

Gender Representation in the English Textbook “*When English Rings A Bell*”

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Abstract: The revised book “*When English Rings A Bell*” (2014) is a standardized textbook of 2013 Curriculum from the Ministry of Education and Culture which is recommended for teachers to use in most of junior high schools in Indonesia. Given that English is compulsory subject in the school begin in junior high school grade seven, teachers should be aware of the content of the English textbook. This study focused on the gender representation in the English textbook: “*When English Rings A Bell*” written by Siti Wachidah used in junior high school. The purpose of this study is to analyze gender representation in the English Textbook. Following Stockdale’s suggestion, there were three aspects that the researcher analyzed, namely the numbers of female and male, illustration, and noun and pronoun. In accordance to that, this research was mix method; quantitative and qualitative. The aspects being researched were analysed quantitatively, while the material interpretation was analyzed qualitatively. The aspects will be presented in number. The result showed that female representation dominated in two aspects including the numbers of female/male, and noun and pronoun. While, male were only represented in illustration. Therefore, the researcher concluded that there is unequal gender representation in the “*When English Rings A Bell*”.

Keywords: *English textbook, Gender representation*

Introduction

Textbook is one source for teaching and learning that conveys materials according to the curriculum. It contains texts, illustrations and instructions. However, there are some crucial issues related to learning materials/textbooks. One of the crucial issues is about gender represented in English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks. According to Yasin (2012), gender construction in schools’ textbooks has continued to hold the attention of researchers. It is the fact that gender awareness and instruction have featured prominently in the school curriculum. Accordingly, research about gender in textbooks is necessary to be conducted in order to maintain good quality of the text book. Furthermore, previous research identified various problems in gender representation. Ching (2014) showed that textbooks are very influential to students, it need to be analyzed if there are underlying gender messages or values embedded which contribute to the formation of gender in textbooks. It indeed affect people conceptualizations of women and men in social categories and give another perception about gender in people’s lives. Gender representation is images of women or men reflected back to them may be objectionable, but tell about their lives are valued and how represented in public sphere (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004). It means that gender that are represent in textbook reflect what is acceptable for women or men in their life. Gender representation gives each description for women and men that appear in the textbook.

It is important to know about gender on textbook. As stated by Stockdale (2006), the ideal EFL textbook should represent both gender equally. In the other hand, people should aware if there is hidden values that embedded on the textbook. Similarly, Pui Ching (2014) If there were underlying gender message or value that could change the conceptualization of male and female and perception in social. Moreover, research on the gender textbook can fulfil the criteria good instructional material. Cheng (2011) stated that textbook’s content must be relevant, visual formatting, visual and graphic are appropriate for student. Therefore, this study is helpful towards the general understanding

The study intended to investigate the textbook entitled “*When English Rings a Bell*” for the

seventh grade because it is a standardized textbook of 2013 Curriculum from the Ministry of Education and Culture. This book is recommended for teachers to use in most of junior high schools in Indonesia. Furthermore, since English is compulsory subject, teachers should be really careful to the content of the English textbook for beginner learners.

Methods

Since the objectives of this study that is to investigate gender representation in English textbook, the selected research design of this study is mix method; quantitative and qualitative; document analysis. Result areas of number of female and male, illustration, and noun and pronoun will be given by number. These aspects are analyzed quantitatively, while the qualitative analysis is applied for interpreting material.

Quantitative research was employed to count number of number of female and male, illustration, and noun and pronoun. In addition, the qualitative design of this present research used document analysis to gather the data. Ary, Jacob, Serosen (2010) states that document analysis is a method to collect the data in a written or visual form for identifying specific characteristics of the material. In this study, the specific characteristics which are investigated are related to gender representation in the textbook of Junior high school "When English Rings a Bell".

The object of this study is one English textbook for the seventh grade students entitled "When English Rings a Bell". It was published by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2016. The textbook consists of eight chapters with illustrations. This study examines the number of female and male are mentioned, illustrations, and nouns and pronouns of all chapters of the textbook. The textbook is chosen because it is composed based on the curriculum 2013. Besides, the textbook is published by Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture is widely used in the national scale.

Some characteristics that are investigated in this research are classified based on the categories proposed by Stockdale's (2006):

1. The Number of Characters Representing Male and Female

The researcher adapted the table designed by Stockdale (2006). This the number of characters representing male and male has three types;

a. Main Characters,

Main characters refer to both females and male characters in the textbook who are named and appeared as active contributors to the reading materials. The main characters that often appear in the all chapters in the textbook are Edo, Lina or Siti.

b. Named as Non-active Characters,

Named, non-active characters refer to both females and males characters mentioned or discussed by the main characters in the reading materials. They can be mentioned by their proper first or full names, for example Nina and Anugrah.

c. Non-named, Non-active Characters.

Non-named, non-active characters refer to both female and male characters in the reading materials, they have no name or only mentioned as he/she.

2. Appearances in Illustration

Photographs of male and female characters will be obtained in the textbook whether they are as individual or group that will be counted as one character. Photographs which cannot be identified as female or male will not examined because they cannot be identified as male or female.

3. Noun and Pronoun

In this study, the number of nouns referring to male and female characters in the text will be counted as the total number of occurrences. They are: tittle names like Mr Smith and Mrs Smith, Mr Adnan and Mrs Adnan, un-named like she/he, and named, Beni, Lina, Edo for instances.

The research analyze data in the following procedure:

1. The data are classified into categories. It will generate the classification which will make it

easier for the researcher to get the frequency and get more specific description of gender representation in the textbook.

2. The researcher calculates the occurrence in each table for the numbers of female and male mentioned in the textbook, noun and pronoun (title name like *Mr. Gunawan*, un-named like *she/he*, or named like *Siti, Lina, Beni* etc), and occurrence of male and female in the photographs. After getting the result, those result will be changed into percentage using

$$formula = \frac{gender}{total\ of\ gender} \times 100.$$

Stockdale (2006) stated if the result show that different more than 5% in any categories will be seen as a significant imbalance.

3. Finally, data analysis involves making an interpretation or meaning of the data, and the data will also be discussed with the results from other studies.
4. The researcher draws conclusions to determine of the gender representation in the textbook.

Results

The Number of Characters Representing Male and Female

Based on the result of data analysis, it was found that there were three gender representations based on the representation of relative number of male and female. The findings of the study are described as follows:

Main characters – female and male

Based on the result of data analysis, it was found that there were 74 main characters. Furthermore, out of 74 main characters; there were 39 female (53%) and 35 (47%) male. This main characters has active contributions in language texts and have a characteristic.

Table 1. Main Characters

| Chapter | Male | Female |
|---------|----------|----------|
| I | 21 | 20 |
| II | 6 | 6 |
| III | 3 | 2 |
| IV | - | - |
| V | 4 | 6 |
| VI | - | - |
| VII | 1 | 5 |
| VIII | - | - |
| Total | 35 (47%) | 39 (53%) |

From the table above, we can calculate that total is 74. If we use $Formula\ Percentage = \frac{39}{74} \times 100 = 53\%$ and $Percentage = \frac{35}{74} \times 100 = 47\%$

This quantitative percentages showed gender bias because the different is 6%, it is unequal in main characters between 39 and 35 occurrences. The example of main character's appearance can be found on page 106:



Figure 1. Main Characters

Named, non-active characters (female and male) that are mentioned

Based on the result of data analysis, it was found that there were 280 named, non-active characters. Furthermore, out of these 280 named, non-active characters; there were 153 (55%) female and 127 (45%) male. Named but non-active characters that have characteristic is directly mentioned or discussed by the main characters in the reading materials. They cannot contribute actively in texts or dialogues. For example:

At school

Edo : Siti, your house is far from school, but you always come on time.

Siti : I always go to school at 6 a.m. That's why I'm never late.

Table 2. Named but non active characters

| Chapter | Male | Female |
|---------|------|--------|
| I | 1 | 4 |
| II | 7 | 6 |
| III | 17 | 10 |
| IV | 9 | - |
| V | 35 | 63 |
| VI | 40 | 49 |
| VII | 17 | 21 |

| | | |
|-------|-----------|----------|
| VIII | 1 | - |
| Total | 127 (45%) | 153(55%) |

Unnamed, Non-Active Characters (Female and Male) that are mentioned

Based on the result of data analysis, it was found out that there were 317 unnamed, non-active characters. Furthermore, out of 317 unnamed, non-active characters; there were 160 (50,5%) female and 157 (49,5%) male in this category. The characteristic was that they do not have clear name in the text. They can be called by their common name such *sir*, *dad*, *mom*, or *ladies*. For example:

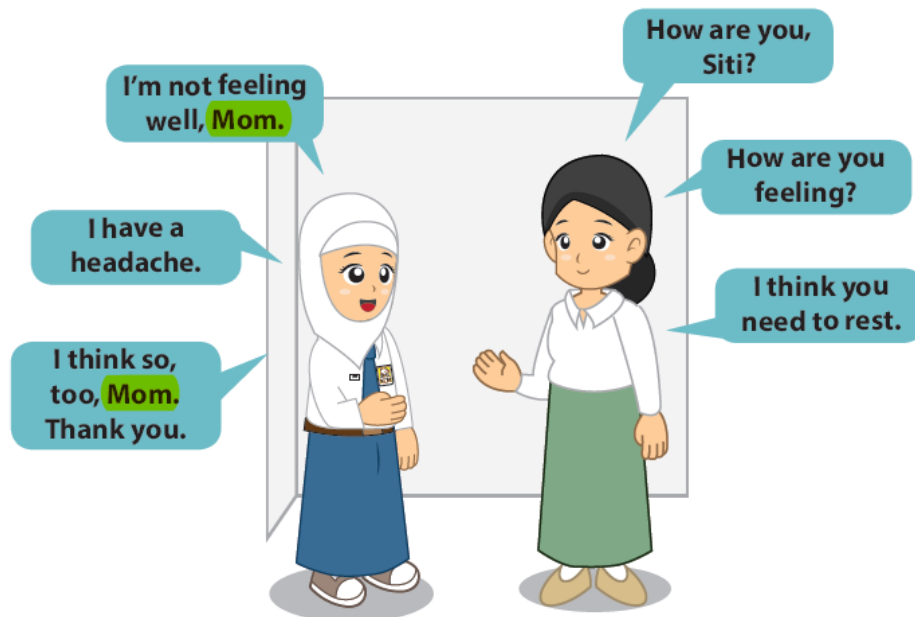


Figure 2. Unnamed, Non Active Character

Table 3. Unnamed, non-active character

| Chapter | Male | Female |
|---------|-------------|-------------|
| I | 16 | 13 |
| II | 18 | 17 |
| III | 14 | 4 |
| IV | 8 | 2 |
| V | 10 | 6 |
| VI | 22 | 37 |
| VII | 73 | 77 |
| VIII | - | - |
| Total | 157 (49.5%) | 160 (50.5%) |

Based on the result of data analysis above, there were 160 (50,5%) female and 157 (49,5%) male in the category of unnamed, non-active characters (female and male) that are mentioned. These quantitative percentages showed that there was no indication of gender bias in unnamed non-active characters because the number of existing female and male characters was almost equal. In fact, the difference was only 1%.

The Representation Male and Female in Illustrations

Based on the result of data analysis, it was found that there were 492 characters. Furthermore,

out of 492 characters; there were 265 (54%) male and 227 (46 %) female. The characteristic of this representation was identified by seeing the female or male characters in the textbook as a figure. Further details are shown in table below.

Table 4. The Representation Male and female in illustration

| Chapter | Both Genders | Appearing | |
|--------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | Male Appearing | Female Appearing |
| I | 117 | 62 | 52 |
| II | 38 | 21 | 17 |
| III | 75 | 47 | 28 |
| IV | 64 | 31 | 33 |
| V | 73 | 33 | 40 |
| VI | 59 | 37 | 22 |
| VII | 55 | 27 | 28 |
| VIII | 11 | 5 | 6 |
| Total | 492 | 265 (54%) | 227 (46%) |

These quantitative percentages analysis showed that there was gender bias on the male's sides with different is 8%. However, qualitatively, the writer tried to describe the characteristics of female and male. Females are described with curly or long hair, ribbon, or veil/hijab. Males, on the other hand, were shown with straight or curly short hair. They are emphasized in local appearances that show Indonesian culture. For examples, there were illustrations about female and male students on page 22.



Figure 3. Illustration Male and Female

From figure 3, there were figures named Hasnida, she came from West Padang, Max Bae came from East Nusa Tenggara, Tito Pesolima came from Seram Island, Haira came from central Kalimantan, Dedeh Fatima came from West Java and last Azwar came from South Sulawesi. From the examples above, there were also different skin complexions for each figures. In chapter II on page 31 for instance:



Figure 4. Male Illustration with different Traits

The male illustration is identified with different traits. For example, Yohanne from Biak, Papua has brown skin and curly hair. Meanwhile, Tito (on page 22) from Seram Island, Medan has white skin and straight hair. The female illustration is identified with different religion values. For example on page 28, Siti who wears veil or hijab with long skirt and shirt; while Annisa (on page 30) does not wear long outfits and veil.

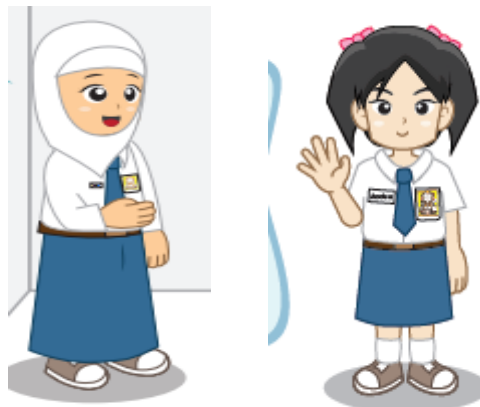


Figure 5. Illustration with different Religion Values

Noun and Pronoun

Based on the result of the data analysis, there were two points that appeared in the textbook: titled name and named. The findings of the study are described as follows.

a. Titled Name

Based on the result of data analysis, it was found out that there were 44 titled names. Furthermore, out of 44 characters; there were 12 (27%) male and 32 (73%) female. The characteristic was that characters have honorific (s) preceding their surnames. For example:



Figure 6. Illustration with Honorifics preceding Surnames
Table .5 Tittle Names

| Chapter | Occurrences | | |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| | Male Occurrences | Female Occurrences | Total |
| I | 5 | 8 | 13 |
| II | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| III | - | - | - |
| IV | - | - | - |
| V | - | - | - |
| VI | - | 18 | 18 |
| VII | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| VIII | - | - | - |
| Total | 12 | 32 | 44 |

These quantitative percentage analysis showed that there was gender bias on female's sides because, there were a lot of honorifics directed to female, such as for Miss or Mrs. Moving on to a little different perspective, titled named in the textbook could show the status and power in society. For example, on page 154



Figure 7. Illustration with Honorifics preceding Surnames

From figure 7, there was honorific Mrs. which refers to married women or one who has higher status in society. In the textbook the writer describes her as science teacher in the school.

b. Named

Based on the result of data analysis, it was found that there were 309 names. Furthermore, out of 309 characters, there were 150 (49%) male named and 159 (51%) female. The characteristic of name was the term used to identify the characters like Lina, Beni, Udin, etc. the example can be found on page 7:



Figure 8. Illustration with Character's Name

Table .6 Named

| Chapter | Occurrences | | Total |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------|------------|
| | Male Occurrences | Female Occurrences | |
| I | 17 | 16 | 33 |
| II | 10 | 9 | 19 |
| III | 20 | 12 | 32 |
| IV | 8 | - | 8 |
| V | 39 | 68 | 107 |
| VI | 41 | 31 | 73 |
| VII | 14 | 23 | 37 |
| VIII | 1 | - | 1 |
| Total | 150 | 159 | 309 |

These quantitative percentage analysis showed that there was no gender bias on both female and male because 150 and 159 are considered almost equal. The difference in number was in fact only 2%.

Discussion

In order to make the discussion more organized, the researcher presents the discussion into two sub-sections; the first is answering the research questions and the second is exploring the implication of the results of this research.

From findings, gender representations in English textbook were imbalance. Female were dominant in two categories such as the number of representing characters, noun and pronoun. Furthermore, female character were dominant in main character, named-non-active, unnamed non-active, titled name and named. The findings of this research showed the opposite results with the result of previous study from Stockdale (2006), in which his study showed that male characters are 10% more dominant than overall female characters in relative number of male and female character. Moreover, he also found that male character were higher in which the images of the same men are repeated several times in different places in the textbook. In some cases, these were multiple images on the same page. Last, male has high prominence in terms of frequency in names category. In the aspect of female and male, this finding is similar with Salamah's (2014) which showed that female is mentioned more compared to male; the total number of female mentioned was 377 and male was mentioned 372.

Moreover, male characters were dominant only in the illustrated representation. This finding shows the similar result with the previous study by Stockdale (2006). He found that the number of male in the photographs is higher with similar cases, images of the same men are repeated several times in different pages in the textbook and some of these images come into sight multiple times on the same page. Furthermore, this finding is also similar with the previous research by Gjroup (2006) which showed that from four books published which he analyzed such as *Wings, Blueprint, Toolbox and All in One*, the dominant one was male. Another previous research by Pui Ching (2014) found that four books that he analyzed showed that male was dominant with 639 appearances and female 494 appearances. These finding could indicate gender bias in the textbook for students in the school. As cited by Jou (2010) in Pui Ching (2014), this type of gender bias is one of the hidden curriculum of lesson taught implicitly to students through the everyday function in their classroom. It means that this hidden gender bias could be hidden and construct students' perception implicitly. In order to achieve gender equality and prevent bad perception, the textbook should be analyzed carefully, especially in the case of gender so it could not affect students' attitude towards gender.

As Hazel (2014) argued that, the textbook may bring hidden value to be taught to the students. It is imperative to examine the students textbook ensuring that the students would get the best lesson when they study at school. The teacher should select the materials carefully so that she / he could transform not only the language content such as grammar and vocabulary or language skills but also the cultural value of equal rights between men and women.

Conclusion

Based on the result of this research, it can be concluded that Gender representation in the English Textbook "*When English Rings A Bell*" showed imbalances of genders between male and female still exists in the school textbooks in term of the relative number of male and male characters, male and female in the illustrations, and noun and pronoun. On the one hand, some parts of the findings demonstrate the evidence of female dominance over males. Furthermore, female was more dominant in terms of relative number of males and females characters and noun and pronoun while male was only dominant in female and male in the illustrations

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