

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

In a patriarchal country like Indonesia, women are often under-represented in many life domains (Setyono, 2018). Egalitarian gender views are hard to achieve because socio-cultural constructions assign different roles and stereotypes to women and men, resulting in other treatments toward the two genders (Connell, 1987). Since R. A. Kartini initiated women's empowerment, the number of women involved in the professional job has risen significantly (Ariyanto, 2018). However, this improvement does not free women from their stereotypical roles. Most women who have professional careers still have to deal with "women's roles," which places a double burden on working women because they have to deal with professional and domestic duties (Agha et al., 2018).

It is very dramatic to promote gender-equal views in the culture that has placed men and women in different qualities (Ariyanto, 2018; Islam & Asadullah, 2019). For a long time, women were related to household roles such as cleaning, cooking, and raising children. Meanwhile, men have to be responsible for searching for a job and funding the family (Connell, 1987; Millett, 2000). Such distinction is commonly found in a patriarchal country like Indonesia. However, this conception of placing men and women in a different place is highly practiced worldwide (Islam & Asadullah, 2019; Setyono, 2018). Many evidence said women are often drawn to be more inferior than men in physical strength, mathematical abilities, and leadership. On the other hand, men are still conceived as logical, brave, ambitious, and good leaders (Gebregeorgis, 2016).

Millett (2000) has described this phenomenon as binary oppositions. Binary opposition is a pair of adjectives comparing two things in opposite qualities as more precious than the

other. For example, the domination of men over women. She argues that women carry society conception where they are assigned specific roles that marginalize women and limit them from developing their full potential. It has been known that gender dichotomy is purely cultural conception rather than the physical difference between men and women (like physical strength and hormones). Recent research shows no significant correlation between hormones and specific behaviors shown by men and women. In addition, another research has also shown that there is no difference in the processing of the brain between these genders (Eliot et al., 2021)

Binary opposition can be reflected by how males and females are represented in society. For example, women are associated with housework activities such as cooking, cleaning, nurturing because those are what society perceived as true. On the other hand, men are described as active, strong, independent, and so (Blangsinga et al., 2021). In addition, in terms of appearance, women were described as soft or dependent, and men must be independent and authoritative. Furthermore, these descriptions are called 'gender stereotypes.' Gender stereotype is a society's conception of the gender itself. Therefore, it will create polarization that will marginalize women to menial, domestic, demeaning roles and professions.

Moreover, Lakoff (1975) explains that language can also become where gender inequality is found. She argues that language carries society's conception of how men and women should use the language. Reid, Palomares, Anderson, & Bondad-Brown (2009) revealed that women tend to use non-assertive language. The non-assertive language indicates women's sensitivity, warmth, and sincerity when they speak. On the other hand, Tannen (1990) adds that women's language discriminates women by making them more inferior than men. Supporting Lakoff's (1975) theory, Coates (2013) also highlights that some of the features in the language have been designed to meet men's preferences. It can be seen from some lexical items which tend to be used by particular gender to meet their society's expectations (Coates, 2013).

Unfortunately, binary opposition and language stereotypes are carried on in all aspects of our life, including textbooks (Yang, 2011). A textbook is expected to distribute social values and norms to the students (Al-Qatawneh & Al Rawashdeh, 2019; Ariyanto, 2018; Gebregeorgis, 2016). As a primary source of learning, textbooks should constitute equal gender representation (Gebregeorgis, 2016; Goyal & Rose, 2020; Lestariyana et al., 2020) because textbooks contain morals and values crucial for the learner's development (Torres & Hutchinson, 1994). However, several studies in Indonesia have proven that the Indonesian EFL textbook has recognized bias in terms of gender (Lestariyana et al., 2020; Islam & Asadullah, 2019; Setyono, 2018; Yonata et al., 2017).

However, recent studies have also found that efforts to deconstruct gender inequality have been pioneered by several ELT textbooks (Curaming and Curaming, 2020; Gebregogis, 2016). The deconstruction happens when males and females are given equal opportunity and chance in their roles and appearance. Some researchers found that the ELT textbook has dismantled stereotypical roles embedded in women (Curaming & Curaming, 2020; Gebregogis, 2016; Julianti, Ikhsanudin, & Sutapa, 2019; Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, 2020). The deconstruction of gender stereotypes in the textbook is also found in the occupation of female characters (Borton & Sakwa, 2013; Gharbavi and Mousavi, 2012; Shamsuddin & Hamid, 2017). In addition, the improvement in terms of the amount of speech, vocabulary, and neutral address is also found in the textbook (Julianti et al., 2019; Lee, 2016)

Since the efforts to create textbooks that deconstruct gender biases have been pioneered by many textbooks worldwide, a study to examine the effort at Indonesian ELT textbooks to deconstruct gender stereotypes is urgently needed. Nowadays, establishing a textbook as teaching media free from gender bias has become a trend in promoting gender equality. The purpose is to create an equal representation of men and women in every textbook aspect. It is in line with Stockdale (2006), which mentions that EFL textbooks should treat gender equally.

He argues that every part of the textbook, including contents, graphics, and language, must consist of gender equality values. A textbook that contains gender stereotypes is potentially harming the children's development, especially their awareness of the social issue. Setyono (2018) and Ariyanto (2018) add that textbook that violates social norms may influence children's development.

It is also supported by the preliminary observation of the ninth-grade junior high school EFL textbook. Although it was depicted some gender stereotypes presented in the textbook, the effort to deconstruct binary opposition was found. The preliminary observation revealed some efforts to deconstruct the gender stereotype in the textbook. This deconstruction is found in the language and visual aspects of the textbook. It is also in line with previous research in the context of the Indonesian EFL textbook (Ariyanto, 2018; Blangsinga et al., 2021; Damayanti, 2014; Emilia et al., 2017; Islam & Asadullah, 2019; Sari, 2011; Setyono, 2018; Yonata et al., 2017). There were several deconstructive traits and ambivalences found in the preliminary observation. For example, in a short conversation, a female character in the textbook, Siti, asked Edo to cook because she had to do the other activities. It is similar to previous research. Curaming and Curaming (2020) found that the female character dominated the conversation and was also determinant. Gebregogis (2013) also depicted female and male characters are in an equal hierarchy, so they can share their idea and work together. In addition, other efforts to deconstruct gendered binary opposition were also found in the textbook in terms of the activities. In a conversation, it was found that a female character was involved in the bike race competition. It implied that the deconstruction of the stereotypical activities of the women had been portrayed in this textbook. These preliminary observation findings align with previous research, where an effort to deconstruct the gender stereotypes has been found (Curaming & Curaming, 2020; Gebregeorgis, 2016; Julianti et al., 2019; Lee &

Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, 2020; Lestariyana et al., 2020; Setyono, 2018; Shamsuddin & Hamid, 2017).

Considering the effort to establish textbooks that have equal gender representation has been discovered by studies worldwide, the present research was focused on examining the effort to deconstruct the gender stereotypes. However, many previous studies in Indonesia still focused on examining gender stereotypes presented in the ELT textbook without clearly seeing the effort to deconstruct the opposite gender binaries. It is important to examine not only the gender stereotypes but also the aspects of deconstruction so it can give insight into the enhancement in the ELT textbook, especially in terms of gender equality. Therefore, this study investigated gender stereotypes and explored the effort to deconstruct gender bias in ninth-grade junior high school textbooks.

1.2 Problem Identification

The textbook is responsible for transmitting social values and knowledge to the students. However, it is found that ELT textbooks in Indonesia have perpetuated gender bias in terms of language and visual aspects. Studies on Indonesian EFL textbooks have been concerned about the gender issue in the textbook and the representations dichotomies between male and female characters. Based on previous studies, it is found that the ELT textbook in Indonesia has highlighted some stereotypical roles in female characters, such as cooking, cleaning the room, and nurturing the child. Such stereotypes may lead to the students' negative perception of a specific gender. On the other hand, the trends in establishing gender-equal textbooks have been pioneered by ELT textbooks all around the globe. Therefore, it is vital to see the effort in deconstructing gender stereotypes in the present Indonesian ELT textbook. This study traces the binary opposition by examining language and its visual representation. The textbook used in this study is the Ninth-Grade Junior High School ELT textbook entitled

“Think Globally Act Locally,” which was published by the Ministry of Education in 2018. Hopefully, this study can increase the students' and teachers' awareness of the gender bias in ELT textbooks.

1.3 Statement of The Problems

The statement of the problem was formulated as follow:

- 1.3.1 How were gender stereotypes represented in the Indonesian EFL Textbook *Think Globally Act Locally* for ninth-grade junior high school students?
- 1.3.2 How were deconstructions in the concepts of gender represented in the Indonesian EFL textbook *Think Globally act Locally* for ninth-grade junior high school students?

1.4 Objectives of The Study

- 1.4.1 To describe gender stereotypes represented in Indonesian EFL Textbook *Think Globally Act Locally* ninth-graduate junior high school students.
- 1.4.2 To describe deconstruction toward the concept of gender in Indonesian EFL textbook *Think Globally act Locally* for ninth-grade junior high school students.

1.5 Significance of The Study

The results of this study were expected to give theoretical and practical significance. Furthermore, the detail of the significance was presented as follows:

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

The results of this study were expected to give a contribution to the precedent theories. As a textbook should provide good values and be free from stereotypical characterization (Lee, 2018), this research hopefully gives additional information about a textbook's theory. In addition, this research will contribute to the post-feminism theory, which states that women are

primarily marginalized in all aspects, including education (Millett, 2000). The other significance is that this research will enrich analyses on binary opposition and deconstruction, inserted in the textual and visual discourse. It is hoped to raise the awareness of the gender stereotype which is unconsciously embedded in the textbook.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

1. For students

Hopefully, the results of this present study were expected to raise students' awareness of gender representation in the textual and visual images in the ninth grade ELT textbook "*Think Globally Act Locally.*" Especially, this study was purposed to raise the confidence of women students of their gender identity because the textbook has represented the concept of gender and roles of male and female in an equal manner. It also gives a good perception of the women's representation in a public place and their job (Widodo, 2016). Moreover, it can also improve students' understanding and sensitivity to several terms used in the conversation section.

2. For teacher

The results of this study were expected to raise teachers' awareness about gender, especially in selecting the teaching material and treating the students of the opposite gender. As promoting gender equality becomes an essential part of teaching and learning in creating a good perception among the children, a teacher must be sensitive in choosing the material for the students (Lestariyana et al., 2020). In addition, this study may give insight to the teacher to be deliberately aware of the importance of this issue in society.

3. For the other researcher

The results of this study were expected to be a reference for the other researchers interested in research feminism and textbook. This study can also be considered for the other researcher to redesign an ELT textbook and teaching material free from gender bias (Ahmad & Shah, 2019).

4. For society

The results of this study were expected to have a significant impact on the feminist movement in society. It became an effort to reach a gender-equal society free from the patriarchal values that marginalize women to reach their full potential. In addition, it deconstructs stereotypical roles of women in the society, which stated that women are related to the housework and minor role and men with their dominance and their superior role. This study is a small step to construct a new society that promotes gender equality.

1.6 Scope of The Study

This study was limited to analyzing the ninth-grade junior high school ELT textbook in Indonesia entitled "Think Globally Act Locally," published by the ministry of education in 2018. This study employed McKee's (2003) textual analysis enriched by Millet's (2000) feminist perspective theory and the concept of language and gender by Lakoff (1975) and Coates (2013). The analysis of this study applied Milles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) interactive model of qualitative analysis, which was adopted from Suwastini (2014).