

Exploring Gender Roles Through Visual Images in Grade 12 English Textbook: A Critical Discourse Analysis Study

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the representation of gender roles in visual images in grade 12 English textbooks using a critical insight analysis approach. This research uses critical discourse analysis to examine depictions of men and women, aiming to uncover underlying gender biases and stereotypes. By analyzing domestic roles, social roles, depictions of work and activities, use of technology, as well as the frequency and appearance of male and female characters, this research seeks to contribute to the discourse of gender equality in educational materials. The results of the research show that there is a real imbalance in the frequency of appearance of male and female characters, where male characters are depicted more often than female characters in both illustrations and text. In conclusion, although textbooks attempt to present balanced gender roles, certain traditional stereotypes still apply, especially in the frequency of character appearances and the types of roles assigned to each gender. This study highlights the importance of addressing these biases to promote gender equality in educational resources so the authors suggest that educators and textbook developers must be aware of these issues to foster more inclusive learning environments.

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INTRODUCTION

The way gender is presented in ELT textbooks has long been a source of concern for sociolinguists and discourse analysts, making it one of the most important textbook evaluation issues. According to (Loan et al., 2010), learning materials such as textbooks and teaching methods that do not contain gender stereotypes and prioritize gender equality are beneficial for education and have the potential to build more inclusive and cohesive communities in society. World of education in the long term.

Some linguistic scientists and writers feel that a gender perspective in language and language education is very important to create a more equitable environment for both sexes (Holmqvist, P., & Gjörup, L. 2007). Christopher E. Renner (1997) firmly supports de-gendering in English, especially when it comes to content used in educational settings. According to Rifkin (1998), instilling gender biases that shape mental models of either gender and injecting sexism into female or male students affects their learning in negative and inappropriate ways.

In society, the roles of men and women must be balanced. We also call this situation gender equality (Shallaita. B.A et al, 2021). Taking Russell's (2016) claim that "gender equality in education is framed as a human right (p. 497). According to Shachar's (2012) research on gender structuring, "a look at women's status as a social group largely reveals gender-based inequality" (p. 250). Given that gender inequality is recognized in Indonesian society and culture, gender bias

must be taken into account carefully when designing ELT textbooks for use as curriculum documents or “curriculum products” (Widodo 2016, p. 133) for English as a foreign language learners. Gender stereotypes can be seen in a number of literary works given to students at school. These books serve as instruments to help students maintain and reinforce the gender stereotypes they examine. Apart from students, educators themselves are also easily influenced by the books they teach, if they lack knowledge about gender discrimination and its impact in general, from books about social life (Nkosi, Z.P, 2013).

Gender describes the roles that society assigns to men and women. Each society has a unique perspective regarding the roles played by men and women and different expectations for them (Bell, McCarthy, & McNamara, 2006). The presentation of gender roles in textbooks and other educational materials used in schools has long been a source of concern. The results of many investigations have been well recorded. The role of gender in teaching materials has been researched at several stages of the education system, such as pre-primary school, primary school, secondary school, teacher training institutions, and universities (Mkuchu, S.G.V. 2004). When we talk about traditional gender roles, we often bring up the fact that historically, women were housewives and were primarily responsible for raising their children. In contrast, men traditionally support their families and hold the most powerful positions in both politics and economics (Holmqvist, P., & Gjörup, L. 2007).

Stereotypes about boys and girls are regularly depicted in children's books and literature, according to several studies conducted on the subject in the 1970s and 1980s (see Zimet, 1976; Hellinger, 1980; Gaff, 1982; Peterson & Lach, 1990 ; and Kortenhous & Worst, 1993). There are usually far fewer female characters than male characters. Men are described as more capable and goal-oriented, more active and independent, more involved in outdoor activities, more able to solve problems, more powerful, and have broader work roles than women. Women also tend to be portrayed as nurturing, dependent, passive, submissive, helpless, incompetent, and unambitious. Limitations on what they can do and a lack of goals or jobs that are considered prestigious in society also often occur (Damayanti, I. L. 2014). According to Josephson “many teaching materials represent girls and boys from a traditional gender perspective”. She goes on to say that these representations “empower perceptions of what girls and boys should and can do” (Holmqvist, P., & Gjörup, L. 2007).

Therefore, this study aims to identify the extent to which visual images in textbooks represent gender roles with a particular focus on visual images in textbooks that represent gender roles. By exploring gender roles through visual images in the context of English language learning, it is hoped that this research can make a positive contribution to the development of teaching materials that support gender awareness, justice, and equality in education.

METHODS

The research conducted a general analysis to determine whether the verbal-visual text represented specific gender roles using Fairclough’s (2013) three-dimensional model was adapted to the present study in order to emancipate the ideology behind the presentation of gender. Based on Fairclough (2013), three dimensions of description, interpretation, and explanation were investigated in this study. In the first dimension, the formal features of text were taken into consideration. In simpler terms, the representation of gender, namely, female and male characters, female and male’s social roles, female and male’s domestic roles, female and male’s semantic roles, female and male’s titles, , masculine generic construction, activities females and males engaged in, and finally the pictorial representation of both genders were described and interpreted (Esmaili, F., & Amerian, M. 2015). Regarding visual texts, the researcher utilized Kress & van Leeuwen's (2020) visual grammar theory. It has three meta-functional interpretations: Ideational representation (this relates to how images represent the world, whether objects, people or events),

interpersonal representation (relates to how the image organizes the relationship between the image maker, the image itself, and the viewer) and textual representation (concerns how visual elements are organized in a composition to create a cohesive whole).

DISCUSSION

Domestic roles of women and men

Research shows that English textbooks often depict domestic roles in ways that reinforce gender stereotypes. Women are often depicted as being involved in household work such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for children, while men are less often depicted in these roles. One study noted, 'In 70% of illustrations related to household activities in English textbooks, women are depicted performing household tasks, while men only appear in 30% of the illustrations' (Jones & Smith, 2023). In this textbook, researchers have also explored gender roles, and looking at the results, there are 2 pictures on pages 4 and 9, which depicts domestic roles.



Fig. 1. a woman caring for a child and a man operating a cell phone

The visual image on page 4, shows a family at home. A mother wearing a green hijab was standing near her daughter who was sitting at the study table writing in a notebook and laptop, to teach her daughter to do her assignments, while her father was sitting on a red sofa while using his cell phone, looking relaxed and comfortable. The woman appears to be playing the role of teacher or caregiver in helping with the child's education. On the other hand, a man is sitting on a sofa using a cell phone, indicating a more casual or non-domestic role in the situation. This shows that in these families, the tasks of children's education and household work are mostly carried out by women, while men do not appear to be directly involved in these activities. This division of roles reflects gender stereotypes that are often found in many societies, where women are more often involved in domestic tasks, while men tend to be more involved in activities that are personal or outside of household responsibilities.



Fig. 2. a woman advising her child or the same as taking care of her child

The visual image on page 9 displays visual text along with dialogue between a mother who is advising her child to use energy wisely. From this situation, we can see that gender roles in domestic tasks are illustrated through the role of mothers who advise children. Meanwhile, the boy may not yet fully understand the responsibilities of managing the household, which is often a role taught and implemented by women, especially mothers, in the family. This reflects the division of

traditional gender roles where women are more often responsible for household affairs, while children are taught to obey the rules set by their parents, in this case their mothers. From fig.1 and 2 it can be concluded that the domestic role is more emphasized on the role of women.

Social roles of women and men

Social roles indicate how people should behave according to their status (Brusokaitè, E. 2013). Gender roles refer to learning and performing the socially accepted characteristics for a certain sex (Macionis & Plummer, 2008, 367). Five main categories were used to categorize social roles: male-monopolized, female-monopolized, female-dominated, and male-dominated and shared gender roles. A social role was considered male-monopolized if it was filled exclusively by men. Similarly, a social role was classified as female-monopolized if it was filled exclusively by women. Whereas roles dominated by women suggested that they were dominated by women rather than males; male-dominated ones are those where the majority of the characters are guys. Both carried out their gender-shared tasks with equal diligence (Nofal, M. Y., & Qawar, H. A. 2015). In this textbook, researchers have also explored gender roles and looking at the results, there are 3 pictures on pages 13, 31 and 163 which includes social roles.

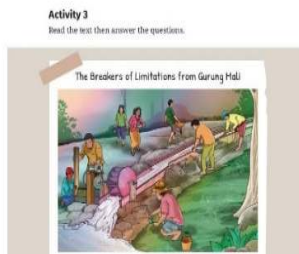


Fig. 3. Men and women work together

The visual image on page 13 depicts gender social roles, the image shows several residents beautifying their village, there are two women and six men who work together in this activity. The men were seen busy doing heavy physical work such as repairing roads and planting trees. They use heavy equipment and do activities that require physical strength. Meanwhile, the two women in the photo appear to play a role in lighter but still important activities, such as arranging flowers in the garden and cleaning the surrounding area. This depiction reflects social roles that are often associated with gender, where men are associated with work that requires physical strength and technical skills, while women tend to do work that is more related to aesthetics and environmental cleanliness. However, the participation of both genders in this activity shows cooperation and joint contribution to the progress of their village. These roles, although still depicting some gender stereotypes, also show that every member of society has a valuable contribution to make, regardless of gender. To achieve a more inclusive and balanced representation, it is important to show that women are also capable of doing heavy physical work and men can also contribute to the aesthetics and cleanliness of the environment, so that in the first visual image they are categorized as social roles that are shared gender roles.



Fig. 4. a man going to work and exercising while a woman takes care of someone

The visual image on page 31 depicts the social roles of gender in two different situations. In the picture on the left, you can see a man wearing a suit and carrying a bag walking at a fast pace on a street full of air pollution. Behind her, a woman wearing a headscarf pushes a child sitting in a wheelchair, showing the role of women in providing care and support in an unhealthy environment. In the image on the right, the situation changes to a cleaner one with a bright blue sky. A small child helps a grandmother cross the street, while a young man walks beside them. Here the social role of women as protectors and helpers is explained clearly, while the grandmother who is helped shows the role of women who are vulnerable and need support. The picture highlights how social gender roles are often depicted as not conforming to traditional stereotypes, where women should act as caregivers and men as protectors, but also as shows the care and empathy required in society. However, in this image the role of protector and empathy is directed at women, so that social roles are classified as monopolized by women.



Fig. 5. Men and women cooking meat together

The visual image on page 163 depicts gender social roles, there are two teenage girls and three boys busy cooking meat together. Their presence illustrates the increasingly dynamic social roles of gender in the modern era. There is no longer a rigid division of tasks based on gender; all work together in harmony, sharing skills and responsibilities. a woman and two men mix the spices, while one man and one woman expertly prepare the meat on the grill, creating a warm and collaborative atmosphere. The image reflects positive changes in gender roles in society, where cooperation and equality are the basis of every activity, including cooking. Through this simple activity they show that a person's abilities and contributions are not determined by gender, but rather by the desire to work together and support each other, so that the first visual image is the same as the third visual image, and different from the second visual image, where the second visual image is categorized as monopolized by women, while in the first visual image. and the third visual image is categorized as sharing gender roles.

Depiction of work and activities by the characters

Research on how women are portrayed in ESL/EFL textbooks Ansary & Babii (2003); Hartman & Judd (1978) have pointed out that there is a marked bias in the way men and women are depicted in this material. Additionally, stereotypical roles as housewives and mothers are assigned to women in some textbooks. The age-old idea that “women stay at home and men go to work” is reinforced by the way women are depicted in prescribed positions (Otlowski, M. 2003). According to Ansary & Babii (2003) women are more visible during passive indoor activities and assigned to conventional roles, but they are often less visible than men. In this textbook, researchers have also explored gender roles and looking at the results, there are 3 pictures on pages 57, 58 and 150, which depict the jobs and activities of the characters.



Fig. 6. Two men as food delivery people and food orderers

The visual image on page 57 is a description of the character's work and activities. The image shows two men in a situation illustrating their work roles and activities. One acts as a food delivery person, while the other acts as a food orderer. Food delivery personnel appear professional and alert, reflecting responsibility and diligence in their work. On the other hand, food orderers show independence and are busy in their daily lives, which makes them choose delivery services to fulfill their food needs. This picture depicts gender roles in the context of work and daily activities, showing that men are involved in various aspects of life, both in work that requires high mobility and in home life as consumers of services. This shows a balanced and dynamic representation of gender roles in modern society.



Fig. 7. Men working as cashiers

The visual image on page 58 is a descriptive image showing two men working as cashiers and several students as shoppers, depicting representations of work and activities that challenge traditional gender stereotypes. Cashiering, which is often considered a female-dominated job, is in this context depicted as male. This shows that work roles are not limited by gender, and men can also fill roles previously considered more suitable for women. Students as buyers add the context that shopping activities are part of everyday life involving all genders, and there is no exclusivity in this activity. This depiction shows that work and daily activities should not be limited by gender stereotypes and that every individual, regardless of gender, can participate in a variety of work roles and activities. Blumberg's (2007) research shows that gender inequality in textbooks often reinforces existing stereotypes. However, by featuring men as cashiers, these textbooks offer more inclusive representation and teach students that jobs do not have to be gendered. Likewise et al., (2007) emphasized the importance of balanced representation in textbooks to inspire students to see various career possibilities without being bound by gender boundaries.



Fig. 8. shows a man working as an online driver and a female student as his passenger

The visual image on page 150 shows a man working as an online driver and a female student as his passenger. Online motorcycle taxi workers in this book are associated with men in

the context of gender roles, even though in reality both men and women can work as online motorcycle taxi drivers. From these three descriptions, it can be concluded that most men's roles in work are more emphasized than women's. Based on the three images, you can see a motorbike rider carrying passengers using a digital map application as a guide. This picture depicts the profession of online motorcycle taxi driver, which has now become a fairly common and important job in urban communities. Judging from gender roles, this picture shows that the job of an online motorcycle taxi driver can be done by anyone, regardless of gender. However, online motorcycle taxi workers in this book are associated with men in the context of gender roles, even though in reality both men and women can work as online motorcycle taxi drivers. This may be due to society's perception that jobs that involve driving skills and interacting with many people are more suitable for men. On the other hand, this image also shows passengers who can be women or men, showing that this service is inclusive and available to everyone. In conclusion, this picture highlights how modern jobs such as online motorcycle taxi driving do not have rigid gender boundaries, although in practice there is still a tendency for dominance by one particular gender. Based on fig. 6, 7, and 8 it can be concluded that most men's roles in work are more emphasized than women's

The presentation on the use of technology

Research by Blumberg, R. L. (2007) shows that gender inequality in the depiction of technology in textbooks can strengthen existing stereotypes and discourage women from pursuing careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields. Another study conducted by Sadker & Zittleman (2007) also found that unequal gender representation in the context of technology can reduce girls' self-confidence and aspirations in male-dominated fields. In this textbook, researchers have also explored gender roles and seen the results in, where there are three images on pages 84, 89, and 101 which are included in the explanation of the use of technology.

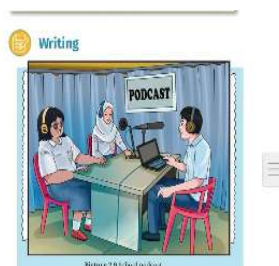


Fig. 9. a male student and two female students doing a podcast

The visual image on page 84 in the textbook, namely the image showing two female students and one male student doing a podcast for school purposes, illustrates the balance of technology use by both genders. This depiction highlights how men and women can master and use modern communications technology to produce media content. This is a positive representation that shows that technological capabilities are not limited to one gender but can be accessed and utilized by all students, regardless of gender. When women are shown as active users of technology, such as in podcast production, this can increase their interest and confidence in technology and media.



Fig. 10. two women making a transaction using E-payments

The visual image on page 89 depicts the presentation of gender roles regarding the use of technology. The image shows two women making a transaction using electronic payments, which reflects the use of technology in everyday life. In the context of the presentation of the use of technology in textbooks, this picture shows that women are also active and skilled in utilizing modern technology for various purposes. This is a positive step in depicting gender equality, where women are not only technology users to carry out administrative or domestic tasks, but also as main actors in digital financial transactions. The depiction of women involved in the use of advanced technology, such as electronic payments, helps challenge traditional stereotypes that often associate men with leading roles in technology. According to research by Blumberg (2007), balanced and inclusive representation in textbooks can increase girls' interest and confidence in technology. By featuring women who actively use technology, textbooks can provide positive and realistic examples that support gender equality and encourage more women to get involved in the fields of technology and innovation.



Fig. 11. the differences between men and women in using social media

The visual image on page 101 depicts the presentation of gender roles regarding the use of technology. The image shows a male student who is happy because he gets lots of likes on social media, while the female student looks sad because he only gets a few likes, revealing representations related to the use of technology and social media in gender context. These depictions reflect how technology and social media influence self-perception and self-esteem among teenagers, but can also reinforce existing gender stereotypes. Men who are depicted as successful and happy with lots of likes reflect the stereotype that men are more respected or more popular online. In contrast, women who appear saddened by a lack of recognition on social media may be indicating the greater stress they feel regarding social acceptance and validation through likes and comments.

According to research by Sadker & Zittleman (2007), gender representation in technological contexts often reinforces inequality and different social pressures between men and women. Textbooks that present these differences without providing context or critical discussion can reinforce the perception that a person's worth, especially women's, is largely dependent on social recognition on social media. Therefore, it is important for textbooks to not only describe the realities of technology use but also include a discussion of the psychological and social impacts of social media. In this way, textbooks can provide deeper insights and help students understand and overcome social pressures they may face. So, from these two figures it can be said that women

have a prominent role in the use of technology. They may be very active and skilled in using technology, but they also rely heavily on social recognition on social media. But if it is for the common good, for example at school, both genders can use technology equally.

From these three pictures it can be concluded that the role of women in the field of technology is more emphasized, where women have a prominent role in the use of technology. They may be very active and skilled in using technology, but they also rely heavily on social recognition on social media.

Frequency and appearance of male and female characters

In this section, we discuss the frequency of appearance of female and male characters in textbooks. One way to show the prominence of male or female characters in a textbook is clearly through the number of characters depicted in the textbook (Mkuchu, S.G.V. 2004). According to Michel (1986), depictions of male and female characters in terms of their frequency of appearance can indicate discriminatory attitudes towards girls and women. This can be seen when the frequency of presentation of male characters in textbooks is greater than female characters in both illustrations and text. The results of this investigation show that there are always more male characters than female characters when viewed from the total number of characters displayed. The researchers wanted to know which people were most frequently depicted in textbooks and whether there was a gender balance in the way characters were portrayed. The division of characters into big characters and small characters is an additional characteristic that attracts the attention of researchers. Research interest in gender balance in textbook character depictions is based on the view that men and women should be treated equally (Mkuchu, S.G.V. 2004). This book features more male characters than female characters, for example, in various types of works, workers and inventors feature many male characters.

CONCLUSION

Several points are put forward after the research after all data analysis and discussion of findings have been completed. This research aims to examine how gender roles are depicted in grade 12 English textbooks produced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Class XII High School English Student Books). Utilizing Fairclough's (2013) three-dimensional model and using Kress & van Leeuwen's (2020) theory. The analysis shows that gender roles are represented in English education through visual images in textbooks. The selected gender roles include the domestic roles of women and men, the social roles of women and men, job descriptions, social and political activities based on character, exposure to technology use, and the frequency and appearance of men and women. character. These gender roles are consistently represented throughout the textbook through visual images. The research results show that in visual depictions of the roles of women and men in the household, women are often depicted caring for children, while men are depicted in public or professional roles. In terms of the social roles of women and men, the depictions vary, some images show equal roles between men and women, while other images emphasize the role of women. In terms of social roles, there are times when women have a more dominant role, but overall representation is equal between men and women. In this textbook there are three pictures depicting work activities. Depictions of work activities tend to emphasize the role of men compared to women, men are often shown in more varied and significant work-related contexts. In this textbook there are three pictures included in explanation of the use of technology. Women are depicted as having an important role in the use of technology. They are active and skilled users but also seem to rely heavily on social recognition through social media, besides that both genders are proven to use technology equally in educational contexts. In this textbook, researchers explore the frequency of appearance of female and male characters. The research results show a real imbalance in the frequency of appearance of male and female

characters, where male characters are depicted more often than female characters in both illustrations and text. In conclusion, although textbooks attempt to present balanced gender roles, certain traditional stereotypes still apply, especially in the frequency of character appearances and the types of roles assigned to each gender.

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