

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the study background, research questions, purposes, significance, scope, conceptual framework, and previous research.

A. Background

Textbooks are essential in shaping student perception by presenting curated information, often influencing how students understand and interpret the world. It plays a role in providing interpretation for the students (Kurniawati, 2006). Teachers usually use textbooks as instructional tools to enhance and provide teaching and learning activities (Tarigan, 1986). A textbook is an essential component of the educational system's curriculum and a cornerstone of education that provides an effective language model and input to shaping students' knowledge and perceptions (Richards, 2001). However, choosing the most appropriate textbook is essential to maximize students' learning potential and perception. Harmer (2004) states that the most critical aspect of textbook use is for teachers to engage learners with the content they will be dealing with.

Textbooks have a profound impact on students' self-perception and their understanding of the world. In other words, it also depicts social and cultural values. Notably, for English language learners or EFL students, these social and cultural values and ideals may impact students' perceptions (Cunningsworth, 1995). The representation of gender is one of the social values that should be presented in balance (Patty, 2023). The representation of gender influences student's perceptions and plays a significant role in shaping their beliefs, thoughts, and socialization. So, when a female or male performs the female gender, he/she is defined as feminine, and the same as a female or male performs the male gender, he/she is defined as masculine.

The discussion of female and male as gender representation in the educational domain has been an issue for years that brings into gender stereotypes and biases, which can manifest in various forms, including textbooks. For example, men are frequently depicted as active, assertive, and in leadership roles, while women are often portrayed as passive, nurturing, and subordinate. These stereotypes can perpetuate traditional gender roles, hindering progress toward gender equality (Dasgupta, 2011). As Smith and Wilhelm (2002) emphasize, these biases and stereotypes can have long-lasting effects on students' identities and life choices.

Furthermore, it is clear that how gender is described in the textbook is primarily shaped by the author's perspective on gender (Muzakka, 2021; Setyaningsih & Rahardi, 2018). Because numerous publishing companies publish English textbooks, it is possible to ensure that the authors of these textbooks are from various regions and have a variety of educational backgrounds, so the understanding of gender depends on the culture of each author (Ali, 2018). Consequently, the authors' decisions extensively influence the language used and the topics covered in English textbooks. How authors and publishers view gender significantly impacts the textbook's content. Moreover, it is crucial that authors of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks understand gender issues, support gender equality, and prevent gender stereotyping (Ali, 2018). Students' perspectives of a specific gender may change if there is an imbalance in the gender representation in English textbooks. When a textbook like this is used in the educational process, it must immediately be modified to remove gender bias.

However, it has been found that many teachers focus solely on evaluating the appropriateness and difficulty level of the material without considering other important aspects of the English textbook, such as the vocabulary used, the types of illustrations and images included, and the sociocultural content like gender concepts (Mihir, 2021). Believing that it is essential to study gender representation in textbooks, as this knowledge can empower educators

to make positive changes. Understanding and addressing gender bias in textbooks can help teachers avoid potential social issues. In several contexts, gender is not represented equally in school textbooks. Many researchers have conducted this issue. Hadianto S (2022), in his research, found out gender is not represented equally in 'Bright: an English 2 and Grow with English 5'. Salamah (2014) carried out "Gender Representation in The English Textbook (A Content Analysis of Bright for Seventh Grade Students Published by Erlangga)" and found that gender is not represented equally in this textbook.

To investigate how gender representation is present in textbooks, the researcher will analyze "Bright" for Second Grade Students of Junior High School, published by Erlangga. The researcher chose this book because it is a recent Merdeka Curriculum book used by most middle schools in Indonesia. The researcher would like to analyze whether the content presented in the textbook represents a fair message.

B. Research Questions

The researcher was concerned with analyzing gender representation in a current curriculum textbook and focused on analyzing gender representation in English textbooks. Dealing with the background of the problem, the researcher recognized the problems as follows:

1. How are female and male as gender representations presented in "Bright"?
2. Does the female and male as gender representation presented equally in "Bright"?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the research question mentioned previously, the following research purposes need to be defined in this study:

1. To find out how female and male gender representation are presented in "Bright"
2. To find out whether or not female and male gender representation are presented equally in "Bright."

D. Research Significant

The results of the study are expected to have several significances as follows:

1. Theoretical Significances

The results of this study are expected to be a resource and to provide more knowledge about how gender is represented in textbooks, enabling teachers to choose the appropriate textbook as a guide for teaching, especially in teaching English.

2. Practical Significances

a. For Students

This research can support students' perception of gender issues, especially in English textbooks.

b. For Teacher

This research hopes to be a reference for teachers, especially English teachers, to choose the appropriate English textbook.

c. For Other Researchers

Hopefully, This research can advance knowledge, methods, and innovation about gender representation in textbooks.

E. Conceptual Framework

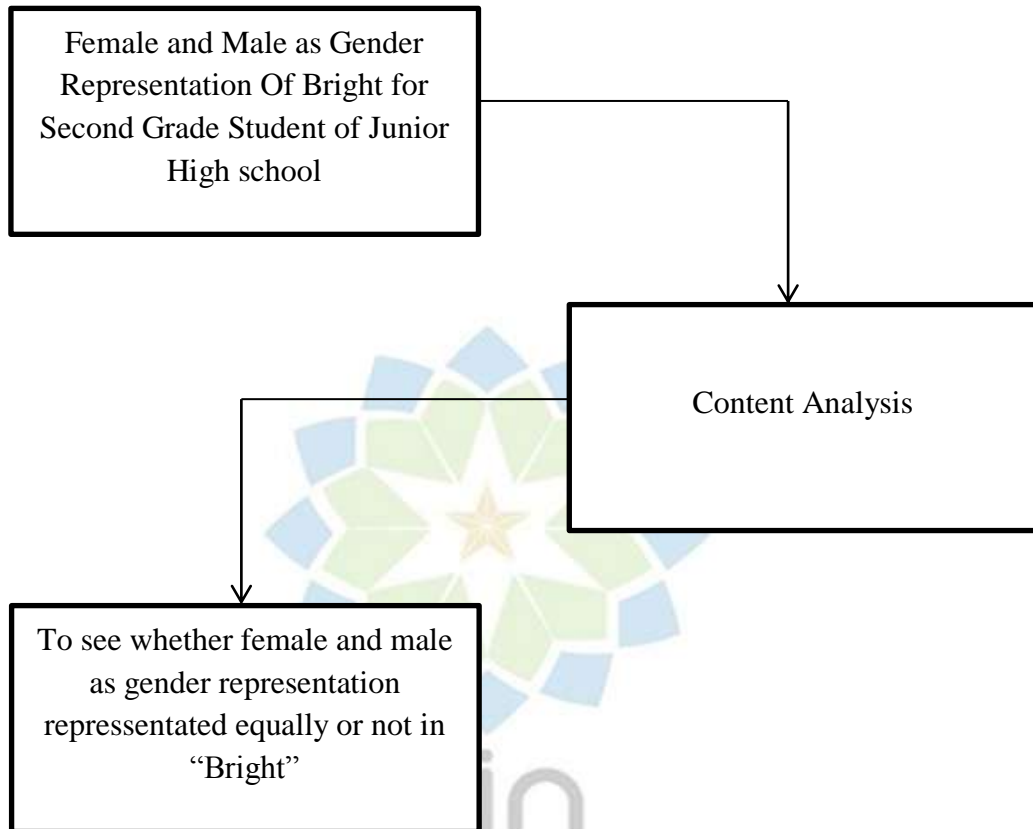
A textbook is an essential component of any English language teaching program as it is a printed form of instructional materials (Shafiee, 2012). Textbooks are a crucial source of instructional resources for both teachers and students. According to Tomlinson (2012), a Textbook should be informative to the students about the target language, guide the students in the practice of the language that they learned, give the students experience in using the language that they learned, push the students to use the language, help the students to find the principle of language.

As Patty (2023) mentioned, the culture and social phenomenon depicted in the book may enhance students' insights about world culture and unconsciously affect their concepts (Patty, 2023). Gender representation in textbooks has been discussed by many researchers who investigated how the textbooks positioned gender. Gender refers to the societal categories of men and female (Helgeson, 2015). It is how society deals with human bodies and the many consequences of that "dealing" in their personal lives and collective fate (Barton & Sakwa, 2012). Gender is a differentiating characteristic that determines how women and men should think, act, and feel.

Females and males are believed to differ in terms of achievement-oriented traits as well as social—and service-oriented traits (Bakan, 1996). The descriptions of females and males can describe their beliefs and attitudes. Males are generally perceived to be in higher positions than women. Male activities are considered more precious than female activities, even though the activities are similar (Judith, 2007). Such beliefs about women and men bring stereotyped beliefs.

Many scholars studying gender and education have focused on representation and how it has been investigated in visual arts, print and non-print media, particularly in textbooks (learning materials). Mustapha and Samuel (2012) mentioned that gender representation, which is prevalent in

visual media, is also found in written texts like textbooks. Gender distribution may impact these. This research focused on unveiling how gender is distributed in EFL textbooks and whether it is represented equally or not.



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Figure 1. 1 Conceptual Framework

F. Previous Study

Other researchers have also researched gender representation in textbooks to support this research. The first is "The Representation of Gender in English Textbook Pathway To English at Second Grade of Senior High School" by Hajrahmatullaily (2020). This study investigates Gender representation in the Pathway to English for Senior High School Grade XI General Programme. The analysis shows that the gender position of males is more dominant than females in textbooks. That is to say, unequally Gender Representation in English Textbook.

The second is from Sudewi, Beratha, and Sukarini (2021), entitled "Gender Representation in English Textbook Used by Senior High School." The results will be focused on the analysis suggested by Lakoff (1975) and Coates (1986). The findings showed that gender bias exists in the textbook. Males are more visible in all aspects, including pictures, characters mentioned, gender role models, female/male activity, and patterns of mentioning male/female. Besides, the use of language by male and female characters, such as verbosity, the use of intensifiers, and the use of questions, are identified.

The third is by Hadianto S (2022), entitled "Gender Differences in EFL Coursebook Used in Islamic School of Bengkulu Province." This study aims to determine gender bias and whether gender is represented equally in the English textbook for junior high school and elementary students by content analysis design. This study focused on the six aspects proposed by Logsdon (1985). The result showed gender bias in the books Bright an English 2 and Grow with English 5.

The fourth is "Gender Representation in English On Sky 1: A Seventh Grade English Textbook" by Sani (2022). Based on the result of the investigation, there is an unequal representation of gender in the textbook. Female figures dominate the book throughout in terms of illustration, theme and language used. A total number of 297 female figures were noted against 252 males. Female dominance was found in the illustration and language used. This is probably because the author tried to minimize gender bias, not knowing that the number of females has already outnumbered males. Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn: The textbook is female-dominated in terms of illustration, theme, and language used; gender is not equally represented in the textbook.

The last research is "Analysis of Gender Representation in "My Next Words": Unpacking First Grade Elementary School Students' Book" by Vionisa, E., & Zahro, S. (2024). The aim of this study is to ensure that a

textbook represents equity. A study of the whole textbook content is needed. According to the results, there are still gender stereotypes in textbooks.

To conclude, this present research uses a similar method of analysis but a different object. The previous study revealed how gender representation is represented in English textbooks. The object of this study is a current curriculum merdeka books. This study came up with the title ‘A Content Analysis of “Bright” for Second Grade Students of Junior High School Published by Erlangga’.

