Gender Portrayals in Indonesian and International English Language Textbooks for Primary Students: A Critical Image Analysis[1]

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Abstract

It is widely acknowledged that textbooks play a critical role in instilling sociocultural norms, values, and ideologies in learners. Within this role, they are also recognized to significantly contribute to the development of learners' gender roles, particularly during primary education. A great deal of information about gender-appropriate behavior, traits, and social roles projected in the textbooks is available for children to model and imitate. As a result, textbooks can be effectively used to promote or perpetuate gender (in)equality. Unfortunately, in the last few years, Indonesia has witnessed little improvement in gender equity, despite the continuously growing awareness in global contexts. Since textbooks play a paramount role in canalizing gender ideologies or values, this study is aimed at examining whether differences in gender equality in global and Indonesian contexts are reflected in gender representation patterns in English language textbooks (ELTs) distributed internationally and locally. Through a critical image analysis perspective, this study discloses emerging differences between the two ELTs in terms of the frequency of male-to-female appearances, where the international ELT depicts a fairer distribution between the two genders. However, the prevalence of gender stereotyping in three social domains, namely, family, occupation, and leisure activities is evident in both ELTs under examination. This study suggests that ELT authors present an equal direction of learning materials that delineate gender equity in EFL textbooks, particularly those used in Indonesia.

Resumen

Los libros de texto desempeñan un papel fundamental en la inculcación de normas, valores e ideologías socioculturales en los alumnos. También se reconoce que contribuyen significativamente al desarrollo de los roles de género de los alumnos, particularmente durante la educación primaria. Una gran cantidad de información sobre el comportamiento, los rasgos y los roles sociales apropiados para el género que se proyectan en los libros de texto está disponible para que los niños los modelen e imiten. Como resultado, los libros de texto pueden usarse de manera efectiva para promover o perpetuar la (des)igualdad de género. Desafortunadamente, en los últimos años, Indonesia ha sido testigo de pocas mejoras en la equidad de género, a pesar de la conciencia cada vez mayor en los contextos globales. Dado que los libros de texto juegan un papel fundamental en la canalización de las ideologías o valores de género, este estudio tiene como objetivo examinar si las diferencias en la igualdad de género en los contextos global e indonesio son reflejados en los patrones de representación de género en los libros de texto en inglés distribuidos a nivel internacional y local. A través de una perspectiva crítica de análisis de imágenes, este estudio revela diferencias emergentes entre los libros internacionales y locales en términos de la frecuencia de apariciones de hombre a mujer, donde el libro internacional muestra una distribución más justa entre los dos géneros. Sin embargo, la prevalencia de los estereotipos de género en tres dominios sociales, a saber, la familia, la ocupación y las actividades de ocio, es evidente en los dos tipos de libro examinados. Este estudio sugiere que los autores de libros presentan una dirección equitativa de los materiales de aprendizaje que delinean la equidad de género en los libros de texto de inglés como lengua extranjera, particularmente los que se usan en Indonesia.

Introduction

Beyond their function as a channel of knowledge transmission, textbooks have been widely acknowledged to play a paramount role in infusing learners' sociocultural norms, values, and ideologies (Goyal & Rose, 2020; Lee, 2014b; Widodo & Elyas, 2020). As Widodo (2018) explicated, school textbooks serve as "an instructional guide that helps learners engage with these value-laden texts in order to expect them to learn the appropriate ways of thinking, behaving, doing, valuing, and being in the world" (p. 132). It implies the prominence of textbooks, which teachers and students view as authoritative, thus being accepted without any challenge (Lee & Collin, 2010; Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouie, 2020) in gender construction and socialization. In this regard, textbooks may serve as social agents to promote gender equality or perpetuate biases and stereotypes.

From the perspective of social cognitive theory (SCT) emphasizing the crucial role of imitation, observation, and modelling in human development (Bandura, 2001), textbooks are also recognized to significantly contribute to learners' gender role development, particularly during primary education. A great deal of information about gender-appropriate behavior, traits, and social roles projected in the textbooks is available

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for children to model and imitate. Furthermore, since students spend the majority of their classroom time using textbooks (Sadker & Zittleman, 2007), the constant exposure to the overt as well as covert gender practices and ideologies embedded in the textbooks subsequently shapes their gender view of the normative ways of thinking, acting, and behaving according to how gender is represented in them (Widodo & Elyas, 2020).

Considering its significant purported contribution to gender equality, gender representation in school textbooks has become researchers' focus of interest since the 1970s (e.g., Britton & Lumpkin 1977; Frasher & Walker, 1972; Nilsen, 1977). However, studies focusing on gender issues in language textbooks, particularly in the context of English language textbooks (ELTs) only proliferated about a decade later (e.g., Graci, 1989; Hellinger, 1980; Porreca, 1984) after the publication of Hartman and Judd's (1978) seminal work, *Sexism and TESOL materials*. Since then, researchers' interests in this topic have been burgeoning in countries in the inner, outer, and expanding circles. Despite some demonstrable pro-female proclivities (Gebregeorgis, 2016; Ghajarieh & Salami, 2016), the findings of these studies overall indicate gender inequality remaining in favor of males and the presence of stereotyped gender roles and gender-exclusive language in English language textbooks across the world (Ansary & Babaii, 2003; Namatende-Sakwa, 2018; Lee & Chin, 2019; Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, 2020; Yang, 2016).

While there was a surge in interest in gender issues depicted in ELTs in the early 1980s in the international setting, a similar development did not emerge in Indonesia until recently. Unequal and stereotyped depictions of male and female genders in textbooks were found to be prevalent (Ariyanto, 2018; Damayanti, 2014; Lestariyana et al., 2020; Setyono, 2018). To validate the findings from previous studies, further studies are needed to investigate biased messages and stereotypical representations of gender in ELTs from a gender role perspective.

Indonesian context was purposefully chosen as the focus in this study because gender inequality is still prevalent in this country, despite the steadily increasing awareness of gender parity in a global context. In the *Global Gender Gap Report 2020*, Indonesia is posited in the same rank it has been occupied for the last three years, 85 out of 153 countries in terms of the most gender-equal country in the world (Global Gender Gap Report, 2019). It is interesting to probe if differences in community awareness of gender equality in global and Indonesian contexts are reflected in the representations of gender in written materials, particularly school textbooks in Indonesia. In order to fill the research gap and investigate such an assumption, the present study aims to explore how females are represented in Indonesian ELTs for primary education. Based on the purpose of this study, the following research question guided this investigation:

How are male and female characters represented in the local and the international ELTs in terms of

1. frequency of occurrence

2. their familial and occupational roles; and 3) leisure activities they are engaged in?

Literature Review

School textbooks and gender (in)equality

Education plays a pivotal role in defining power relations, (non)discriminatory norms, and social (in)equality. It may be used as a tool to canalize cultural prejudice leading to discrimination, or to embrace multicultural and diverse society imposing the equal position of men and women. With regards to this function, the need to promote gender equality through the adoption of gender fairness in all the educational policies, practices, and documents has long been promoted by the international community. As one type of educational document, school textbooks are one of the most powerful agents for gender socialization (Foroutan, 2012; Setyono & Widodo, 2018; Widodo, 2018). One's view of gender roles, expectations, and values, commonly shaped by growing up in a particular culture and society are then "reinforced and/or transformed with what is conveyed in textbooks" (Luk, 2004, p. 3), not only through visual presentations but also the messages in the text (Wu & Liu, 2015). Similar to this belief, Widodo and Elyas (2020) contend that textbooks could be the most most important agents to instill gender-laden values such as gender equality, mainstreaming, and stereotyping. Thus they play a fundamental role in shaping the learners' worldview of the roles and responsibilities of males and females in society (Kobia, 2009).

For primary education, the construction of gender equality in school textbooks is considered particularly important. Primary school children undergo essential development cognitively and socially during which they learn the basic factual knowledge and appropriate social values and norms from their teachers, peers, and

textbooks (Lestariyana et al., 2020). In addition, they spend a great deal of their school time reading textbooks (Sadker & Zittleman, 2007). As a result, what the primary school children see in the textbooks will strongly influence their view of life and shape their belief, attitudes, and values (Kereszty 2009; Wu & Liu, 2015). In this regard, if gender stereotype appears in textbooks, the subliminal implantation of this view may have an substantial impact on their development in various ways, including inequality in learning opportunities.

Considering their crucial influence on children's gender role development, ideally, school textbooks should represent balanced gender roles while avoiding gender biases and stereotypes (Widodo & Elyas, 2020). Unfortunately, much empirical evidence proves textbooks paradoxically serve as a place for nurturing gender inequality, in various forms of manifestation including female omission, male firstness, linguistic sexism, and gender bias and stereotyping.

Previous studies on gender presentation in ELTs

Over the past few decades, many studies have reported the existence of gender inequality in English language textbooks (ELTs) around the globe, in which stereotyping emerged as one common plaguing manifestation. Despite the growing presence of better constructions favoring female gender in some recent studies (e.g., Curaming & Curaming, 2020; Yang & Yan, 2020), the most studies point out that males and females are usually assigned specific attributes, characteristics, or roles overemphasizing the existing differences between the two genders. For examples, males are more likely to be described as active, aggressive, and competitive, while females as passive, emotionally expressive, dependent, and weak (e.g., Barton & Sakwa, 2012; Damayanti, 2014; Wu & Liu, 2015). Likewise, males are likely to be pictured doing more physically demanding work while utilizing high technology and other sophisticated tools in diverse social and occupational roles. Females, on the contrary, are typically assigned domestic and nurturing tasks like cooking, dishwashing, knitting, and babysitting (e.g., Aguilar, 2021; Ariyanto, 2018; Curaming & Curaming, 2020; Hall, 2014; Lee, 2014b)

To begin with, Barton and Sakwa (2012) addressed the topic of gender representation in a secondary English textbook endorsed by the Ministry of Education of Uganda. Employing a mixed-methods approach, they demystified the overtly gender stereotype depicted in the textbook as men were attributed with better paying and high-status jobs, while women's occupational roles were not only limited but also restricted mainly to the domestic sphere. Furthermore, women were often portrayed as helpless wives or mothers (in-law) with negative emotional states.

Hall (2014) examined how males and females were represented in two EFL textbooks locally designed for Iranian secondary students, focusing on a similar topic. Although the findings indicate gender equity in job possibilities and leisure activities, a perpetuation of gender stereotyping was still evident through the delineation of women predominantly doing traditional stereotypical activities such as cooking, serving food, and taking care of the children.

In the same year, Lee (2014b) delved into second language (L2) primary English language textbooks published between 1988 and 2005 to search for any correlation between Hong Kong women's higher status in recent decades with how gender was depicted in the examined textbooks. The findings revealed a promising portrayal of gender parity to a certain extent. Yet, the prevalence of stereotyped images of both genders and women's more limited range of social roles were indisputable. Wu and Liu (2015) also reported similar findings when comparing three sets of primary school English textbooks published by People's Education Press (PEP) of China from 1978 to 2003. Results suggested that during the past thirty years in spite of some progress towards gender parity, females still suffered from gender stereotypes in occupational, familial, and educational roles and activities.

Curaming and Curaming (2020) conducted their study in the Philippines, a country that consistently ranks high in global gender equality indices. Inspired by the country's 'achievement' in bridging the gender gap, they investigated whether gender inequality was still prevalent in the Philippine's primary English textbooks. Using critical discourse analysis as the analytical tool, they discovered that, despite some fairly ambivalent patterns of gender relations in the textbooks, gender inequality continued to favor male characters.

In a more recent study, Aguilar (2021) examined male and female representation in ELTs used in Mexican public elementary schools. Employing quantitative and qualitative methods, the study looked at how males and females are depicted in the occupational sphere in three EFL textbooks used in early elementary grades through visuals and photos. The findings revealed that females are underrepresented in visibility and

occupational diversity. This study also revealed stereotypical gender attributions in occupational roles, with females depicted in traditionally female-dominated nursing and caring occupations and males in traditionally male-dominated occupations.

Conducted in Indonesian EFL context, a number of studies probed gender representation in diverse primary and secondary English textbooks. As a beginning, Damayanti (2014) investigated four primary English textbooks published by four different well-known local publishers, with the focus on visual images accompanying written texts. Through the lens of Visual Grammar that considers image as a coherent semiotic system that implies representational meaning, interactive meaning and compositional meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), the findings revealed the stereotyped portrayal of women as being dependent on men in doing activities. Furthermore, stereotyped portrayals of the two genders were also observed in other aspects. For example, male characters were associated with professional activities and female characters with physical attributes. Similarly, Ariyanto (2018) examined gender representation in a government-endorsed EFL textbook for lower secondary education. The results indicated that gender stereotyping was prevalent in both visual artifacts and textual texts, with women dominating familial roles and men dominating occupational roles.

Slightly different findings were reported by Setyono (2018) and Lestariyana et al. (2020), who analyzed English textbooks for lower and upper secondary education, respectively. The findings of both studies indicated better gender construction in favor of females who were portrayed in a wider range of social roles and associated with positive traits such as competence, rationality, and professionalism. Nonetheless, despite the constructive images depicted in textbooks, gender stereotypes still persisted in some discussions.

CDA as a research tool

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multi-functional approach to studying discourse that stems from a critical theory of language that views language as a social practice. CDA, which is anchored in Halliday's (1978) functional view of language emerged in the late 1980s as an amelioration of the broad field of discourse analysis (DA), which was perceived as inadequate to delve into discourse use in society and its dynamics with ideology and power relations (Fairclough, 1992). Since discourse as text is viewed as both a process and a product, in which socio-political values and norms are inadvertently or advertently embedded, CDA serves to expose both hidden and visible ideologies, social power abuse, hegemony, and dominance (Fairclough, 2001). Furthermore, because textbooks also serve as a cultural text mediating the correlation of privilege and power in social interactions (Widodo, 2018), educational researchers have widely used CDA to decode hidden messages concerning a variety of social issues embedded in such a text, such as a gender (in)equality.

One key figure in the realm of CDA is the British sociolinguist Norman Fairclough whose three-dimensional model of discourse (2001) has been widely utilized in exploring gender representation in the EFL textbooks. Fairclough's (1995) CDA model considers three simultaneous focuses of analysis: text (whether verbal, visual, or verbal and visual), discursive practice (the production, distribution, and comprehension of a text), and social practice (the text's place in society). Furthermore, these three areas of analysis necessitate three distinct stages of analysis:

1. text analysis (description), which is concerned with the text's formal properties;
2. processing analysis (interpretation), which is concerned with the analysis of the participants' cognitive processes and interactions; and
3. social analysis (explanation), which is concerned with the relationship between social events and social structures that influence the events.

The Study

The present study attempts to examine how gender is portrayed through visual discourses in Indonesian and international English language textbooks for primary students. Thus, an adapted version of CDA, called Critical Image Analysis (Giaschi, 2000) is deemed suitable as the analytical tool. The adaptation involved rephrasing or adjustment to better serve the purpose of this study.

The corpus data

The current study's corpus data includes two books: *English Chest 6* (Robinson,2012) which is widely used in private primary schools in Indonesia, and *Let's Go* 6 (Nakata et al, 2006), which is used for teaching

English-language learners in over 160 countries around the world. These two textbooks were chosen because they have a lot in common in the amount and type of visual texts they contain.

English Chest 6 (Robinson, 2012) was published as part of a six-level English language study series. It was specifically designed to cater to Indonesian syllabus of the General English class for primary students while still meeting two international standards: the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and Cambridge Assessment English. The selected book is divided into three parts, each with four lessons. Each lesson includes a wide range of activities such as conversations, stories, language builders, songs, games, and so on that are designed to improve learners' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

Meanwhile, *Let's Go 6* (Nakata et al, 2006) is the final volume of a seven-level American English course series. It is divided into eight units, containing authentic materials from a range of sources with communicative situations that assist students to learn how to use a language rather than just how to utter words or sentences. Each session includes a variety of activities geared toward hearing and speaking, such as dialogues, pair work, and communicative games, with reading and writing exercises being deferred until the end of the course.

Methods of data analysis

The selected textbooks were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods to answer the research questions. An adapted version of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), called Critical Image Analysis (Giaschi, 2000) was used as the analytical tool to evaluate the images in the textbooks. Images and illustrations in the selected ELT textbooks were the main focus of analysis because pictures are believed to have the ability to communicate beyond what oral or written language can express (Giaschi, 2000) and have a greater impact than words for students, especially for younger students (Law & Chan, 2004). In addition, pictures, which are quite dominant in most, if not all, primary English textbooks in Indonesia, can help motivate young students to learn (Jou, 2010). To sum up, since the visual content has become significantly important in EFL teaching materials, Critical Image Analysis which is designed to examine these images (Giaschi, 2000) is deemed justified and appropriate to be used in this study.

For the data analysis, all images in each lesson unit were manually counted while female and male visibility in the two selected textbooks were compared. A discursive analysis of male and female characters in the two textbooks was conducted with the focus on the visibility of male and female characters using three social context parameters: (1) family, (2) occupations, and (3) leisure activities. These contextual parameters were chosen because they highlighted how female characters were stereotypically portrayed in school textbooks (Lestariyana et al., 2020). Using the combination of Rifkin's (1998) framework for a critical evaluation of gender representation in verbal and visual (pictorial) texts and Giaschi's (2000) framework for a critical image evaluation of gender stereotypes in ESL textbooks, the following criteria as detailed in Table 1 were developed to guide the analysis of gender portrayal in the two textbooks.

Criteria	Function in Analysis
1. Images including females/males only 2. Images in which females/males are depicted as children	Emphasize female/male visibility
3. Images where females foregrounding males 4. Images where females backgrounding males	Determine the actor
5. The activities of women/men in familial and occupational contexts 6. The activities of girls/boys in familial and occupational contexts	Establish field of activity

Table 1: Criteria used in data analysis

Findings and Discussion

Male-to-Female appearances

The first finding, concerning the frequency of occurrence of male and female characters in local and international ELTs as detailed in Table 2, reveals that male characters were slightly more prevalent than their female counterparts in the two textbooks as a whole, with a proportion of 33.1 percent (154 images) to 31.8 percent (148 images) respectively. However, when examined separately, the two ELTs showcase contrasting results in terms of gender visibility. Despite the fact that the local ELT depicts female characters in every unit throughout the book, they are still less prominent in comparison to male characters, with a ratio of 1 to 1.2. This finding echoes some earlier studies indicating female under representation in English language textbooks (e.g., Aguilar, 2021; Barton & Sakwa, 2012; Curaming & Curaming, 2020, Lee, 2018; Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, 2020; Lestariyana et al., 2020). Female characters, on the other hand, enjoy

more visibility than their male counterparts in the international ELT, with a ratio of 1.1 to 1. This finding is consistent with previous research (Yang, 2011; Yang & Yan, 2020), which suggests that females are no longer invisible in some educational artifacts.

ELTs	Images with Gendered Characters				Total of Images
	Male	Female	Mixed-Sex	Unidentified	
English Chest 6	69 (35.5%)	57 (29.4%)	63 (32.5)	5 (2.5%)	194 (41.7%)
Let's Go 6	85 (31.4%)	91 (33.6%)	90 (33.2%)	5 (1.8%)	271 (58.3%)
Total of Gendered Characters	154 (33.1%)	148 (31.8%)	153 (32.9%)	10 (2.2%)	465

Table 2: Images with gendered characters

Surprisingly, females' lower visibility in *English Chest 6* is unrelated to their quantitative representation in overall activities. Female characters are depicted more frequently than male counterparts in the three sociocultural contexts used as the parameter in this study, as shown in Table 3, with a proportion of 51.8 percent (100 images) to 48.2 percent (93 images). In terms of age differs by actor gender, males (76.3%) are more likely than females (69%) to be portrayed as children. Concerning the field of activities, most of the images depict human characters doing activities related to hobby/interest (42%) followed by profession/work (23%), education/school (19%), and family (16%) respectively.

Field of Activities	Number of Activities	Actor				Total of All Actors
		Male		Female		
		Man	Boy	Woman	Girl	
Family	18 (16%)	1(4.5%)	3 (4.2%)	10 (32.3%)	6 (8.7%)	20 (10.4%)
Occupation						
Profession/work	26 (23%)	14 (63.6%)	1 (1.4%)	12 (38.7%)	1 (1.5%)	28 (14.5%)
Education/school	21 (19%)	2 (9.2%)	24 (33.8%)	1 (3.2%)	27 (39.1%)	54 (27.9%)
Leisure activities	48 (42%)	5 (22.7%)	43 (60.6%)	8 (25.8%)	35 (50.7%)	91 (47.2%)
Total of Actors		22	71	31	69	193
Total of Activities	113					

Table 3: Male and female representation in the three social contexts in *English Chest 6*

Let's Go 6, on contrary, portrays females in a slightly greater frequency with a ratio of 1.4:1. In total, there are 173 (51.3%) female characters compared to 164 (48.7%) males engaging in diverse activities in the three sociocultural contexts. A closer examination to the figures in Table 4 reveals that 51% of the total females are visualized as girls, while 54.3% of male characters are in the portrayals of boys, which gives the same impression that males are more likely to be illustrated as children. A slightly different result could be seen in terms of the most dominant activities the gendered characters engaged in. Although leisure activities and profession/work are still in the top two with 56% and 19.4% proportion, respectively, the textbook depicts family-related activities more often than the school-related ones with a comparison of 12.7% to 11.9%.

Field of Activities	Number of Activities	Actor				Total of All Actors
		Male		Female		
		Man	Boy	Woman	Girl	
Family	15 (12.7%)	4 (5.3%)	5 (5.6%)	6 (7.1%)	3 (3.4%)	18 (5.3%)
Occupation						
Profession/work	23 (19.4%)	40 (53.3%)	-	29 (34.1%)	-	69 (20.5%)
Education/school	14 (11.9%)	-	22 (24.7%)	1 (1.2%)	20 (22.7%)	43 (12.8%)
Leisure activities	66 (56%)	31 (41.4%)	62 (69.7%)	49 (57.6%)	65 (73.9%)	207 (61.42%)
Total of Actors		75	89	85	88	337
Total of Activities	118					

Table 4: Male and female representation in the three social contexts in *Let's Go 6*

One might readily assume that female-dominant portrayals in activity engagement in the two ELTs equal to gender imbalance in the three sociocultural contexts in favor of females. This assumption, however, cannot be confirmed until the next findings elucidating how both genders are portrayed in each of the contexts, namely: family, occupation (particularly work), and leisure activities, are examined more closely. It is crucial to keep in mind that the focus of my analysis is limited only on images with/out text accompaniment depicting human characters whose genders could be identified.

Gender portrayals in familial setting

Social responsibilities are inextricably gendered, which serves as the primary drive for the conventional divide between men and women. Gender roles are the conventions of how one can be expected to function and comport according to their assigned sex in different sociocultural circumstances, and often contribute to gender stereotypes. The home sphere is frequently a socio-cultural milieu in which gender stereotypes are found. The following finding concerns the representation of men and women in a family context in respect to this question.

As seen in Table 3, there is strong female presence which is proven through the higher frequency of female characters than their male counterparts with the ratio of 4: 1. Females are also portrayed to be engaged in a wider range of activities than males (15 vs. 4 types respectively). Specifically, as seen in Figure 1, females are visualized to play a traditionally feminine role, such as performing nurturing duties and doing domestic chores in the kitchen, which are dominantly visualized with adult females (women) as the main characters. On the other hand, males are only depicted to be involved in familial activities in outdoor settings such as barbecuing, pet caring, and lawn mowing, which are dominantly done by male children (boys).

Figure 1: Some examples of gender portrayals in familial settings in *English Chest 6* (2012, pp.20, 38, 64, 70)

Another stereotyped visualization of females in *English Chest 6* can also be seen in Figure 2 depicting the portrayal of a woman with a familial role as a mother. In this socio-cultural situation, the mother seems to be angry with her son for his misbehavior. The stereotypical portrayal of an adult female as a mother becomes evident when we carefully inspect the text stating "when his parents came home, they were very angry" (para. 3, Lines 1-2). In this sense, Todd is acknowledged to have more than one parent, possibly a father and a mother. However, the image only shows a female parent/mother, rather than either both parents or the male one/father, rolling her eyes in exasperation signaling her anger at her son's disobedience. The image may reinforce the depiction of a stereotypical behavior a mother should regulate as a primary caregiver and children's first educator (Cordry & Wilson, 2004). In this respect, she is expected to be the rule maker regarding her children's activities and enforce it to teach them discipline and time management.
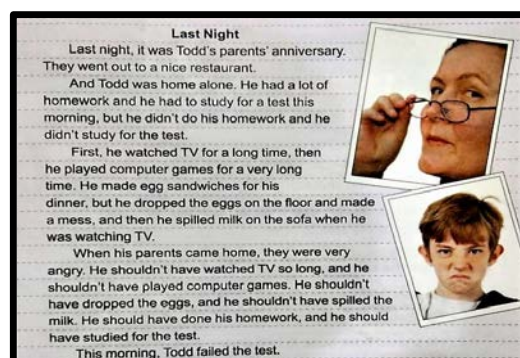

Figure 2: The depiction of a stereotypical behavior of a mother in *English Chest 6* (2012, p.79)

The imbalance in visibility and engagement of the two sexes provided ample evidence that gender stereotyping in familial context is existent in *English Chest 6*. The activity engagement played by the two

sexes as visualized in this book subtly conserves the sociocultural assignment of females in familial domain, which entrenches the traditional gender stereotypes portraying women in "the construal and perpetuation of a traditional, quiet, stay-at-home mother image" (Lee & Chin, 2019, p. 57). This stereotyped gender representation also infers males' and females' dichotomy in terms of the interests or responsibilities (Lestariyana et al, 2020) and the territories where the responsibilities are conducted (Clark, 2016) in the domestic domain. Furthermore, such images postulates two critical points; 1) female predominance in such sociocultural context may serve to reinforce female identity (Barton & Sakwa 2012) who, traditionally are obliged to do a wide range of household chores; and 2) boy's domination in activity engagement by male characters may imply children's domestic obligation when they are still dependent to their parents.

Contrary to the findings of the local ELT with a stronger tendency to depict women in domestic roles, *Let's Go 6* depicts a fairer distribution of both genders doing similar range of activities in familial setting. Even in absolute numbers, the genders are portrayed quantitatively equal with a ratio of 1:1 (see Table 4). Figure 3 shows equal involvement in household chores by females and males. Three out five pictures in Fig. 3 also note some departures from the traditional gender stereotypes in which males are portrayed as setting the table, cleaning the room, and performing a childrearing duty, in this case reading the daughter a story book.

Figure 3: Some examples of gender portrayals in familial setting in *Let's Go 6*
(2012, pp. 27, 45, 48, 49, 53)

This finding is consonant with what Yang (2011) reported in her study where males were portrayed in domestic chores slightly more frequently than females although the latter were depicted to engage in a wider range of activities than the former. Such cases indicate the textbook authors' effort to avoid gender inequality and stereotypes.

However, despite this apparent effort, some isolated instances still depict gender stereotypical portrayals. For example, Figure 4 showing male and female parents teaching their children how to do different activities such as walking, writing, swimming, and riding a bicycle may depict stereotypical gender dichotomy between men and women in their familial roles. In this case, male parents are more frequently portrayed to teach their children outdoor activities, which are often considered accident-risky such as ice skating and hand-standing. This depiction may legitimize the hegemonic gender-stereotypic belief that men are audacious and adventurous, whereas women are weak and fragile, and thus should avoid risky activities (Lee & Chin, 2019).
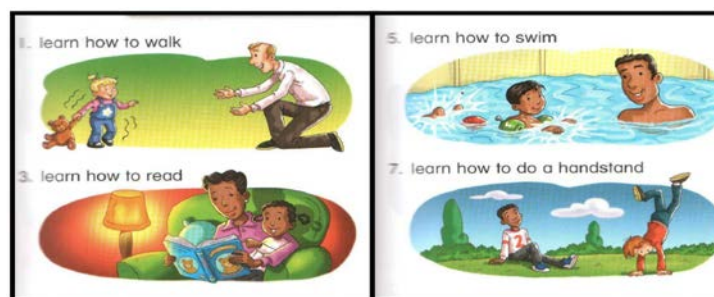

Figure 4: The stereotypical gender portrayals in familial setting in *Let's Go 6*,
2012 (p. 57)

Gender Portrayals in Professional Setting

There is widespread agreement that occupations are socially gendered. As a result, the workplace becomes the exact socio-cultural milieu in which different forms of gender inequities exist. The findings presented in Table 3 shows that other than the domestic roles, *English Chest 6* portrays male and female characters, particularly the adult ones in diverse instances of professional activities with a qualitatively fairer distribution (15 and 13 times, respectively). However, in terms of the range of activities, the portrayal of professions is very unbalanced. In this case, males are visualized in a more diverse settings from professional to less skilled workers (e.g., doctor, show host, horse rider, gymnast, bus driver, and waiter), while females in very limited settings perform stereotypical jobs such as teacher, nurse, and shopkeeper. This finding suggests that equal gender visibility in educational materials alone does not readily translate into gender equality (Lee, 2018), particularly in this professional domain. Furthermore, one interesting phenomenon is also noticeable in this ELT in which females are visualized to be teachers in six appearances, none of male teachers could be found. This validates the stereotypical portrayal of primary teaching as a female occupation, similar to that observed in Lee's (2016) and Yang's (2016) studies. From a different perspective, this finding also indicates male underrepresentation and invisibility in the domain of primary school teaching (Yang, 2016).

A closer examination of the book also reveals some hidden gender inequities that deserve attention. When females are depicted in the work sphere, they tend to be positioned as a subordinate instead of a superior or a coordinate. The picture in the top-left in Figure 5 portrays the interaction of a woman and a man in a workplace as a sociocultural space. The woman in this situation receives some money, most likely her wage, as the word "pay" is written on the paper handed to her. It's reasonable to presume that the woman is an employee and the man is an employer. Similar to this assumption, based on the clothing worn by the two characters, it may be assumed that the man has a better professional position than the woman because he dresses more formally, as evidenced by the inclusion of a tie as part of his attire. This illustration ratifies female inferiority in occupational domain.

Figure 5: Some examples of gender portrayals in professional setting in
English Chest 6 (2006, pp. 23, 64, 70)

This finding shows a concordance to previous studies (Barton & Sakwa, 2012; Clark, 2016; Lee, 2018, Lee & Chin, 2019) which indicates little improvement has been made in terms of gender equality in occupational context. Women make up a large proportion of the workforce in contemporary Indonesia and they work in a wide variety of professions, including those requiring advanced skills and educational backgrounds (Lestariyana et al., 2020). However, the ELT suggests that most sophisticating careers are associated only with men. These portrayals of women in more limited jobs and roles than males as found in this ELT imply that "males are superior to, stronger and more powerful than women in society" (Lee, 2018, p. 5). In addition, they embodied overt and covert gender inequality, squandering the potential to expose the young generation for a more accomplishable future on equal social and economic participation (Clark, 2016). Consequently, such regular subliminal exposure to stereotyped gendered visualization in occupational context may create life-long dreadful impacts on young learners' life aspirations (Wu & Liu, 2015), particularly on their academic and career choices (Lee, 2018).

Despite the unbalanced qualitative representation of male and female characters in professional context with a ratio of 1.4:1 (see Table 4), the discrepancy is less apparent in Let's Go 6 when it comes to professional diversity. Both are portrayed in a wide range of activities as professionals and skilled workers (e.g., pilot, police officer, detective, tv presenter, musician, athlete, acrobat, dancer, magician),

Interestingly, in contrary to the stereotyping portrayal of teaching profession in the local ELT, this textbook depicts a teacher as a gender-shared occupational role played by both female and male characters. This finding points out that this ELT attempts to evoke a 'gender equality discourse' (Barton & Sakwa, 2012), emphasizing the notion that women and men are equally able to operate in the same traditional nurturing professions such as teaching and waitressing.
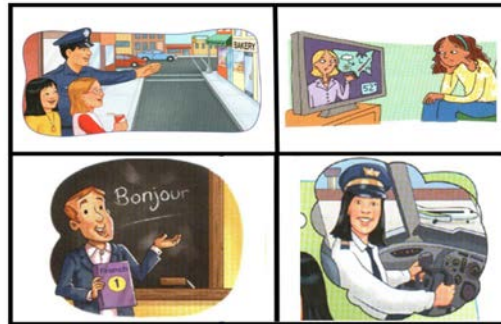

Figure 6: Some examples of gender portrayals in professional setting in *Let's Go 6*
(pp. 1, 28, 46, 47)

Furthermore, as seen in the bottom-right image in Figure 6, women in the international ELT are portrayed as having professional occupations such as pilots. This finding is in line with what Lestariyana et al. (2020) found in their study, which revealed that women have their own potential and capability for earning money and achieving professional success. This portrayal of a woman as a pilot implies that the textbook authors attempted to depict both genders in a similar light in order to promote women's empowerment and/or gender equality (Curaming & Curaming, 2020). In addition, they may seek to propagate the concept that women may pursue outstanding careers in response to the equality movement in a labour-force role (Penner, 2008). The discourse of being a career woman also emphasizes women's contributions to traditionally masculine occupations (Meeussen et al., 2020).

Gender Portrayals Engaging in Leisure Activities

Common stereotypes hold that males and females spend different amounts of time on leisure activities. Males are thought to be more inclined to 'thing-oriented' activities such as vehicle repair, carpentry, engineering, whereas females are more drawn to 'people-oriented' activities such as dancing, acting, and shopping (Lippa, 2010). The findings related to this topic discloses that the highest frequency of male and female representation in both local and international ELTs is depicted doing leisure activities (91 and 207 times, respectively). Both ELTs depict females and males in a much wider range of settings which include participating in different kinds of indoor and outdoor sports, shopping, reading, playing music, etc. Furthermore, as shown in Tables 3 and 4, it is also found that the local ELT depicts a fairer distribution of males and females in this social context, while interestingly the international one portrays females engaging in leisure activities more often than their male counterparts. A closer examination to the figures in those two tables reveals that both genders are visualized more often as children when doing leisure activities with a ratio of 6: 1 in *English Chest 6* and 1.6:1 in *Let's Go 6.* These findings give the impression that spare time is more affordable during childhood compared to adulthood.

Figure 7: The stereotypical depiction of females engaging in leisure activities
in *English Chest 6* (pp.64, 69)

However, the equal depiction of both genders in diverse leisure activities does not mean that these two ELTs are free of gender stereotypical portrayals in this very context. In some units in both *English Chest 6* and

Let's Go 6, females outnumber and dominate their male counterparts, however their domination is only when engaging in activities stereotypically associated with female gender such as shopping and chit-chatting. In the local ELT, the first lesson of the third unit 'I Think You Should Give Her an Apron' has a strong female presence in which they are given much voice in providing advice to both male and female characters the appropriate things to purchase. As seen in Fig. 7, the female characters are being asked their opinions on the appropriate items to buy for presents given to other people. A closer look of the accompanying texts, the suggestions given are also gender stereotypy-laden as the girl on the left suggests an apron, an item closely-related to doing domestic chore as a present for the boy's mother while the girl on the left opines a webcam, a technological device which is often associated with male hobbies and interest, suitable for Father Day's present.
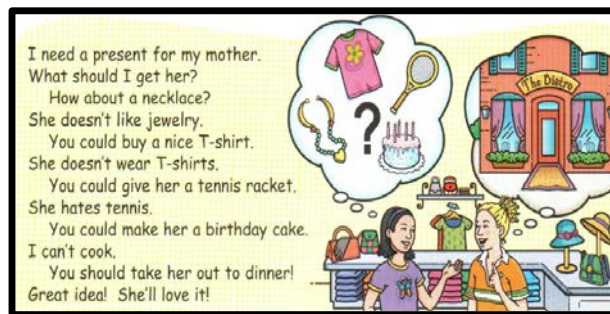

Figure 8: The stereotypical depiction of females engaging in leisure activities in
Let's Go 6 (p.26)

The third unit of the international ELT "Going Shopping" also embodies gender stereotypes in which females are heavily depicted engaging in female-related activities, in this case, as the title suggests, shopping. Throughout this unit, female characters (n = 56) outnumber male ones with the ratio of 2.1:1. Furthermore, as seen in Fig. 8, the two female characters are conversing about the most suitable present given to the mother of one of the female characters. Similar to the gender stereotype-laden hidden in the offered opinion as discussed previously in the local ELT, the other woman also suggests some items needed to support one's physical appearance/beauty such as jewelry and clothing. This dialogue implies that physical appearance/beauty becomes women's primary interests, which is another form of subtle gender stereotyping. These findings corroborate prior studies that found female dominance in specific ELT units is stereotypically associated with this gender (Barton & Sakwa, 2012; Lee, 2014a; Lestariyana et al., 2020; Setyono, 2018). Both ELTs contain subtle gender demarcation disclosing differences between the two genders in terms of hobbies and interests: men are portrayed as high-tech and gadget enthusiasts, whereas women as beauty and fashion lovers. As a result, despite the fact that the presence of female characters engaging in leisure activities significantly outweighs that of males in the two ELTs, there is a strong propensity for them to be portrayed stereotypically.

Conclusion

This comparative study has provided understanding on gender representation in the ELTs used to portray genders stereotypically in family and hobbies/interest social domains. Despite having a significantly higher proportion of female mentions, the authors of both ELTs frequently produced highly stereotyped representations of the sexes. Specifically, females are still traditionally stereotyped as more engaged with beauty and physical appearances, while males with manly things and technological devices. To put it in other words, although the textbook writers have demonstrated their awareness of balanced gender visibility, gendered stereotypes in the two ELTs still persist. The (continued) presence of gender stereotyping messages on the two ELTs may have insidious consequences on the learners', particularly female learners', horizons and expectations, including restrictions on academic subjects and career choices (Lee, 2014a; Samadikhah & Shahrokhi, 2015), distortion of their self-image and images of the opposite gender (Lee, 2014b; Witt 2001), and impediment to their self-development (Khan et al, 2014),

The findings of this critical discourse study have a number of pedagogical implications. Because educational textbooks play a pivotal role in instilling gender-related values, it is critical that ELT authors present a more equitable direction of English language learning materials that represent gender equity by demonstrating equality in male-to-female appearances and removing any gender disparities, particularly the elimination of gender stereotypes and biases. English language teachers can also actively participate in developing

students' proper gender concepts through the utilization of learning resources that emphasize gender equality. Furthermore, textbooks, as one type of agent for future generations' socialization, should depict the egalitarian gender construction aspired through accurate descriptions of contemporary practices and equal visibility for all gender identifiers. Grounded in a general consensus that heteronormativity is prevalent in all aspects of life, it is of paramount importance that textbook writers and publishers use gender-neutral discourse to avoid the production and exposure to heteronormative language. It is hoped that this practice will make textbooks more inclusive of all gender identities and convey the message that all genders are equally valid and neutral, with none being an aberration.

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