

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Textbooks are essential since they contain specific materials to support teaching and learning. As teachers' silent partners, they serve as instructional guide that aids students in reading texts with a strong emphasis on values to teach them how to think, act, consider, and exist in the world (Widodo, 2018). Furthermore, they are critical in instilling virtues that society considers essential, consciously or unconsciously, through a hidden curriculum (Lee, 2019). As instructional material, they also impart ideological, social, cultural, and even political assumptions and applications in addition to information and scientific knowledge (Kayed et al., 2020). In line with Alexopoulos et al. (2022), textbooks convey knowledge on academic subjects and ideological messages. Thus, textbooks play a significant role in infusing moral, cultural, and gender-related values.

As stated in UU number 20 of 2003, every citizen has the right to education, which means equal rights in education make gender equality an important matter. However, a lot still needs to be improved in the educational process, such as many textbooks still do not provide a model that supports gender equality. Hence, ELT textbooks may depict gender differences between males and females, either regarding or disregarding gender equality, such as Pakistani ELT textbooks for grades 9 and 10 of Balochistan, which presented gender bias in favor of men. Due to this imbalance, women were portrayed in a prejudiced, limited, and marginalized manner. This imbalance may lead to incorrect judgments of cultural and social realities (Mahmood et al., 2021). In this case, the representations of females teach learners that these are the only images of females that are acceptable in society (Mahmood et al., 2021).

Moreover, in the context of international ELT textbooks series, i.e., interchange 1A & 2B student's textbooks taught in Al-Balqa Applied University, females hold just as many high-status positions as males. It was

evident that there was a tendency to demonstrate some degrees of equality between males and females regarding pictorial representation, visibility, and some activities and roles, even though the data indicated that the two volumes (1A & 2B) were biased in favor of men in particular positions. Therefore, feminism and anti-feminism were absent in these textbooks (Kayed et al., 2020). With this in mind, investigating gender representation in ELT textbooks remains imperative. Further, raising the importance of gender equality and raising sensitivity to situate gender equality proportionally is demanded. In addition, it can be a pedagogical resource for teachers to develop self-awareness and build students' critical awareness of gender-related values (Widodo & Elyas, 2020).

The research regarding gender representation in textbook materials have been carried out by researchers. The first previous study was conducted by Ariyanto (2018). It examined how females and males were represented in an Indonesian ELT textbook published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. Moreover, it employed a critical micro-semiotic textual analysis. The results of the study indicated that the textbook's visual artifacts and verbal text presented gender bias. Furthermore, in a similar research, Ahmad & Shah (2019) employed Fairclough's three-dimensional model to evaluate how gender was portrayed in an English language textbook for children in grade 5 being taught in both public and private schools in Pakistan. It has been analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis. As a result, it was discovered that the textbook had a very biased gender representation, favoring males over females. In addition, 'Aini et al. (2021) investigated how different genders were portrayed in an Indonesian ELT textbook, specifically at the junior high school level. Fairclough's three-dimensional framework was applied in this study to analyze the data. The findings reported that gender inequality was promoted in the textbook, i.e., men were shown as being more prominent than women (' Aini, 2021).

Even though myriad studies have been performed to examine the representation of gender in various ELT textbooks across diverse educational

levels (e.g. Fithriani, 2022), little attention has been addressed to the scrutiny of Indonesian ELT textbooks (e.g. Ariyanto, 2018 & Pratama, 2019), notably viewed from social actors analytical perspective (van Leeuwen, 2008). Therefore, the present study is intended to fill the void.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

How is gender represented discursively in selected chapters of an Indonesian ELT textbook?

1.3 Operational Definitions

The researcher provides the terms of each keyword in this study as follows:

1.3.1 Gender Representation: The way of portraying gender (males and females). In other words, the representation of male and female characters in ELT textbooks.

1.3.2 Selected Chapters of an Indonesian ELT Textbook: Selected chapters of an Indonesian ELT textbook refer to chapters containing texts that represent gender in an Indonesian ELT textbook.

1.3.3 Social Actors: Social actors refer to people involved in a social practice. The representation of social actors in English discourse is grounded in CDA, namely social actors network by van Leeuwen (2008).

1.4 Aim of the Research

The objective of this study is to examine how gender is discursively portrayed in selected chapters of an Indonesian ELT textbook.

1.5 Significances of the Study

- 1.5.1 Theoretical Contribution:** This study contributes to existing theories proposed by van Leeuwen (2008) in examining gender representation in ELT textbooks, particularly in Indonesian context.
- 1.5.2 Practical Contribution:** The results of the study provide information for teachers, students, authors, policymakers, etc. regarding gender representation in an Indonesian ELT textbook as well as increase sensitivity and awareness of gender equality in education.
- 1.5.3 Empirical Contribution:** Empirically, this study adds insights to the existing research in Indonesian ELT textbook analysis, particularly related to gender representation.