

Gender Representation in English for Foreign Language (EFL) Textbook in Indonesia

Siti Salamah Fauziyah¹, Risma Julistiana², and Tri Agustini Solihati³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Perjuangan, Tasikmalaya, Indonesia

¹ salamahsfauziyah@gmail.com

² risma@unper.ac.id

³ triagustini@unper.ac.id

Article History: Submitted February 10th, 2025; Accepted May 14th, 2025; Published June 27th, 2025

Abstract. Gender representation plays a significant role in shaping social norms and perception, especially in education. The study examines whether gender is represented equally and how this representation aligns with the gender equality principles promoted by the Merdeka Curriculum. This study investigates gender representation in the English for Nusantara 7th-grade textbook, focusing on five dimensions: visual and textual gender visibility, topic dominance, occupational and leisure activities, and the use of gender-neutral language, based on Hamdan's (2008) framework. The research found that the textbook offers a balanced gender representation in some aspects, while others still require improvement. Male characters were slightly more dominant in illustrations, while female characters led in topics and occupational mentions. The use of inclusive language was positively noted. The findings indicate a relatively balanced gender portrayal, yet subtle patterns of traditional bias remain. These insights contribute to the broader discourse on inclusive education and may guide curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers in improving the gender sensitivity of future textbooks and learning materials.

Keywords: EFL textbook; gender equality; gender representation; Indonesian textbook

Abstrak. Representasi gender memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk norma dan persepsi sosial, khususnya dalam pendidikan. Penelitian ini menguji apakah gender terwakili secara setara dan bagaimana representasi ini sejalan dengan prinsip kesetaraan gender yang dipromosikan oleh Kurikulum Merdeka. Penelitian ini menyelidiki representasi gender dalam buku teks Bahasa Inggris untuk Nusantara kelas 7, dengan fokus pada lima dimensi: visibilitas gender visual dan tekstual, dominasi topik, aktivitas pekerjaan dan waktu luang, dan penggunaan bahasa yang netral gender, berdasarkan kerangka kerja Hamdan (2008). Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa buku teks tersebut menawarkan representasi gender yang seimbang dalam beberapa aspek, sementara yang lain masih memerlukan perbaikan. Karakter laki-laki sedikit lebih dominan dalam ilustrasi, sementara karakter perempuan memimpin dalam topik dan penyebutan pekerjaan. Penggunaan bahasa inklusif dicatat secara positif. Temuan tersebut menunjukkan penggambaran gender yang relatif seimbang, namun pola bias tradisional yang halus tetap ada. Wawasan ini berkontribusi pada wacana yang lebih luas tentang pendidikan inklusif dan dapat memandu pengembang kurikulum, pendidik, dan pembuat kebijakan dalam meningkatkan kepekaan gender pada buku teks dan materi pembelajaran di masa mendatang.

Kata kunci: Buku EFL, buku teks bahasa Inggris; kesetaraan gender; representasi gender

INTRODUCTION

Gender representation in educational materials is an important issue because textbooks play a big part in shaping how students understand gender roles and what society expects of them. Textbooks are

not just for learning academic content; they also influence how students see themselves and the world around them (Brittan, 2020; Dyer, 2016). When gender is not represented or when certain genders are excluded, it can reinforce traditional stereotypes (Klein & Turan, 2015). On the other hand, accurate and balanced gender representation can help promote equality and offer students a more inclusive understanding of gender roles (Feldman, 2020).

In Indonesia, the educational system depends on the curriculum. The constitution (*Undang-Undang*) no. 20 of 2003 states, “curriculum refers to a comprehensive framework including goals, content, teaching, materials, and methods that establish guidelines for organizing learning activities in order to accomplish a national educational objective”. The English textbooks used in classrooms are changing based on the curriculum in that era. In KTSP (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*) in 2006, the title of the English textbook is *Bahasa Inggris*. Then, the curriculum was changed to *Kurikulum 2013*. The title of the English textbook is *When English Rings a Bell*. However, English textbooks are changing depending on the curriculum in that era.

Furthermore, according to the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 8 of the year 2016, Article 2 Paragraph 2, school textbooks in the Republic of Indonesia must include standard content and societal favorable values. Textbooks must be free from pornography, extremism, radicalism, violence, *SARA* compliance, gender bias, or any other kind of deviation. In conclusion, Indonesia's education system has taken steps to address gender bias and promote gender equality within the curriculum.

Currently, Indonesia used *Kurikulum Merdeka* as the current curriculum. It uses the English textbook entitled “English for Nusantara” for the teaching-learning process. The *English for Nusantara* textbook was introduced to align with modern educational values, particularly a focus on gender equality. Since textbooks play such a big role in shaping how young people see themselves and the world around them, it is important to look closely at how gender is represented. Research has shown that many textbooks, both in Indonesia and around the world, often depict male characters in active leadership roles, while female characters tend to be shown in more passive, nurturing, or domestic settings (Cohen, 2018; Korreck, 2020). These kinds of portrayals can reinforce traditional gender stereotypes, limiting how students think about the roles they or others can take on (Lau, 2017; Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

Although previous studies have widely discussed gender bias in textbooks (e.g., Rohmah, 2016; Saputra, 2019; Siregar et al., 2021), there is limited research specifically addressing how the English for Nusantara textbook developed under the new Merdeka Curriculum reflects gender representation. Most earlier studies focused on textbooks from the KTSP or the 2013 Curriculum, making it essential to explore whether this newly implemented material aligns with inclusive and equitable learning goals. This study aims to take a closer look at how gender is represented in the *English for Nusantara* textbook. The researcher uses the English for Nusantara textbook for seventh-grade junior high school students. The researcher employs Hamdan (2008)’s framework for determining gender representation in the textbook. Specifically, it looks at how visible each gender is in both the images and the text, which dominates the topics, how both genders are represented in occupations and leisure activities, and how gendered language is used. By looking at these aspects, the study aims to see if the *English for Nusantara* textbook truly reflects the gender equality goals of *Kurikulum Merdeka* and whether it shows both male and female characters in a balanced way. Based on the background above, the research is guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent are male and female characters represented in the English for Nusantara textbook in terms of visibility, topic domination, occupations, and leisure activities?
2. Does the textbook employ gender-neutral terms or reflect gender bias through generic language?

This study contributes to the literature on gender equality in educational contexts by analyzing a textbook aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum, offering timely insights for educators and policymakers. It also enriches the field of textbook analysis using a focused framework (Hamdan, 2008) while highlighting areas where gender portrayal has improved and where further efforts are needed. By looking at these aspects, the study aims to see if the *English for Nusantara* textbook truly reflects the gender equality goals of *Kurikulum Merdeka* and whether it shows both male and female characters in a balanced way, beyond stereotypical roles. In the end, the researchers hope to add this research to the larger discussion about gender in Indonesian textbooks and provide useful insights that can help teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers create more inclusive and equitable learning materials.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method using a content analysis approach, which is appropriate for analyzing the representation of gender in textual and visual materials. The selection of content analysis is based on its strength in systematically describing written, spoken, or visual communication messages. It allows researchers to objectively and quantitatively analyze the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts (Springer, 2010). The materials may include legal documents, observational and survey studies, textbooks, diaries, informal narratives, etc. This study will use a textbook as the object of research. Also, through this approach, researchers can explore in detail how gender is represented in the *English for Nusantara* textbook.

The primary data source for this study is the English for Nusantara textbook for seventh-grade students, published in 2022 and officially mandated by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology under the Merdeka Curriculum. Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology mandated the national English Language Teaching textbook, entitled *English for Nusantara* for seventh-grade students, published in 2022 and written based on *Merdeka Curriculum*. The contents of the *English for Nusantara* were analyzed, including pictures and texts.

The researchers gathered qualitative data in this study by analyzing text and pictures representing gender representation. The data was collected using content analysis. This technique describes written or text-based artifacts such as textbooks and journals. The data collection involved identifying and categorizing textual and visual materials that reflect gender representation. Texts and images were carefully coded based on gender characteristics (e.g., male or female identifiers such as names, pronouns, clothing, and activities) following Hamdan's (2008) analytical framework. The coding sheet was manually constructed to classify the findings under six categories: gender visibility in photos and illustrations, gender visibility in text, topic domination, occupational roles, leisure activities, and generic terms usage. The technique used to collect the data in this research is based on condensation data processes (coding). Then, the researcher transcribed the data to the research instrument (table). Then, the researcher concluded from the data. The English for Nusantara textbook analyzed includes pictures, texts, and a combination of pictures and texts.

The analysis followed Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2014) interactive model, which consists of three main steps: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During data condensation, researchers highlighted relevant gender-related content, categorized it through coding, and filtered unnecessary information. The data were then organized into visual displays (tables and figures) to identify patterns. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the findings and linking them to broader gender discourse in educational materials. Miles et. Al (2014) have proposed steps of qualitative data analysis. In the first step, it's "data condensation". In the first stage, the researchers identified and highlighted all instances and representations of gender. Then, the researchers choose the sentences and pictures that contained gender. Next, the researcher analyzed the data by using coding. After that, the researchers used the code to highlight the data that was put into the data display. The code can be used to reduce the data, so the researcher only got the data that contains gender representation. The second step of qualitative data analysis is "data display".

In this stage, the researcher classified the data and manually put it into the research instrument. The last step is "conclusion drawing/verification". In this stage, the researchers interpret and explain the meaning of the results based on the theory and then conclude the findings. The researchers also connect the findings with social issues in society. This study focused on the data gathered from the pictures and texts representing gender. The category of the textbook is based on Hamdan's (2008) framework, such as the visibility of photos and illustrations, visibility of texts, topic domination, occupation, leisure activities, and generic conception. The main research instrument was a coding table developed based on Hamdan's (2008) categories, adapted to the context of Indonesian junior high school textbooks. This instrument ensured consistency and validity in the classification and analysis of gender representation aspects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings based on the two formulated research questions. The first research question focuses on the representation of male and female characters across five dimensions: visual and textual visibility, topic domination, occupations, and leisure activities. In this research, the researcher presented data, and the result of the analysis is the gender representation in *English for Nusantara* textbook based on the factors from Hamdan (2008); these are visibility in photos and illustrations, visibility in the texts, topic domination, occupations, leisure activity, and generic conception.

Results

1. Gender Visibility in Photos and Illustrations

The first thing discussed in the finding is gender visibility in photos and illustrations. Figure 1 is the total percentage of table 1 that revealed the representation of males and females in gender visibility in photos and illustrations are pretty balanced, with males 52% and females 48%. The portrayal of the male gender in photos and illustrations is higher than the female, as seen in Figure 1. This result aligns with findings by Rohmah (2016) and Siregar et al. (2021), who also noted male dominance in visual portrayals across Indonesian educational materials. The persistence of this pattern may reflect lingering societal perceptions that associate men with public or active roles. However, the minimal gap in percentage in this textbook indicates a positive shift toward visual equality. The characters for both male and female are counted for each character in one illustration; it can be a picture, cartoon,

drawing, or photograph. Characters' gender can often be inferred from their clothing and hairstyle.. Together, these components portray gender visibility in photos and illustrations.

Table 1. Gender Visibility in Photos and Illustrations

Chapter	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
0	4	67%	2	33%
1	89	62%	54	38%
2	23	48%	25	52%
3	41	57%	31	43%
4	58	51%	56	49%
5	60	41%	85	59%
Total	275	52%	253	48%

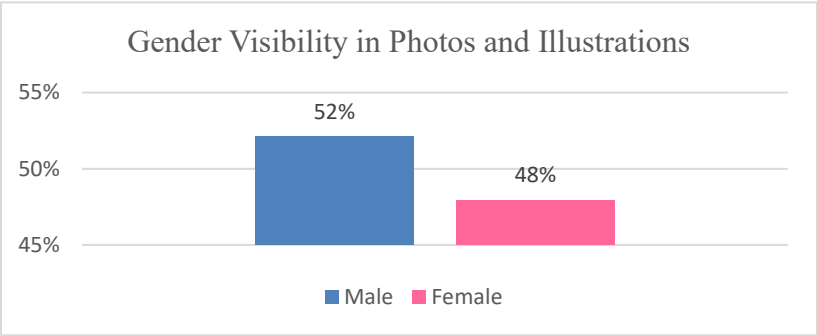


Figure 1. Chart of Gender Visibility in Photos and Illustrations

2. Gender Visibility in the Text

Next is about gender visibility in the text. Figure 2 is the total percentage of Table 2 that the representation of males and females in gender visibility in texts is pretty balanced, with males 51% and females 49%. This balance contrasts with earlier Indonesian textbooks analyzed by Saputra (2019), which heavily favored male names and pronouns in learning dialogues. The improved ratio suggests that the English for Nusantara textbook consciously aligns with the Merdeka Curriculum’s emphasis on inclusivity and equitable language use (Kemdikbud, 2020; UNESCO, 2019). The portrayal of the male gender in texts is higher than the female, as seen in Figure 4.6. The male and female characters counted for every name, noun, and generic antecedent in the texts. Together, these components provide a portrayal of gender visibility in text.

Table 2. Gender Visibility in the Text

Chapter	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
0	10	42%	14	58%
1	190	69%	84	31%
2	28	37%	47	63%
3	64	40%	95	60%
4	106	50%	104	50%
5	76	40%	114	60%
Total	474	51%	458	49%

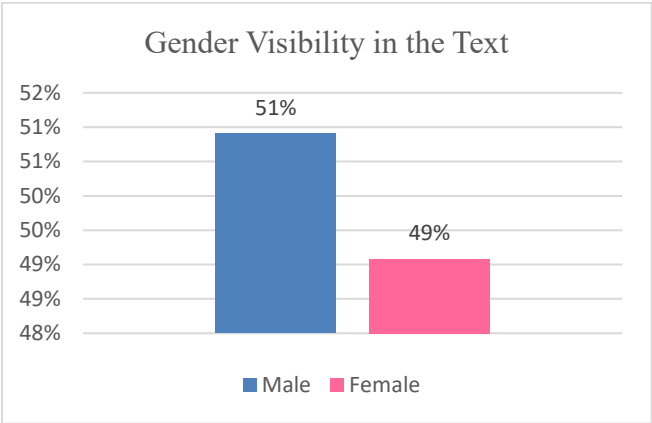


Figure 2. Chart of Gender Visibility in the Text

3. Topic Domination

Next is about the topic domination of gender representation in the *English for Nusantara* textbook. Figure 3 is the total percentage of Table 3 that revealed the representation of males and females in gender in topic domination are different, with males 45% and females 55%. This is a notable reversal from traditional trends where male characters dominate academic or central topics (Kusumawati, 2021). It signifies a commendable effort in presenting girls as active and knowledgeable contributors in learning content, potentially influencing students’ self-perception positively. The portrayal of the female gender in texts is higher than the male, as seen in Figure 3. The male and female characters counted for every name, noun, and generic antecedent in the texts. Together, these components provide a portrayal of gender in topic domination.

Table 3. Gender in Topic Domination				
Chapter	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
0	0	0	0	0
1	1	50%	1	50%
2	2	50%	2	50%
3	1	100%	0	0
4	1	50%	1	50%
5	0	0	2	100%
Total	5	45%	6	55%

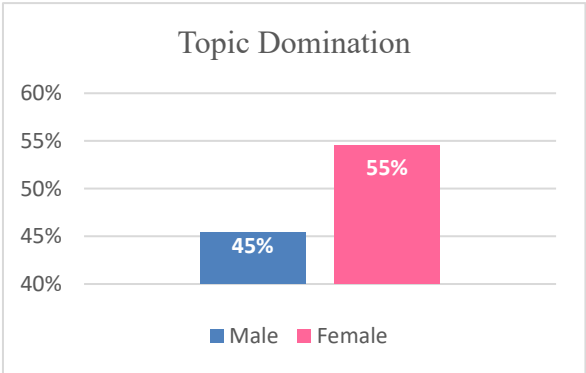


Figure 3 Chart of Gender in Topic Domination

4. Gender in Occupations

Next is about gender in occupations. Figure 4 is the total percentage of Table 4 that the representation of males and females in gender in topic domination is different, with males 43% and females 57%. The portrayal of the female gender in texts is higher than the male, as seen in Figure 4.12. The gender in occupations is counted when occupations are in pictures or texts. This component provided a representation of gender in occupations.

Table 4. Gender in Occupations

Chapter	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
0	0	0	0	0
1	1	50%	1	50%
2	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	2	100%
5	2	67%	1	33%
Total	3	43%	4	57%

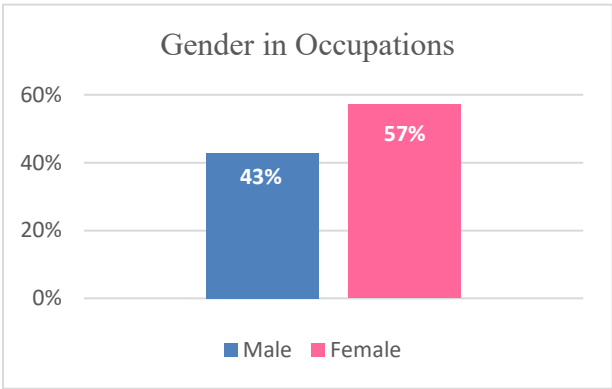


Figure 4. Chart of Gender in Occupations

5. Gender in Leisure Activity

Next is about gender in leisure activity. Figure 5 is the total percentage of Table 5 that the representation of males and females in gender in topic domination is balanced with males 50% and females 50%. The portrayal of both genders are balanced in this factor, as seen in Figure 4.12. While this is encouraging, it is worth noting that the roles shown remain largely traditional, such as teachers or nurses, similar to observations by Keddie (2016) and Sullivan (2018). Future textbook editions could enhance this by portraying women in STEM, leadership, or entrepreneurial roles, thereby reinforcing progressive gender roles. Gender in leisure activity is counted when there are leisure activities in pictures or texts. This component provided a representation of gender in leisure activity.

Table 5. Gender in Leisure Activity

Chapter	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
0	0	0	0	0
1	9	50%	9	50%
2	1	50%	1	50%
3	1	50%	1	50%
4	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0

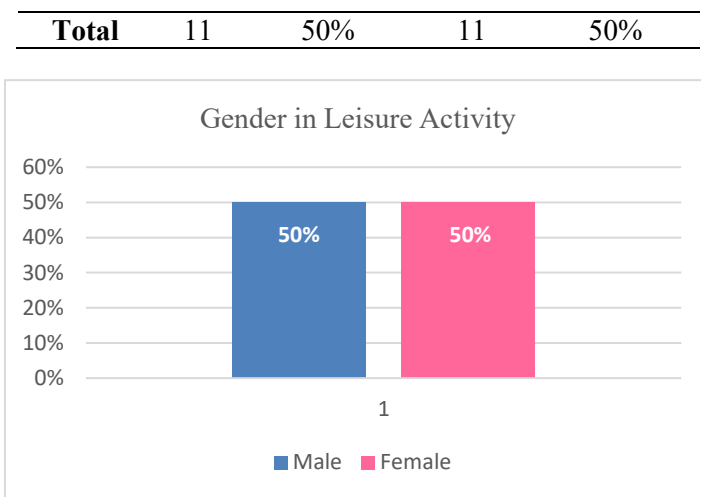


Figure 5 Chart of Gender in Leisure Activity

6. Gender in Generic Conception

The emergence of male as a generic conception is nothing. The researcher doesn't find any words that contain generic conceptions, such as postman, policeman, and other words that refer to males and exclude females. Thus, the English for Nusantara 7th grade textbook doesn't contain any word that refers to males as a generic conception. Equal portrayal in non-academic contexts, such as hobbies, is significant because leisure reflects identity and agency. This challenges stereotypical gendered activities found in older materials (Meyer, 2017; Prasetyo, 2019), and affirms the Merdeka Curriculum’s broader push toward breaking binary gender norms.

7. Summary of Gender Aspects

Table 6. Summary of Gender Aspects

The instrument analysis of Gender Aspects						
Gender Aspect		Male		Female		Total
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
1	Visibility in Photos and Illustration	275	52%	253	48%	528
2	Visibility in the Text	474	51%	458	49%	932
3	Topic Domination	5	45%	6	55%	11
4	Occupations	3	43%	4	57%	7
5	Leisure Activities	11	50%	11	50%	22
6	Generic Conception	0	0	0	0	0
Total		768	51%	732	49%	1.500

Table 7 above provides the gender representation in *English for Nusantara* textbook. In visibility in photos and illustrations, this category is dominated by males with 52% (275 instances), while females accounted with 48% with 253 instances. The total visibility in photos and illustrations is 528 instances. This data is found across chapters, such as in "Say What You Know," the listening section, the speaking section, the reading section, the language focus, and "Did You Know?".

In the visibility of the text, this category is dominated by males, with 51% (468 instances), and females, with 49% (458 instances). The total visibility of the text is 932 instances. This data is found

across chapters, such as in "Say What You Know," the listening section, the speaking section, the reading section, the language focus, and "Did You Know?"

In topic domination, this category is dominated by females with 55% (6 instances), while males are represented with 45% (5 cases). The total number of instances of topic domination is 11. This data is found across chapters, such as in "Say What You Know," the listening section, the speaking section, the reading section, the language focus, and "Did You Know?"

In occupations, this category is dominated by females with 57% (4 instances), while males with 36% (3 cases). The total number of occupations is seven instances. This data is found across chapters, such as in "Say What You Know," the listening section, the speaking section, the reading section, the language focus, and "Did You Know?"

In leisure activities, this category was equal between males and females, with 50% (each gender 11 instances). The total of leisure activities is 22 instances. This data was found across chapters, such as in "Say What You Know," the listening section, the speaking section, the reading section, the language focus, and "Did You Know?"

In conclusion, gender representation in *English for Nusantara* 7th grade textbook is quite balanced based on the percentage for each factor. Males dominated in 2 factors (visibility in pictures and illustrations, visibility in the texts), females dominated in 2 factors (topic domination and occupations), and leisure activity factors balanced male and female representation. Hence, the gender representation based on numerical percentage was quite balanced for males and females. the textbook presents a balanced and increasingly inclusive portrayal of gender. However, areas such as occupational diversity and visual leadership roles still offer room for growth. These findings not only contribute to gender analysis in textbooks but also serve as a valuable reference for curriculum developers seeking to design socially responsive learning materials.

Discussion

This study investigated gender representation in the *English for Nusantara* 7th-grade textbook, focusing on six key aspects: gender visibility in photos and illustrations, gender visibility in text, topic domination, gender in occupations, gender in leisure activities, and the absence of gendered generic conceptions. The findings indicate a relatively balanced gender representation; however, certain parts continue to reflect traditional gender norms, which aligns with both Indonesian and international trends observed in educational materials .

1. Gender Visibility in Photos and Illustrations

According to the data, male figures are slightly more visible (52%) than female ones (48%) in photos and illustrations. This little difference is consistent with earlier studies from Indonesia, such as Rohmah (2016), who found that male characters are more visible than females in Indonesian educational materials. It is the same pattern as a study by Siregar et al. (2021), who found a dominance of males both in visual and written material. Because of that, it can be seen that the large number of male characters in educational visuals is not limited to Indonesia. It also happened in a study of Dutch primary school textbooks; Terlouw (2013) found that male characters were represented more frequently than females, especially in leadership roles. This pattern has been observed globally in a variety of educational situations. Brittan (2020), in a study analysis of UK textbooks, also found that male characters were often dominant in action-oriented positions, while female characters were more

likely to be shown in passive or nurturing roles. In conclusion, male characters dominated female characters in the visibility of photos and illustrations.

2. Gender Visibility in the Text

The study found that gender visibility in the text is relatively balanced, with male characters accounting for 51% and female characters for 49%. It is a significant shift compared to earlier Indonesian textbooks. Saputra (2019) found that in traditional textbooks in Indonesia, the male character is often more frequently seen than females, especially in texts related to academic content or activities requiring intellectual engagement. It is similar to Müller's (2018) study of German English textbooks, which revealed that male characters were more represented in more intellectually demanding tasks, with female characters often relegated to supporting roles. In contrast, the English for Nusantara textbook makes a conscious effort to present both genders equally in textual content. This increase is consistent with UNESCO's (2019) global support for gender-inclusive educational materials, which encourages textbooks to provide balanced representations of both genders in all situations, from academic subjects to social roles.

3. Topic Domination

The study found that females (55%) dominated the representation of topics compared to males (45%). It is a great step towards gender inclusion because it challenges the long-standing norm of male-dominated academic and professional content. Kusmawati (2021), in the study of Indonesian textbooks, found that females have gradually been featured in topics related to social issues, health, and education, which were traditionally portrayed for males in older textbooks. Dyer (2016) found similar shifts in textbooks from the United States, with more recent texts portraying women in a wider variety of subjects, including science and leadership. However, Halimah (2020) noted that while much progress has been made, female characters are still frequently connected with issues like caregiving and emotional intelligence, whereas males dominate conversations about innovative leadership. The English for Nusantara textbook emphasizes Indonesia's efforts to achieve gender equity, a major Kurikulum Merdeka ideal. However, both global and local data show that more effort is needed to secure women's equal representation in traditionally male-dominated professions such as science, politics, and technology.

4. Gender in Occupations

In the *English for Nusantara* textbook, female characters were portrayed more often in occupations (57%) than males (43%). This finding represents an overall trend in modern Indonesian textbooks. Siregar et al. (2021) discovered an increase in female representation in professional jobs, particularly in disciplines such as education and nursing, but noted that male characters were still more frequently shown in leadership and high-status professions. Across the globe, similar patterns have been observed. For example, in Keddie's (2016) study of Australian textbooks, females were often shown in healthcare or education roles, while males were represented in more technical or authoritative jobs. Sullivan (2018) analyzed U.S. textbooks and also found that while female representation in occupations had increased, traditional gender roles still influenced the kinds of jobs assigned to each gender. The *English for Nusantara* textbook shows a positive trend in incorporating women into occupational roles. However, as Halimah (2020) suggests, it is essential to continue diversifying these representations by showcasing women in a broader range of careers, such as engineering, business leadership, and technology.

5. Gender in Leisure Activities

The study found that both genders were equally represented in leisure activities (50% each), which is a positive step in challenging gender stereotypes about hobbies and interests. Prasetyo (2019) emphasized that Indonesian textbooks have historically reinforced traditional gender roles in leisure activities, with boys being depicted in physical or competitive activities while girls were shown engaging in artistic or domestic activities. It matches with the findings from Meyer's (2017) study of French textbooks, where male characters were often shown engaging in sports or outdoor activities, while females were more likely to be depicted in domestic settings or with artistic hobbies. The equal representation observed in this textbook suggests a shift toward more inclusive depictions of leisure, in line with international efforts to break down rigid gender norms. However, both international and local studies indicate that further progress is needed to ensure that both genders are equally portrayed in a wider variety of activities, particularly those that challenge traditional gender boundaries, such as extreme sports or leadership roles in artistic fields.

6. Generic Conceptions

The absence of gendered generic nouns like "postman" or "fireman" is an important feature of the English for Nusantara textbook. Indriani (2018) highlighted the importance of avoiding masculine generic phrases in textbooks, since they frequently exclude women and support traditional gender norms. This aligns with Feldman's (2020) study, which showed that using gender-neutral words in textbooks can increase equality and can help students to see both genders in a variety of positions. Klein and Turan (2015) also highlighted the importance of eliminating gendered terms from educational materials to avoid stereotype continuation, especially in professional contexts. The English for Nusantara textbook's dedication to utilizing gender-neutral vocabulary is a significant step toward meeting global standards for equity in education.

CONCLUSION

This study explored gender representation in the *English for Nusantara* 7th-grade textbook, focusing on key areas such as gender visibility in photos and illustrations, gender representation in text, topic domination, occupations, leisure activities, and the use of generic conceptions. This study explored gender representation in the English for Nusantara 7th-grade textbook using Hamdan's (2008) framework. The analysis covered key areas including visibility in visuals and texts, topic domination, occupations, leisure activities, and the use of gender-neutral terms. The findings reveal that, overall, the textbook presents a fairly balanced representation of gender, with some areas showing more progress than others. In terms of visibility in photos and illustrations, male characters were slightly more represented (52%) than female characters (48%), which reflects a common trend in many textbooks. Similarly, the textual representation of male and female characters was almost equal, with a marginal dominance of male figures (51%) over female ones (49%). Regarding topic domination, females were slightly more dominant (55%) than males (45%), indicating a positive shift toward gender inclusivity in the content. The representation of occupations was also more balanced, with females comprising 57% and males 43%, though the occupations depicted were often traditional and could benefit from more diverse and non-stereotypical roles. The depiction of leisure activities was perfectly balanced, with equal representation of both genders (50% each), which is a positive step in breaking traditional gender stereotypes. Moreover, the textbook was commendable for avoiding gendered generic terms like "postman" or "fireman," reflecting a modern approach to inclusive language.

While these findings indicate significant progress toward gender equality in the *English for Nusantara* textbook, there is still room for improvement. For educators, these findings can support critical textbook evaluation and classroom discussions about gender equity. Curriculum developers and textbook authors may also benefit from this study by identifying areas for improvement, especially in diversifying occupational portrayals and reducing subtle visual imbalances.

Future studies are encouraged to explore gender representation in other subject areas and educational levels, and to assess the impact of textbook content on students' perceptions. Continued monitoring and revision of learning materials will be essential to uphold the values of inclusivity and equality in Indonesian education. In occupational depictions, there is a need to expand the range of professions presented to both genders, ensuring that both males and females are shown in diverse roles, including those in STEM, politics, and leadership positions. Furthermore, although female characters dominated topic representation, it is crucial to ensure that both genders are equally represented across all topics, avoiding the reinforcement of traditional gendered subjects. To promote gender inclusivity further, the textbook should continue to use gender-neutral language, particularly when referring to professions and generic terms. Additionally, it is important to continue depicting both genders in a wide range of leisure activities, from physical sports to artistic hobbies, to encourage students to break free from stereotypical gender norms. Lastly, periodic updates to the textbook, reflecting ongoing research and feedback from educators and gender experts, would help ensure that it remains relevant and aligned with the evolving understanding of gender equality.

In conclusion, while the *English for Nusantara* 7th-grade textbook has made notable strides in promoting gender balance, there is a need for continued effort to challenge traditional stereotypes and foster a more inclusive, equitable learning environment. By ensuring more balanced and diverse representations of gender in all aspects of the textbook and by incorporating critical discussions about gender roles and stereotypes, this textbook can play a key role in advancing gender equality in education.

REFERENCES

- Amini, M., & Birjandi, P. (2012). Gender bias in the Iranian high school EFL textbooks. *English Language Teaching*, 5(2), 134–147. <https://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/elt/article/view/14570>
- Al Kayed, M., Al-Khawaldah, S. K., & Alzu'bi, M. A. (2020). Critical discourse analysis of gender representations in EFL textbooks. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 9(4), 244–254. <https://archive.aessweb.com/index.php/5019/article/view/471>
- Brittan, A. (2020). Gender representation in British textbooks: A study of illustrations and textual roles in primary education. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 25(3), 320–337. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2020.1757171>
- Crawford, L., Saintis-Miller, C., & Todd, R. (2024). Sexist textbooks: Automated analysis of gender bias in 1,255 books from 34 countries. *PLOS ONE*, 19(4), e0310366. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11463758/>
- Cohen, L. (2018). *Gender Bias in Textbooks: A Global Perspective*. *International Journal of Education and Gender*, 21(4), 402–417.
- Dyer, C. (2016). Gender bias in the English language: Examining texts in primary school curricula. *Gender and Education*, 28(5), 648–661. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2016.1183973>
- Dyer, S. (2016). *Educational Materials and the Reinforcement of Gender Roles*. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 49(2), 119–132.

- Feldman, J. (2020). Eliminating gendered language in educational texts: An imperative for inclusivity. *Journal of Educational Equality*, 32(4), 409-421. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11542-020-00240-w>
- Halimah, N. (2020). Gender roles in Indonesian educational textbooks: A shift in representation. *Indonesian Journal of Gender and Education Studies*, 10(1), 74-86.
- Hidayati, F., & Anwar, M. (2017). *Gender Representation in Indonesian Textbooks: A Critical Review*. Indonesian Journal of Language and Education, 45(1), 78-90.
- Indriani, S. (2018). Gender-neutral language in Indonesian English textbooks: A necessity for equality. *Journal of Language and Gender*, 5(2), 102-118.
- Keddie, A. (2016). Gender in the Australian curriculum: Analyzing how textbooks shape future leaders. *International Journal of Gender and Education*, 37(4), 444-459. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2016.1221134>
- Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. (2020). *Kurikulum Merdeka: Panduan Pengembangan Kurikulum dan Materi Ajar*. Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia.
- Klein, L., & Turan, A. (2015). Breaking gender stereotypes in school textbooks: The role of gender-neutral language. *Gender and Education*, 27(3), 335-348. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2015.1025024>
- Korreck, A. (2020). *Gender Representation in Education: Textbook Analysis in the Indonesian Context*. Asian Journal of Gender Studies, 12(2), 185-198.
- Kopytowska, M., & Grabowski, M. (2022). Is gender bias in textbooks spilled over from schools to universities? Evidence from language textbooks in Poland. *Cogent Education*, 9(1), 2152616. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2152616>
- Kotek, H., Cépeda, P., Pabst, K., & Syrett, K. (2024). Gender bias in linguistics textbooks: Has anything changed since Macaulay & Brice 1997? *Language*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1378749>
- Kusumawati, T. (2021). Female representation in the Indonesian curriculum: A shift from traditional gender norms. *Indonesian Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, 22(1), 21-35.
- Lau, P. (2017). *Breaking the Stereotype: Gender Representation in Textbooks and Its Impact on Students*. Journal of Gender and Education, 15(4), 450-462.
- Meyer, C. (2017). Gender equality in French textbooks: Analyzing representations in primary school reading materials. *Gender and Education*, 29(2), 240-253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2017.1287732>
- Müller, T. (2018). Gender representation in German English textbooks: From traditional to inclusive. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 12(1), 60-75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2018.1445061>
- Nawaz, S., Noreen, S., & Ahmed, M. (2024). Gender representation in English language textbooks of primary education. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384551218_Gender_Representation_in_English_Language_Textbooks_of_Primary_Education
- Prasetyo, S. (2019). Leisure activities in Indonesian English textbooks: A gendered perspective. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Research*, 14(2), 54-68.
- Rohmah, R. (2016). Gender representation in Indonesian English textbooks: An analysis of primary school materials. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 13(2), 129-140.
- Sadker, M., & Sadker, D. (1994). *Failing at Fairness: How America's Schools Cheat Girls*. New York: Touchstone.
- Siregar, R., Aisyah, F., & Sabirin, H. (2021). Gender in Indonesian educational materials: A critical review of English textbooks. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 15(3), 199-212. <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v15i3.2632>

- Sullivan, E. (2018). Gender in US primary school textbooks: A look at how gender is represented in elementary education. *Gender and Society*, 32(4), 481-495.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243218782217>
- Terlouw, H. (2013). Gendered representations in Dutch primary school textbooks: Analyzing images and texts. *Journal of Educational Research*, 22(3), 201-213.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jedu.2013.05.007>