Indonesian Teachers' Perspectives on Gender Representation in EFL Textbook Visual Images for Elementary Schools

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Abstract

Background:
The use of gendered visual imagery in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks has raised concerns about perpetuating gender stereotypes and the potential effect on students' conceptions of gender roles. Despite the widespread use of mandated textbooks in primary classrooms in Indonesia, less is known about instructors' perceptions of gendered visual imagery.

Methodology:
This qualitative research employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analytic methodologies. An investigation was conducted in Samarinda East Kalimantan to collect the perspectives of 41 teachers who teach English in elementary school regarding the gendered visual representations present in the mandatory EFL textbooks. Furthermore, 12 teachers were chosen to partake in exhaustive interviews to present more informed and profound perspectives.

Findings:
They merely focused on how to teach the materials rather than scrutinizing the gender bias represented through texts and visual images. The study revealed that a significant proportion of teachers (80%) believed that gendered visual imagery in textbooks was not impartial and could influence the gender roles of pupils. Furthermore, a significant majority (75%) said they often adjusted or avoided using these pictures in their teaching methods. The interviews highlighted the teachers' concern about the possible negative impact of these pictures on students' social relationships and self-image. However, they merely focused on how to teach the materials rather than scrutinizing the gender bias represented through texts and visual images

Conclusion:
The findings suggest that elementary school teachers in Indonesia know the potential negative repercussions of gendered visual images in EFL textbooks and have implemented measures to mitigate these effects. The study underscores the importance of incorporating diverse and inclusive visual materials into educational resources to promote gender equality and positive gender representations. This concept is new to them. They agree that gender equality needs to be addressed and discussed as part of the content in classroom practices to raise students' awareness of gender bias.

Originality:
Previous studies have investigated the frequency and occurrence of gender bias in textbooks, found in images and texts. However, there is a lack of investigation into teachers' awareness of gender stereotypes in textbooks. This study enhances the existing corpus of literature by examining the perspectives of teachers on the use of gendered visual images in EFL textbooks in elementary schools in Indonesia. It emphasizes the importance of teachers and policymakers advocating for more inclusive educational resources and considering the impact of visual materials on students' gender perceptions

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender equity has become an issue in education in the last two decades. This view was raised when there was a movement that men and women should have equal opportunities in terms of education and cultural, economic, social, and political developments (Sahin, 2014). This motion triggers the shift of the stereotype that men are the only breadwinners and women should remain in their domestic life. In an education context, the view that a girl should be trained to have domestic-hood and motherhood skills is still practised by many patriarchal societies (Widodo, 2018). A girl is expected to have the ability to manage all domestic life and become a good mother. Therefore, sending her to higher education is unnecessary, whereas a boy is expected to be a future breadwinner. Consequently, every effort should be made for them to achieve their career life. Since the 1970s, the movement of gender equity awareness has spread to the world, and this made the issue of gender bias become a crucial issue to be discussed by many researchers (Blumberg & Kenan, 2015; Dahmardeh & Kim, 2020; Gouvias & Alexopoulos, 2018).

The movement for gender equity can be inserted into educational materials. This idea is raised since education is vital in influencing the students' minds related to gender equity. It is revealed that the contents provided in the language textbooks reflected curriculum purposes in shaping students' behaviour and competence (Atchison, 2017). It is believed that educational materials such as language textbooks should bring visual images or activities that familiarise students with the real life of society. Therefore, language textbooks should be expected to depict the positive values or norms practised by a society that should be free from gender limitations (El Kholy, 2012). As one of the languages being taught in the education context, English has an abundance of textbooks designed for teaching the language. Some studies have been conducted to explore the portrayal of males and females in textbooks (Piercey, 2000; Ghorbani, 2009; Dahmardeh & Kim, 2020). Ghorbani (2009) revealed that one of the prescribed textbooks, American Headway, is the sexiest textbook among other books. Ghorbani investigated three widely used textbooks in her study: Interchange, American Headway, and Person to Person. The gender bias in American Headway has been reflected

both in the texts and visual images. The previous studies also highlighted an unequal portrayal of males and females in the textbooks.

In Indonesia, language textbooks prescribed by the government also show gender-biased and stereotyping in all texts and visual images. In a study by Damayanti (2014), women were portrayed to be more dependent than men. It is also noted that women tended to show affection to all activities done by men. The result was that the pictures provided in the textbook represented a gender imbalance. Although both men and women played the actors' roles, they showed different roles. Women tend to have bidirectional actions, whereas men are more unidirectional. It means that men were expected to have actions associated with "men's activities." Pointing to women's roles in the textbook, it is revealed that women always needed a partner, whereas men tended to have independence.

Similarly, Ariyanto (2018) depicts gender inequality in texts and discourse. Gender differences are analysed through pictures and texts. Surprisingly, there are no tasks to discuss gender equality provided in the textbooks in which students can discuss the gender values reflected in pictures and texts.

What has been found in previous studies remains a gap to be filled. Those studies discussed the gender representation of texts and pictures in language textbooks. However, how teachers perceive gender representation in the textbook remains unclear. To fill this gap, the present study aims to explore how teachers perceive gender representation in language textbooks. It emphasises the analysis of teachers' perspectives on gender bias in the textbooks implemented in the classroom setting. This study aims to find out how aware teachers are of possible gender biases as well as how well they can recognise and understand gender representations in the textbooks they use. The study aims to find the degree to which teachers see textbooks as either supporting or challenging conventional gender roles and stereotypes, thus enabling or undermining them. It also examines how teachers react to these gender representations in their classroom practices and if they change or challenge any supposed material bias.

Some research questions are constructed to frame the study: How do teachers perceive gender representations in the textbooks they use in their classrooms? To what extent do teachers believe these textbooks perpetuate or challenge traditional gender roles? How do teachers address gender bias in textbooks during their teaching practices?

The objectives of this study are threefold. First, it seeks to identify teachers' perceptions of gender bias in their textbooks, exploring how they recognise and interpret gender

representations in these materials. Second, the study aims to analyse how teachers adapt their teaching practices in response to any perceived gender bias, whether through modifying lesson plans, supplementing textbook content, or addressing the issue directly with students. Finally, this research intends to contribute to the broader discussion on gender equality in educational resources by providing insights into the role textbooks play in shaping students' understanding of gender roles, ultimately helping to inform efforts to create more balanced and inclusive educational materials.

It was to build the teachers' enhancement to raise students' awareness of gender equality values represented in the textbook because it is a value-laden curriculum document (Widodo, 2018). As a silent partner in depicting dominant values held by societies, textbooks can form teachers' and students' knowledge of gender equality. To constrain the space, this in-depth analysis only considers the visual images relevant to lesson themes categorised as a corpus of gender-based discourse.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Gender Stereotyping in EFL Textbooks

Gender equality understanding is a critical issue to be considered when authors write textbooks. Previous studies revealed that gender equality is visualized evenly among male and female characters. Not only male characters but female characters were visualized in both verbal and visual texts (Lestariyana, 2020), however, female characters remained stereotypically portrayed as women who handled all domestic chores, professions, and hobbies (Setyono, 2018).

Textbooks are an essential tool for social change and should be one of the priorities of a gender equality education policy (Blumberg, 2008). They also reflect the intersection of various educational actors: students, teachers, textbook publishers, and families. Besides, they have an influence far beyond the immediate limits of schooling and learning in any society and worldwide. Consequently, the severity of their impact must be considered appropriately: a textbook is a real learning opportunity for teachers and students, a tool for negotiating between the various stakeholders engaged in production and use, and a component of interaction within families, particularly for values (Carole & Sylvie, 2009).

Textbooks appear to be the most searched resource for language development (Sunderland, 1992). The position of learners' textbooks should be highlighted, particularly as students often view textbooks as authoritative, and thus, they can impact students (Mustapha,

2013). It creates the impression that the reader interprets whenever a text is read, and that meaning is created. Romera (2015) notes that gender roles are templates of educational institutions. They develop the idea of what it means to be male or female, so there should be places where there should be "various masculinities and femininities" (p. 206). Correspondingly, a gender-based language in textbooks will negatively impact students and create an undemocratic environment because it is irrational and unreasonable for them (Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012).

Extensive work on gender equality in foreign language textbooks was undertaken during the 1970s and 1980s (Pawelczyk et al., 2014: Sunderland, 2000; Tahriri & Pouran, 2014). The investigation in these studies produced many precise results in the English language textbooks regarding the portrayal of males and females. In the textbooks, identical types of behavioural stereotypes were noted: females are usually portrayed as passive, reliant, generally weak, and physically attractive, whereas males are as aggressive, independent, and strong. Students are believed to learn information subconsciously from the stereotypical representations portrayed in the chosen instructional materials. These learning experiences can have detrimental impacts, especially on female students. Such consequences include 'feelings of exclusion, devaluation, alienation, and lowered expectations' (Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012).

If a textbook in the classroom brings a change that infringes on students' social and cultural norms and values, it can undoubtedly be considered inconsequential and need enhancement. In this regard, Gebregeorgis (2016) argues that "the contributions of a textbook to social change, which the present study aims to analyse from the perspective of the targeted textbook, rely on the ideals, norms, and modes of social conduct embedded in it" (p. 120) In other words, the portrayal of gender in classroom practice, such as the issue of gender inequality, should be a significant discussion.

2.2 Teachers' Perception of Gender Stereotyping in Classroom Contexts

For decades, some studies have reported that female students tend to be incompetent in the technological and computing fields. In contrast, male students were assumed to outperform competence in technology, sports, and outdoor activities. Male students are believed to have abilities in analysing, synthesising, hypothesizing, assessing, determining, and visualising, whereas female students are excellent in observing, communicating, and abstracting concepts (Eccles, 1989; Olubunmi, 2016; Tatar & Emmanuel, 2001). Generally, teachers have developed their perception of gender differences in the classroom. The differences refer to

male-female students' roles, male-female school achievement, ethnicity, characteristics, and parents' economic status (Jones & Dindia, 2004).

Although all teachers provide equitable learning opportunities for both male and female students, studies pointed out that teachers stereotyped their students' performance in school (Åhslund & Boström, 2018; Jackson, 2006). It has been reported that almost over decades, female students' performance at school has been better than that of male students (Arnesen, Lahelma & Öhrn, 2008; Blanchenay, Burns & Koster, 2014; Van Hek et al., 2016). Female students tended to have greater chances of being accepted in higher education as their grades were superior to male students (Arnesen et al., 2008). In most learning activities, female students are considered obedient to school rules and keen to complete school assignment (Jones & Myhill, 2004). At the same time, male students tend to show a misbehavior attitude and perform less attention to school assignments (Bertrand & Pan, 2013). These behavioural differences lead to the assumption that female students outperform male students in schools (DiPrete & Jennings, 2012).

This situation unconsciously affected teachers' attitudes toward their students in the class. Åhslund and Boström (2018) revealed that teachers had a positive perception of their ability to give tasks in the classroom practices; in fact, they acknowledged that male students did not perform well in handling individual work than female students. They thought those female students were more motivated and keener on their learning progress. It made teachers have a low expectation of male students' academic performance. However, OECD (2015) has reported contradicting phenomena. In general, there is no gender gap between male and female students in performing mathematics and science problems. Also, PISA analysed those female students tend to perform better when they are required to work on mathematical and scientific problems that are like what they do at school.

Teachers' perceptions of gender bias can influence how they communicate and interact with their students (Francis, 2000). In the classroom practices, the teacher has observed emphasized the responsibilities of standard practices in society; for example, in Indonesia, it is not appropriate for male students to cry in public. The teacher would say, "Do not cry; wipe off your tears. You are a boy." In this context, the teacher seemed trapped in gender identity, as confirmed by the larger society.

2.3 Previous Studies

Previous studies on how teachers perceived gender differences in the classroom context include those of Baig (2015), who revealed that teachers' personal experiences and beliefs

influenced their perceptions toward gender identities. It is reflected when she or he visualised the images and the discourse provided in the textbook. For example, there is a picture of a girl sweeping the floor. The teachers would say that the girl was doing a household and sweeping the floor. It is very uncommon for teachers to discuss the possibility that boys can have the opportunity to sweep the floor. Teachers commonly rely on assigning tasks provided in the textbook without attempting to discuss gender equality issues. On the other hand, students will passively receive what has informed them (Baldwin et al., 1992; Page & Jha, 2009).

Teachers are expected to communicate, explain, and clarify the information in the textbooks used in teaching and learning activities. In this context, teachers often transfer his/her beliefs of gender values through verbal and nonverbal communication. The beliefs often rely on social norm construction (Gosselin, 2007). Page & Jha (2009) investigated that teachers often reproduced and reaffirmed gender stereotypes rather than considering seeking clarification. Besides, Sunderland (1994a, 1994b) argued that a non-sexiest textbook could be the very sexiest textbook in the hand of a teacher with the sexiest attitude. It leads to the need to explore teachers' perceptions of gender-related issues represented in the textbooks. The reason is that teachers are the first agent of how textbook contents and information are versed in students. It is up to teachers how they interpret and deliver the textbook's content. Second, teachers have the privilege to identify and consider the area of gender-biased represented. Third, teachers have full authority to determine the teaching strategies to clarify the textbook contents. Fourth, teachers can create an awareness of the gender equality issue in the textbooks, which can influence students on gender equality shaping (Asadullah et al., 2018; Mahmood &Kausar, 2018).

3. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study employed a mixed-method approach to investigate the perspectives of teachers on gendered visual images in prescribed EFL textbooks used in elementary schools in Samarinda, East Kalimantan. To assess the general opinions and attitudes of 41 elementary school teachers regarding the incorporation of gendered visual images in textbooks, the study was initiated with the administration of a survey. The survey was intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the teachers' perspectives on the matter and quantify their responses.

Twelve teachers were selected to partake in in-depth interviews to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their perspectives and a more nuanced understanding of their perspectives. The researchers were able to further explore the teachers' thoughts and

experiences by conducting these interviews, which examined their motivations for either modifying or eschewing the use of gendered visual images in their teaching methodologies. The researchers were able to gather a wealth of detailed and copious data that could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the teachers' perspectives on the topic by conducting the interviews using semi-structured questions.

There were 12 teachers (six males and six females) from seven elementary schools in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, Indonesia, who asked to participate in this study. During the group discussion, six teachers were withdrawn due to self-consent availability. Accordingly, the subjects in this study consisted of six teachers (three male and three female teachers). The average number of teaching experience years was 6,8 years. Two teachers (female) reported that they are still doing their undergraduate education, whereas others (three males and one female) have completed their undergraduate education. These teachers were recruited using a consent form filled in and returned to the researchers.

The discussion conducted in this study was elaborated into four sections: 1. Background information consisted of 4 items requesting personal details from each teacher: date of birth, educational background, years of teaching experience, and primary teaching grade. 2. The topics addressed in the group discussion were adapted from (Christensen and Massey, 1990). The original version of Christensen and Massey's consists of 31 question items. There were only 13 items taken consisting of teachers' perceptions toward the students' gender roles in an educational context, whereas items concerning gender roles in a social context were not used. The researchers added 7 (seven) items concerning teachers' perception toward gender issues that were not incorporated in Christensen and Massey's (1990) for example, teachers' responses toward gendered visual images in the textbooks and cultural stereotypes of males and females in the Indonesia context. The 20 items in the present study were divided into two possible factors: elaboration of job division, hobbies, and daily activities provided in the textbooks (e.g., who is familiar to do it) and teachers' awareness of gender bias issues reflected in the images in the textbook (Christensen and Massey, 1990).

The person-to-person interview explored unsaid information during discussions to add focus group discussion data. The interview covered one's cultural values related to gender, the teachers' awareness of gender issues reflected in the textbooks, and the teaching instruction of transferring the pedagogical values of the visual images to students. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for analysis.

4. FINDINGS

The findings are derived from two types of instruments: questionnaire and interview. The survey results of 41 elementary school teachers in Samarinda, Indonesia, who teach English as a foreign language (EFL) indicate that many teachers are aware of the potential impact of gendered visual images in prescribed EFL textbooks on students' gender roles and perceptions.

From chart 1, 80% of elementary teachers perceived that gendered visual imagery in textbooks was not impartial and could influence students' gender roles. Gender roles, specifically in the textbook, have allowed students to acknowledge and manage their identities. These concepts are so compelling that the images of each sex can help students identify their own individual characteristics, behaviours, and favoured items. It can be interpreted as a form

Chart 1 Elementary teachers' response of gender images in the prescribed EFL textbook
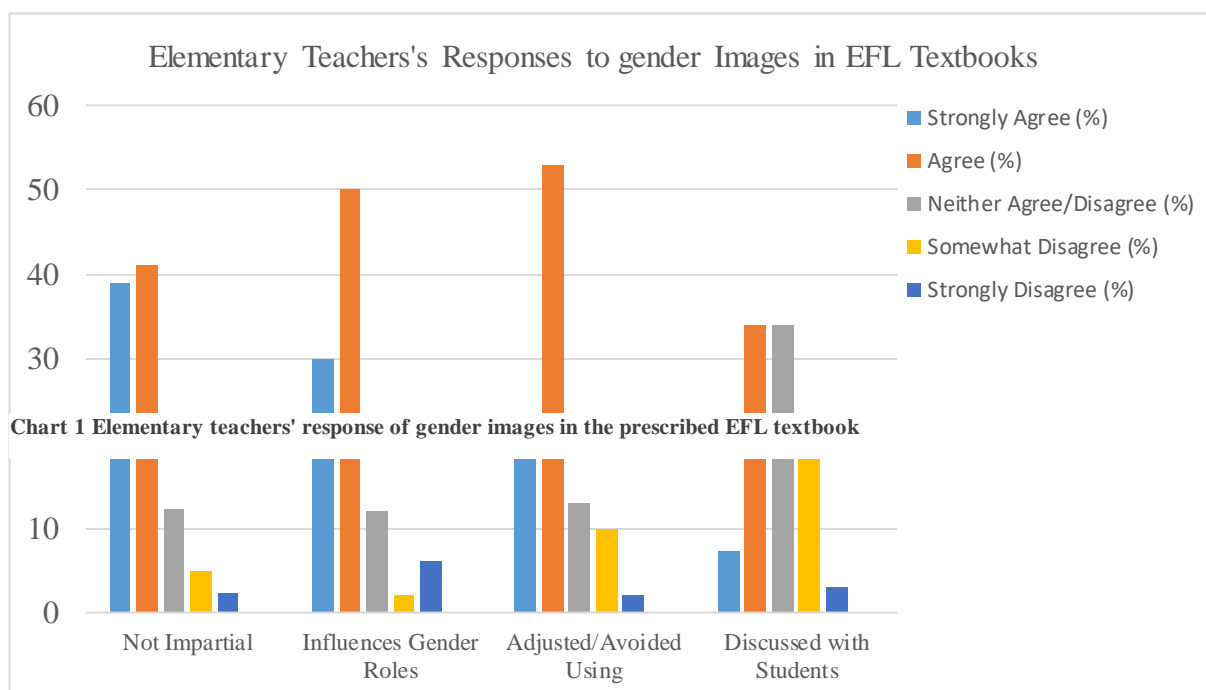
of self-management that allows individuals to understand their own selves and the individuals around them. This evolution has resulted in the ideology that gender is a significant factor in cultural change, as it influences the daily lives, families, workplaces, and broader society of each individuals (Dasrul, et.al., 2022). Liannita et. al. (2023) explored that gender has been the governing factor in the discrepancy between societal norms and perceptions regarding the biological distinctions between the sexes. It is a form of control in which students were expected to possess an interest or occupation consistent with their assigned sexes (e.g., male students were always depicted as policemen, whereas female students were assigned to be teachers).

It is also revealed that elementary teachers often avoid or adjust to conflict from gendered visual images (75%). They prefer to elaborate on vocabulary or grammar. The interview with some teachers who voluntarily joined the group discussion explores this. There are some themes emerged as follows:

a. *Textbook material distribution is more important than gender bias issues.*

In the used textbook, the visualisation shows children's daily activities. It was shown by images representing daily routines carried out by male and female children. Some routine activities shown through the visual images are getting up, taking a bath, studying, having breakfast, going to school, going to bed, taking a nap, and watching television. Most of the pictures provided in the textbook visually illustrate a male child. Despite the visual portrayal of two girls compared to a boy on the chapter cover, the dominant pictures in the whole chapter are represented by male images. The dominant representation of male images shows that gender stereotypes commonly occur in EFL textbooks (Hameed, 2012; Mahmood &Kausar, 2018; Mirza, 2004).

This exciting finding raised curiosity among the participants of FGD toward the gendered images they saw in the textbook. They agreed that most of the textbooks' images favour male gender. This was shown in their discussion and interview results. All-female participants believe that gender-biased images can indirectly affect students, particularly females. However, they are also convinced that it is difficult for teachers and students to identify stereotypical images. Most teachers sometimes ignore the gender phenomenon as their focus is usually on the language and activities in the textbook. It can be seen from their interview excerpts:

> *From this chapter, I found that most boys are used as images. Yeah, I think because boys are appropriate to be used in the pictures there, maybe; nevertheless, I do not focus on that when teaching, because I don't want my students, especially the females, to think about those differences. I'll let them learn the language, instead. No surprising images I found. There's nothing awkward or strange at all about the images (FT1).*

Another female participant strongly believed that the dominance of male images in this chapter could not be considered gender bias as males and females had an opportunity to do the same daily activities. Consequently, her teaching in the classroom focused on language. It can be seen as follows:

> *Yeah, I know that males dominate most of the images from this chapter. However, the girls are also in the textbook, so I don't think it's a problem.*

I just think if the pictures represent are boys, it doesn't mean the girls cannot do the activities, right? So, I just taught my students the daily English activities without being concerned about the images. For example, I taught them some verbs used in daily activities. All-female and male students could use the same verbs (FT2).

These teachers argued that completing the material is very important because they have limited time to teach issues other than English skills material.

b. *Let the students discuss the gender bias issue in their context!*

Unlike the other participants, this gender phenomenon brought curiosity to one of the female participants. She declared that gender inequality issues might be interesting to discuss in the classroom. She asserted:

I am not sure whether it will influence my students' views about gender. Males will be superior, while females will be inferior, I plan to give my class more discussion about gender; it is also for my students, especially the girls, to be motivated that girls can do more than boys. (FT3).

Interestingly, one male participant knew the boys were always portrayed as doing outdoor activities in the textbook. However, he argues that it has become one of his classroom discussion topics. He clarified:

Images in the textbooks do make the book enjoyable. When I saw a boy doing outdoor things, I would address questions in my classroom..Can girls do the activities? I want my students to have an open-minded opinion..and it works...it made my students active share their opinion (MT1)

Nevertheless, this assumption was aligned with Gebregeorgis (2016), who proposes that bringing gender inequality into the classroom is a recommended way of introducing and promoting gender awareness amongst teachers and students.

5. DISCUSSION

This study utilizes theoretical frameworks related to critical discourse analysis, education, and gender studies to support the claims based on the data better and more effectively. Lazar's Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a theoretical framework that emphasises the significance of language and images in sustaining gender disparities. Lazar's Feminist CDA offers insight into how gender is constructed and reinforced in discourse, particularly in education settings. This viewpoint asserts that the language and imagery in textbooks are not impartial; instead, they mirror and perpetuate society's power dynamics, including gender hierarchies. This paradigm aligns with the finding that a significant

proportion of teachers (80%) recognized the gender bias in textbook visuals, noting its potential influence on students' ideas of gender roles. Nonetheless, teachers emphasized information delivery rather than critically examining or contesting the gendered messages embedded in the materials while recognizing this issue.

Despite their image as a remarkable group, teachers are subject to the same biases as everyone else. Despite the emergence of the idea that teachers, as part of school environments, must support gender equity, they are forced to focus on teaching completeness. According to Law No. 14 of 2005, teachers' teaching duties include but are not limited to analysing and assessing the learning process and results. These obligations will result in what is more often referred to as a workload. Teachers in this study were aware of gender issues. However, they had difficulty discussing the case with their students. As teachers, sometimes they noticed that 'he' was frequently used as a generic pronoun in the textbook they used. The boys play leading roles and are depicted as initiative people in a dialogue. This is also found in (Sunderland, 1997).

The geographical context of this study is crucial for comprehending the results since Indonesia's extensive cultural, religious, and social variety profoundly affects the perception and representation of gender in educational materials. In areas characterised by conservative or traditional gender norms, such as some portions of Aceh or West Java (Cameron, 2023), textbooks may embody these ideas, perpetuating conventional roles for men and women. In contrast, more progressive areas such as Jakarta or Bali, where gender equality campaigns and reforms are more common (Wardhani & Natalis, 2024), may include instructional materials that aim for more equitable gender depictions. This geographical diversity significantly influences the results, notably the discovery that a substantial proportion of teachers (80%) acknowledged gender prejudice in textbooks but prioritized material delivery above critically confronting these biases. This may indicate that regional perspectives on gender and the function of education in confronting stereotypes vary, affecting teachers' methodologies in delivering the content.

The present study revealed that students use gender bias materials in the textbooks (Sahayu et. al., 2023). Teachers were aware but did not think it would harm the students. However, it is necessary to note that a textbook is a socialising tool for students to learn universal and communal norms. A textbook teaches the intended and legitimised fundamental socioeconomic values of the societies to which students belong. 'Through the representations they provide, textbooks are (more or less purposely and purposefully) a vehicle for norms, values, and patterns of social behaviour in their interpretation and presentation of knowledge.' (Brugeilles & Cromer, 2009).

Furthermore, Gender Role Theory, particularly Eagly's Social Role Theory (2012), supports the concerns that teachers must modify or avoid using gendered imagery in their classroom practices, fearing that such images might adversely affect students' self-esteem and

social relationships. This notion asserts that students develop gender roles from their surroundings, including educational resources, which, if not scrutinised, may perpetuate conventional gender norms. Teachers' understanding of the possible ramifications of these pictures indicates their awareness of the socialization process; nevertheless, they lack the skills or expertise to address these biases in their teaching methods effectively.

Focusing on how textbooks play the role of norm messengers in society, teachers can decide whether students should discuss gender-biased texts. This is partly because each student is an individual who will interpret the text differently depending on a variety of background characteristics. Consequently, there is no evidence that stereotypical texts turn girls into passive members. Indeed, there is a possibility, but it is also possible that they will distrust their reading and grow more dubious of literature in the future (Sunderland, 2000).

In this study, there is an effort for teachers to lead the classroom discussion of gender bias. The teachers are expected to encourage students' critical thinking by posing a thought-provoking question and discussing gender bias reflected in the texts (Brodin, 2017). To this point, teachers must ensure that activities need active involvement for all students to feel included (Norton & Pavlenko, 2004). In addition, various specific strategies and activities may be applied in the classroom. When students read in pairs, boys often read what male characters say, and girls typically read what female characters say. If one gender speaks more than the other, one student will have less time to speak, which is problematic. A straightforward solution to this issue is to have the students reread the passage while exchanging roles (Sunderland, 2000).

Furthermore, teachers can also stimulate conversations in which one gender speaks more often than the other may be the subject of a discussion in and of itself, with students analysing what this may say about their relationship (Sunderland, 2000). Themes and concerns may also serve as debate starters. Teachers may inquire, for instance, how the plot might change if the protagonist's gender were altered (Jett-Simpson & Masland, 1993). Another excellent strategy for teaching students to recognize gender prejudice is to have them compile lists of literary stereotypes (Jett-Simpson & Masland, 1993). When students have grasped the content, teachers may push them to revise their tales so that they are less prejudiced towards any gender.

6. CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates a discrepancy between teachers' awareness of gender bias and their capacity or inclination to engage with it critically. This discrepancy emphasizes the necessity of professional development programs that provide teachers with strategies for incorporating gender-sensitive analysis into their instruction rather than solely emphasizing the content of textbook materials. Educational practices must expand to encompass not only an awareness of gender bias but also the challenge and dismantling of the biases that influence students' comprehension of gender when viewed through a feminist CDA lens.

Despite more portrayals of female images, gender bias still exists. Females are strongly associated with gendered activities such as managing households, cooking, washing, caring for family, etc. Teachers in this study were aware of gender bias reflected in the textbook used by the students. They did not think this negligence would lead to gender shaping and marking among their students. They paid attention to how to complete the materials but not to bring a particular case, gender bias, to be noted by their students. They admitted that they treated the value of gender bias as a tradition they must receive without asking for explanations and analysis. Therefore, they acknowledged that they had no idea how to teach their students the value of gender bias. Through the discussion in this study, they become aware that this issue is part of their responsibility to transfer gender equality understanding to what has been described as gender empowerment.

The teachers believe gender bias in the textbook is essential, apart from teaching language in the classrooms. Their traditional views on gender representation are influenced by their surrounding societies, which affect their attitudes and beliefs toward gender issues shown in the textbook. Also, their perceptions towards the importance of learning and discussing gender issues identified from the book demonstrate their open-minded attitude as language teachers who used to ignore these issues before they were involved in this study.

However, significant limitations exist in generalizing these findings to a national level. Indonesia's educational system is decentralized (Bjork, 2003), giving regional authorities considerable autonomy in curriculum formulation and textbook selection, leading to significant disparities in materials and teaching methodologies among provinces. The present study offers valuable insights into teachers' views and management of gender bias in a specific region of Indonesia. However, it may not fully encapsulate the varied experiences throughout the country. Furthermore, teachers' training and understanding of gender issues may vary based on the resources and support available in each region. By analyzing these regional discrepancies, researchers may better understand gender biases in educational materials as a national issue and provide more tailored recommendations for promoting gender-equitable educational environments throughout Indonesia.

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