CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Research Background

Gender inequality is a widespread issue in Indonesia which is apparent in many aspects such as education access, labour wage, entrepreneurship and finance, health, and institutions and laws (AIPEG, DFAT, & Monash University CDES, 2015). Indonesian women are reported to be underrepresented in those aspects leading to women marginalization (AIPEG et al., 2015). Surbakti & Devasahayam (2015) reported that women are left behind men and boys seen from the early marriage found more in girls, followed by more numbers of widows and divorced women living with less education, financial security leading to more vulnerability. Cameron & Contreras-Suarez (2018) reported that women participation in formal sectors in Indonesia are reduced along with their marriage and child rearing. This implies that Indonesian women are still expected to stick within informal sectors reflecting the patriarchal structure in Indonesia. Therefore, efforts to mainstream gender and promote the participation of women in all lines must be preceded by efforts to build awareness about gender equality itself.

Gender equality efforts in Indonesia have been carried out in the fields of education and economics. In the field of education, according to Sumar (2015), men and women should get justice and equality in obtaining formal education. In addition, men and women also have the same obligations, namely studying (Sumar, 2015). Then,

according to Probosiwi (2015), efforts in gender equality have been carried out by providing free functional literacy education in the context of overcoming illiteracy, which is given to both men and women (Probosiwi, 2015). Then, in the economic field, Probosiwi (2015) said that a Joint Business Group (KUBE) has been established or known as a gender-based Social Welfare Guarantee. This organization was established as a means of developing women's creativity to innovate and develop skills to improve the family economy (Probosiwi, 2015). Then, according to Rachmina (2009), gender equality in the economy is realized through policies in equalizing access to credit for both men and women. This policy causes the freedom of men and women in obtaining and utilizing credit (Rachmina, 2009). Through gender equality in education and the economy, men and women have the same opportunity in obtaining and exercising their rights and obligations as a human being.

Gender mainstreaming programs need to be implemented in the field of education, for example education in early childhood. The program can be in the form of Gender Perspective Education in Early Childhood, such as a study conducted by Roziqoh and Suparno (2014). Considering that Early Childhood Education has a basic function which is to familiarize and shape the behaviour of children, then gender mainstreaming is important to be implemented early on through educational programs. Roziqoh and Suparno (2014) explained that sometimes the teacher unconsciously carries out learning activities in class that disadvantages female students, for example by giving more attention to male students or giving the media a masculine role to male students and roles that are feminine to female students. In fact, education must develop

gender equality and justice for male and female students seriously in terms of decision making, equal learning opportunities, and so on (Sahin, 2014). In fact, parents also unconsciously have accustomed gender inequality to children since they were born by giving toys or colors that are tailored to the child's sex, for example by giving gun toys to boys and the pink colors given to girls (Roziqoh & Suparno, 2014).

By developing gender equality and justice in the field of education, social issues in society such as inequality, division and conflict between men and women can be reduced (Sahin, 2014). Roziqoh and Suparno (2014) stated that efforts to increase gender equality through education can be carried out through formal education in schools and non-formal education at home. Given that gender is a social construction, awareness about gender equality needs to be carried out as early as possible. Therefore, societies that mainstream gender equality must insert and infiltrate these concepts of gender and gender equality in children (Wood, 1994). Thus, inclusion of gender awareness to the education system especially language teaching can be the option as language is also the medium to construct gender equity.

Based on her work in 1975, Lakoff argues that gender difference exists in language, for example some lexical items can be positive or negative depending on the roles assigned to them (Lakoff, 2004). The difference is also apparent in the way society shapes children's language based on their gender (Lakoff, 2004). Take the example of the needs to ensure that boys and girls talk as they should, rough talk from girls are less favoured from boys. (Lakoff, 2004) Later, Quina, Wingard, & Bates (1987) supported Lakoff's work by studying about speech patterns as a gender-linked

stereotype. They found that the more feminine person used non-assertive linguistic that is indicated as socially warm, sensitive, friendly, and sincere. In contrast, they explained that assertive language is more masculine. Reid, Palomares, Anderson, & Bondad-Brown (2009) conducted a study about social influence of language and gender as they are intertwined from one to another. They found that woman's educational status and gender elicited different influence on men. When the men were aware with the female speaker high education, they were more influenced by women speaking assertive language (Reid et al., 2009). However, the men wore more influence by female speaker speaking attentive language when the men were only aware of the gender but not the female's education. Reid et al. (2009) added that this is related to the perceived competence coming from the gender and the educational status. Tannen (1990) argued that women are depicted as incapable in communication leading to their limited access towards power.

The depiction of women incapability is also shown in media widely accessed by children such as student's textbooks, which usually contain less representation for women in its texts and illustrations (Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012a; M. Hall, 2014; Kholy, 2017; Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, 2020; Roohani & Zarei, 2013; Suhartono & Kristina, 2018; Svein, 2018). Other findings reveal that public activities were mostly illustrated by men and domestics activities were dominated by women (Ahmad & Shah, 2019). Some textbooks have attempted to present equal gender representations, such as depictions of working women, women inferiorities were still found in form of the depictions of women having jobs with lower salary than men (Lee & Mahmoudi-

Gahrouei, 2020; Setyono, 2018). Language textbooks are often contained with gender bias perspective (Cook, 2015). In her work of comparing EFL textbooks produced in 10 years of difference, she found that males are still represented as more powerful and reliable while female characters in the textbooks are represented in domestic chores and dependable. In the analysis toward English coursebooks in Egypt, Kholy found that male holds more modern and prestigious jobs where they leave the house to work while females characters are assigned with domestic and traditional jobs. Pro-male bias is also found in English textbooks in Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (Islam & Asadullah, 2018). They found that female characters are underrepresented both in texts or pictures in the textbooks. Not only that, males dominance is also shown in the communicative position of the clauses in English textbooks, where the theme, rheme, and actor roles is dominated by males (Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012b). Rachmijati & Cahyati (2018) conclude that the gender representation in English textbooks released by the Ministry of National Education in Indonesia for tenth grader is dominated by male.

Previous researches have revealed the bias in English textbooks, but they mainly focus on the physical and educational attributes of the characters. This research intended to analyse the English Textbook *When English Rings a Bell f*or 8th grade students to find out whether the language and gender stereotypes support the characterisation of the characters. Preliminary observation on the textbook shows underrepresentation for visual of female characters in the textbook illustration which is in line with the findings from Lestariyana, Widodo, & Sulistiyo (2020) who analysed

the same textbook. Underrepresentation of female characters implies that favourability towards men existing in the textbooks as Agni, Setyaningsih, & Sarosa (2020), Ariyanto (2018), Barton & Sakwa (2012), Curaming & Curaming (2020), Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei (2020), and Rachmijati & Cahyati (2018) have identified in various English textbooks for students of junior and senior high schools. In addition to that, preliminary observation on verbal portrayals for both male and female still convey the dichotomies for feminine and masculine activities in line with the findings from (Ariyanto, 2018; Ena, Yulia, & Prabandari, 2016; Lestariyana et al., 2020). On the other hand, the preliminary observations also reveal deconstruction on gender representations in form of male characters doing house chores or female characters working in public sphere and equal representation of males females character in outdoor activities as identified by Lestariyana et al. (2020). Although many stereotypes of gender representations were identified in previous research, some researchers have successfully identified deconstruction on gender representations in various English textbooks both from their visual and verbal portrayal. In Indonesia, Lestariyana et al. (2020) and Setyono (2018) discovered that female characters having career on prestigious jobs were portrayed in the textbooks for junior high school students. English textbooks in other countries also began to portray women for being more involved in outdoor activities or use gender neutral pronouns in the texts (Abdelhay & Benhaddouche, 2015; Cook, 2015; Lee, 2014; Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, 2020; Yang, 2011). Recent observations on English textbooks inform some disagreement regarding gender representations in their visual and verbal portrayal. Furthermore, the report from Ministry of National Development Planning (2013) shows that although

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educational access is available for both gender, gender disparities remain exist in curriculum, learning materials, textbooks, teachers development, etc. Murthi et al. (2017) also state that one of the principles of gender analysis pathways is understanding the factors and actors that perpetuate the discrimination upon women and girls through an analysis of the value existing in the community. Previously, Vervecken (2012) found that children's perception of gender is affected by language noting that those expressing gender fair language are committing to gender equity. Considering that *When English Rings a Bell* for 8th grade students is one of the commonly accessed textbooks which serve the role of value agent for gender awareness (Setyono, 2018), further analysis on the representation of gender and how the deconstruction is done appears to be important to be conducted.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

Based on the background explained above, this research has the following problem statements:

1. How are the stereotypes of language and gender represented in *When English Rings A Bell* for eighth grade students?
2. How are the stereotypes of language and gender deconstructed *When English Rings A Bell* for eighth grade students?

1.3 Purposes of the study

Based on the statements of the problem, this research aims:

1. To reveal the confirmed stereotypes of language and gender found in *When English Rings A Bell* for eighth grade students

2. To elaborate the deconstructed stereotypes of language and gender found in *When English Rings A Bell* for eighth grade students

1.4 Significances of the Study

The results of this research are expected to contribute on theoretical and practical significance as explained below.

1.4.1 Theoretical significance

It is expected that the results can be taken into consideration in evaluating the content of textbooks. This is in line with Richards (2001) who explains that the development of language textbooks content may rely too heavily on fulfilling students' language learning needs and tend to ignore social issues such as gender representation. Therefore, by highlighting the language and gender representation in the textbook, the gender issues can be given more attention in language learning material development. This research was also expected to enrich the factors which maintain the discrimination on women that appears in educational system supporting the findings by Murthi et al. (2017). Employing representation reading method, this research can enrich the example of doing such analysis especially on how the combination of text and visual that lead to the creation of meaning as explained in theory of representation by Hall (2003). Furthermore, the results on representation of gender through language can enrich the

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studies about language and gender that are previously done by Lakoff (1973), Quina et al. (1987), and Tannen (1990).

1.4.2   Practical significance

The present study is expected to be fruitful for teachers, students, and other researchers regarding the stereotypes of language and gender existing in students' textbook, especially in *When English Rings a Bell* textbooks for the 8th grade students. The details of the significance are explained as follows.

1. For teachers

    The result of this research is expected to inform the teachers about the language and gender stereotypes existing in student textbook. According to Barton and Sakwa (2012), gender issues were rarely addressed by teachers, especially those existing in the content they taught. It might be caused by insensitivity towards gender discrimination existing in their instructional material (Ahmad & Shah, 2019). According to Wood (1994), societies that mainstream gender equality must insert and infiltrate these concepts of gender and gender equality in children. Thus, teachers with gender awareness will enlighten their students about gender awareness, such as giving emphasize that domestic or public sphere is not bound to be dominated by certain gender.

2. For students

    The result of this study can build awareness about gender and language issues existing in texts and visual images found in the textbook *When English*

Rings a Bell for the 8th grade of junior high school. According to Vervecken (2012), mental representation of children regarding gender awareness are directly influenced by the choice of gender fair language. Therefore, this research may help the students to be more sensitive on gender awareness issues occurring through language use.

3. For other researchers

Other researchers interested in researchers on applied linguistics, gender studies, and feminisms may use this research as reference. The limitation found in this research can be directed as future research to develop the field being studied, such as comparing the result with analysis done on English textbooks used for international schools or using psycholinguistic perspective to study the impact of gender representations on students (Kholy, 2017).

1.5   Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research is limited to the analysis of stereotypes and deconstruction of language and gender existing in the 8th grade students' English textbook entitled in *When English Rings a Bell*. This research adapted Lakoff's (1975) concept on language and gender and representation of gender through visual adapted from Syela (2018) and Ahmad & Shah (2019). This research also focused on how meaning is produced through deconstruction as explained by Derrida (1976). The scope of this study is the text and visual of English textbook entitled in *When English Rings a Bell* for 8th grade junior high school students adapting the multimodal analysis by Bateman (2008).

Considering that the textbooks is compulsory for Indonesian student and composed by Indonesian authors, the analysis was limited on Indonesian social and cultural aspects.