

Analysis of English teaching materials with gender equality perspective at junior high school

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Abstract

This study was carried out to disclose the gender bias issue by analysing English teaching materials. The research objects are three textbooks used by junior high school students from 7th to 9th grade in learning English at one school in Karawang. This is a qualitative research implementing content analysis to obtain the findings. From the outcomes of the research, it shows clearly that the three books have only delivered very little value of gender equality within the contents, in which gender stereotype dominantly become the primary issue. As a result, it is necessary for English teaching materials at junior high school level to be adjusted and revised with more balanced contents of gender equality perspective.

Keywords: *English teaching materials; gender equality perspective; junior high school*

Introduction

The issue of gender inequality is something that is commonly discussed across various fields in society at this time. The term of equality in gender does not always have to be resolved by giving a 50-50 ratio in all respects because in essence this nation (Indonesia) only needs to show its existence and provide opportunities for women's actualization in some sectors that still lack female presence.

Gender, which is basically a social and cultural construction, is often discoursed through various activities, one of which is the process of learning at schools. Furthermore, scientist and psychologist William Louis Stern (in Sarwono, 2010) states that the formation or development of a person's personality is determined by the innate factors as well as the surrounding environmental factors. Since gender is a manifestation of socio-cultural products, it is crystal clear that environmental factors will have a large impact in determining one's perception. Of the many public places available in the community, schools have a strategic role as an environment that can attract many parties to interact and exchange ideas.

Quality education is by all means only able to be manifested through sensible and progressive planning and reasoning. Furthermore, Hamalik (1995) emphasizes the importance of learning components, namely Educators, Students, Learning Environments, and Learning Sources in producing best education. Learning resources, in this case are teaching material book, will undoubtedly be needed by educators in assisting the transfer of

knowledge to students. However, it is so unfortunate that the textbooks used today are greatly influenced by the writer's subjectivity in understanding contemporary concepts including the issue of gender (Muthali'in, 2001).

Thus, it is necessary to make some adjustment and corrections to the books that have been circulating, especially in the English Language Subject teaching materials. The results of this study are expected to be able to provide input for the authors of the book to consider aspects of gender equality in formulating quality teaching materials in the realm of education. In addition, the school as a place where the instructional materials will be used has a vital role in rectifying the mindset of students to be more aware of the material with gender bias.

Gender Equality in Education

Gender equality can be defined as the similarity of conditions for men and women to obtain opportunities and their rights as human beings, so that they are able to equally play a role and participate in political, legal, economic, socio-cultural and educational activities. Therefore, gender equality is simply a fair treatment of women and men in all its aspects without any standardization of roles, double burden, subordination, marginalization and violence against (especially) women or men.

However, so far gender equality in fact is still a mere utopia. Various forms of gender disparities occurring in various fields of community life are also presented in the world of education. In fact, educational processes and institutions are seen as having a major role in socializing and perpetuating the values and perspectives that underlie the emergence of various gender inequalities in society. Furthermore, Asrohah (2008) states that gender bias in education is the reality of education that favours one particular sex, causing gender inequality.

Gender inequality, namely the existence of discrimination that does not benefit one party, arises because of social construction. The forms of gender inequality are as follows (Suprapdiono, 2007): (1.) Marginalization; (2.) Subordination; (3.) Stereotype; (4.) Violence; and (5.) Double burden. Marginalization means a process of marginalization due to gender differences that results in poverty. For instance, kindergarten teachers, nurses, convection workers, factory workers, domestic servants are normally rated as low-level workers, thus affecting the level of salary/wages received. Subordination can be defined as an assessment or assumption that a role performed by one sex (usually women) is lower than the other. A

sample of subordination would be the current trend where only a small number of women working in decision-making or policy-making positions or roles compared to men.

Stereotype is a standard image of an individual or group that is not in accordance with the existing empirical reality. Negative labelling or stereotype normally always creates injustice. The best example to illustrate gender stereotype is the view of women whose duties and functions only carry out domicile related work or domesticity, or how women are labelled as being weak and feminine. Furthermore, violence means behaviour involving both physical and non-physical force intended to hurt, damage, or even kill someone or something which is committed by one sex or a family institution, community or other gender (like physical and non-physical violence committed by a husband against his wife in the household). Lastly, double burden means that the workload received by one sex (women) is more than the other (men). A common example of double burden is how statistic data shows women work almost 90% of work in the household. Consequently, for those who have career, in addition to working in the workplace they also still have to do the housework at home making this as double burden.

One phenomenon of gender inequality in education can occur in the dimensions of learning process. Educational material in the learning process usually contains examples of questions and tasks in whose all ownership is always in the name of men. In addition, in textbooks, all formal positions such as sub-district heads and directors are not seldom portrayed as patriarchal; not to mention text narratives that are often gender-biased like “*mother cooks in the kitchen, father reads newspapers; mother shops to the market, father hoes in the rice fields*”. Illustration pictures also show boys more often than girls and in more varied activities. Therefore, in order to fulfil gender equality, education needs to satisfy the basic education, namely the formulation of teaching materials that have gender equality perspective.

Materials and Methods

This research was carried out at a junior high school in Karawang, West Java. The appropriate research method for this research is qualitative method because the data analysed is verbal data that is not in the form of numbers, but words, sentences, visualizations and expressions contained in the text. This is also in line with what was said by Creswell (2012) that qualitative research aims to examine a problem and develop an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon.

Based on the object of the study, this research is considered as the library research or literature study. Subagyo (1991) explained that literature study is a research that collects data and information with the help of various literature materials (books, journals, magazines, and writings that have relevance to the research). In addition, the data obtained in this study is dynamic which is a characteristic of qualitative research (Sugiyono, 2008) so that it is expected to improve the quality of English learning later.

Objects in this study are teaching material books with 2013 curriculum (K-13) English Language Subjects at Junior High School level in one SMP in Karawang from Grade VII, VIII, and IX which are compiled and reviewed by various parties under the coordination of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The focus of this research is the existence of gender issues and biases contained in the discussion content of the instructional materials that includes narratives, illustrations, material and characterizations.

The data that has been obtained were prepared based on the needs which then were analysed through the stages of data reduction, data display and data verification. The data that has been analysed then were interpreted through a literature review on material with gender equality based on the emergence of aspects or forms of gender injustice, namely: (1) *Marginalization*, (2) *Subordination*, (3) *Stereotype*, (4) *Violence*, and (5) *double burden*.

Content Analysis


Content analysis is a research method which is an in-depth discussion of the contents of a written or printed information. This analysis is usually used in qualitative research where the pioneer of content analysis is Harold D. Lasswell who do the coding: systematically record symbols or messages and then interpret them. Whereas according to Holsti (1969), the method of content analysis is a technique for drawing conclusions by objectively, systematically, and generally identifying specific characteristics of a message.

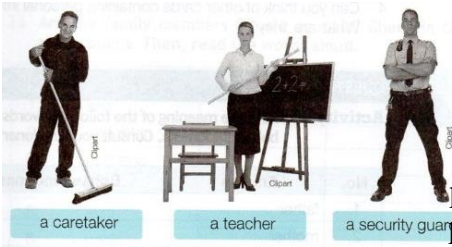

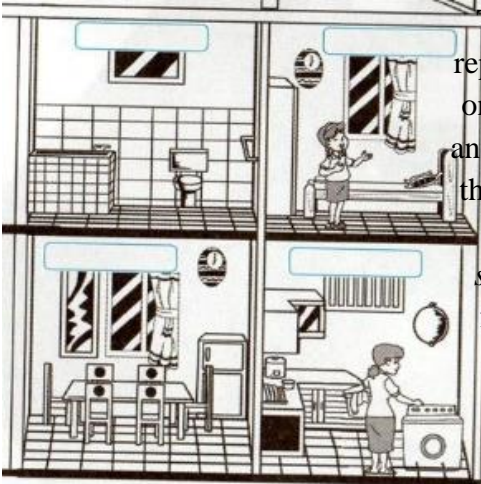
In addition, content analysis is a method that allows the researcher to get the message, content and value content in accordance with the topic under study (Krippendorff in Wajidi, 1991). This analysis is used because the object of research in the form of tangible text documents that contain communication messages systematically and objectively. Furthermore, the content analysis method will be applied to English textbooks at a junior high school in Karawang that have gender-oriented content or values.

Results and Discussion

First of all, following is the general description of the three books that were analysed by researchers. After reviewing all Chapters from the three books, both those who have gender bias and those who do not, the researchers elaborate on the chapter's description shown in a table, so that it will be a unified analysis based on gender equality perspective.


Table 1. Analysis of Gender Equality Perspective on *BRIGHT 1* Grade VII K-13

No.	Unit Title Page	Gender Equality Issue (Sentence/Illustration/ Question)	Interpretation
1	Unit 1 Greeting and Leave-taking -	-	-
2	Unit 2 Thanking and Apologizing 22	“When my mummy bakes some cookies...”	<i>Stereotyping</i> on woman in which she (usually) does the cooking in the kitchen.
3	Unit 3 Introducing Each Other 27-28	 <p>(1) Ratna practices dancing in the afternoon; (2) Nyah and her mother go to the market by bus; (3) Nyah's mother can steer small boats well.</p>	<p><i>Stereotyping</i> on women can be shown clearly on sentence 1 and 2 where they are depicted as being feminine and domicile-related by practicing dancing and doing the grocery shopping.</p> <p>However, the last sentence (3) shows a gender equality perspective that woman can also do something difficult as well as men.</p>
4	Unit 3 Introducing Each Other 35	Mother's occupation: nursery school teacher	Compared to the subject's father's occupation which is a clerk in a company, being a pre-school teacher is considered as <i>marginalization</i> since it is a low-class work.
5	Unit 4 Days in My Life 43	Mum always buys seven loaves of bread.	This is another <i>stereotyping</i> sample where, by default, women do the domestic work.

- 6 Unit 5 | People around Me | 61 (1) My mother, Anita, is a cook; (2) Lisa is my mother. She is a salesperson. Mothers who are both portrayed as a cook and a salesperson could be regarded as *stereotyping* and *marginalization*.
- 7 Unit 5 | People around Me | 65  *Stereotyping* on how soft and nurturing woman is depicted as teacher whereas men are presented with task works like a security guard and a caretaker.
- 8 Unit 6 | Things at School | 74 “This is Salma’s bag. She usually brings these things to school.”  When a woman is only seen for its physical appearance like by bringing comb to school, then she could be considered as the ‘second’ sex making it as a *subordination*.
- 9 Unit 7 | Things in My House | 94  There are two women represented differently as one is (good at) singing, and the other one is doing the laundry. The latter is clearly seen as a *stereotyping* while the former is vaguely the same.
- 10 Unit 8 | Labels and Lists of Things | 121 “Lia is going to buy some groceries.” *Stereotyping* takes another form when it is woman who is considered as the grocery shopper.
- 11 Unit 9 | My Favorite Animals | 128 “Sarah likes helping her mother in the kitchen. She helps her cut the vegetables.” Another *stereotype* in which woman is the one who does the kitchen

			stuff.
12	Unit 10 Describing Things 140, 146	My Diary (narrated by a girl) “I have a new diary... I love the poem.” “I am Salma and I like to collect dolls.”	Never boys are labelled to write a diary, collect dolls and love poems, so it goes without saying that it is a <i>gender stereotype</i> .
13	Unit 11 Be Quiet Please -	-	-
14	Unit 12 My Idol 169	“This is Ananda Mirza Iryanti. You can call her Mirza. She practices dancing every day. In the future, Mirza does not want to be a doctor or an engineer. She wants to be a professional dancer.”	While boys usually want to fill elite professions like doctors or engineers when they have grown up, girls are said to be dancer in their future. This is a common gender <i>stereotype</i> and <i>subordination</i> occurring in our society.

Table 2. Analysis of Gender Equality Perspective on *BRIGHT 2* Grade VIII K-13

No.	Unit Title Page	Gender Equality Issue (Sentence/Illustration/ Question)	Interpretation
1	Unit 1 Attention, Please -	-	-
2	Unit 2 Good Job! 12, 16	 <p>“The boy’s name is Victor. He has just received the award of MVP (Most Valuable Player) in the regional junior high basketball championship.” “What a brave man!”</p>	Boys and men are considered more superior and deserve to be better than their counterparts. This could be regarded as <i>subordination</i> for girls and women. Besides, it is also <i>stereotypic</i> that a man is considered brave while a woman is not.
3	Unit 3 Isn’t It	“Salma and Rita are currently at	Women are often

Lovely? | 20

the flower exhibition in Java Mall.”

symbolized with flower because it is said that they are keen on flowers.

However, this is not entirely true, so this is a stereotype.

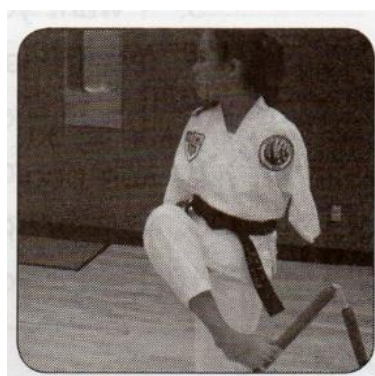
4 Unit 4 | You Can Do It! | 29



This is a stunning image and might be rare since women are presented in their unusual hobbies. This certainly has fulfilled the gender equality qualities.

Meilin is portrayed as a girl who can do martial arts, while Mischa can play football.

5 Unit 4 | You Can Do It! | 35




Doing taekwondo and flying an airplane are absolutely breathtaking when it is done by a woman who has no arm, so this has presented the gender image equally.

Jessica Cox was born without arms, but she can do a lot of things.

6 Unit 5 | Put on The Life Jacket, Please? | 43

Mr. Campbell: “Annie and Sally, don’t talk among yourselves. Read your book and listen to Zach

The traditional belief on how women are fussy and like to gossiping is a

		reading.”		negative attitude labelled to them, thus making it as <i>stereotyping</i> and ‘ <i>cultural violence</i> .’
		Annie: “Oh, I’m sorry, sir.”		
7	Unit 6 Will You Come to My Party? 56-57	<p>“Lousia, are you free this afternoon? Yes, I am. Why? What about going shopping? It’s a good idea.”</p> <p>“Eric, are you doing anything after work? No. why? Let’s play basketball.”</p>		<i>Stereotyping</i> on women who like shopping is no piece of cake to witness, while men are often associated with sports.
8	Unit 7 Congratulations! -	-	-	-
9	Unit 8 It Is a Lot -	-	-	-
10	Unit 9 What Do You Usually Do? 105	“Mr. Rahmayadi likes shopping once a week.”		Unlike previous case as in no. 7, a man is depicted with unusual feminine attribute, so this is a good sign of gender equality representation.
11	Unit 10 What Are You Doing? 112	 <p>“Mrs. Baxter is in the kitchen. She is baking a cake.”</p> <p>“Mr. Baxter is in the front yard. He is washing the car.”</p> <p>“Sarah is in the kitchen. She is helping her mother.”</p> <p>“Ellen is in the living room. She is mopping the floor.”</p>		This is undoubtedly a clear picture of traditional gender roles and <i>stereotype</i> in society where females are expected to do all the domestic works like cooking and cleaning the house while men do the finance work and maintain it.

12 Unit 10 | What Are You Doing? | 120-121



(1) “Why are you crying?”

(2) “Justin is cheating on the test”

Common narrow *gender stereotypes* might include: that it is not okay for men to cry, but acceptable for women; that men are naturally defiant, while females should be submissive (to the rules).

13 Unit 11 | He’s Old but Strong | -

-

-

14 Unit 12 | As Timid as A Rabbit | 147-148

“I have three best friends. Their names are Salma, Firman, and Lia. Three of them can play the guitar well. The three are clever students.”

Both men and women are treated equally and fairly.

15 Unit 13 | What Does She Look Like? |

“Clara is a really energetic girl. She loves basketball, volleyball, and football. And she hates singing and dancing. She also plays basketball with other boys and girls, plays volleyball with her brothers at home. She said she’d like to be a rich professional footballer.”

Unlike typical girls, Clara has redefined the traditional *stereotypic* gender roles by doing those all male activities.

16 Unit 14 | Lost and Found Department | 171, 173

“This red belt is made of genuine leather. You will look more beautiful wearing this belt. The buckle is glossy. You can choose the patterns of the buckle: leaf, rose, star, kitty, and apple.”

“My sister, Mercy, collects piggy (bank), not the real one of course. I (Lia), myself, collect pink stuff, so anything I have in my bedroom is in pink. ”

By certain period of age, the gender *stereotypes* and gender roles/norms are usually set. Girls are ‘supposed’ to collect pink stuffs, and wear those beautifully glossy belts with typical feminine patterns like rose and kitty.


17 Unit 15 | It Was Tasty! | 182, 189

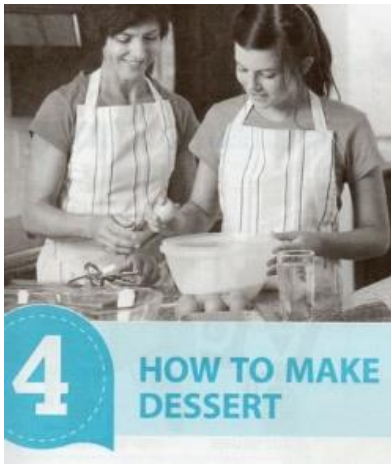

“Here are the things Sarah planned to do last weekend: wash the

While Sarah still retain her *stereotypic* gender roles by


		dishes; clean bed room; repair the gas stove; iron clothes; paint the garage.”	doing the chores, she also shows that she is capable of doing what men can do like repairing and painting. Therefore, it is a quite balanced representation.
		“While the men were fixing the roofs, the women were cooking the dinner.”	However, the second case clearly shows gender <i>stereotype</i> .
18	Unit 16 Let’s Share Your Experience 201	“My mother was cleaning the room. My father was mowing the lawn.”	This is a typical gender <i>stereotype</i> .
19	Unit 16 Let’s Share Your Experience 209	“Look! I have cooked delicious food!” Mother exclaimed cheerfully.	Mother cooks in the kitchen is a common trait for female <i>stereotype</i> .
20	Unit 17 I Want You to... 220	To: Salma Please babysit your little sister this afternoon. Ok, mum. I will take care of Jean	Women are usually treated as nurturing, so that creating a <i>stereotype</i> that they are better at taking care and raising children.
21	Unit 18 May I Have Your Attention, Please? -	-	-
22	Unit 19 Stories That Teach -	-	-

Table 3. Analysis of Gender Equality Perspective on *BRIGHT 3* Grade IX K-13

No.	Unit Title Page	Gender Equality Issue (Sentence/Illustration/ Question)	Interpretation
1	Unit 1 Good Luck 8-9	 <p>“Lisa wins the marathon in school sport competition. She has trained</p>	Both designing jersey and winning a marathon competition are often associated with males, so here the females have been equally presented.

		for a month and did not give up.”	
2	Unit 2 I Agree with You 14	Dina: “I have a cooking class on Sunday morning, and a dancing class in the afternoon.”	Like in <i>BRIGHT 1</i> and 2, there is always constant occurrence of gender <i>stereotype</i> in which women cook and dance.
3	Unit 3 Know What You Eat -	-	-
4	Unit 4 How to Make Dessert 41		The cover page illustrates two females making some cake in the kitchen resulting <i>stereotypic</i> gender role for women who belong in the kitchen.
5	Unit 5 I Am Doing My Homework 54-55	“Dad is baking a cake.” “Dad was cooking our dinner.”	By contrast, this time readers are uniquely presented with a father doing the cooking which is breaking the normal gender stereotype.
6	Unit 5 I Am Doing My Homework 62-63	“Linda was dancing gracefully when I came.” 	Not once a man is portrayed dancing in the three books. It has been always the <i>stereotypic</i> women. In addition to this, it is quite common to see a little girl carrying a doll.
7	Unit 6 Have You Done Your Homework? 70	“My dad is washing the dishes.” “My dad has washed the dishes.”	Male is treated equally by doing the domestic work.

8	Review The First Term 78	“My sister gave English lessons to earn some money.”	The female subject is treated more equally by being presented as an independent woman.
9	Review The First Term 84	Alita: “May I visit you around seven this evening?” Bella: “I’m afraid I will still be ironing my clothes.”	Ironing the clothes by woman is another form of gender <i>stereotype</i> .
10	Review The First Term 86-87	“She is cutting the vegetables and now she will start cooking.” “Dona is crying because she cut her finger while she was cooking dinner.”	Generally speaking, people still believe the gender <i>stereotype</i> that women belong in the kitchen.
11	Unit 7 I Love Indonesian Folktales 98-99	A famous Indonesian <i>Timun Mas</i> folktale is presented. The story said how an old woman carelessly accepted a giant’s disadvantageous proposal by giving grown-up Timun Mas. In the end, Timun Mas somehow could manage to escape her death from the wicked giant.	This is a mixed case where there are two sides to consider. Firstly, women like the old woman and Timun Mas are often unfairly depicted inferior like being careless and weak (subordination). On the other hand, it also shows that both of them could survive independently without the help from men, so they have balanced treatment by losing the patriarchal ideology.
12	Unit 8 The Garden Is Taken Cared of 106-107	“This <i>gudeg</i> was cooked by my Mom yesterday.” “This sweater was knitted by my grandmother.”	Both mother and grandmother do cooking and knitting respectively, thus creating <i>gender stereotype</i> .
13	Unit 8 The Garden Is Taken Cared of 116	“My father is a tailor. He sewed this sheet when I was two years old.” “Mother is the best cook. She cooks delicious dishes.”	Even though a male tailor is not rarely found, it still exhibits gender equality to some extent. On contrary, the second sentence shows the <i>gender stereotype</i> of

		woman
14	Unit 9 What an Amazing World! -	-
15	Unit 10 Special Offer! Today Only! 142-143	 <p>Both advertisements use women to attract audience, thus indicating that attractive women is stereotypically the decisive factor to gain consumers' interest.</p>
16	Unit 11 Let's Sing! -	-

When it comes to women or gender equality discourse, then it involves the emancipatory ideals that are to be achieved throughout the globe. The finish line of the transition situation is envisioned as being practiced by women and men through the struggle and efforts to eliminate inequality, to achieve equality and equity for both sexes.

The paradigm transformation in the elements of life, especially in education, is believed to be a necessity in order to comply with contemporary developments of modern life. Biological differences between men and women have occurred from the time of conception, embryological development, until the period of adulthood. Even though Socio-cultural differences are developed according to the conditions that take place in each society, it's just that often biological differences are also applied to the gender roles. There is a disproportionate dichotomy gap in gender roles and is very detrimental to women, and because gender inequality has taken place from generation to generation in almost all

communities, the inequality issue has assimilated to the norms and become difficult to identify.

Changing the mindset of androcentric (looking at things from male perspective) towards a gender-based approach needs to be constructed by raising awareness of needs and experiences of women that is different from men. This is where English education must reflect its current content and make necessary adjustments for its gender bias issue by revising with more gender-responsive materials. English teaching materials with gender equality content will tackle discussed paradigmatic issues and provide a theoretical and practical framework for students.

In conclusion, gender-equality oriented English teaching material is by all means required in global education in order to create students' mindset before equal rights or gender equality could be reached. The three books analysed in this research have shown that gender inequality values, particularly gender stereotype, has been preserved on and on, and thus making the issue taken for granted. Last but not least, gender equality perspective in education is not a mere slogan, but it deserves more attention and recognition so that both men and women have equal rights and positions in all aspects of life.

Conclusion

It appears that nowadays English teaching materials which have been studied by students still transfer to only little extent the gender values or norms applied in the culture of society. Therefore, having been set for its strategic role as lingua franca, English language teaching must adapt all of its contents based on gender equality perspective by equipping necessary knowledge constructs about male and female relations that are more fair and gender sensitive. By doing so, a new paradigm and mindset would be able to be activated and then promote gender-oriented English education. Even though the research objects also contain some gender equality materials, the content of gender bias still far outweigh the ideal concepts; therefore, a revision needs to take place in order to present the students a fairer and equal treatment for both men and women.

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