

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the current study, including the background and context of the study, the specific research questions being addressed, the overarching objectives and purpose of the study, the significance and relevance of the findings, the delimitation of the scope and focus of the study, and the definition and explanation of key terms and concepts used throughout the research.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Critical Discourse Analysis is a study of discourse that has the purpose to “understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality” (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 352). Continuing from the previous point, the term "Critical Discourse Analysis" refers to a field of study that focuses on analyzing and examining discourse in order to comprehend, bring attention to, and ultimately challenge social inequality. It is done by involving a critical and analytical approach to understanding how language and discourse contribute to the reproduction and perpetuation of social inequality (i.e. in the context of this study this refers to the issue of gender inequality in the English textbook, e.g. lack of representation or, stereotypical gender roles). The primary purpose of critical discourse analysis is to shed light on these inequalities and to against them by raising awareness, promoting social justice, and advocating for change.

The term critical is used in CDA because, according to the perspective of CDA, discourse is not neutral; it is influenced by the social, political, historical, and cultural contexts in which it is used. Furthermore, the term discourse in CDA refers to any form of communication employed by individuals or society, including spoken and written language, images, and other modes that create meaning. As a methodological approach to language analysis, CDA aims to identify and address social issues. Accordingly, it examines not only the language within a text but also its relationship to the broader social context in which it is produced and received (Baker & McGlashan, 2020). Ultimately, CDA seeks to bring about positive societal change (Fairclough, 2015).

With regard to the previous point as already discussed related to the nature of CDA, CDA is fruitful to be utilized in the study of gender representation since the term gender is shaped and reinforced by language and discourse; then, language and discourse itself are constructed and validated by the socio-cultural in the society; and most importantly CDA provides a framework in analyzing the construction or the representation of gender in the discourse. The utilization of critical discourse analysis (CDA) in the study of gender representation is beneficial. By recognizing the influential role of language and discourse in shaping and reinforcing gender, CDA offers an analytical approach. Moreover, the understanding that language and discourse are constructed and validated by the socio-cultural standards and norms within society further emphasizes the significance of employing CDA in this present study.

A large number of scholars and researchers have conducted studies on gender representation to examine how the figures of males and females are depicted in English language textbooks. Malik et al. (2021) conducted a content analysis study to examine gender representation in three English textbooks in the context of Punjab. The data was obtained from both the textual content and pictures and was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings showed that female characters are either underrepresented or inaccurately portrayed. This study suggests that textbooks should fairly depict females and promote gender equality. Correspondingly, Curaming and Curaming (2020) used critical discourse analysis to investigate gender representation in Philippine English language textbooks. The results of the study showed that although the authors and editors have tried to advance gender equality, a significant level of gender inequality is still present in the textbooks, with a tendency to favor males. The study suggests that the ongoing gender inequality in textbooks may be perpetuated by larger societal factors that maintain inequality.

Moreover, in the Indonesian context, Rohmawati and Putra (2022) studied gender representation in occupational roles in English textbooks for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades students, using content analysis. They found gender stereotypes in both textbooks, with fewer photos of women in public roles and more images of women in conventional gender roles like cooking and caring for children. Santosa (2020) used content analysis to study gender representation in an English textbook for 10<sup>th</sup> grade senior high school students. The study showed that males characters as the

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dominance group in the textbook. Asriyama and Sari (2022) studied gender representation in two Indonesian English textbooks for 10<sup>th</sup> grade senior high school students using content analysis. The results showed a clear bias in the portrayal of males and females which is in favor of males. Setyono (2018) studied gender representation in EFL textbooks for 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade senior high school students using critical discourse analysis. Results showed that the analyzed textbooks still support the continuation of gender biases and stereotypes toward female characters.

Furthermore, Emilia et al. (2017) observed the representation of males and females in two printed English language textbooks designed for junior high school students by applying critical discourse analysis with a systematic functional linguistic approach. Specifically, the study utilized the theory of functional grammar (i.e. transitivity system). In the study, males were consistently portrayed as being "adventurous," "risk-taking," "active," "independent," and "capable." On the other hand, females were depicted as being more "passive," "expressive," "nurturing," and "unassertive". Nunun et al. (2020) conducted a study to investigate the representation of male and female characters in an English language textbook used by junior high school students in grade 7<sup>th</sup> by applying visual content analysis, which involved systematically analyzing and interpreting the visual images in the textbook. The findings of the study revealed that in each of the gender categories, the representation of women was consistently lower compared to men. The results also showed that the textbooks were not gender-sensitive, as they were found to be imbalanced in their representation of gender in the illustrations.

To wrap up, it is apparent that the prior studies on gender representation in EFL textbooks in Indonesia and other countries have shown that women are often underrepresented in these materials. For this reason, it is crucial to continue examining the issue of gender representation in English language teaching materials in order to confirm and verify the findings and results of past research. Further, it is worth stating that the investigation of EFL textbooks in terms of gender representation can be defined as an ongoing process, given the diversity of ideologies and the abundance of textbooks (Al-Juaythin, 2018). Additionally, there have only been a limited number of studies that have utilized critical discourse analysis to examine gender representation in EFL textbooks, especially in the context of Indonesia. It is crucial to use critical discourse analysis to uncover the hidden ideology, i.e. whether males and females in the observed English language

textbook are represented proportionally. Moreover, only a few studies have focused on gender representation in English textbooks for vocational school students; previous studies in the study of gender representation have commonly been done in textbooks for junior high school and senior high school students. To further address the gaps in the previous studies and expand upon the findings, this present study aims to investigate the representation of males and females in the English language textbook specifically designed for vocational school students by utilizing critical discourse analysis to analyze the representation of males and females.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

The research question of the study is conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the topic at hand. This study is undertaken to answer the following questions, as follows:

1. How are males and females represented in the Indonesian EFL textbook for vocational school students?
2. What recommendations could be made to textbook authors to promote gender equality for males and females in the observed English language textbook?

## **1.3 Purposes of the Study**

Referring to the previous research questions, this study aims to meet the following purposes:

1. To construct the representation of males and females in the Indonesian EFL textbook for vocational school students
2. To give recommendations in promoting gender equality for males and females in the observed English language textbook

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is expected to provide several benefits theoretically and practically in terms of policy, as follows:

Theoretically, exploring this study is expected to enrich the literature related to the study of gender representation in English language textbooks. Accordingly, it can provide a policy, especially in terms of how male and female characters should be depicted in English language

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textbooks. Besides, the finding of this study may reinforce or discourage the fact of the previous studies related to gender representation in the EFL textbook.

Practically, for English teachers, the finding of the study is expected to be a guidance for them in their classroom practices in displaying male and female characters fairly in English language materials since the biased representation of males and females can ruin educational values. As a result, the finding of the study is expected to make them more critical in delivering the materials contained in English language textbooks to students. For textbook authors, this study can be an input or criticism related to how males and females are represented in textbooks. Hence, this input can be a guideline for them in constructing an EFL textbook in the future. Later, for policymakers, this study is expected to present notable information related to the gender representation issue in the textbook in the field of education. Further, it is expected that they will be selective in determining and observing English language textbooks that will be used in Indonesian educational practices.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study is concerned to conduct an examination of males and females represented in the content of the English language textbook called "Forward: An English course for vocational school Students" for 10<sup>th</sup> grade published by *Erlangga*. The representation of male and female characters in the textbook is analyzed using the category of gender representation proposed by Amerian and Esmaili (2015), i.e. the visibility of males and females, domestic or public roles of males and females, the activities of males and females, and the pictorial representation of males and females. Moreover, this study specifically employs the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model developed by Fairclough (2015), which takes a socio-cultural approach to understanding discourse. The examination of this study consists of two main objectives, as follows:

The first objective of the present study is to construct the depiction of male and female characters in the observed English language textbook designed for vocational school students. The investigation focuses on four categories, i.e. the visibility of males and females, the social or domestic role of males and females, the activities of males and females, and the pictorial representation of males and females.

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Further, taking into consideration the outcome of the previous objective, the concern of the second objective is to provide recommendations in promoting gender equality of males and females in the observed English language textbook.

## **1.6 Clarification of the Key Terms**

To prevent any confusion or misinterpretation of certain crucial terms, the definitions of those terms will be specified in this section.

### **1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

According to Baker and McGlashan (2020), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can be understood as a systematic way of examining language with the aim of identifying social issues. This approach not only evaluates the language used within a text but also takes into account the relationship between the text and the larger societal context in which it is both received and created. This present study employs the CDA model by Fairclough (2015) which the model of CDA is well-known as a socio-cultural approach, this is because according to Fairclough, discourse plays an active role in shaping and reinforcing social and cultural reality, and discourse itself is also influenced and shaped by socio-cultural that is legitimized by the society. For this reason, this study proposed a CDA model from Fairclough to uncover the representation of male and female characters in the English language textbook designed for vocational school students that are used in Indonesian educational practice for disclosing whether males and females are depicted proportionately.

### **2. Gender**

Gender is established from birth and is constantly sustained throughout an individual's life due to its relationship with social structures (Lorber & Farrell, 1991). Straightforwardly, gender refers to how a person values and interprets ideas of what is to be a female and male (Reeves & Baden, 2000). In the context of Indonesia, there are only two genders that are recognized, i.e. ‘‘male or boy or man’’ and ‘‘female or girl or woman’’. Referring to the previous discussions, Indonesian only legitimizes binary ‘‘gender’’. All in all, the exploration of gender in this study refers to the representation of male and female characters in the English language textbook series designed for vocational school students.

### 3. Textbook(s)

Textbooks are one of the components of the curriculum and are often viewed as a quiet means of imparting values or moral education (Widodo, 2018). A textbook is considered as the instrument or stimulus of teaching and learning (Graves, 2000); and it has significant roles to determine educational content in educational practices (Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012a). In the wider context, the textbook can be a resource, a map, a teacher, a trainer, an authority, and an ideology (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). In this present study, gender representation is explored in the English language textbook for 10<sup>th</sup> grade designed for vocational school students in Indonesian educational practice. This English language textbook is chosen for knowing the effectiveness and fairness of the chosen textbook in depicting males and females.

### 4. Gender representation

Gender representation refers to how gender (i.e. male and female) are portrayed or depicted in any kind of media. It should be noted that schools play a substantial role in teaching and reinforcing the dominant values of culture associated with the areas of gender and sexuality (Meyer, 2010) because when the first-day students enter preschool or kindergarten, they have been identified by their sex referred to their roles (i.e. the roles of boys and girls); and their gender is also consistently reinforced and practiced toward the interaction with their teachers and their peers (Renold, as cited in Meyer, 2010). In this study, gender representation is investigated in the content of English language textbook for 10<sup>th</sup> grade designed for vocational school students in Indonesian educational practice. Gender representation is explored by focusing on four categories, namely: the visibility of males and females, the social or domestic role of males and females, the activities of males and females, and the pictorial representation of males and females. Further, it is worthwhile to affirm here that those four categories are explored based on the critical discourse analysis perspective proposed by Fairclough (2015).

## 1.7. Organization of the Chapter

The arrangement of this thesis consists of five chapters:

The first chapter provides a brief review of the overall structure of this study. It consists of the background of the study, research questions, purposes of the study, significance of the study, the scope of the study, clarification of the key terms, as well as organization.

The second chapter provides relevant theories and previous studies related to the subject matter in this study.

The third chapter focuses on the methodology of the present study. This consists of research design, the process of data collection in the chosen textbook, and English language textbook analysis.

The fourth chapter focuses on the findings and the discussion of the study. It is conducted based on the research questions or purposes of the study and to answer the questions addressed in the present study.

The fifth or last chapter is the final chapter of this thesis. It consists of the conclusions of the study, recommendations of the study, and limitation(s) of the study as well