ABSTRACT

The Portrayal of Gender Roles in Textbooks for Junior High School Students

(Systemic Functional Linguistics as a Tool of Analysis)

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Abstract: This research is managed to investigate the portrayal of gender roles in two selected published English textbooks for eight graders in Indonesia. The research utilizes a qualitative descriptive analysis focusing on the textual data obtained from 20 selected reading passages—narratives—with reference to the gender roles of the characters. The data were then analyzed using verbal Transitivity system of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The results of the analysis explicate that male characters dominate the roles of important Participants as they appeared more frequently in the Processes along the narratives. The selection of transitive verbs used (e.g. travel, walk, and climb) also reveals that male characters are perpetually constructed as 'adventurous', 'risk taker', 'active', 'independent', and 'capable'. Meanwhile, through the using of intransitive verbs, the female characters are shaped as; more 'passive', 'expressive', 'nurturing', and 'unassertive' than their male counterparts (Blackstone, 2003; Evans & Davies, 2000). Thus, the research findings presented the characters' gender roles in asymmetrical manner. Such portrayal of asymmetrical gender roles is likely to stem from the domineering culture and power asymmetry of men over women that ideologically manifested in some social systems (Francis, 2004).

Keywords: Gender Roles, Gender Asymmetry, Textbooks, Transitivity System