gender roles, presenting diverse and non-traditional depictions that encourage students to question and expand their understanding of social roles.

Discussion

The findings reveal that while traditional gender norms remain prevalent, there are emerging trends toward more diverse portrayals, especially in the representation of females in career roles and males in caregiving or domestic settings. Though conventional preconceptions still predominate many visual representations, EFL textbooks in Indonesia seem to be progressively shifting towards more balanced gender images. This change points to a rising awareness of the necessity to question out-of-date gender norms in line with worldwide demands for gender equality in educational tools ²².

According to the study, traditional gender stereotypes remain strongly shown in Indonesian EFL textbooks, with males in professional or authoritative roles and females mostly in domestic roles. This trend reflects long-standing societal expectations of gender roles in which males are considered as breadwinners and leaders and females as homemakers or caregivers. Latest textbooks do, however, demonstrate a clear tendency toward more progressive depictions in which females are represented in professional vocations including doctors, teachers, and engineers. Males are also occasionally seen in caring roles, such as those of fathers doing housework or childbearing. This change suggests that Indonesian publishers of educational materials are starting to understand the need to

²² Habib, Putra, and Setyono.

show different gender roles to question prejudices and advance equality²³.

When one compares the results of this study with those of other nations, one finds a worldwide movement toward more fair gender representations in instructional tools. Similar research conducted in the United States has revealed that over the past two decades, EFL textbooks have progressively veered from strict gender norms. By the 2010s, textbooks in the United States were providing more varied roles for males and females, particularly in disciplines historically dominated by males—science and technology in particular—which research revealed reflected more diverse roles for both males and females²⁴. Studies conducted in the United Kingdom have also shown a similar trend, with an increasing focus on equitably presenting males and females in both home and professional environments²⁵. These changes show a larger society's awareness of the need for gender equality in education and the need to confront preconceptions that restrict the possibilities of both genders.

The case study from Indonesia emphasizes how strongly textbooks shape students' ideas about gender roles. Particularly those used in formative years, educational resources have the power to either support or contradict social mores. From politics to childcare, EFL textbooks have long included gender-neutral language and equal representation of males and females in nations like Sweden, which boasts one of the most progressive educational systems in terms of gender equality²⁶. This innovative approach helps

create an environment where students are less likely to accept limiting gender norms, therefore promoting a more inclusive society. While the slower rate of change in Indonesia may reflect cultural and socioeconomic disparities, the trend toward more gender equality is obvious and corresponds with worldwide attempts to improve instructional content.

The results of this research demand a critical review of how gender is portrayed in instructional materials. Although Indonesian EFL textbooks show some improvement, the continuation of conventional preconceptions points to more work required to reach gender equality in education. This is consistent with demands from academics all around for textbooks to not only question gender stereotypes but also represent a wider spectrum of experiences, identities, and roles. Fostering an environment whereby every student, regardless of gender, may see themselves mirrored in many roles and desire to break free from the limitations of conventional stereotypes requires a more inclusive approach to gender representation in textbooks. Examining world trends and learning from nations that have made notable progress in gender representation in education will help Indonesia keep on toward a more inclusive and fair approach to gender in its EFL textbooks²⁷.

The findings reveal that while traditional gender norms still apply, there is an emerging trend towards more diverse depictions, particularly in the representation of women in career roles and men in caregiving or domestic settings. Using Critical Feminist Discourse Analysis (CFDA), this shift can be understood as part of a broader ideological struggle within educational materials, where textbook content reflects both progressive and conservative cultural values²⁸.

CFDA highlights how power relations between genders are encoded in textbooks. For example, the dominance of male characters in

²³ Tyarakanita and others.

²⁴ Carmen Botella and others, 'Gender Diversity in STEM Disciplines: A Multiple Factor Problem', *Entropy*, 21.1 (2019), 1–17 <<https://doi.org/10.3390/e21010030>>.

²⁵ Abdul Awal, 'Gender Representation in English Language Textbooks in Bangladesh', *Studies in Linguistics, Culture and FLT*, 12.2 (2024), 62–82 <<https://doi.org/10.46687/KOKB5598>>.

²⁶ Lekai Li, Tao Xiong, and Jing He, 'The Representation of Gender in a Popular Primary School EFL Textbook Series in China', *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 5.5 (2017), 79–87 <<https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.61.2017.55.79.87>>.

²⁷ Bernice Anne Hayibor, 'Analysis of Gender Bias in Home Economics Textbooks', April, 1990, 19–25.

²⁸ (Saputra, 2019)

professional roles and female characters in domestic roles perpetuates hierarchical norms that position men as leaders and women as caregivers²⁹. These depictions are not simply a reflection of societal norms but also a reinforcement of patriarchal structures in the educational domain. By critically analyzing these patterns, it becomes clear that while newer textbooks attempt to incorporate more balanced representations, traditional stereotypes remain deeply embedded, subtly shaping students' perceptions and expectations³⁰.

According to CFDA, the visual and textual elements in textbooks do more than simply convey information—they actively construct social realities. The depiction of men in dominant roles and women in subordinate roles communicates implicit messages about gender power dynamics³¹. Even when textbooks include progressive depictions, such as women in professional careers or men engaged in caregiving duties, these representations are often less frequent or situated in non-central narratives, failing to effectively disrupt entrenched norms³².

Globally, CFDA studies have shown similar trends in other countries, where shifts toward gender equality in textbooks reflect broader societal changes. For example, studies in the United States and the United Kingdom have documented increased representation of women in science and leadership roles, challenging traditional gender gaps³³. However, the persistence of stereotypes in Indonesian textbooks underscores the challenges of translating global gender equality movements into local educational practices, particularly in

conservative cultural contexts³⁴. From CFDA's perspective, the power of textbooks lies in their dual function as educational tools and cultural artifacts³⁵.

In Indonesia, textbooks play a critical role in socializing students into social norms, often reinforcing traditional gender roles through visual and linguistic representations³⁶. The limited depiction of men in domestic roles or women in leadership positions reflects cultural adherence to gender expectations, suggesting that educational materials are not fully aligned with the global push for gender equality³⁷.

The findings call for a critical overhaul of gender depictions in Indonesian EFL textbooks, with the CFDA providing a framework for identifying and addressing these biases. By deconstructing the subtle power imbalances embedded in textbook content, educators and policymakers can work toward creating more inclusive resources that challenge stereotypes and promote gender equality. Future efforts should focus on strengthening diverse narratives that empower students to imagine roles and opportunities beyond traditional gender boundaries³⁸.

Conclusion

This study highlights the significant influence of educational materials, specifically EFL textbooks, in shaping students' perceptions of gender roles. The visual representations in *Work in Progress* and *English for Change* predominantly reinforce traditional gender stereotypes, with male characters depicted in professional, authoritative roles and female characters placed in domestic or passive positions. These portrayals reflect broader

²⁹ Ariyanto.

³⁰ Habib, Putra, and Setyono.

³¹ Seyran Jannati, 'Gender Representation in EFL Textbooks: A Case of ILI Pre-Intermediate Series', *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 2.3 (2015), 211–22.

³² Fatmawati Fatmawati and others, 'Gender Representation in EFL Textbooks in Indonesia', *Lensa: Kajian Kebiasaan, Kesusastraan, Dan Budaya*, 12.1 (2022), 19 <<https://doi.org/10.26714/lensa.12.1.2022.19-32>>.

³³ Hayibor.

³⁴ Tyarakanita and others.

³⁵ Kagaba Amina G, 'Digital Humanities: Using Technology to Analyze Cultural Artifacts', 2024, 1–8.

³⁶ (Yulistiana et al., 2022)

³⁷ Jannati.

³⁸ Pebrina Nurwahyuningsih and H S Nurianti, 'Gender Representation in EFL / ESL Textbooks in Indonesia: A Literature Review', *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 6.4 (2023), 671–75.

societal norms that associate men with leadership and women with caregiving, which may limit students' understanding of gender equality. While some images challenge these stereotypes, such instances are few and do not sufficiently provide women with leadership roles or equal representation in professional contexts. The study calls for reevaluating gender representation in educational resources, urging a more balanced and inclusive approach to depicting gender roles in textbooks. This would better promote gender equality and encourage students to engage with societal norms critically.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that future research expand the scope to include a wider variety of EFL textbooks and other educational materials used across different grade levels and subject areas. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of gender representation in Indonesian education. Additionally, studies should explore the role of teachers in mediating gender stereotypes within textbooks, as their interpretation and discussion of these materials can significantly influence students' perceptions. It is also crucial to investigate the potential impact of books that challenge traditional gender roles by assessing how gender-equitable content might affect students' attitudes and behaviors in both academic and social contexts. Lastly, textbook developers and educators should prioritize the creation of materials that present diverse and empowering gender representations, ensuring that both male and female students see themselves equally represented in a wide range of roles and contexts.

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