CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

Teachers and textbooks are two essential components in teaching and learning English as Foreign Language (EFL). These two components play an important role in helping students understand not only the linguistic contents but also the cultural values that accompany them. In this context, teachers can provide explanation about the contents of the textbooks as meaning of cultural symbols presented there. Thus, it can be argued that textbooks and teachers are instruments that link students' native culture and the target language culture.

If the essential role of teachers can be accepted, then the way textbooks portray people in society and the way people communicate will directly influence EFL students in choosing words that will be used to communicate with native speaker. This has important implications for the EFL teachers, particularly in the process of textbooks selection.

In Indonesia, according to Damayanti (2008), the process of selecting textbooks can be influenced by several factors. First, the person that has authority (the principal or teachers) decides to use the textbooks based on the price of them. This often happened in most schools in Indonesia, especially in schools that are financially critical. Second, the decision in choosing textbooks is made by those who have no professional background experience. For instance the principal, as the one who has authority, decides to choose particular textbooks to be used in school because he or she usually has connection with certain publisher. It often

happens that teachers, who do not have enough information about the criteria of good and proper textbooks, decide to use certain textbooks only because the textbooks provide colorful pictures. They think that with colorful pictures the students will find it easier to understand what are in the textbooks without considering whether the content of the textbooks is appropriate or not.

A large number of textbooks circulating nowadays provide more options not only for EFL teachers but also for the students to choose their learning materials. One potential problem remains that many EFL books, to a certain extent, are not free from biases, especially gender bias. Curriculum, learning materials and instructional process, being realized or not, often construct gender biases and marginalization. If this is abandoned and teachers do not realize that the gender roles should be noticed, students may be directed to think in a distorted way.

Much research on education shows that education has failed to instill this unbiased attitude. According to such research, stereotypical about men and women were constantly described in textbooks (see Chung, 2000; Otlowski 2003 and Damayanti, 2006). There were also imbalanced representations between women and men in terms of occupation, social status and roles. The portrayal of men and women in the textbooks was far from the actual situation. For instance, the depictions of *doctor* are mostly portrayed by male characters, while females are portrayed as *nurses.* Another example is when many school principles are portrayed as male rather than female. By contrast, in reality, nowadays more women work as doctors and more women also become principal.

Damayanti (2006) argues that the unequal portrayal of men and women in the textbooks has the potential to bring negative effects on students' learning process. If the portrayals are viewed repeatedly to students, especially to young learners, they will think in limited way about what men can do and what women can do. The impact, it might give such an assumption that women can not have job as high as men have.

The issue of gender bias in textbooks has been an important concern of Indonesian teachers. Asiatun cited in *Kompas* (05 Mei 2003) unpacked gender biases which occur in curriculum implementation, in this case, textbooks. Men were portrayed to have better occupation than women. It was also been described that most women characters worked at home. At the same time, Susmanto, cited in *Pikiran Rakyat* (November 2003), found gender biases which show inequality between men and women. He further added that there was a kind of assumption that occupations in domestic sector were more appropriate for women while occupations in public sector were more suitable for men.

Textbooks are an important tool for instruction. Their role is important for the instruction process for both students and schools. In addition, textbooks are powerful representations of the curriculum and pedagogical practice. In textbooks there are male and female characters depicted in all fields of activities that may reveal gender stereotypes. Gender is as a part of culture that is introduced in school. School transfers norms and values in society, including norms and values of gender. Then the norms and values of gender are transferred through both

textbooks and attitudes that reflect the norms and values of gender in social culture.

Sadker (1994) as cited in Otlowski (2003) said that teachers are generally unaware of their own biased teaching behavior because they simply teach how they used to be taught and the subtle gender inequities found in teaching materials are often overlooked. While teacher education textbooks offer few specific resources to promote gender fairness, there are steps that teachers and teacher educators can take to create more equitable and effective learning. In curriculum, for example, teaching students to recognize common forms of bias can pay rich learning shares. Following is a framework for assessing curricular bias. Since these forms of bias exist from picture books to college texts and apply not only to gender but also to many groups, mastering this framework offers a useful lesson to students of all ages.

Not only teachers, but also BSNP (Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan) have obligation in selecting textbooks in Indonesia. BSNP is an institute under the government which is concerned with educational issues especially in Indonesia. BSNP has established the appraisal of the content of textbooks in Indonesia. According to BSNP, one of the appraisal points of the textbooks is the accuracy of the material that has been divided into three aspects, namely, social function, elements and meaning structure, and linguistic features. Based on the appraisal, good textbooks are those that provide texts that have a 95% minimum useful to achieve proper social function in their elements, meaning structures and linguistic features. In other words, the textbooks that contain gender biases are considered to

have not enough material accuracy, because of their elements, meaning structures and linguistic features which have not fulfilled the expected social function.

Meanwhile, studies of the portrayal of women in EFL/ESL textbooks (Ansary and Babii 2003, Hartman and Judd 1978, as cited in Otlowski 2003) have shown that the stereotypical role of women as mothers and homemakers is still being maintained in many current language textbooks. In many cases, important parts of the society presented in textbooks are unequally presented. Otlowski (2003) has conducted a study to examine gender bias in English textbooks used in Japan. Based on his findings, women were depicted to have some stereotypical roles mainly serving as homemakers and mothers.

Inspired by many studies, including that of Otlowski, the present study attempts to unpack gender representation in 3 English textbooks in Indonesia, namely, *Speed Up English 4, 5 and 6* written by Dra. Rita Kurniawan and Dra. Naning Partini. It is expected that this study can give some contributions on improving people's awareness of the hidden biases in many English textbooks used by many students in Indonesia.

1. 2 Statements of the Problems

The problems in this study are formulated in the following research questions:

1. How is gender represented in three English textbooks for Elementary school students?

2. From the point of view of critical pedagogy, what do such representations signify?

1.3 Aims of the Study

The present study is aimed to:

1. reveal how gender is represented in three English textbooks for Elementary school students;

2. see how critical pedagogy views such representation.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study is limited to the three textbooks examined to reveal gender biases reflected in texts and visual illustrations. Texts in this sense are limited to the reading passages, dialogues and exercises. The visual illustrations are limited to the visual images that accompany the text. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized as those in quantitative study.

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 Research Design

This study is an attempt to analyze how texts are used as a tool to smoothly transmit certain ideologies. As a text analysis, this study investigates texts by the use of Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar to see how clauses are structured to create certain representations. This framework is combined with Freire's framework on Critical Pedagogy to see how such cultural representation signify the whole process of teaching

and learning. The explanation of the use of the two main frameworks above will further be explained in detail in chapter II.

1.5.2 Data source

The sources of the data for this study were three English textbooks for Elementary students: *Speed Up English 4, 5 and 6* by Dra. Rita Kurniawan and Dra. Naning Partini. The textbooks selection was based on the portrayal of males and females characters both in the texts and at the pictures.

There are two main reasons for the selection of the textbooks. First, the textbooks were used for two years in the Elementary School where the researcher works. This fact implies, to a large extent, these books had affected the students' thinking framework.

Second, those books were published by Yudhistira that is one the famous publishers in Bandung. Presumably, these books had broad readership particularly elementary students in Bandung.

1.5.3 Data Analysis.

Data analysis consists of two stages. First, to see how gender is represented, Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar was employed. On the level of clauses, transitivity, which consists of the analysis of Participants, Process and Circumstances, becomes the main tool for analysis. Second, this representation was further analyzed by the use of Freire's Critical Pedagogy. This study used Critical Pedagogy theory

because this theory has been used by several researchers to unpack educational problems, so that the researchers believed it can make an important change in education and maintaining a critical position.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

- Representation: using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people (Hall, 1997).

- Gender: an individual's self-conception as being male or female, as distinguished from actual biological sex. (Encyclopedia Britannica)

- Critical Pedagogy: a teaching approach which attempts to help students question and challenge domination, and the beliefs and practices those dominate. (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

- Textbook: a formal manual of instruction in a specific subject, especially one for use in schools or colleges (Wikipedia)

- Transitivity: a system that construes the world of experiences into a manageable of process types (Halliday: 1994)

- Systemic Functional Grammar: a functional-semantic approach to language which explores both how people use language in different contexts, and how language is structured for use as a semiotic system (Halliday: 1994)

1.7   Organization of the Paper

The content of the paper will be presented into five chapters as follows:

Chapter I   : Introduction

This chapter clearly explains about Background of the Study, Research Questions, and Aims of the Study, Scope of the Study, Clarification of Key Terms and Organization of the Paper.

Chapter II   : Theoretical Foundation

In this chapter, the researcher serves the theoretical frameworks that are relevant for the study as the foundation to rely upon in the data analysis.

Chapter III   : Methodology

This chapter consists of the research methods and the explanation of the procedures of analyzing the data.

Chapter IV   : Findings and Discussion

In this chapter, the researcher presents all collected data and findings by analyzing and interpreted the data in detail. Further discussion on the data is presented by using theoretical foundation in Chapter II.

Chapter V   : Conclusions and Suggestions

This chapter consists of the researcher's interpretations of the result of the study and the researcher's suggestions for readers about related issues and further studies.