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# New Approach of Gender Representation on English Textbooks: A Critical Discourse Analysis Study

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## Abstract

*Gender representation is essential for cultivating an inclusive educational environment that accommodates all students. This study employed a critical discourse analysis framework to investigate the similarities and differences in gender representations within English textbooks authored by both English and Indonesian writers, utilizing the Fairclough model. Collectively, these methodologies provided an extensive framework for examining the construction and representation of gender in discourse. The data were collected from grade X English textbooks, authored by both English and Indonesian authors specifically from chapter 1 of each book for the first semester. Domestic and professional roles of female and male characters in both of English textbooks were analyzed according to the model. These elements were qualitatively described, analyzed, and elucidated. The results revealed a notable discrepancy between the two types of textbooks: the textbook written by English authors displayed a more balanced or predominantly female representation, while the one written by Indonesian authors predominantly featured male characters. This revealed cultural differences in the portrayal of gender roles, with English textbooks exhibiting a stronger emphasis on female visibility and empowerment compared to their Indonesian counterparts.*

*Keywords: critical discourse analysis; English textbooks; Fairclough dimension; gender representation*

## 1. Introduction

Textbooks shape students' perceptions, attitudes, and comprehension of gender norms and stereotypes. Textbooks are indispensable in language courses. It facilitates language acquisition in educational institutions (Richards, 2001). Turner-Bowker (1996) asserts that textbooks instruct children on appropriate and inappropriate conduct. Investigating gender representation in textbooks can guide curriculum development, textbook selection, and pedagogical methodologies. Their counsel can assist educators, administrators, and legislators in creating more inclusive and fair educational resources that foster gender equality and diversity.

CDA distinguishes itself from its foundational technique by analyzing language usage within historical, social, cultural, and political settings, rather than deconstructing language into isolated components without considering these contexts, as stated by Fowler (1991). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) originated in European debate studies, influenced by scholars such as Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Theo van Leeuwen, Gerlinde Mautner, and Teun van Dijk. These pivotal intellectuals were influenced by Marx, Foucault, Moscovi, and Halliday (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and English textbooks illustrate the influence of language on society and power dynamics. The CDA emphasizes the need of examining the influence of language on social behaviors, especially on gender roles in education. In recent decades, there has been much research and discourse around gender representation in educational materials, especially English textbooks. To cultivate a more inclusive and empathetic society, gender expressions and identities must be acknowledged and honored. The United Nations Population Fund characterizes gender as the economic, social, and cultural benefits associated with being male or female (UNFPA, 2005).

This study employed Fairclough's (1989) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to investigate the representation of gender in two English textbooks, informed by a review of pertinent literature. Fairclough's model serves as an analytical framework consisting of three stages: description, interpretation, and explanation. The description stage utilized in the text is analyzed during the description phase. The initial phase of description emphasizes the formal attributes of the text. This analysis examines the quantity of female and male characters, their visual representation, the notion of firstness, their titles, and their activities (Taki & Shahbazi, 2012, p. 109).

According to social cognitive theory (Burr 1998), educational institutions significantly impact gender development. Numerous gender-related subjects are included in senior high school English textbooks for students to replicate. Educational resources serve as the primary official agent and the most efficient facilitator for gender socialization (Foroutan 2012, 771). Researchers have evaluated and revised textbooks to advance gender equality in response to global gender prejudice and the inadequate or inaccurate representation in educational resources (Blumberg 2008). The depiction of women and men in textbooks significantly impacts perceptions of gender roles (Frawley 2008). Inaccurate or inconsistent gender representations lead children to misinterpret gender social status (Afshar 2015). Contemporary English textbooks also examined gender. Researchers identified gender disparities in high school English textbooks. This impacted pupils' perspectives on gender equality throughout society. Consequently, the researcher determined that the examination of gender representation in high schools is essential.

A multitude of qualitative and content analysis research have investigated gender representation in the text, visuals, and language in English textbooks across diverse countries and educational contexts.

Nijmi Edres (2022) conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis of gender portrayals in Jordanian textbooks, grounded in UNESCO's principles of gender equality. This study emphasized essential approaches to enhance gender equality and engagement. Gendered representations were meticulously examined.

In 2023, Yim, D., and Lee, R. examined gender representations in English as a foreign language textbooks for junior high schools in Hong Kong and Japan. Male characters are inadequately represented in textbooks in Hong Kong. It emphasized the significance of gender education for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educators, specific gender-sensitive pedagogy, and definitive rules for textbook authors to facilitate the development of inclusive materials. The division of home and professional duties among male, female, and gender-neutral characters, their activities, the initiators of conversations, the frequency of their dialogue appearances, and the quantity of spoken words and dialogue exchanges were significant factors. Japanese textbooks have a deficiency in gender-neutral nomenclature, indicating that their authors may adhere to traditional views or lack awareness of strategies to mitigate gender stereotypes.

Previous studies depicted gender in educational textbooks; nevertheless, insufficient empirical research has investigated gender-neutral speech in instructional materials. This study investigated the differential portrayal of gender in English textbooks endorsed by the Indonesian government and those published globally that was focused on domestic and professional roles.

## 2. Methods

The study utilized a descriptive qualitative design, employing critical discourse analysis as the analytical method, specifically applying Fairclough's three-dimensional framework to examine data from Indonesian Government Endorsed and Global Publisher English textbooks. This method facilitated a thorough examination of data with various possible interpretations, allowing for an analysis of the authors' perspectives on the depiction of gender in Indonesian government-endorsed and global publisher English textbooks.

This study utilized data from texts, including words, phrases, clauses, and illustrations that depict gender neutrality and gender representations. The researcher analyzed gender neutrality, the visibility of men and women, and their domestic and social roles in the texts. This research utilized Indonesian Government Endorsed and Global Publisher English textbooks as data resources.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### 3.1. Domestic Roles

The researcher examined 16 texts—8 Indonesian Government Endorsed and 8 Global Publisher English textbooks. Table 4.2 shows the proportion of men and women in domestic roles from 8 Indonesian Government Endorsed English textbooks. In these textbooks, men were called "Father," and women were called "Mother." Each role is depicted equally, with one illustration. The gender-neutral category "Parents," has three roles and larger representation. While traditional parental responsibilities were equally represented, the gender-neutral category provided for a fuller understanding of family dynamics without being limited to gender roles.

The equal representation of father and mother reflected a focus on traditional gender norms in domestic roles. The gender-neutral category's prominence indicated an acceptance of diverse family relationships. This dichotomy contrasted traditional gender norms with modern, inclusive family depiction in instructional materials.

In conclusion, Indonesian Government Endorsed English textbooks showed diverse household gender roles. While father and mother are equally featured, gender-neutral roles are more prevalent, indicating a shift toward diversified family relations. This emphasizes the need to balance traditional representations with more inclusive ones that reflect modern society. This technique can help students see gender roles more fairly and broaden their family and domestic life perspectives.

Table 1. The Proportion of Men and Women Representation in Domestic Domain in Indonesian Government Endorsed English Textbooks

Domestic Roles	Men	Domestic Roles	Women	Domestic Roles	Gender Neutral
Father	1	Mother	1	Parents	3

Global Publisher English textbooks' data on men and women in domestic responsibilities provided important insights about gender roles and gender-neutral identities. Domestic positions were listed, with "Father" appearing 8 times and "Mother" 10 times, suggesting a small preference for female parental roles. Unlike "Sister," "Brother" was stated once inside sibling relationships. The role of "Husband" was mentioned twice and "Younger Sister" once. The data contained gender-neutral phrases such "Children" 16 times, "Parents" 14 times, "Grandparent" 2 times, and "Great Grandparent" once. This data showed that while mothers and fathers were fairly evenly represented, children and gender-neutral phrases were far more visible, suggesting a larger acknowledgment of familial duties beyond gender binaries. In conclusion, table 4.3 shows gender representation gains and issues in Global Publisher English textbooks for domestic roles. Despite an emphasis on maternal figures and gender-neutral language, male roles, notably siblings and husbands, were underrepresented, indicating a persisting imbalance. This difference required more complex home role illustrations in instructional materials. Textbooks can better reflect family diversity and promote gender equality by including more gender representations. These findings also emphasize the significance of critically reviewing educational content to ensure that it matches current societal standards and helps students comprehend family dynamics. This inclusive approach is essential for developing future generations' gender and family views in a fast changing environment.

In English textbooks that were endorsed by the Indonesian government, there was a significant amount of focus placed on the percentage of female students. In comparison to the percentage of women who were published in English textbooks published by Global Publisher, this was a significant difference. There was a limited representation of household roles in textbooks that were endorsed by the Indonesian government. These textbooks presented equal roles for men, women, and gender-neutral roles. On the other hand, textbooks published by Global Publishers offered a wider variety of domestic responsibilities, particularly those that fell into the gender-neutral category. The inclusion of gender-neutral roles in the English textbook published by Global Publisher contributed to a growing understanding that abilities and talents were universal. Additionally, Indonesian Government Endorsed and Global Publisher English textbooks freely represented professions, which gave individuals of any gender the opportunity to choose a career path. Not only does this approach promote equality, but it also questions the conventional gender norms and prejudices that are prevalent in society. A wide variety of people working in a variety of professions are depicted in the novels, which encourage readers to pursue their own passions and interests regardless of the gender norms that are typically expected of them.

Table 2. The Proportion of Men and Women Representation in Domestic Domain in Global Publisher English Textbooks

Domestic Roles	Men	Domestic Roles	Women	Domestic Roles	Gender Neutral
Father	8	Mother	10	Children	16
Brother	2	Sister	2	Parents	14
Husband	2	Younger Sister	1	Great grandparent	2
Mother's Father	1			Grandparent	1

### 3.2. Professional Roles

The analysis of eight Indonesian Government Endorsed English textbooks revealed the representation of men and women in professional roles within these texts. Table 4.5 presents a categorization of various professional roles assigned to a gender-neutral framework. The authors of English textbooks endorsed by the Indonesian government present all professional roles in a gender-neutral manner. The gender-neutral category was significant, encompassing ten professional roles. They held roles as a footballer, basketball player, badminton player, environmentalist, climate activist, teacher, ecological activist, researcher, chancellor, and ambassador. The analysis of gender representation in Indonesian Government Endorsed English textbooks indicates the presence of gender-neutral representations. This representation illustrates the persistent challenges in attaining gender parity alongside the progressive measures taken toward inclusivity in professional roles. These findings highlight the significance of educational materials in influencing perceptions of gender roles and fostering a more equitable perspective on professional opportunities across all genders.

The analysis of eight texts from Global Publisher English textbooks revealed the representation of men and women in professional roles, showcasing gender-neutral identities across various occupations. The gender-neutral category was significant,

encompassing twelve professional roles. They included journalists, crew members, astronauts, engineers, workers, teachers, police officers, doctors, a British online superstar, a singer-songwriter, and a jeweler. Gender neutrality reflects an increasing recognition of diverse professional identities. The data presented in table 4.6 of the analysis of professional roles in Global Publisher English textbooks highlights both advancements and persistent challenges in gender representation.

Table 3. Gender Neutral in Professional Domain in Indonesian Government Endorsed English Textbooks

Professional Roles	Men	Professional Roles	Women	Professional Roles	Gender Neutral
				Footballer	6
				Basketball player	1
				Badminton player	1
				Environmentalism	4
				Climate activist	3
				Teacher	1
				Ecological activist	1
				Researchers	1
				Chancellor	1
				Ambassador	1

Table 3.4 Gender Neutral in Professional Domain in Global Publisher English Textbooks

Professional Roles	Men	Professional Roles	Women	Professional Roles	Gender Neutral
Businessman	1			Journalist	2
				Crew	3
				Astronauts	7
				Engineers	3
				Workers	1
				Teachers	1
				Police/Officer	1
				Doctor	1
				British online superstar	1
				Singer-songwriter	1
				Jeweller	1

#### 4. Conclusion

There was a limited portrayal of household responsibilities in textbooks that were endorsed by the Indonesian government. These textbooks, however, presented equal roles for men, women, and gender-neutral roles. The textbooks published by Global Publishers offered a more comprehensive selection of domestic responsibilities, particularly those that fell within the gender-neutral category. A growing understanding that abilities and talents were universal was contributed to by the inclusion of gender-neutral roles in Global Publisher English textbooks. Additionally, Indonesian Government Endorsed and Global Publisher English textbooks freely represented professions, which gave individuals of any gender the opportunity to choose a career path. Not only does this approach promote equality, but it also questions the conventional gender norms and prejudices that are prevalent in society. A wide variety of people working in a variety of professions are depicted in the novels, which encourage readers to pursue their own passions and interests regardless of the gender norms that are typically expected of them. In English textbooks that were endorsed by the Indonesian government, there was a significant amount of focus placed on the percentage of female students. In comparison to the percentage of women who were published in English textbooks published by Global Publisher, this was a significant difference.

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