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UNVEILING GENDER PORTRAYALS IN INDONESIAN EFL TEXTBOOKS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: This study aims to describe the representation of genders in five Indonesian EFL textbooks published by Erlangga Publishing and unveil the ideology and attitudes behind the image of genders. The methods of critical discourse analysis (CDA) proposed by Van Dijk, which comprise discourse, social cognition, and discourse and society, are used to unveil the patterns of gender portrayal and the attitudes behind it. Data for this study are the human images in five Indonesian EFL textbooks published by Erlangga Publishing. This study reveals that in terms of frequency, women are more dominant than men; women's images appear more frequently than men's. In dealing with other aspects under study, men and women are depicted symmetrically. The symmetrical representation between

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men and women suggests the attitude and ideology of gender equality the authors uphold.

Keywords: CDA, EFL textbooks, gender, gender (in)equality, images

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian government has constantly tried to realize gender equality, which is the balanced treatment of men and women. The strategy to attain it is implementing gender equality mainstreaming or *Pengarusutamaan Gender (PUG)* in all ministries. This policy is stated in Law No. 17/2007 concerning the National Long Term Development Plan or *Rencana Pembangunan Nasional Jangka Panjang (RPJPN)* 2005 – 2025.

Since the national-level medium-term development or *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah II (RPJM II)* 2010-2014, the problem formulation, direction, strategy, and policy objectives for gender equality were mentioned—equality and Empowerment of Women. Moreover, in the 2015-2019 *RPJMN III*, the gender perspective at all levels was emphasized. The targets were the improvement of the quality of women, the increase of the role of women in various fields of life, the integration of gender perspectives in all stages of development, and the strengthening of gender mainstreaming institutions both at the central and regional levels (Siscawati et al., 2020).

Despite the systemic and constant efforts to realize gender equality, some research findings revealed that gender inequality and woman stereotyping are still present in Indonesian society. A study by (Khaulasari & Suhaeri, 2024) Confirmed that gender inequality in Indonesia has improved from 2021 to 2022. The disparity in each province in Indonesia has decreased by 2.65% from 0.392 in 2021 to 0.382 in 2022. However, in general, the study confirmed that gender inequality in Indonesia still needs attention because almost 50% of the total number of provinces is still above average in gender inequality. In addition, there is still a gender gap in educational achievement,

particularly outside of the Java Bali region (Karimah & Susanti, 2022). Likewise, at the global level, Indonesia is now ranked 149th out of 190 countries with a total score of 64.4 because of which Indonesia is below the worldwide average and lower than several Southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Singapore (World Bank, 2021).

The portrayal of gender inequality is not only in research data presented in the earlier paragraph but also in EFL textbooks. Using content or document analysis research design, scholars across the globe research EFL textbooks from various perspectives. Studies in Pakistan (Ahmad & Shah, 2019), in China (Rong et al., 2021), and in Mexico (Aguilar, 2021) are three cases in point. Their research results in almost consistent findings: stereotyping occurs in almost all books under study, men are depicted as more potent and active than women, and women are more passive than men and fragile creatures.

Likewise, Indonesian EFL textbooks that have been researched revealed similar findings. The survey by Agni confirmed that in all indicators – textual and visual representation, variety of activity, role, occupation, order of mention, and adjectival portrayal – the female is underrepresented, hidden, and framed within traditional gender stereotyping (Agni et al., 2020). Likewise, another study revealed that men are much more dominant than women in all aspects being studied: first name, family relationship, other relationships, occupational status, and other status and men's dominance over women (Emilia et al., 2017; Santosa, 2020; Wijayanti et al., 2022; Wina Yulistiana et al., 2022)

Three notes are relevant to those findings. *First*, they confirm that inequality and men's dominance over women are present. One conclusion relevant to draw from this is that EFL textbooks subtly perpetuate inequality. This is not good news for gender equality due to textbooks' central role in education.

Textbooks play a vital role in education. As the primary source of learning, textbooks might serve as the medium to spread knowledge and values. Finally, coursebooks can serve both as a syllabus and a framework of classroom progress, a measure external stakeholders can evaluate teaching. Cunningsworth mentions that coursebooks have

several roles in ELT: a resource for teaching materials, a source of activities for learners, a reference, a syllabus or curriculum, a resource for self-access work, and support for less experienced teachers.

Second, most studies on gender (in)equality focus on linguistic and textual languages, such as firstness, order of mention, and pronoun use. Visual language has been researched, but only in a minimal portion. Images in textbooks are essential. They explain written words' meaning and provide artistic leisure and enjoyment (Foutsitzi, 2022). In line with this, Richard said that books with a high standard usually appeal to teachers and students. The representation function means that the image functions to clarify ideas. The meaning of a text will be easier to understand if images accompany it (Richard, n.d.).

Third, most research on gender in EFL textbooks uses content or document analysis. Only a few use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which facilitates unveiling the hidden message behind seemingly neutral texts. Through CDA, prejudice of bias and stereotyping behind images in EFL textbooks can be unclosed.

Given the widespread gender inequality and the vital roles of textbooks in education, the critical function of images for textbooks, and the minimum research on textbooks using CDA, research on textbooks focusing on the visual representation of gender using CDA is called for. This research aims to unveil the gender representation of visual images in five books published by Erlangga Publishing.

METHOD

Research Design

The research design involves a qualitative approach using content or document analysis because it focuses on textbooks, particularly images in selected textbooks. In addition, it involves a critical discourse analysis because it aims to investigate the ideology behind the visual representation of gender in the books under study.

Data Sources

The data for this study are images representing gender in all chapters in the books under the study: a book series for senior high

schools consisting of five books published by Erlangga Publishing (Sudarwati & Grace, 2017c, 2017a, 2017b, 2018, 2022). The publisher's books are widely used, so they were selected as the focus of this research. Table 1 presents a detailed description of the books.

Table 1.

Books under study

| Book | Title | Authors | Editors | Year | City | Publisher |
|------|---|----------------------------------|---|------|---------|-------------------|
| 1 | Pathway to English (Buku Siswa) Untuk SMA/MA Kelas XI | Theresia Sudarwati & Eudia Grace | E Tiyas Utami & Dwi Wahyu Priyanto | 2017 | Jakarta | Penerbit Erlangga |
| 2 | Pathway to English (Buku Siswa) Untuk SMA/MA Kelas X Phase E | Theresia Sudarwati & Eudia Grace | L Intan Albaluni & Dwi Wahyu Priyanto | 2022 | Jakarta | Penerbit Erlangga |
| 3 | Pathway to English (Buku Siswa Edisi Revisi) Untuk SMA/MA Kelas XII | Theresia Sudarwati & Eudia Grace | E. Tyas Utami, Yuniar Widiastuti & Dwi Wahyu Priyanto | 2017 | Jakarta | Penerbit Erlangga |
| 4 | Pathway to English Untuk SMA/MA Kelas XI | Th. M. Sudarwati/Eudia Grace | Yuniar Widiastuti & Dwi Wahyu Priyanto | 2017 | Jakarta | Penerbit Erlangga |
| 5 | Pathway to English Untuk SMA/MA Kelas XII (Kurikulum 2013 revisi) | Th. M. Sudarwati/Eudia Grace | Risanti Al Baluni & Dwi Wahyu Priyanto | 2018 | Jakarta | Penerbit Erlangga |

Data Collection and Data Management

Data collection and data management were simultaneously done. The data were collected through reading, coding, and classifying, each detailed in the following. Reading is the process in which researchers read the books thoroughly. The books were read individually, and as human images appeared, the reading stopped because the researchers coded and classified the images. The images were classified into three groups: male/males in a single picture, female/females in a single picture, and male/male and female/females in a single picture.

Coding and classifying are the phases in which the researchers code and classify the found images according to the number of people in the images – it can be female or male in a single picture, or male and female in a single picture – their clothes, and their roles.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis with some modification was applied to analyze the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the coding phase, the images which have been classified in three frames were coded according to the four aspects of images by (Giaschi, 2000): activities and occupations, activeness and passiveness, and body language. The codes from this phase were intended to search for commonalities that could lead to the themes. The images of footballers, boxers, and runners were coded as athletes. The images of women wearing formal dress were coded as career women or executives. The images of people cooking, sweeping the floor, and washing were coded as doing household activities. Themes were given to images having similar characteristics. The theme is the 'abstract' classification based on the codes. Themes are drawn from the 'keywords' appearing in the images. The images of women and men helping each other are considered into the images radiating equality. The image of men standing up in front of a woman and looking down at her is considered an image conveying inequality. The themes were qualitatively interpreted to determine the knowledge, attitudes, and ideology behind the pattern of visual representation.

FINDINGS

As stated earlier, this study is a critical discourse analysis (CDA) using the methods proposed by Van Dijk (2001 & 2017), which encompass Discourse, Social Cognition, and Discourse and Society. Each of these methods is presented in this subheading.

Discourse

The findings displayed in this subheading are the frequency of images, occupations and activities, activeness and passiveness, and body language.

The Frequency of Occurrence of Gender Images

This study reveals that female images appear more frequently in all books under study than male images. None of the books under study feature more male images than female images. Data in Table 1 shows that female images dominate all books: the occurrence ranges between 39% to 55%. In total, 251 human images appear in the books under study. Out of the number, 117 female images were in a single frame, 79 male images in a single frame, and 55 were male and female. The detailed number of images of each book is presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
The frequency of appearance of female and male images

| No. | Books | The Frequency of Occurrence | | | Total |
|-----|--------|-----------------------------|------|-----------------|-------|
| | | Female | Male | Female and Male | |
| 1 | Book 1 | 33 | 21 | 20 | 74 |
| 2 | Book 2 | 12 | 6 | 4 | 22 |
| 3 | Book 3 | 27 | 16 | 1 | 61 |
| 4 | Book 4 | 20 | 18 | 13 | 51 |
| 5 | Book 5 | 25 | 18 | 17 | 60 |
| | Total | 117 | 79 | 55 | 251 |

Occupations and Activities by Females and Males

This study reveals that females and males are constructed similarly because they are actively involved in public occupations. *Teacher, student, career woman, and artist* are the occupations and

activities commonly used for representing females in a single frame. Occupations other than those mentioned appear in minimal frequency.

In all books under study, *student* is an occupation frequently used to represent women. The properties they hold, their uniforms, and their clothes are markers of the students, as seen in Picture 1.

Executive or career women are frequently used to represent females visually. Women wearing formal dress—skirts or trousers combined with formal coats—represent successful career women, as seen in Picture 2.

Being an artist is another occupation frequently used to represent females. It was revealed that images of female artists are used more than ten times. The photo of a famous artist, Julia Robert, as seen in Picture 3 is an example. Besides, the female is also represented as a glassmaker, as seen in Picture 4. In addition, women are sometimes visually represented as having low-status professions, such as beggars and tea-leaf pickers, as seen in Pictures 5 and 6.



Picture 1 (Book 3, page 59).



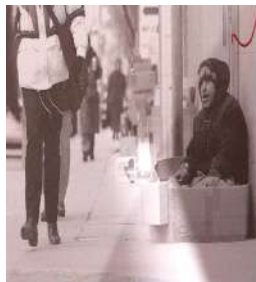
Picture 2 (book 1, page 29)



Picture 3 (Book 3, page 59)



Picture 4 (Book 4, p 86



Picture 5 (book 1, page 172



Picture 6 (Book 4, page 80)

Likewise, stereotyped roles and stereotyped activities such as housewife and doing household activities appear in minimal

frequency. In addition to social roles, females in single photos represent unhealthy women or women suffering from something.

Turning to the images of males, this study reveals that males are depicted as individuals having various occupations. The five most frequently appearing occupations are *executive*, *athlete*, *officer*, *student*, and *news anchor*. Occupations other than those mentioned appear in very minimal frequency.

Executive is the occupation frequently used to represent males. Nine images portray males as executives. Picture 7 is an example. The indication of being an executive is their clothes, namely formal coats. Other occupations frequently appearing in the data are *athlete*, *officer*, *mechanics*, and *student*, as seen in pictures 8, 9, 10, and 11. Those occupations are traceable from the clothes they are wearing and the properties they are holding. In addition, males were represented as chefs (Picture 12), and politicians (Picture 13).



Picture 7 (Book 5, page 69).



Picture 8 (Book 3, page 70).



Picture 9 (Book 1, page 156



Picture 10



Students Picture 11 (book 1,



Picture 12 (Book 1, page 144)



Picture 13 page 187)

Activeness and Passiveness by Females and Males

Dialogues and gestures, such as eye direction between males and females, determine the activeness and passiveness. This study

reveals that the images representing men as the doers are more dominant than the ones representing women as the active. In addition, some images suggest that both men and women are in a neutral state.

Picture 14 shows that the male person is actively explaining something to the female one. It means that the male is active (the doer), and the woman is passive (the recipient). In some pictures, however, women are represented as active characters even though this occurs less frequently than in men's pictures. Picture 15 is an example.

Another active woman can be seen in Picture 16 in which a female teacher explains something to her students.

This study revealed that when women and men are in single frames, sometimes they are in a neutral position, in the sense that neither women nor men are active, as seen in Picture 17. Picture 17 shows that neither the men nor the women are active. They all are passive; none of them did and received something. Another image indicating neutrality is Picture 18, in which men and women are busy with their work. Each person in this picture is doing their work.



Picture 14 (Book 1, page 8)



Picture 15 (Book 1, page 97)



Picture 16 (Book 3, page 120)



Picture 17 (Book 5, page 59)



Picture 18 (Book 5, page 108)

Body Language

This study reveals that males and females share similar body language. Images of females and males suggest they are cheerful,

passionate about working, close with technology, optimistic, confident, and eager to learn.

Cheerfulness is the expression frequently radiated in the females' body language. Picture 19 presents a lady riding a motorbike with a smile, indicating inner happiness. Her smile suggests cheerfulness. It seems that the world around her is so bright that they are happy. Likewise, being passionate about working is another depiction of females in single frames.

Picture 20 is a receptionist whose one of the duties is answering phones. In the picture, she is answering a call. Her smile suggests that she is doing the work passionately. Eagerness to read and learn is another body language frequently appearing in female images. Picture 21 presents a young lady who is seriously reading a book. Picture 22 conveys a similar message: A young lady holding an open book in a library.

Female characteristics frequently appear in the books under study, including optimism, smarts, and self-confidence. Picture 23 shows a young lady presenting in front of an audience. Her smile and her eye direction suggest that she is confident.

Some images in the books under study radiate intimacy between a mom and her kids. Picture 24 presents a mother and her daughter. Their physical closeness indicates that they are very close and intimate. Picture 25 shows a mother holding the hands of her kids. Holding hands suggest that the mom protects and loves the kids.

On the other hand, pain, soreness, poverty, and hopelessness are other representations of women in the books under study. Picture 26 shows a woman with a toothache. Her grinning face, her almost-meeting eyebrows, and the palm hand holding the cheek suggest that she is suffering from a toothache. The lady in Picture 27's body language suggests powerlessness. Looking at the flat tire, the lady feels powerless because she cannot fix it.

When males are in single photos, they are represented similarly to females. The body language of males represents fewer messages than females. The dominant messages conveyed through the males' body language are passionate for working, closeness with technology, and dependence and inconvenience.

Images in the books under study frequently represent men as passionate about working. Picture 28 is the image of a chef. The smile, the posture, and the way he holds the frying pan suggest that he is passionate about cooking. Likewise, Picture 29 shows a radio broadcaster. His smile and posture suggest that he is passionate about working. Closeness with technology is another body language appearing in the data. Pictures 30 and 31 display men using headsets and operating laptops. Headsets and laptops are two technology products, so the utilization of those devices suggests their closeness to technology. Picture 53 suggests that the man is familiar with technology. Laptop and headset are the technological properties operated by the man.



Picture 19 (Book 3, page 105)



Picture 20 (Book 5, page 11)



Picture 21 (Book 4, page 5)



Picture 22 (Book 4, page 52)



Picture 23 (Book 5, page 4)



Picture 24 (Book 4, page 121)



Picture 25 (Book 5, page 4)



Picture 26 (Book 1, page 7)



Picture 27 (Book 5, page 10)



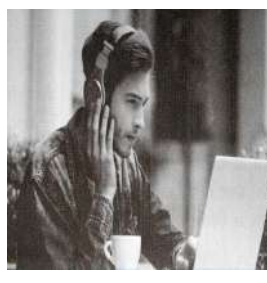
Picture 28 (Book 1, page 138)



Picture 29 (Book 3, page 124)



Picture 30



Picture 31 (Book 3, page 53 and 192)

Dependence and Inconvenience

It was found that despite the limited frequency, men are represented as individuals who are dependent on others. Picture 32 presents a young man reaching out to his friend's hand because he is asking for help. Other images suggest that men suffer from illness, as seen in Picture 33.



Picture 32 (Book 4, page 139)



Picture 33 (Book 4, page 9)

In sum, this study reveals that men and women are visually represented similarly in the books under study. In terms of roles and occupations, they are similar. Both genders, such as teachers, students, executives, athletes, and artists, tend to be actively involved in public works. Stereotyped professions, such as the army, mother, politician, and chef, appear with minimal frequency. In terms of activeness and passiveness, this study reveals that the proportion of the activeness and passiveness between males and females are equal. It means that neither of the genders is more dominant than the other. In some images, females are active, but in different photos, males are more active, and in other images, they are neutral. Likewise, dealing with the body

language, images under study suggest that men and women are equal. The images radiate mutual appreciation, cooperation, and mutual respect. The summary of the gender portrayal in the books under study is presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

The portrayal of gender in the books under study

| Images | Occupations and Activities | Activeness and Passiveness | Body Language |
|-------------------|---|---|---|
| Females | Teacher, student, career woman/executive, glassmaker, beggar, tea-leaf picker | | Cheerfulness, passion for working, eagerness to learn/read, intimacy between mom and kids, smartness, pain, soreness, and poverty, confidence, and optimism, hopelessness |
| Males | Executive, athlete, student, news anchor, chef, politician, mechanic | | Passion for working, closeness with technology, dependence, and soreness |
| Females and Males | | Females are active, Males are active, females and males are neutral | |

Social Cognition Behind the Patterns of Visual Representation Knowledge

Data analysis reveals that the patterns of gender representation radiate gender equality. From this, it can be stated that the books under study share group knowledge, namely the knowledge shared by a specific group of people: authors and publishers. As reviewed earlier,

group knowledge is sometimes biased and sometimes not considered knowledge by other groups.

Images in the books under study represent the belief of the Indonesian society in treating genders. Regarding roles, occupations, and activities, the books under study radiate equality. Males and females are actively involved in public works. Males in the books have various professions, such as teachers, students, politicians, news broadcasters, army, and others. Even men are represented as chefs several times, a profession that is stereotyped for women. Despite the various professions, males have weak sides as well. In some images, males are dependent and physically weak. Likewise, females also occupy several public works, such as teachers, athletes, artists, executives, secretaries, students, etc. The occurrence of females having low-level occupations – tea-leaf pickers and beggars – is minimal.

Regarding activeness and passiveness, this study shares the knowledge that images representing men as doers are more dominant than those representing women as active. In addition, some images suggest that both men and women are in a neutral state.

Dealing with body language, the shared knowledge is that males and females share similar body language: cheerfulness, passion for working, closeness with technology, optimism and confidence, eagerness to learn, and pain and soreness.

The gender equality radiated in the data is considered to be group knowledge because groups other than the authors and publishers of the books under study frequently share different messages. Previous studies cited earlier confirmed that gender inequality is still prevalent. The different representation of gender between the previous studies and the present study indicates that gender equality is not universally applicable.

Attitudes and Ideology

As reviewed earlier, attitude is socially shared opinions, sometimes with evaluative propositions. Data analysis reveals that the authors of the books under study believe that women and men are

equal and not superior to each other. The opinion, however, is not provided with evaluative propositions.

The books under study implicitly radiate attitudes about equality between males and females. Most images suggest that males and females have two opposite sides: strength and weakness. Males are depicted as solid creatures, and so are females. Their empowerment is traceable from their professions, social roles, activities, and gestures. Their being 'weak' is traceable from a limited number of images. In some cases, males are dependent (Pictures 32 and 33). Females, in some moments, are 'weak' and dependent (Pictures 5, 26, and 27). Concerning activeness and passiveness, the books under study suggest that both genders are equal; none is superior to the other. It can be concluded that the ideology of gender equality is the basis for the visual representation.

Discourse and Society

Social elements that can be caught up from the data are the actors or the doers of the communicative event and the social structure where the communicative event takes place. The book's authors are the actors or doers of the communicative event. As stated in the earlier part, the authors of the books under study are two female authors. Concerning the social structure, the books were written in a society where many parties support gender equality and when equal rights are granted to men and women.

DISCUSSION

In general, it can be stated that women and men are treated equally in the books under study. The characteristics of gender inequality proposed by Mansour (2022) are minimally manifest in the data. Woman marginalization and subordination, that is, the act of placing women in unimportant roles and positions, does not appear. Women are depicted as essential figures in almost all images. Women in the books under study are not viewed as less capable and less critical. There are no images describing women as subordinate to men.

Likewise, negative labeling for women, as stated by Mansour, is not evident in the books under study. The only negative depictions of women in the books under study are that of a woman frustrated by a flat tire (Picture 27) and a female tea-leave picker (Picture 6). These depictions are disparaging since they suggest that women are weak creatures and poorly educated.

Double burden is another issue of gender inequality (Mansour, 2022). Does it happen among female images in the book under study? Double burden is the condition in which a woman as a breadwinner and housekeeper simultaneously. None of the images in the books under study depict such double roles. All female images portray a single role: a female working in public or working in her home. The absence of female images having double roles does not guarantee that the double burden is not evident in real life. The absence of double-burden images might be due to technical reasons. Overall, using Mansour's parameter of gender inequality, it can be stated that in terms of frequency of occurrence, occupation and activities, activeness and passiveness, and body language, images in the books under study do not represent gender inequality.

The next question is, why are genders represented in that way? To Van Dijk, such a way of representing genders is due to cognition and social factors (van Dijk, 2017). Cognitively, the authors' representation of genders is due to their mental models of past and present experiences in relation to men's and women's relations. These experiences could include the values instilled by their seniors, the readings they read, their interaction with others, and many more. The experiences stored in their minds are recalled, reactivated, and processed, and they control the production of discourse (visual images). The representation of genders through the visual images features their attitudes and ideology.

Socially, men and women are depicted symmetrically because of the micro and macro contexts. On the micro level, the symmetrical depiction of the genders is due to the gender of the authors. The authors of the books under study are females. What can we say about this? Several studies prove that females and males use language

differently (Gu, 2013; Simon, 2021; Wahyuningsih, 2018). Some of the characteristics of the language used by females are (1) that females are better at listening and sharing emotions with others; (2) females tend to use exaggerated adjectives such as gorgeous, so sweet, unique, creepy, and dear ; (3) females use higher frequency of supportive words such as get well soon, don't worry, you will be fine/ok, and others; (4) females tend to use exaggerated pronouns such as dear and say.

Based on those findings, it can be concluded that women's communication styles connote positivity, such as softness, goodness, and harmony. The images of women working in public spheres like men do, such as glassmakers, and the pictures of men doing women's activities, such as cooking, symbolize harmony. The depiction of women and men as solid and weak creatures suggests another positivity, particularly balancing. The positivity radiated through images in the books under study is in line with the characteristics of women's styles in communication.

On the macro level, women in Indonesia are adequately treated politically. The political will of the Indonesian government to treat women correctly and with respect is to implement gender equality mainstreaming (*pengarusutamaan gender*) in all ministries as stated in Law No. 17/2007. The equal rights granted to men and women to pursue education are further evidence of social conditions that favor women.

In sum, gender inequality using the indicators of woman marginalization and subordination, negative labeling, and double burden is not evident in the books under study. Gender equality depicted in the books might result from the authors' underlying mental model and the social factors surrounding them.

CONCLUSION

In sum, regarding the frequency of occurrence, women appear more frequently than men. Men and women are depicted symmetrically when dealing with activities and occupations. Both genders are actively involved in public works. Stereotyped works

and activities remain present but in minimum frequency. Concerning social cognition, particularly the ideology and attitude of the authors, it can be underlined that gender equality is the ideology and attitude of the authors. The aspect of the authors is the aspect of discourse and society highlighted in this research. The genders are depicted in this way, which might be because of the women's styles in communication. Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that language and social conditions are interrelated, but their interconnection must be bridged with the human cognition. Otherwise, the connection between language and society is not clearly seen.

Given that experiences, including the texts we read, might control the production of language, textbook developers and education policymakers should avoid gender bias in developing textbooks. The absence of gender bias in their products might promote gender equality.

The data for this study are merely visual images. It did not include an interview as a data collection method. Future research could include an interview as a data collection method to make the analysis more comprehensive.

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