

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aimed to present the background of the study, problem identification, statement of the problem, study objectives, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Gender bias has become an endless issue to be discussed. Not only in the social and economic spheres but its never-ending existence in our society also penetrates a purportedly neutral domain known as education (Emilia et al., 2017; Mihira et al., 2021). The bias that mostly marginalizes women as inferior and men as superior tends to put women in a weaker position than men (Blangsinga et al., 2021; Curaming & Curaming, 2020; Islam & Asadullah, 2018; Lee, 2018; Mihira et al., 2021; Millett, 2000) that they are often treated as weak, passive, objects, and most of the time placed in a lower position than men (Anggawati et al., 2018; Dewi, 2016; Lakoff, 1973; Paudel & Khadka, 2019; Suwastini, 2013). Thus, the marginalization and the limitation is given to women often indirectly stopped them from acquiring their actual capacity (Ahmad & Shah, 2019; Chowdhury, 2017; Emilia et al., 2017; Friedan, 1977; Lee, 2018).

The binary opposition that often places women and men into two polar seems to make the two genders have contrasted roles in society. This is due to the existence of patriarchy in society for decades ago which indirectly forces women to have certain traits and roles that are different from men, in which the roles that are juxtaposed or

attached to women tend to be detrimental and limited (Blangsinga et al., 2021; Islam & Asadullah, 2018). One obvious instance could be seen through the domestic roles that are often associated with women, while, men are placed in the public sphere. Unfortunately, the same depiction also happens to reflect the findings of gender bias studies in English textbooks (Ariyanto, 2018; Barton & Sakwa, 2012; Julianti et al., 2019). Others discovered its resistance mirrored in the two genders' occupational spheres represented in textbooks, in which men were depicted in broader, manlier, as well as well-paid occupational options than females such as police officers, firefighters, doctors, and engineering (Abraham, 2018; Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, 2020; Sari, 2011). Meanwhile, females are often depicted in a more nurturing scope of work such as teachers and nurses (Blangsinga et al., 2021; Lestariyana et al., 2020; Paudel & Khadka, 2019).

The persistence of gender bias in the educational field is concerning, especially when the norm taught is reflected through their textbooks which are the main source of their learning material (Lee, 2014). School as a center of learning holds a significant role in providing learning facilities for students, including in the cultivation of social values for students. Textbooks as the most commonly used and mandatory learning materials in schools play an important role to construct one's knowledge through the ideologies that are manifested in the content (Olson in Paudel & Khadka, 2019; Turner-Bowker, 1996; Widdowson, 2007). The existence of gender bias in the realm of education may have a negative impact not only on the student's perception of the issue but also on society by keeping to preserving the “force” of unequal ideologies on the two genders by unconsciously everyone “doing gender” (Gebregeorgis, 2016; Mihira,

2022; Paudel & Khadka, 2019; West & Zimmerman, 1987). This means that gender construction is formed and reproduced through social interaction involving our conscious and subconscious minds (Lorber, 2001).

Education as a powerful tool in shaping one's knowledge, perception, and behavior (Masud, 2017) holds an important role in promoting the scientific as well as social norms that are applied in society which includes gender bias preservation. As a result of its penetration into education, international educational institutions such as UNESCO demand all educational institutions to neutralize all of the instructional material, including textbooks, from any variety of social concerns including gender bias (Mihira et al., 2021; Yonata & Mujiyanto, 2017). It is shown through guidelines that are kept being published by UNESCO gradually over time, such as those published (Michel, 1986; UNESCO, 1999, 2015) which mainly provide guidelines for institutions to create textbooks containing gender bias-free.

Unfortunately, UNESCO's guidelines does not entirely eliminate gender bias in textbook content. In other words, the process of UNESCO's good intentions did not run smoothly. After publishing guidelines for creating textbooks that are free from gender bias, there are still many textbooks identified as containing bias found in many countries over the years such as those found in English for Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks in Iran (Dabbagh, 2016; Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012), Japan (Lee, 2018), Saudi Arabia (Sulaimani, 2017), Pakistan (Ahmad & Shah, 2019), and Indonesia (Artini, 2021; Blangsinga et al., 2021; Damayanti, 2014; Julianti et al., 2019; Lestariyana et al., 2020; Wiraningsih, 2021). The gender disparity is reflected in various aspects throughout the textbooks, starting from their language aspects such as

the use of lexical hedges, the choice of topic, the activities involvement, and their identical traits (passive, shy, weak, etc. for women and active, brave, strong, etc. for men) (Blangsinga et al., 2021; Islam & Asadullah, 2018) until their visual aspects which often shows male domination in terms of appearances and physical stereotyped of each gender (Ariyanto, 2018; Shamsuddin & Hamid, 2017; Yang, 2016).

Referring to the Indonesian context, the maintenance of gender stereotypes contained in textbooks in Indonesia is inseparable from the patriarchal values adopted by Indonesia and most of its people (Apriliandra & Krisnani, 2021; Mihira, 2022; Rahayu et al., 2019; Rahayu & Ramadhanti, 2017). One of the reasons patriarchal norms are maintained in Indonesia is because the majority of the population belongs to Islam, which closely conforms to patriarchal principles governing how men and women behave, including their status in society (Setyono, 2018). The application of patriarchal culture that has existed for a long time in Indonesia causes its application to integrate not only into the social context but also into the culture. One of the examples could be seen in Javanese culture which has the majority of the Muslim population that tends to discriminate against women through one of their phrases specifically assigned to a woman which refer to the notion that they must be able to cook, give birth, be a mother, and dress up for her husband (Apriliandra & Krisnani, 2021; Hermawati, 2007). This indicates, in an assortment of ways, that patriarchal beliefs are still intimately tied to Indonesian society, as the prejudice against women indicated in Javanese culture is indeed obvious in the portrayal of gender contained in EFL textbooks, which is a true phenomenon that occurs in society.

Although gender bias still appears in textbooks, in recent years several gender deconstructions have been found in EFL textbooks. Derrida argues that deconstruction could be simply defined as an act of criticism of binary opposition in which one side of the opposition always has more or less valuable meaning than the other (Derrida, 2000; Lawlor, 2021). It is initiated in order to reorient the binary by inserting a 'new' or hinge word (Papadelos, 2006; Wiraningsih, 2021) so that a deconstruction or something revolutionary happens through the critiques given (Derrida, 2000). The example could be seen through one of the traditional concepts of gender stereotypes between women and men in which women are “shaped” and “destined” to do domestic roles such as being good housewives and while men as breadwinners (Blangsinga, 2022; Mihira et al., 2021; Millett, 2000). However, the categorization goes along with the times, women are no longer attached to being good housewives as the final goal of their life but are also able to have a career outside of domestic roles such as being a doctor, entrepreneur, pilot, etc, and vice versa. This indirectly shows that there has been a deconstruction of traditional gender roles which is influenced by criticisms and movements that fight for these changes so that the role of women is not only fixated on the domestic sphere but also in the public sphere. In relation to the binary opposition of gender bias, the attempt of deconstruction toward the negative stereotypes is expected to create equal traits and rights for everybody as well as raise gender awareness.

Fortunately, efforts to deconstruct the negative gender stereotypes have started to emerge in several studies that were conducted recently. The first deconstruction effort can be seen in the study that was conducted by Emilia et al. (2017). Their study found

that female characters were represented to have brave heroic act which is often categorized as masculine traits rather than feminine. They are also depicted to have active roles in participating in an event. The next deconstruction efforts were also shown in the study conducted by (Lestariyana et al., 2020; Setyono, 2018) who found both women were depicted to be more intelligent than men which also indirectly attaches masculine qualities to women. This implicitly shows a positive representation of women that is tried to be informed to the reader, which is also found in Chowdhury (2017) and Curaming & Curaming (2020). Thus, all of this leads to a positive reconfiguration in which conceptions of traditional femininity are gradually shifting to accept previously excluded attitudes, behavior as well as possibilities.

The effort to deconstruct gender that has been found in several of these textbooks is something that should be appreciated. Although the description of gender equality has not been fully achieved, these findings have shown that there has been an awareness created by the author, both consciously and unconsciously. Therefore, the researcher needs to undertake additional research on gender deconstruction in textbooks, as only a limited amount of research has been conducted on this topic. Especially, considering that this type of research is typically limited to language considerations, therefore in this study, both the language aspect as well as the visual aspect, is expected to make the analysis more critical. It is due to the existence of gender deconstruction that has started to emerge that needs to be investigated further to see the accuracy of the efforts made by the author to create gender awareness. In this case, the researcher uses the student's English textbook for grade 12th as the subject of the research and the deconstructions as the object of this research.

The textbook was chosen due to the preliminary observation that has been done at the very beginning of the study. The observation resulted that the textbook showed indications of both gender stereotypes as well as deconstructions, vividly reflected in the content through the visual aspects. Unlike the series of English textbooks for grades 10 and 11 which have been studied and proven to contain gender stereotypes and deconstruction based on language and/or visual aspects (Islam & Asadullah, 2018; Setyono, 2018; Yonata & Mujiyanto, 2017), in the English textbooks for grade 12 have yet to find research that examines the book through language and visual aspects that focus on gender deconstruction (Blangsinga et al., 2021; Mihira, 2022; Rachmijati & Cahyati, 2018). Therefore, this strengthens the reason for the need for deeper analysis in English textbooks for grade 12 to find out the types of gender stereotypes and also the deconstruction implied therein. Besides, the supported reasons for choosing the textbook as the subject is because it is a mandated textbook that is formally assigned by the Indonesia Ministry of Education to be used in all of the public schools throughout Indonesia. Referring to its massive usage, the textbook could influence the perspectives of its users on the concept of gender prevailing in society. Besides, the supported reasons for choosing the textbook as the subject is because it is a mandated textbook that is formally assigned by the Indonesia Ministry of Education to be used in all of the public schools throughout Indonesia. Referring to its massive usage, the textbook could influence the perspectives of its users on the concept of gender prevailing in society.

Additionally, relating to the student development stage, learners in grade 12th are at the final stage of their adolescence development process. Thus, this period will have

a significant impact on not only biological and cognitive development processes but also their socioemotional development. According to Santrock (2010, 2016), socioemotional processes are defined as changes in individual emotions, personality, relationships with others, and societal conditions. Aggression toward peers, assertiveness, and gender role orientation are all examples of how the socioemotional process plays a role. This is a crucial time in which students' mindsets will profoundly influence their conduct in society, both towards themselves and others. As a result, comprehending the proper gender idea will be able to contribute significantly to the long-term sustainability of gender equality in society, where the more definitive the concept that is really implanted, the stronger the correct gender construction will be. Therefore, it is important to have gender-neutral content in a textbook to achieve gender equality and eliminate the misconception of gender roles/depictions that tend to marginalize one gender over the other. The present study is expected to raise awareness as well as critical awareness of both teachers and students of gender awareness and equality that is portrayed in the textbook.

In this case, this study uses the Language and Gender theories by Lakoff and Coates in order to analyze the stereotype representation reflected in the textbook. It is because Lakoff was the first pioneer who recognize the difference in language use by women and men. However, her thesis did not include any empirical review, therefore her analysis regarding the issue is continued by Coates who also criticizes the same thing but also adds the empirical review to the analysis that supports the thesis. Additionally, for the deconstruction analysis, this study uses Kate Millet's feminist perspective based on her book entitled *Sexual Politics* as the parameters. Kate Millet

was chosen because she is one of the pioneers of feminism that criticize the use of binary opposition to differentiate women and men. She recognizes the use of binary opposition that is constructed to divide women and men tends to marginalize women. For example, women tend to be expected and 'raise' as someone shy, passive, and emotional, while men are brave, active, and rational. Therefore, her theory is used as the parameters of the deconstruction both through language and visual aspects.

1.2 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Research findings on patriarchal norms found in learning materials – textbooks are not surprising in the analysis of gender bias in school textbooks. Unfortunately, based on the observation of the preliminary research, most of them depicted each gender in their traditional stereotype which women were disadvantaged by the negative depiction most of the time. This proves that patriarchal norms penetrate deeply into our society, culture, and religion that affect our point of view of things including differentiating and dividing the certain role and depictions of each gender. Though, a positive change is beginning to emerge through several research findings that do not only identify conventional qualities of men and women but also endeavor to modify the paradigm. The deconstruction image of stereotypical men and women starting to shift in various aspects such as activities (Dabbagh, 2016; Gebregeorgis, 2016), attitudes (Blangsinga et al., 2021; Emilia et al., 2017; Lestariyana et al., 2020), up to the occupational sphere that the two genders portrayed (Chowdhury, 2017; Wiraningsih, 2021) even though the representations still contained ambivalence since most of the time women were

depicted of having less masculine traits and more feminine characteristics attached to them.

Since very few studies focused on both proven deconstruction images of gender stereotypes from linguistic and visual image perspectives in ELT textbooks, this study is conducted in order to explore more the stereotype and deconstruction image of the two genders in the EFL textbooks for 12th-grade students in senior high school. The present study is expected to raise awareness as well as critical awareness of both teachers and students of gender awareness and equality that is portrayed in the textbook.

1.3 STATEMENTS OF THE PROBLEM

- a. What gender stereotypes are represented in Indonesian senior high school student's English textbook for 12th grade?
- b. How are deconstructions of gender stereotypes represented in Indonesian senior high school student's English textbook for 12th grade?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

There are three objectives of the study that is concluded based on the statement of the problem, they are:

- a. To elaborate on gender stereotypes that are represented in Indonesian senior high school student's English textbook for 12th grade.
- b. To analyze deconstructions of gender stereotypes that are represented in Indonesian senior high school student's English textbook for 12th grade.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study aims to describe the contribution of this study theoretically and also practically. The significance of this study is divided into two groups, namely, theoretical significance and practical significance.

1.5.1 Theoretical significance

The expected theoretical significance of this research is to enrich the application of feminist theory in the border area, namely the field of education in terms of the learning material used – textbooks. Besides, the results of this study are expected to increase public understanding and awareness of the traditional characteristics of both genders which often marginalize women (Blangsinga et al., 2021; Mihira et al., 2021; Suwastini, 2013), and the shift to the new traits that are portrayed in the textbooks of the two genders. In addition, the result is expected to have a contribution to enriching the deconstruction image of the stereotyped female and male traits.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

The practical significance of this study is divided into three groups; they are, for students of English as a Foreign Language learners (EFL learners), teachers, other researchers, and society.

a. For EFL Students

The result of the study is expected to raise students' awareness regarding the gender bias issue and its deconstruction in student's English textbook for 12th grade through textual and visual images. As argued by Al-Qatawneh & Al Rawashdeh (2019); Blangsinga et al. (2021); Mihira et al. (2021); and Fadhila

Yonata et al. (2017) that what students read in their textbooks shapes their views on gender equality and reflects society's position on the topic, which is portrayed in the texts as a social construct. Thus, by knowing the stereotypical and deconstruction qualities of the gender, it is expected that they would have an open-minded view and a more flexible attitude toward seeing things and becoming more gender-neutral.

b. For Teachers

The result of the study is expected to raise teachers' critical thinking in selecting the materials that are going to be used in the classroom so that the material given to the students will be bias-free. It is because occasionally, teachers may convey gender-biased ideas into the classroom accidentally via the material learning materials they provide (Islam & Asadullah, 2018; Julianti et al., 2019; Yang, 2011). Therefore, through the result, the teachers are also expected to raise their awareness regarding the issue and are able to guide their students to have a gender awareness understanding. It is because teachers' perception of phenomena or societal problems would be advantageous for students' character building (Yasamahadewi et al., 2021).

c. For Other Researchers

The result of this study is expected to increase the interest of researchers to investigate further gender deconstruction depictions contained in the EFL textbooks, in order to improve the quality of scholarly works that address the topic of gender deconstruction in educational materials. As found in the preliminary research that gender deconstruction has started to appear in some

textbooks, although its representation is still relatively small (Blangsinga et al., 2021; Chowdhury, 2017; Curaming & Curaming, 2020; Emilia et al., 2017; Lestariyana et al., 2020; Wiraningsih, 2021).

Another thing that is expected from the results of this research is the creation of gradual changes to the criticisms built through systematic research.

d. For English Learning in High School

High School/Vocational High School is the last level in the three series of levels of education required by the government of the Republic of Indonesia. This causes students who have graduated from high school to be considered capable of deciding whether to continue to a higher level of education, look for work, or do it at the same time. In this case, the result of this study on learning English at the SMA/SMK level is very important because English is an international language that can be used in almost all countries. Therefore, by providing a view of the correct gender concept in each material taught, it can indirectly show the opportunities that students can have in terms of careers/jobs and education after graduating from school. So that the negative preservation of gender construction can gradually change positively through the implementation of gender equality in teaching materials and classroom activities carried out by teachers.

e. For society

The result of this study is expected to have an impact on changing the traditional perception of the binary opposition that often marginalizes women. Everyone involved in society could take part in voicing and supporting the feminist movement in fighting for gender equality through various types of media

such as audio, video, and printed both online and offline (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003; Westra, 2019).

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to analyzing only one English textbook for 12th-grade senior high school students. The theory that is used to analyze the stereotype image of the two genders is based on Lakoff and Coates' theories for language aspects analysis. Meanwhile, in terms of the deconstruction portrayal found in the textbook, Derrida's concept of deconstruction and Kate Millet's feminist perspective on a binary opposition between women and men that tend to marginalize one gender over the other is used as the guidelines. The analysis is also limited to Indonesian social and cultural aspects since the study and the textbook are conducted and produced in Indonesia.

