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ORIGINAL PAPER

A Portrait of Gender Bias in the Prescribed Indonesian ELT Textbook for Junior High School Students

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Abstract   In recent decades, gender in language education has been discussed and studied. Textbooks play a critical role in canalizing particular gender ideologies or values. ELT textbooks are no exception. In response to this, this paper reports on a critical discourse study that examines how females and males are represented in the prescribed Indonesian ELT textbook published by the Ministry of National Education. Critical micro-semiotic analysis indicates that the ELT textbook depicts gender bias or stereotypes in which these stereotypes are presented through visual and verbal texts. This finding implies that gendered texts and discourses in the textbook inadequately depict gender equality. The textbooks also showcases stereotyped gender differences. For this reason, language textbook writers and language teachers need to take into account the interplay between gender and language use when designing and using any ELT textbooks.

Keywords   Critical discourse analysis (CDA) · ELT textbooks · Gender bias · Indonesia · Junior high schools

Introduction

In an Indonesian English as a foreign language (EFL) context, the design of an ELT textbook as a curriculum document or "a product of the curriculum" (Widodo 2016, p. 133) must take gender bias into serious consideration because the country socio-culturally recognizes gender differences. Although female and male genders have long been stereotypically recognized as being unique or distinct in multicultural and

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multi-religious Asian societies such as Indonesia, this gender distinction has been affected by the issue of gender equality, e.g., through Indonesian women's emancipation or what Widodo (2018) describes as "women empowerment (for Raden Ajeng Kartini)" (p. 144): "a national heroine who fought for gender equity (female education)" (p. 143) in all aspects of social practices. Despite this gender equality movement, gender differences remain to operate in social practices of any societies because men and women are innately different in terms of perceptions and behavor patterns. To some extent, these gender differences may create gender bias that leaves a negative imprint on people's perceptions of gender equality. In the domain of language education, ELT textboks are textually not free from gender differences or gender bias because any texts and tasks in such textbooks are always gender-laden. In other words, ELT textbooks may portray gender differences between men and women, which may promote or ignore gender equality.

The discourse of gender equality in ELT textbooks tends to create gender bias. The discourse of gender equality has been well-articulated in legal documents. For example, Iran places emphasis that "Iranian laws hold education accountable for the support of girls' social and political status" (Salami and Ghajarieh 2016, p. 259). Similarly, Indonesia recognizes gender equality and heterosexuality practices, which vary in Indonesian social communities and education because it has different ethnic groups that hold particular social and cultural values of gender equality. Indonesia is a home to the largest Muslim population. For this reason, in many cases, Islamic principles shape gendered social behaviors and frame gender differences between males and females in terms of social and marital status. For instance, Islamic laws regulate or guide personal and social relationships (social distance) between females and males. This issue penetrates in education in which textbooks canalize gender issues. The role of gender in Indonesia's educational landscape has changed over time as the issue of gender equality is a topic of discussion and debate. In the Indonesian context, male and female genders have been equally treated in education although such treatment does not fully reflect the ideological values of Indonesian society recognizing gender differences.

At present, Indonesian Islamic classes at schools, for example, recognize heterosexuality, which contradicts the control of social behavior in Islam in which the dichotomy between males and females remains highly controlled. The Islamic tradition of having male students separated from female peers is fading away due to the adoption of gender equality in Indonesian education. Shachar (2012) also reports this gender equality issue, as follows: "the value of gender equality as a social value is characteristic of Zionist history, beginning with the declaration of Theodore Herzl in 1887 on women's equality in the Zionist Organization" (p. 249). Furthermore, gender equality promotes a sense of heterosexuality in ELT textbooks at secondary schools, as noted by Salami and Ghajarieh (2015): "it is therefore not surprising that the gendered discourses in textbooks support and privilege compulsory heterosexuality with children living with heterosexual parents being taken for granted as normal and natural" (p. 72). Aydinoğlu (2014) even suggests that "it is important to eliminate the gender discriminating elements in any language to be able to establish gender equality in the society" (p. 234). It is important to note that gender equality does not guarantee the occurrence of gender bias because this gender equality

imposes a certain gender role that may be inappropriate for females to play. For example, females work for jobs that require considerable physical effort.

Taking this social phenomenon into account, raising an awareness of EFL teachers and students regarding gender bias in ELT textbooks as a curriculum document is important because gender bias represented in such textbooks can affect teachers' and students' conceptions or perceptions of how gendered social practices are enacted in real-life situations. In this regard, Lee (2014) reported that "manifestations of gender norms can be found in educational materials" (p. 39). She further explains that "if a language contains words and phrases that indicate prejudice against a particular gender group, these gender biases may be imparted to children through textbooks in the form of linguistic sexism" (p. 39). Similarly, Kizilaslan (2010) argues that "assessing various manifestations of sexism in foreign language textbooks, mainly English language teaching (ELT) textbooks" (p. 3528) has inspired a critical analysis of textbooks as a representation of male or female genders in ELT classrooms.

Thus, the representation of gender bias in ELT textbooks is worthy of close investigation. The present critical discourse study examines such representation in one ELT textbook endorsed by the Indonesian Ministry of National Education. The conributions of this textual research are two-fold: (1) to raise a teacher and student critical awareness of gender roles portrayed in educational textbooks, such as ELT textbooks and (2) to showcase the issue of gender-laden educational texts, such as textbooks. The findings of the study can be a point of departure for language teachers and language materials developers to re-think of how males and females are represented in ELT textbooks.

Literature Review

Textbooks as Social Practices in the Classroom Discourse

Textbooks as social practices in the classroom discourse represent teaching materials that provide students with opportunities to carry out social actions in the target language (TL). They are what Widodo (2018) describes 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). The presentation of such materials is related to the fact that textbooks or "course books communicate a view of teaching and learning, a view of the target language and the culture(s) they represent and the worldview of their producer" (Tomlinson 2012, p. 165). This is "potentially dangerous as the course book is revered in many classrooms as the authority and there is a risk of its users uncritically accepting its views" (Tomlinson 2012, p. 165). Similarly, Foulds (2013) exemplifies the risk of uncritically accepted views in that "children interact with textbooks on an almost daily basis, understanding their biases and children's perceptions of the information put forth by them connects to the lengthy debate on the political nature of the textbook." (p. 165).

In other words, teachers using ELT textbooks might not critically consider gender bias among their students and ignore the fact that gender bias might represent

a potential risk to the establishment of gender equality in ELT textbooks. Despite this, for various reasons, teachers and students may be critical, as Tomlinson (2012) maintains that "teachers and learners are more critical than they are given credit for and often resist the commodity they are being asked to consume" (2012, p. 165). Similarly, Barton and Sakwa (2011) note that "[i]t has been argued that there is a need for teachers to critically analyze the content of textbooks before using them in the classroom since textbooks may undermine the objectives and principles of the school curriculum" (p. 176).

Unisex classes in the classroom discourse could suggest gender bias due to the fact that the social actions of male and female students have naturally been considered to be distinct. Examples include the report of Parker et al. (2017) that "the persistence of gender bias in healthcare, alongside the significant opposition that movements such as the women's self-help movement have faced in trying to gain recognition and legitimacy, highlights the fact that gender continues to be used as an apparatus of power within medical discourse" (p. 107). Their report illustrates an attempt to prove the power of what Yang (2016) describes as gender stereotypes that "not just simply reflect, but also overemphasize, the existing differences between males and females" (p. 3). In the same vein, this might also happen in the ELT classroom discourse, where students are both physically and socially identified as distinct, and the representation of gender bias in ELT classrooms proliferates.

Representation of Gender Bias in ELT Textbooks

Lee and Collins (2008) argue that particularly in the context of classroom discourses, the representation of gender bias in ELT textbooks used by teachers is inadequately diverse, or in their words "no significant change, textual or visual, in the representation of women in social and domestic settings from the earlier to the recent textbooks" (p. 135). They emphasize that "despite the fact that textbook writers are evidently making increased efforts to avoid biased or stereotypical treatment of males and females, there is still much room for improvement" (p. 135). This suggests that textbooks as a representation of what students should do are also a product projected to facilitate learning materials that maintain an equal treatment of males and females in the classroom discourse. If the number of either females or males outweighs one another in a classroom, gender bias might violate the relevance of textbooks inasmuch as females and males are subject to different social norms and values.

If a textbook used in the classroom causes a change that violates the social and cultural norms and values of students, it may certainly be considered irrelevant and require improvement. In this respect, Gebregeorgis (2016) maintains that "contributions of a textbook to social change, which the present study tries to assess from the context of the target textbook, depend on the chosen values, norms and modes of social behavior incorporated in it" (p. 120) In other words, the representation of gender in a classroom discourse, such as the issue of gender bias, should be a main concern of ELT textbook developers.

Previous Studies on Gender Representation in EFL Textbooks

Previous studies on gender representation in ELT textbooks include those of Benham and Mozaheb (2013), who presented research findings that Islam as a religion is "an inseparable part of Iranian EFL textbooks, which is taught indirectly" (p. 103). This indicates that social beliefs become a crucial factor that determines social practices in terms of language use in the EFL context. In other words, Indonesia, where Muslims are the largest religious group, shares to some degree similar social practices of English language use that are supposed not to violate Islamic social values. Indonesian EFL textbooks as a representation of the social actions of students certainly recognize gender differences rather than similarities between male and female students.

Such gender bias may emerge when either female or male individuals are treated unequally in textbook-based social practices in the classroom. This results from gender inequality in the classroom milieu. Therefore, Shachar's (2012) study on structuring of gender revealed that "examining the status of women as a social group largely indicates inequality based on gender" (p. 250). However, in her research findings, Kizilaslan (2010) notes that "it seems to be the case that most of the student teachers in this study do not feel comfortable having class discussions on the portrayal of males and females in school texts since they perceive this option as potentially controversial and divisive" (p. 3530). Shachar's (2012) report and Kizilaslan's (2010) statements in their previous study refer to different points of view. The first is based on a subjective point of view dealing with examining the status of women (Shachar 2012), whereas the latter is more concerned with an objective point of view related to the portrayal of males and females in school texts (Kizilaslan 2010). The above-cited studies ignore the improvement of textbooks as "the representation of women in social and domestic settings" (Lee and Collins 2008, p. 135).

Lee and Collins (2008) maintain that even though textbook writers attempt to present gender stereotyped texts in textbooks, minimizing such stereotypes remains of priority. However, they admit that such effort remains relatively neglected, because "there was no significant change, textual or visual, in the representation of women in social and domestic settings from the earlier to the recent textbooks" (p. 135). In other words, the previous study of Lee and Collins (2008) suggests that the representation of gender bias ELT textbooks remains an important research topic, at least in terms of what Yang's (2016) gender stereotypes mean, as discussed above. Moreover, research on the representation of gender bias in ELT textbooks is also part of cultural portrait.

Considering the statement by Russell (2016) that "gender equality in the educational sphere is framed as a basic human right" (p. 497), gender bias in ELT textbooks represents a problematic issue, since it violates "a basic human right," namely "gender equality in the educational sphere" (Russell 2016). Meanwhile, Bahman and Rahimi (2010) suggest that "textbooks play a very important role in EFL education since it is generally through textbooks that learners get acquainted with the target language culture and values" (p. 273). Furthermore, they reported that "the manifestation of women and men in these textbooks was not fair." In short, there is gender bias in Iranian English textbooks, especially reported by Bahman and Rahimi

([2010](#)). However, gender bias in ELT textbooks does not always mean gender bias in the classroom population. If more female students occupy the classroom in Indonesia, textbooks used by Indonesian teachers do not always represent gender bias in the classroom. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate the representation of gender bias in Indonesian ELT textbooks.

The Study

Research Context

This study was conducted in a context where English is politically considered as a foreign rather than additional language, despite being "a language for international communication that Indonesian people need to learn and acquire as stipulated in the Act of the 2003 National Education System" (Widodo [2016](#), p. 131). Government policy as reflected in the ELT curriculum for Indonesian secondary schools adopts English as a subject, along with others such as mathematics and natural sciences that do not directly contribute to English language use in school social practices. In this regard, I share Widodo's ([2016](#)) statements corresponding to this research context that the status of English as a school subject has been well established, and English has gained socio-political authority and prestige in Indonesian society.

ELT textbooks in this context are a representation of the social practices of students whose social background is strongly related to multireligious values. In other words, gender bias in ELT textbooks might yield social resistance to the use of English as a TL means of communication in the wider EFL society. In other words, the social context in which this research was conducted requires ELT textbooks that are learnable in the social context and that recognize multireligious values and gender differences in a wider Indonesian society.

Research Design and Data

Since this study examined gender bias as one of the gender discourses in textbooks, its design adopted critical discourse analysis (CDA), which regards "language as social practice" and considers the context of language use (Wodak and Meyer [2001](#), p. 2). Gender bias represented in one Indonesian ELT textbook endorsed by the Ministry of National Education was the focus of analysis in which both visual and verbal texts were units of this analysis. Texts as an artifact or product of social practices in ELT textbooks may represent gender issues, such as gender bias in terms of the presentation style and performance mode of English language materials. Because texts are never divorced from social context, this CDA employed a qualitative ethnographic approach to gender communication (Saville-Troike [1982](#)) in an ELT textbook. This analysis was intended to elucidate the representation of gender bias in the prescribed Indonesian ELT textbook for secondary school students widely used in Indonesia.

Regarding textbook analysis, Widodo (2018) argues that "a textbook is a curriculum or educational genre that contains a myriad of moral and cultural values that teachers and students of which may or may not be aware. These values have different meanings" (p. 136). In other words, as a curriculum genre, textbooks contain ideological values such as gender bias as a layer of language use of which teachers might not be aware. In this study, one textbook, viz. *When English Rings the Bell* for junior high school grade VII by Siti Wachidah, Asep Gunawan, Diyantari, and Yuli Rulani Khatimah, was selected for in-depth analysis with reference to the following criteria:

1. The blurb in the selected textbook represents a curriculum document focusing on attitude, knowledge, and skill competencies.
2. The textbook was written to implement a scientific approach based on the 2013 curriculum guidelines.
3. The English textbook for grade VII was selected because it contains exercises, activities, and visual images, such as pictures, with non-verbal and gender-based depiction of social actions.
4. The textbook was written by Indonesian authors who understand the Indonesian ELT context.
5. The textbook was published by Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan, Balitbang, Kemdikbud, the Indonesian Ministry of National Education.

The selected textbook is not merely a curriculum document but also reflects a gender-based representation of social actions. CDA considers discursive events through which textbook users as gendered human individuals put English language materials into practice in relation to what they constitute and their social conditioning in terms of gender bias. In other words, discursive events in the selected textbook might be socially conditioned by the authors of the textbook, with or without consideration of gender bias, which can be considered using CDA as it "takes a particular interest in the relation between language and power" (Wodak and Meyer 2001, p. 2).

Moreover, the textbook in this research is considered to be a representation of social practices of Indonesian students, whose social backgrounds are strongly related to multireligious values in which Islamic values are predominantly portrayed. In other words, gender treatment in the multireligious values of Indonesia recognizes gender differences with equal status between education and job opportunities for females and males.

Engrained in CDA, the language used in the ELT textbook represents social practices (Wodak 2001, p. 1), so the research settings included in this study were classrooms of different junior high schools where the selected ELT textbook, *When English Rings the Bell*, is currently used for teaching and learning activities. Thus, the research focus includes a portrayal of gender bias in the textbook as a representation of social practices.

Data Analysis

The selected textbook for seventh grade students mentioned above was used to collect data regarding the language materials in chapters containing learning tasks for language skills and some visual artifacts such as pictures as non-verbal depictions of gender in the textbook. Critical micro-semiotic textual analysis reflecting the fact that "visual artifacts seem to be considered to be values free" (Widodo 2018, p. 13) was also used in this research. Additionally, the textbook follows the 2013 curriculum guidelines as the basis of ELT at junior high schools. It contains eight chapters, with the presentation style of each following a scientific approach comprising four aspects: (1) observing and asking questions, (2) collecting information, (3) communicating, and (4) associating.

Furthermore, this textbook was selected because it represents social practices of teaching and learning activities from different classroom discourses at junior high schools. The representation of gender bias in the textbook was identified with respect to the following elements of social practices based on the language learning tasks and activities and visual images in the textbook. The elements of social practices examined include Leeuwen's (2008, p. 23) elements: '*actions*,' '*performance modes*,' '*presentation styles*,' '*location*,' and '*eligibility condition*,' (the qualification ELT textbooks must have in order to be eligible to play a particular role in a particular social practice) (p. 23). The performance mode that results in the representation of social practices (Leeuwen 2008) in the analyzed text is based on the 2013 curriculum guidelines, as mentioned above. In other words, the textbook is also expected to maintain a balance between female and male representations in terms of the learning needs and expectations of students.

Research Findings and Discussion

A considerable number of texts in the selected textbook are represented both visually and verbally, and the focus of this textbook analysis is on gender bias that may prevent ELT teachers from teaching social and cultural values by using the TL. By maintaining gender equality, teachers can optimally improve and develop their students' moral values as implied in verbal texts as the representation of social actions, both material and semiotic (Leeuwen 2008, p. 73). However, if gender bias is ignored as a focus of this study, the mixed class to whom the selected textbook is taught may find no differences in male or female gender. Therefore, the textbook *When English Rings the Bell* accommodates learning activities that suggest moral values, such as greetings, patriotism, and other moral values.

In-depth data analysis is presented using the approach of recontextualization of social actions in relation to the representation of gender bias in the ELT textbook. The findings include the gender-based social actions of the textbook identified through its material and semiotic actions and the representation of gender bias through (1) themes and *visual artifacts* in the presentation styles and performance

mode of the ELT textbook, (2) the eligibility conditions of the textbook presentation styles, and (3) location. These aspects of the findings are in conformity with the theoretical framework of ELT textbooks as social practices. Therefore, data describing these aspects are worthy of presentation and discussion.

Visual Representation of Gender Bias in ELT Textbooks

The writers of the selected textbook present what Widodo (p. 6) describes as *visual artifacts*, such as "pictures, photographs, and diagram trees" (p. 6) or nonverbal depictions of learning activities. These visual artifacts are used to portray particular values of gender treatment that "both teachers and students may go unnoticed or take for granted" (p. 6) and that may visually represent gender bias. The aim of uncovering these gender treatment values as gender equality or bias is "to build and enhance teacher and student awareness of values represented in the textbook because the textbook is a value-laden curriculum document" (Widodo, p. 6). This is because a textbook is "a silent partner that depicts legitimized or dominant values that certain societies hold" (Widodo, p. 6). Owing to space limitations, this in-depth analysis only considers visual representations that are relevant to lesson themes selected as a corpus of gender-based discourses.

Table 1 shows that the visual artifacts portray a variety of gender bias, or what Lee and Collins (2008, p. 135) describe as "biased or stereotypical treatment of males and females" of which teachers should be aware in order to build and enhance awareness of the treatment of gender equality that the textbook writers apply. In this case, most of the *visual artifacts* presented in the textbook chapters contain gender bias; for example, in Chapter 1, the stereotypical treatment of female gender can be seen by the depiction of three students saying "Good morning, how are you?" The visual artifacts in the individual pictures and speech bubbles show two male students who are stereotypically treated as enthusiastically active to greet others. Meanwhile, the female student appears passive. Similarly, although the speech bubble goes to the female student in Chapter 2, the two male students appear dominant, expressive, and active. Like those in Chapter 1, the two male students in Chapter 3 are treated as stereotypically active and socially sensitive. By contrast, the female student appears stereotypically passive and domestic.

In addition, the presentation style and performance mode include a colorful visual artifact with a single picture of a boy (male student) as the first depiction in each of Chapters 1–3. This reinforces the sense of gender stereotyping by posting a picture of a male student as the first visual artifact accompanying the verbal text in the chapter, and it is against the requirement that the presentation style of visual artifacts in the form of pictures in the textbook should embody gender equality.

From a domestic perspective, the female student stereotypically appears as domestic and familiar as a part of home life, as can be seen in Chapter 4. Unlike the previous chapters, all female and male students in Chapter 5 are treated equally in the outdoor reading activity, but this condition changes in Chapter 6, with biased or

Table 1 The portrayal of gender bias in the textbook, '*When English Rings the Bell*' for Junior High School Grade VII [adapted from the table "The Portrayal of Values in the Textbook" in Widodo (2018, p. 7)]

Chapter	Theme	Visual artifact	Description	Location/page	Gender bias
N/A	N/A	Book cover	One image depicts the world. Hands grab the globe	Book cover	Whose hands? Female or male or both
1	Good morning. How are you?	Individual pictures	Three images portray two male students with speech bubbles for **greeting**, and one female in silence	P. 1, 4	Two male students greet, but the female one remains passive
			Two images showcase the interaction between a son and his father **in the bedroom**, and a daughter and her mother **in the kitchen**	P. 4	Stereotypical difference between male and female gender at home
II	This is me	Individual pictures	Three images illustrate two male students in silence, and the female with a speech bubble for informing	p. 21	Two male students remain silent, but one female student speaks
III	What time is it?	Individual pictures	Three images depict two male students with speech bubbles for greeting, and one female in silence	p.37	Two male students greet, but the female one remains passive
IV	This is my world	Home outdoor	A set of images portray things, utensils, pets, trees, and flowers, and one female student. One separated image depicts one male student with a speech bubble for informing, but one female in silence	p.59	Two female students are kept domestically passive saying nothing, but one male student speaks

Table 1 (continued)

Chapter	Theme	Visual artifact	Description	Location/page	Gender bias
V	It's a beautiful day	School yard or park	A set of images depict three male and three female students sitting together reading their books with a speech bubble for what they are going to learn	P. 99	The male and female students are treated equal, and one male student speaks
VI	We love what we do	Pictures in series and individual pictures	A set of images showcase a farm and classroom settings with a speech bubble aiming at a female student	p. 127	The male and female are at work, and a female student speaks
VII	I'm proud of Indonesia	The country and two individual pictures	An image illustrates the country-side and an Indonesian flag with a speech bubble aiming to the male student	p. 149	The male student speaks, but the female one is in silence
VIII	That's what friends are supposed to do	Individual pictures	Two images depict a male student and a female student, with a speech bubble aiming at the male student	p. 177	A male student speaks, and a female student is in silence

stereotypical treatment with female people feeding and serving while the male ones do farming and teaching. The stereotypical treatment in Chapters 7 and 8 shows that the male students appear to feel the pride as the speech bubbles go to them more than to the female students.

Verbal (Written) Portrayal (with Visual Accompaniment) of Gender Bias in ELT Textbooks

In addition to a visual portrayal of gender bias in the selected textbook, the writers provide verbal texts which pertain to written texts. In the textbook, the writers exemplify social actions of greeting, singing, discussing, and other social activities through some visual artifacts representing gender values that potentially reflect gender bias. To portray gender bias in the selected textbook, two aspects considered by Leeuwen (2008, p. 59), viz. "material" as "doing" and "semiotic" as "meaning," were applied. The material aspect of the social action in the textbook deals with what junior high school students are supposed to do to use English and perform meaning in some social actions of doing something. For an in-depth analysis of the requirements for the textbook presentation style in the form of verbal texts, some text extracts from each chapter that mainly contains verbal texts were selected.

Anchored in the concept of gender bias in the textbook, the in-depth analysis of the language use in each verbal text extract reflects Parviz and Gorjian's (2014) concept of men and women reporting that "women's texts are strongly self-reflexive and evaluative, while men's were more egocentric" (p. 1418). In short, the gender difference between women and men is the main issue regarding the portrayal of gender bias in the ELT textbook. In this case, the material action or purpose is labeled as MA (material action) while the semiotic action of the verbal text is labeled as SA (semiotic action).

Verbal text 1

MA: The students associate something about introducing themselves
SA: "*Hi I'm Annisa …I live in Bulungan, North Kalimantan…My hobbies are cooking and running*" (Chapter 2, page 30)

The material action (MA) in Verbal Text 1 describes the associating stage of the students' action sequence of observing, asking, collecting, and communicating. When introducing herself, Annisa (a female student) may associate herself with a place, stating Bulungan as her origin, by saying for example "I live in Bulungan" as the semiotic aspect of student's doing. The above student's semiotic action in the verbal text on page 30 represents the stereotypical treatment of her gender in that she appears to introduce herself and that her hobbies include **cooking**. Such a hobby is so common for Indonesian women that it is much more biased or stereotypical than equal gender treatment. However, in Indonesian social practices, the proper name used in this semiotic action in Verbal Text 1 explicitly denotes female rather than male gender, so it does not support the issue of 'heterosexuality' (Salami and Ghajarieh 2015, p. 70) that signifies gender equality in the textbook.

Unlike that of Verbal Text 1, the semiotic action of Verbal Text 2 supports the issue of heterosexuality in the textbook. Although the textbook writers on page 44 provide a picture of a female student to depict the speaker who carries out the semiotic action, any student, male or female, could say "I usually go to the traditional market" (Verbal Text 2). Such a depiction implies the stereotypical (biased) difference of gender.

Verbal text 2

MA: The students communicate by making their own schedule
SA: *I usually go to the traditional market. About 06.30 in the morning, the vegetables are still fresh at that time. You should go there.* (Chapter 3, page 44)

In Verbal Text 2, the students are expected to be able to communicate their learning schedules, and their social actions of communicating are represented and illustrated using different models of language practice, such as telling someone about daily activities. The writers provide speech bubbles and pictures of female students to show that the semiotic actions belong to the female students as the speakers or TL users. The topic of the semiotic action in Verbal Text 2 reflects the stereotypical treatment of the above students' female gender due to their familiarity with, for example, how to get "**fresh vegetables in the traditional market**," with which male students are unfamiliar. In other words, the SA shows that the verbal texts in the aforementioned speech bubbles represent gender bias focusing on gender differences rather than on gender equality in the textbook. Although any student could say "the vegetables are still fresh at that time," the provision of the speech bubbles to a particular gender depiction indicates biased or stereotypical gender treatment by the writers (Lee and Collins, 2008).

Verbal text 3:

MA: Students communicate with their friends, talking about public buildings
SA: *Here is what we will do. It is about the public buildings.* (Chapter 4, page 67)

The semiotic action (SA) in Verbal Text 3 shows how students communicate with other people concerning public buildings. In this case, the writers of the textbook present the speech bubble containing the verbal text to show the SA of a female student in the conversation. The conversation presented on the above-mentioned page contains a set of dialogs between a father and son rather than a mother and daughter through visual accompaniment. This implies that a female student may take the role of a father or son instead of taking the role of a mother or daughter. In other words, the gender treatment in the textbook undermines gender differences, violating the ideological values that students should learn in Indonesian society. This, therefore, aggravates gender bias unless students can take the role of an individual of their own gender (e.g., a female student taking the role of a mother or daughter).

The SA in Verbal Text 4 enables students to act on and obtain information about what they can say about the quality of things. The students in the dialog texts on

pages 101 and 103 are represented by proper names, Siti, Lina, Dayu, Edo, Beni, and Udin, indicating the writers' gender treatment with Siti, Lina, and Dayu as female students in Indonesian social practices.

Verbal text 4

MA:　The students collect information about the quality of things and rooms
SA:　*This park is shady…* (Chapter 5, p. 101). *Wow. Your classroom is clean and tidy, nothing is dirty and messy. Our schoolyard is very large. We can play badminton and do many other activities here.* (p. 103)

> Siti　: This park is shady and the flowers are colourful. I like this park.
> Lina　: I do, too. This is a wonderful park
> Edo　: Look! There are butterflies.
> Dayu　: They're pretty.
> Beni　: There are garbage cans, too. We can keep this park clean.
> Udin　: I like studying here. The weather is nice. The park is beautiful.
> 　　　　And, it'sa beautiful day!

The proper names Edo, Beni, and Udin in Verbal Text 4 represent male students. This indicates that the textbook writers implement gender treatment that tends to be stereotypical or biased. The semiotic action (SA) in Verbal Text 4 on page 101 suggests that the female students Siti and Dayu present **evaluative remarks** (Parviz and Gorjian, 2014) that mark their gender stereotype in the textbook. On contrary, the male students, Edo, Beni, and Udin, do not use evaluative language but attempt to draw their friends' attention, and this marks their gender stereotype in the textbook as well. Therefore, gender bias remains to exist in the textbook.

A female student in Verbal Text 4 on page 103 provides an evaluative comment on the classroom condition that it is clean. Such a female student is what Parviz and Gorjian (2014) mean by "**strongly self-reflexive and evaluative**," which makes women and men distinct. On the same page, a male student does not give any evaluative comment but describes the schoolyard as he wants to, or as what Parviz and Gorjian (2014) mean by egocentrism. Thus, the verbal texts in Verbal Text 4 potentially convey biased or stereotypical treatment of gender, since neither female nor male students experience the same opportunities to use the TL to evaluate or describe the quality of things in the textbook. Furthermore, in Verbal Text 5, the students associate things and animals as follows:

Verbal text 5

MA:　The students observe animals and ask questions about them.
SA:　*Look at the giraffes……* (p. 115)

At the zoo

Siti   : Look at the giraffes. They have curly eyelashes.
Lina   : Yes, they do. Their eyelashes are adorable.
Beni   : And look at the zebras. They have black and
            white stripes on their bodies
Udin   : Guys, do you know that each zebra has
            different pattern?
Edo   : They do? That's very interesting!
Dayu   : Look at the elephants. They are huge!
Udin   : Yes, they are. And look at the tigers. They have
            sharp teeth.
Siti   : And they have powerful legs.

Verbal Text 5 shows that students' material purpose is to observe animals and ask questions about them. Like the previous verbal text, it contains a dialog with proper names, viz. Siti, Lina Dayu, Udin, and Beni dan Edo, to identify who communicates with whom. The proper names Siti and Lina are names for female rather than male students. In contrast, the proper names Beni, Edo, and Udin represent male students. This means gender treatment is feasibly evident in Verbal Text 5 via proper names that recognize gender differences between male and female students. In text, female and male students make some comments on animals. To do so, they try to draw each other's attention, respond, and comment on animals at the zoo. The semiotic actions (SA) show six students visiting the zoo. In Indonesian cultural values, the proper names Siti, Lina, and Dayu represent female rather than male students. Meanwhile, the proper names Beni, Udin, and Edo represent male students, who tend to be egoistic or what Parviz and Gorjian (2014) describe as egocentric; For example, Beni does not respond to Siti and Lina's comments on giraffes. Rather, he tries to change their focus to zebras. This is reinforced by Udin and Edo's comments, although they have their own focus on the different patterns of the zebras. In other words, the conversation between the female and male students is clearly evident as reflected through the proper names. Moreover, the use of proper names in the above conversation indicates a treatment of gender by the writers that tends to be stereotypical or biased.

In response to Dayu, Udin's acknowledgement of Dayu's evaluative remark on elephants does not much affect his egoism to change the topic and focus on his own. The egoism of these three male students reflects a biased or stereotypical treatment of gender that only contributes to gender differences rather than gender equality in the textbook. Siti and Lina's evaluative comments on giraffes and tigers also indicate a stereotypical or biased treatment of gender that does not contribute to gender equality; Rather, it only contributes to gender differences that lead to gender bias in the textbook. Such a phenomenon of ignoring the risk of gender bias is inevitable when the writers of a textbook only focus on the language theme as stated in the chapter without considering how to maintain gender equality as well.

Further gender differences between male and female students in the textbook can be easily detected, somewhat similar to the verbal texts described above. The

dialog between the two female students Lisa and Dayu in Verbal Text 6 implies that both of them are very caring and evaluative rather than egoistic.

Verbal text 6

MA: The students observe and ask questions about pets and houses.
SA: *Do you have any pets…/your house is very clean.* (Chapter 5, p. 120)

Lisa   : Dayu, do you have any pets?
Dayu   : Yes, I do. I have two cats.
Lisa   : I love cats! **What do they look like?**
Dayu   : They're very **little**. They're babies, very **cute** ones. They have grey fur, **big** eyes, and each of them has a **pink** nose.
Lisa   : Wow! I can imagine how cute they are.

Beni   : Siti, your house is very **clean** and **tidy**.
Siti   : It's nice to have a **clean** and **tidy** house. It can also keep cockroaches and mice away. They don't like **clean** and **tidy** places, you know.
Beni   : You're right. I will keep my house **clean** and **tidy**, too. I don't want to have cockroaches and mice in my house.

Lisa's remarks on Dayu's cats, such as "I love cats! and wow I can imagine how cute they are," are purely evaluative. If she were to say "I will have my own cats," she might think of herself as appearing much more egoistic, like the male student Beni does in his remark "You're right. I will keep my house clean and tidy." Although any student could say the words in the semiotic actions of the text, the proper names used in the dialog indicate a stereotypical treatment of gender by the textbook writers. In other words, this chapter of the textbook still showcases gender bias due to its reliance on stereotypical gender differences between male and female students.

Other information on gender bias can also be obtained from the following text extracts (Verbal Text 7) from the dialog between Edo and Udin (male students) talking about real monkeys, and the dialog between two female students, Siti and Dayu, about going to the traditional market.

Verbal text 7:

MA: The students observe and ask questions about animals and places.
SA: *Have you seen real monkeys../Do you often go to ….* (Chapter 5, p. 121)

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Edo    : Have you seen real monkeys, Udin? I mean, not
         on TV or in a magazine.
Udin   : Yes, I have.
Edo    : What are they like?
Udin   : They're very friendly and playful.
Edo    : Wow! That's interesting because as far as
         I know, not all monkeys are friendly. I want to
         see one, too.
```

The topic of the dialog between these two male students, viz. a real monkey, certainly sounds strange to female students, since they are much closer to domestic contexts that prevent them from going to the habitat of real monkeys. Unlike female students, male ones have greater opportunities to get to the habitat of real monkeys. In other words, the gender difference in this chapter of the textbook between male and female students remains stereotypically predictable, thus being vulnerable to gender bias.

```
Siti   : Dayu, do you often go to the traditional
         market on weekends?
Dayu   : Yes, I do?
Siti   : What is it like? Is it very crowded?
Dayu   : Yes, it is. You'd better go on weekdays.
Siti   : Okay. Thank you.
```

The role of the two female students in the previous verbal texts in the textbook still reflects somewhat the same stereotypical treatment of gender in that they appear caring and evaluative. In response to Siti, who asks "Is it very crowded?" (see the above verbal text), Dayu suggests that she go on weekdays. This means that, in the textbook, Dayu is presented as caring towards Siti, and the topic of their dialog remains stereotypically predictable, because the traditional market is a place with which they, as female children, are familiar.

The proper names Edo, Udin, Siti, and Dayu obviously imply that the textbook writers recognize gender differences rather than gender equality. In Indonesian sociocultural practices, proper names have no particular lexical meaning; For example, the proper name Edo only means Edo, but it definitely has the personal pronoun "he" (for male gender) rather than "she." Similarly, the proper name Siti in Indonesian, especially Javanese, communities definitely has the personal pronoun "she" (for female gender), and it is indeed one of the cultural values in Indonesia that those proper names Siti and Edo represent gender differences. In Verbal Text 8, the proper names Beni and Miss Mutia are also used to represent a male and female teacher.

Verbal text 8

MA: The students communicate with their teacher to tell them about jobs.
SA: *e.g. My father is a farmer (Chapter 6, p. 128)*

Beni	: My father is a farmer. He plants and grows rice.
Miss Mutia	: That's great! How about you, Dayu, what does your father do?
Dayu	: He is a teacher. He teaches mathematics in junior high school.
Miss Mutia	: That is wonderful! Lisa, how about your mother? What does she do?
Lisa	: She's a housewife. She takes a good care of us and our house.
Miss Mutia	: That's excellent! What does your mother do, Udin?
Udin	: She's a surgeon. She performs operations on her patients.
Miss Mutia	: That is excellent! How about you, Edo? What do you do?
Edo	: I'm a student.

The semiotic action in Verbal Text 8 represents a particular social practice in an English class where a teacher, Miss Mutia, asks her students some questions about what their parents do. The semiotic action (SA) for Lisa, viz. "She's a housewife. She takes a good care of us and our house," in response to Miss Mutia implies a stereotypical treatment of gender rather than gender equality. In other words, Lisa's mother represents only the female gender, working as a housewife at home. When Miss Mutia asks the other students about their father, none says my father is a house husband. Rather, they say that their father is, for example, a farmer or a teacher. In addition, the female student Lisa is evaluative and caring, which also implies a stereotypical treatment of gender. Therefore, gender bias in the textbook remains evident.

Verbal text 9

MA: The students associate things and animals.
SA: *This is a butterfly. The color is pretty. It flies. This is a snake. It's a wild animal. It bites.* (Chapter 6, p. 141) *This is a bowl. It's round. We put soup into it.* (p. 143)

The female students in Verbal Text 9 talk about beautiful things, such as butterflies and cooking utensils, for example, bowls, with which women are familiar, whereas the male students consider ugly things, such as snakes. The verbal texts in this chapter potentially contain biased or stereotypical treatment of gender, since neither female nor male students experience the same opportunities to use the TL to associate things and animals.

The sequence of social actions in Chapters 3–6 also includes the same actions of observing, asking, collecting, communicating, and associating. The topics of these chapters strongly contain a sense of feminine gender representation, such as what

Bakar (2014) describes as "emotionally expressive and sensitive" (p. 748), in the topics "What time is it?" (Chapter 3), "This is my home" (Chapter 4), "It's a beautiful day" (Chapter 5), and "We love what we do" (Chapter 6). In other words, the sense of masculine gender representation, such as "muscular, dominant and aggressive" (Bakar, 2014), is relatively undermined in these chapters. However, the topic of Chapter 7 ("I am proud of Indonesia") sounds not only "expressive" but also "muscular, dominant and aggressive" (Bakar, 2014). In Verbal Text 10, the gender treatment is somewhat equal, as can be seen below.

Verbal text 10

MA: The students associate something about Indonesia.
SA: *I am proud of Indonesia. It is a big country…* (Chapter 7, p. 170)
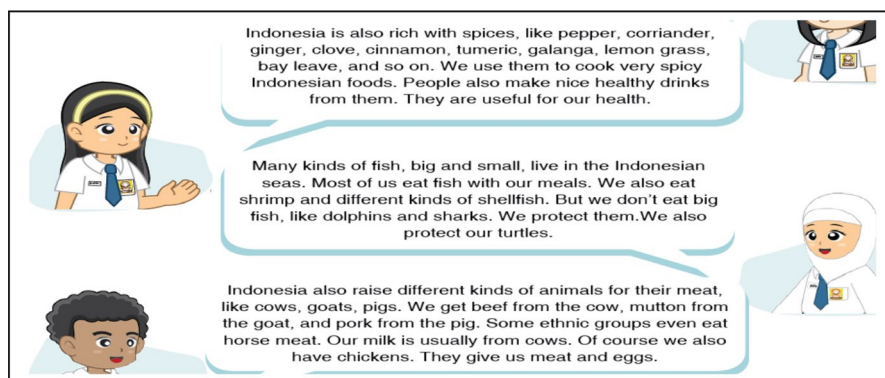
The visual accompaniment to Verbal Text 10 shows all the male and female students describing Indonesia, and they are treated equally socio-politically in the sense that they have equal opportunities to present their ideas about Indonesia. However, the domestic discourse of who recognizes spices such as peppers, corianders, gingers, cloves, cinnamons, turmerics, galangals, lemongrasses, bay leaves, and other cooking ingredients suggests the stereotypical image of female rather than male gender in Indonesian cultural values. Furthermore, the social discourse of who can say that some ethnic groups even eat horse meat is highly concerned with the stereotypical image of male gender, although female students as the representation of female gender have equal opportunities to talk about such statements. In other words, this stereotypical treatment of gender strongly contains gender bias.

Moreover, the material action in Verbal Text 10 showcases students' action of associating something about Indonesia, and the semantic action includes one of the students saying "I am proud of Indonesia. It is a big country." The topic of this chapter strongly suggests something hidden in the language content of the textbook itself, namely an ideology that students should learn to be patriotic, as described by Marefat and Marzban (2014) that "it is important to make students and teachers aware of textbook

contents and hidden ideologies" (p. 1094). In the social context of Indonesia where Muslims are a major religious group, gender differences remain feasibly recognized as ideological values, and this sometimes contradicts gender equality in educational contexts. In the struggle against colonialism before 1945, the patriots were heroes rather than heroines in the history of the social and political movement in the country. This yields a stereotypical representation of patriotism that Indonesian students will learn and put into practice. Verbal Text 10 in the textbook reflects this stereotypical treatment of gender by adopting the ideological value of patriotism.

The fact that language in the textbook contains gender bias plays an important role as "an ideology maker and social role determiner" (Söylemez 2010, p. 748) that "leads us to make generalizations about the roles of the sexes in a community" (p. 748). Therefore, the authors and users of the textbook as agents of ideology making and social role determination should critically consider gender equality in the textbook, the classroom and its wider society discourses.

The performance mode of the textbook shows that its authors focus on students' gender, deviating from gender equality due to the visual artifacts of gender bias. Examples include the performance mode of Chapters 1–3 of the textbook, in which the first, colorful visual images depict a male rather than female student. This deviates from the requirement that genders in textbooks should be treated equally, as also suggested by Aydinoğlu (2014), i.e., "it is important to eliminate the gender discriminating elements in any language to be able to establish gender equality" (p. 234).

Meanwhile, the presentation style of the textbook meets its requirement in having all pictures of students dressed in uniforms as a representation of their social actions in junior high school. Overall, this gender-based social analysis of the textbook showcases gender bias. However, since the textbook is currently used by English teachers for teaching the TL at different schools, this issue of gender bias should be considered by teachers as its users in ELT classes. The awareness of teachers regarding gender bias in the textbook is of great importance, because they have power and authority in classrooms and thereby can, in Bayraktar's (2011) language, "interrupt more, set topics, and can be indirect" (p. 2546).

Conclusions

The analyzed textbook addresses TL use based on the 2013 curriculum in Indonesia, and its writers claim that the focus is on maintaining a balance between all aspects of competency, including knowledge, attitudes, and skills. In other words, the textbook includes attitudes as social values of English language use, which are also presented through visual and written texts. The analysis of the textbook did not focus on learning tasks, because the textbook writers merely list TL excerpts and visual artifacts such as pictures, with some speech bubbles that depict the use of the TL in particular social actions, such as greeting, describing, thanking, apologizing, and other speech acts. No explicit learning tasks depicted through visual artifacts entail the social value of how male or female students use the TL.

Based on the critical micro-semiotic textual analysis presented herein, the writers of the textbook treat visual artifacts, such as pictures, as value-free texts (Widodo,

p. 13); For example, the single pictures of a male student in Chapters 1–3 are considered not to represent any value (be value free), whereas in fact, photographs, pictures, and other visual texts represent particular values that both "teachers and students can discuss and learn" (Widodo, p. 13). Consequently, the visual artifacts used in the textbook feasibly raise the issue of gender treatment that tends to be biased.

The textbook presents an information gap in terms of both visual artifacts and verbal texts. The depiction of male and female students through visual artifacts shows a gender treatment that obviously entails gender differences. In contrast, the verbal texts or excerpts show a treatment of genders by the writers of the textbook that shows no gender differences when using the TL; For example, no gender-based discussion tasks are included in the textbook, where students would have to discuss attitudes as values depicted in visual and verbal texts. In other words, learning tasks focusing on gender-based practice of attitudes as social values in ELT remain under-practiced.

The representation of gender bias in the ELT textbook *When English Rings the Bell* can occur in both the visual artifacts as well as verbal texts used in the ELT textbook as a means of communication rather than the representation of social actions. The gender treatment in the textbook is unspecified because gender itself undermines the importance of the visual artifacts that signify the elements of gender bias. Moreover, the presentation styles and performance mode of the textbook discourse undermine the classroom discourse, where English teachers may use the ELT textbook as the context of the social actions of their students. This implies that EFL teachers should be more critical when considering two important aspects of the ELT discourse, viz. the textbook they use to teach their students and the classroom where ELT takes place, to alleviate gender bias that might negatively affect the learning needs of students. Therefore, future studies on gender-based textbook analysis should explore teachers' affective and cognitive reactions to gender representations in ELT textbooks.

As one of the components of competence in using the TL, attitudes can certainly be portrayed using different text genres, such as short functional texts, as mainly presented in this textbook; For example, apologizing, thanking, and greeting are positive attitudes as social values that can be reflected through social actions that teachers and students can discuss and learn. However, gender equality as one social value is undermined by the fact that the writers of the textbook only provide visual artifacts and verbal texts that stereotypically depict gender differences in the TL use, and this leads to the representation of gender bias.

Gender equality in the usage of the TL does not seem to be critically translated into curriculum documents, such as textbooks. This suggests that textbook writers need to have the ability to translate gender equality into the TL use to formal settings such as ELT classrooms. This evidence has pedagogical implications that teachers should take into account. Firstly, there is an urgent need for teachers to implement gender equality in TL learning practice in order to engage students in critical exploration of attitudes as social values in English textbooks. Secondly, such critical exploration will enable either students to build and improve their awareness of using the TL with socioculturally appropriate attitudes or teachers to consider how gender equality is discursively depicted in texts. Thirdly, by encouraging teachers to

improve their awareness of gender equality, students can "play roles as text users, participants, and analysts instead of being text consumers" (Widodo 2018, p 149). Therefore, further studies that critically examine gender equality and bias as social values in ELT textbooks in the EFL context remain worthy of further exploration.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest   I declare that I have no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval   This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by the author.

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