

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

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

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Women, men, and language have long been established as the object in the field of language study, providing an account of the many ways in which language and gender may intersect, and stereotype might be constructed. Different linguistic and sociological factors of men and women affect - the construction of stereotypes both of their communication ways and behavior (Lakoff, 1975; Montgomery, 1995). Society has construct stereotypes whether positive and negative based on social norms and culture (Butler, 1990). They label attributes, characteristics, or the roles which should be performed by members of a particular group. The concept of gender is also inseparable from this labelling. Although men and women in Asian multicultural and multi-religious societies have long stereotypically identified themselves as different (Ariyanto, 2018; Widodo, 2018), this differentiation has raised the issue of gender inequality. As the consequence, negative gender stereotypes still occur as an issue in society, where gender differences remain to operate in social practice (Ahmad & Shah, 2019; Ariyanto, 2018; Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012). Indonesian women were found to be

marginalized from education and participation in social aspects (AIPEG, 2015). They were underestimated as less educated and financially unstable since the early marriage found more in girls along with the numbers of widows and divorce (Surbakti & Devasahayam, 2015). This issue appears because of the negative impacts on women where inequity in the form of social roles and opportunities happened (Ahmad & Shah, 2019; Ferreira & Vasconcelos, 2019; Gamble, 2004). Such negative gender disparities may establish gender discrimination that creates a detrimental impression on the public understanding of gender equality.

Negative gender stereotype was found to contribute on the marginalization of women where the identified marginalization has existed in various media such as internet, magazine, and books. On the internet, women were targeted as the victim of sexist humor through memes (Bell et al., 2002; Pryor, 1995). It was also found in Pakistani teaching media in the form of EFL textbook (Ahmad & Shah, 2019) where women were associated with subordinate positions and domestic roles. It was revealed that this teaching media highly contained marginalization of women by exposing males more than females. It also argued that it had been designed to maintain male dominance in both implicit as well as explicit ways. The gender marginalization revealed in the previous studies was prompted by the role of patriarchy in a society where the interests of women are subordinated to the interests of men (Gamble, 2004). The patriarchal system caused passive movement of women as the result of being in a subordinate place (Harrison & Boyd, 2003). In regards to this, Ferreira and Vasconcelos (2019) argued that the purpose of some media to deliver information in a certain way is to maintain

relations of gender domination. Such state of affairs may lead to gender discrimination in practical lives.

The prejudices against women's rights by creating feelings of inferiority result in limiting the behavioral, linguistic, and social roles of female students (Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012; Lesikin, 2001). The future effect on students was also need to be considered. The gender stereotype in EFL textbook also affect on student's perception thus it may restrict females job opportunities and career as well as lead individuals sense of what is normal for men and women (Ahmad & Shah, 2019; Amini & Birjandi, 2012; Durrani, 2008). Therefore, raising awareness of EFL teachers and students regarding gender bias in EFL textbooks as a curriculum document is important. It seems that negative gender stereotype corroborates the binary position of men to women. Thus, deconstruction tried to show a new perspective on what is already labelled as a negative stereotype in society through highlighting what is excluded in the textbooks. Derrida (1976) stated that deconstruction attempts to analyze and criticize the binary opposition. The binary that is included will be benefited while the binary that is excluded will be disadvantaged. Deconstruction does not necessarily aim to fight against binary opposition but creates new ideas or concepts to mark the differences and uncertainties (Güney, 2008). As the result, this new perception is expected to lead to gender awareness.

Schools as the pioneer for transferring knowledge and shaping behavior have the roles to educate the students towards gender awareness (Roziqoh & Suparno, 2014). With gender awareness movement, the students learn to relate with the appropriate gender group with more and more of these features over time

(Edelsky, 1977). Thus, it may deconstruct the negative stereotyped gender where they form a new construction of what males and females can actually do. Furthermore, English as compulsory subject is not only seen as language but also culture. It brings influence on Indonesian students of Western culture which is slightly different including how men and women interact in society (Gunantar, 2016; Lauder, 2010). It can be started from the curriculum, the chosen material as well as the teaching media. Accordingly, the ripple effect of this movement can be gained.

The rise of gender awareness can be started from the selection of the textbook as the teaching media. As found by Yasin et al. (2012), researchers have continued to pay attention to the development of gender in school textbooks. The fact is that awareness of gender and education are prominently included in the school curriculum. The ideal English EFL as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbook should represent both genders equally including the content, visual formatting, visual and graphic (Wen-Cheng et al., 2011; Stockdale, 2006). It means that the materials contained in the textbook should be able to represent equal chances of males and females students in the classroom. EFL textbook is considered to be relevant when the textbook does not cause any change that violates the social and cultural norms and values of students (Ariyanto, 2018). Teachers are also responsible for ensuring that the textbook is ideal for the student's development and relevant in order to achieve appropriate learning results. Chung (2014) also defines ideal textbook when there are gender values underneath that could raise the sensitivity of male and female roles and societal expectations.

Based on preliminary observation, the deconstruction toward the concept of gender in the textbook was found in language and visual representations. The result of this observation was supported by Ariyanto (2018) who found that both male and female characters were represented having outdoor activities which are usually associated with masculine activities. Another attempt was done by the authors of the textbook to deconstruct the negative stereotype was through reconstructing the social roles of men and women in the form of the choice of occupations. It is in line with Lestariyana et al. (2020) who found that the male characters were represented doing domestic roles such as coking while female characters were career women. Setyono (2018) further added that the textbook started to highlight women through the use of Indonesian woman public figures as an example in a text. The shift in the image of women to be more active in social interactions was also identified (Arfiandhani, 2019; Yang, 2011). Lestariyana et al. (2020) and Abdelhay & Benhaddouche (2015) also found that some activities that are associated with feminine jobs are done by men, such as dancers and cooking. From linguistic aspect, it was found that the textbook applied the use of gender-neutral construction such as police officer instead of policeman, and fire-fighter instead of fire-man.

However, the result of the preliminary observation also found that textbooks still remain an unequal representation of both male and female as supported by the findings of Ariyanto (2018), Ahmad and Shah (2019), Elbalqis (2020), Fitriyani (2013), and Syela (2018). The textbook was found to be less present the roles of women in a social and public setting (Lee and Collins, 2008; Cook, 2015), counting from the frequency of male and females appear in the textbooks textually

or visually. Ahmad and Shah (2019) argued that the reason behind this inequality was due to a tendency of certain parties and interests where the contents of a textbook were being included to hide, and excluded to highlight any particular factor. The domination of males towards female characters also causes subordinate position and dependent where female characters always appeared together with male characters (Cook, 2015; Syela, 2018). Likewise, the unequal gender representation was found to rise up inferiority issues of female. Females are more inclined to deal with private or domestic jobs and have passive roles in terms of social leadership and technology. This lameness implies that males always existed in the public sphere and more active than females.

The representation of the concept of gender in the textbook has not satisfactorily been abridged in the previous studies, shown by the overlapping between the stereotyped and deconstructed aspects. Thus, further investigation on how the concepts of gender were represented in the textbook worth conducted. With this consideration, this present study analyzed the representation of the concept of gender in the EFL textbook "*When English Rings the Bells*" for seventh grade junior high school. This textbook is widely used by Indonesian junior high school students and represents Indonesian culture. Thus, how this textbook represents the concept of gender affects the students' perception toward their gender roles widely. Therefore, through conducting this research, it is expected to raise the teacher's and student's critical awareness toward the concept of gender represented in educational textbooks.

## **1.2 Problem Identification**

Negative gender stereotypes established issues toward inequality of men and women in society. One of the issues is the imbalanced representation of males and females in EFL textbooks. The unequal representation of the gender potentially affects the behavioral, linguistic, and social roles of the students. The result of the preliminary observation supported by previous researches revealed that the EFL textbooks show the deconstruction towards the stereotyped concept of gender was done. However, another finding also revealed that the EFL textbooks contained the stereotyped concept of gender. The studies which focused on gender stereotype mostly only centralized on counting the number of males and female appeared in the textbooks. Furthermore, most of the previous studies conducted on the analysis of EFL textbooks only discussed gender in a surface, as a unity of learning components. Few researches have been paying attention to both confirmed stereotypes and deconstruction of the concept of gender stereotypes from linguistic and visual image aspects. Thus, the study on the analysis of the concept of language and gender represented in the EFL textbook “*When English Rings A Bells*” for seventh grade junior high school was worth conducted. It was chosen as the subject of the study since this book represents Indonesian culture and is widely used in Indonesia. It was aimed to analyze how the multimodality of text and visual images work together in the meaning making process to represent the concept of gender in the textbook. The present study was expected to raise the teacher and student critical awareness of gender representation portrayed in educational textbooks.

### 1.3 Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of the problem, the statements of the problem were formulated as follow:

1. How were the stereotyped concepts of gender represented in the Indonesian EFL textbook *When English Rings A Bell* for seventh grade junior high school students?
2. How were the deconstructions toward the concepts of gender represented in the Indonesian EFL textbook *When English Rings A Bell* for seventh grade junior high school students?

### 1.4 Objectives of the Study

Based on the formulation of problem statements, the objectives of the present study were identified as follow:

1. To describe the concepts of gender represented in Indonesian EFL textbook *When English Rings A Bell* for seventh grade junior high school students
2. To describe the deconstruction toward the concepts of gender represented in Indonesian EFL textbook *When English Rings A Bell* for seventh grade junior high school students

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this research are expected to give some significance for both theoretically and also practically. The details of the significance were presented below:

### 1.5.1 Theoretical significance

The results of the present study were expected to contribute to the theory toward the good criteria of textbooks explained by Campbell (2010) as unbiased and non-stereotypical. This also brings significance to the theory of post-feminism where the voices that were previously marginalized have the opportunity to speak themselves through the equal depiction of gender in the textbook (Faludi, 2006; Genz & Brabon, 2009). This is also beneficial to enrich the example of the deconstructive reading method in the text which the meaning contained in the EFL textbook are represented through multimodal ways of communication such as text together with visual images to raise the concept of gender awareness and equality among students.

### 1.5.2 Practical significance

#### A. For students

The results of the present study were expected to raise student's awareness of gender equality through textual and visual images in the textbook *When English Rings a Bell* for the seventh grade of junior high school. The students could have a broader perception of job opportunities and careers that they can have because the concept of gender represented in the textbook show equal roles of men and women. Besides, the students can avoid sexist language through the use of gender-neutral construction.

#### B. For teachers

The results of the present study were expected to raise the teacher awareness towards the selection of teaching material and students guide in learning English as well as gender roles portrayed in educational textbooks especially for seventh grade junior high school students.

#### C. For the other researcher

The results of the present study were expected to be a reference for other researchers who are interested in developing a similar study. For the researchers who are interested in research and design (R&D), the result of this study can be used as the consideration to design learning materials that represent equality of gender. For materials developers, this study can be used as a consideration to redesign the EFL textbooks that consider equal gender portrayed as suggested by Ahmad & Shah (2019) that both genders should be represented in an equalized proportion.

#### D. For society

The results of this study were significant to support the Feminist movement to fight for gender equality in every aspect of life, for example, men which as the leaders in the family can also do domestic roles while women that responsible for parenting and household have a chance to be career women. This equality may construct positive stereotypes toward the concept of gender as found by Siy & Cheryan (2016) to be beneficial for social community.

## 1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study was limited on analysing one Indonesian EFL textbook entitled *“When English Rings A Bell”* for Seventh Grade Students of Junior High School as the object of the research. The concepts of language and gender were based on the deficit, dominance, and difference approach. The concepts of deconstruction by Derrida (1976) was applied as the guidance on how meaning as the uncertainty brings a new perspective towards binary opposition. The analysis was also limited on the social and culture aspects in Indonesia considering that the textbook is compiled by Indonesian authors and used by Indonesian students. Therefore, this study focused on gender as the construction of social and norms in Indonesia.

