



EXPLORING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS GENDER BIASED TEXTS IN EFL TEXTBOOK

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ABSTRACT

In education, gender is a very serious issue that needs to be discussed, particularly in academic circles. Textbooks are the only open and inexpensive resource for education, they should have been a critical tool to identify better gender equity. The result of the research reveal that pre-service teachers still can not really comprehend the idea of gender bias and unable to notice that the texts are gendered.

INTRODUCTION

For more than a century, women in the whole wide world have been aggressively fighting and demanding justice upon gender equality. The movement was ignited by numerous human discriminations (including and mostly women). The first wave of women's movement began in the late nineteenth, primarily fought for legal equality for women's right to vote and the poor results both for occupational women and for the profession as its whole regarding salary, reputation, strength, and attractiveness. (Acker, 1990; Reskin and Roos, 1990; Standing, 1989, 1999; Webb, 1891). The movement gained success after years of fighting and continuing to move until today.

However, even in the 21st century, it is still a significant task to discuss gender. Apart from continuing to grow, there are still other issues of gender that have never been solved by the time or age of their existence in the world, which is quite obvious when it comes to the low level of woman's resources, the matter of abuse in women is prevalent in both the public domain or other sectors.

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Talking about the Indonesian education system, we still face the fact that our education system is not yet to be a way of liberation from all forms of exploitation, violence, and inequality. Whereas education is the foundation of the cycle of liberation, as a means of humanization, or a path to acquiring valuable knowledge for one's life.

In a designed system called Global Gender Gap that is made by the World Economic Forum (WEF) regarding the importance of gender equality for the growth and development of the country, Indonesia is in the 85th rank of Global Gender Gap Ranking based on the large gaps in the fields of education, health, politics, power, and economy (WEF, 2018). In education, gender is a very serious issue that needs to be discussed, particularly in academic circles. Women are still left behind compared to men in the education sector. The underlying rationale for these conditions is the assumption developed amid a society that women do not need to gain better education than men because women are only needed to take care of the household, and by that, they are considered not requiring intelligence to think.

Rahayu (2016) proved that women dominate high school students who discontinued their school in Central Java by 51.85 %, while the male students reached less percentage in 48.15 % in the year of 2014/2015. This situation happened because the stereotype lived in a society where men are considered superior to women. Whereas education has to be equally and fair received by both women and men.

Since textbooks are the only open and inexpensive resource for education for a vast number of school-aged children and teachers, they should have been a critical tool to identify better gender equity and inclusion (Setyono, 2019).

Based on the previous research done by Yonata and Mujiyanto (2017), there are two English textbooks proven to hold a representation of men who have a dominating part than women in the exercise and images section. Those two books are used regularly in the Senior High School level in Semarang; the books are called Bahasa Inggris (BA) and Aim High (AH). Setyono (2018) also specifies a stereotyped portrayal of women in Senior High School EFL Textbooks in Indonesia. They have become the origins of cultural prejudice that teachers and students might be ignorant of.

There are several research focusing on analysing the gender bias in a textbook but lack of research exploring the pre-service teachers perception on this matter. The researcher will take a small sample of gender biased texts from a textbook that has been studied by Setyono to find out the pre-service teachers' perception towards a gender biased text.

Based on the background of the research, the identification of the research questions are:

- 1) How do the pre-service teachers comprehend the idea of Gender Biased text in the EFL textbook?
- 2) What is the strategy to raise awareness about gender bias to students and peer teachers?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender Biased in EFL Textbooks

As evidenced by the rising number of journals in recent years, language and gender are a growing field for researchers to review. According to Cameron (2004), Language, gender analysis, and theoretical shifts in the field arise from real-world developments brought on by political revolutions and, as such, not only reflect variations in scholarly gender and language viewpoints but also change with time in the world's view of sex and language.

Textbooks contain a broad variety of texts chosen purposefully to fulfill unique curriculum objectives as a language learning resource. To some degree, textbook writers are influenced by the curriculum philosophy in selecting texts and designing tasks. For this reason, textbooks are used in the official/prescribed curriculum as an agent of ideology (van Dijk 2001, Widodo 2016);

A curriculum artifact conveys principles and philosophies to form learners' personalities (Awayed-Bishara, 2015) and a means for instilling learners with universal and community-specific values (Gebregeorgis, 2016). Chapelle (2009) argues that not only do language textbooks teach language, but also express numerous underlying agendas (Widodo 2018). Ideologically, Indonesian school textbooks are expected to avoid pornographic material, extreme ideology, radicalism, violence, ethnic-religious racial sentiments, and gender bias (Direktorat Jenderal Peraturan Perundang-undangan 2016).

Textbooks are a compilation of knowledge about a society's prevailing concepts and attitudes in social and cultural terms. Despite the fact that several gender equality measures have been taken internationally, the material of textbooks tends to reproduce sexist assumptions.

In terms of psychology, gender bias in school textbooks can affect student motivation and choices in life (choices of careers), the development of self-esteem and a sense of self in society, and the negative views of students about women's ability in the world of today (Ullah and Skelton 2013).

Birjandi and Amini (2012) found that the materials in Iranian secondary high school manifest highly and unfairly biased against women and it affected the entrance university examination. The finding of this study were in line with a research done in Indonesia by Setyono (2018), the results indicate that some of the gendered discourses articulated in the analyzed textbooks by female characters and social actors encourage the persistence of gender biases and stereotypes.

The problem also exist in a textbook material for Junior High School, based on a study done by Ariyanto (2018) in the prescribed Indonesian ELT textbook published by the Ministry of National Education, the finding implies that the visual objects as well as the verbal texts used in the textbook effectively raise the issue of biased gender representation.

Pre-Service Teachers' Perception

Pre-service teacher based on Thomas et al. (2019) are students enrolled in an initial educator preparation program, studying to become practicing. A tutor or co-operating instructor eventually brings the college student into the teaching role for a specific course. The pre-service teacher begins as an observer and finishes the pre-service teaching experience as a competent professional.

Pre-service teaching is a crucial experience in professional training and education program. While additional schools, programs, and colleges provide the prospective teacher with knowledge and experience, pre-service preparation offers the ability to learn the challenging and fulfilling challenge of taking on major teaching responsibilities.

Smith et al. (2004) explain the theory of perception as a term to describe the application of neurological science and agreed psychological concepts to the study of visual communication by addressing, processing, deriving meaning from and using information obtained by the mind-brain. The perception in common terminology is described in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English as a) the way you think

about something and your idea of what it is like; b) the way you notice things with your senses of sight, hearing, etc.; c) the natural ability to understand or notice things quickly.

Based on Ou (2017) the process of perception involves 3 phases: selection, organization, and interpretation. 1) Selection is the first stage in the sensing phase in which we turn the stimuli of the environment into a meaningful experience. However, we cannot grasp all the information available to us because we will experience overload and disorder of information. Therefore, only part of environmental knowledge is perceived through a selective process; 2) Organization is the second phase in the perception process. We must arrange the process in a certain way by defining certain meaningful patterns after selecting information from outside the world. This process is achieved by categorizing objects or people, which is why some researchers call it categorization; 3) The third phase of perception is interpretation, adding meaning to the stimuli chosen. Having categorized the selected stimuli into organized and stable motifs, try to make sense of these motifs by assigning them meanings. But various people may perceive the same stimulus differently.

Pre-Service Teachers' Perception of Gender-Biased Texts

Cerice and Francavilla (2012) believe that discriminatory social systems limit or exclude women and girls from their access to opportunities, resources, and power that adversely affect growth outcomes. This discrimination affected many aspects of people's lives, especially women. Research has demonstrated that gender discrimination adversely impacts various factors, including decreased self-estimation, depression, or restricted career ambitions, including physical, psychological, and personal consequences (Brown et al. 2010; Klonoff, Landrine and Campbell 2000; Ro and Choi 2009; Schmitt et al. 2007.)

Education for All (EFA) requires enrolling all girls and boys at school and maintaining them. It is also about ensuring women's and girls' full capacity of all ages through education and their full and fair engagement in creating a better future.

Based on Aikman and Unterhalter's (2007) book, *The Gender Equality in Education Index (GEEI)* was developed by the Beyond Access project to measure broader progress in gender equality in education. The GEEI tests the attendance of girls in primary school, the attainment of five years of education, their enrollment in high school, and the rate of gender equity that girls will face in health care and earnings as adults.

South Asia has the largest number of out-of-school girls in the world because of deep-rooted gender inequality and because of South Asia's huge population. Although gender problems in education in South Asia have harmful impacts on boys rather than girls, such as boys being more likely to be subject to physical punishment or being disqualified for benefits explicitly intended to bring girls to school, girls are the target of this segment. This is because girls are much more likely than boys to be negatively impacted by hardship, isolation, or any other sort of disadvantage.

For many girls, gender inequality is a hallmark of both their lives and their educational experience. A core feature of good-quality education is gender equity in education. It is essential to improve teaching approaches, innovative ways of learning, and curricula that enable girls and boys to engage in learning as equals to increase the fairness of access to education and maintain progress towards Education for all. For example, on the playground or at mealtimes, the school's atmosphere and its activities outside of formal lessons often influence how girls and boys learn. Therefore, gender

equality has to be a crucial aspect of developing the school curriculum and teaching methods.

It is essential to know the perception of preservice teachers towards gender-biased texts as a material for teaching EFL to practice the gender equality movement. Pre-service teachers who do not fancy the idea of gender-biased text has a bigger chance to continue teaching sexist material for their future students. Knowing this earlier could decrease the possibility of prolonging gender inequality and raising awareness of the uninformed ones.

Previous Research

There was some research about Gender Bias in school textbooks. Starting from the Primary until Secondary high school textbook, the study's result elaborates that the textbooks contain Gender Bias. Female professions are mainly traditional and less prestigious in terms of personality characteristics, whereas the characters are primarily introverted and passive. It is also seen that women are primarily engaged in domestic and in-door activities, while men have a more significant presence in professional positions (Islam and Asadullah, 2018)

Setyono (2018) also examines a Senior High School English textbook by MONEC of Indonesia, the results indicate that some gendered discourses articulated in the examined textbooks by female characters and social actors support the continuity of gender roles and stereotypes. However, some emerging lessons reflect women's constructive pictures.

In a recent study about English textbooks for Primary school, Damayanti (2014) found that females were depicted as more dependent than males and were also construed to be admirers of an action carried out by the males.

From several research about Gender Biased English textbooks, it is also necessary to assess how the pre-service teachers perceive gender-biased textbooks. In a study done by Kızılaslann (2010), the majority of pre-service teachers ignored the gender presuppositions in the texts and remained mostly gender-blind. In particular, it recognizes the urgent need for educators to raise awareness of gender among EFL pre-service teachers. It seems apparent that ELT textbooks also include sex-stereotypes that can significantly affect the affective and cognitive growth of young people. Since textbooks consume about 80 percent of classroom time, educators seem to be especially responsible for growing the perception of these issues by student teachers (Blumberg, 2008)

METHOD

This study was planned to carry out basic research within the qualitative model (Patton, 2002) as it explores the pre-service teachers' perception of gender-biased EFL texts. According to Cresswell (2017), qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding individuals' or groups' meaning ascribed to a social or human problem.

The case study methodology for this research was considered to be the perfect design because it is the preferred strategy when questions about 'how' and 'why' are asked, when the researcher has little control of events and when the focus of this is on a contemporary and real-life phenomenon (Yin, 2003, p. 1).

This research's procedure starts with choosing the theme or topic, which is identifying the perception of pre-service teachers towards gendered texts in EFL textbooks. After finding out the case, the researcher read and wrote the literature review

and proposed the research problem. The next step is to gather data, data enhancement, data processing, and data analysis. This continue to the next step, the researcher starts a theoretical dialogue to discuss the answered question, and before finishing the study, it is rather important to confirm the informants to validate data. The last step is to make a conclusion of the research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Analyzing Gender Bias in Texts.

In this part the researcher used two texts chosen from the EFL textbook published by the MOEC called Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK/ Kelas X. The first text were taken from page 43 about daily activities written below:

Santi: So, what about you, Bayu? Do you have any plans?
Bayu: Definitely! My dad and I are going to go fishing. We plan to go fishing in a lake near my uncle's house. Would you like to come with us?
Santi: I don't really like fishing. I would rather stay at home than go fishing. What about you, Riri?
What would you like to do on the long weekend?
Riri: I have made a plan with my mother about what to do on this long weekend. We are going to practice baking cookies
Bayu: Are you going to bake choco chips cookies like the other day?
Riri: Well, yes. That is my favourite. But we are going to try to make ginger cookies too
Riri: Oh, would you like to join me to learn baking cookies? You can come to my house
Bayu: It's a good idea! Or will you go fishing with me and my dad?
Santi: Uhm, not fishing I guess. But I think I would like to bake cookies with Riri. Thanks for asking me to join you Riri

The second text were taken from page 97 explaining the interview with The Wright Brothers, written below:

Interview with The Wright Brothers

In 1905. There was a TV talkshow that interview great inventors at that time. Below is a script of interview with The Wright Brothers.

Host : Hello and welcome to our talkshow tonight, Great Inventors! Today we have very special guests, Orville and Wilbur Wright. We are going to ask them about their revolutionary inventions. What do you call your invention?

Orville : We invented airplane.

Host : Airplane? What is the tool for?

Wilbur : It's a tool that will help human being to fly!

Host : Oohh, is it like a flying car? How did you get the inspiration?

Orville : Our dad gave us a toy helicopter that flew with the help of rubber bands. We've been interested in the idea since then.

Wilbur : Orville has always liked to build kites, so, we have experimented with making our own helicopters for a while now.

Host : But that was only a toy, what about the actual plane?

Wilbur : Orville made the first flight with our first plane at Kitty Hawl on December 14, 1903.

Host : Why did you choose Kitty Hawk?

Orville : Kitty Hawk had a hill, good breezes, and was sandy. The condition would help soften the landings in case of a crash. The first flight lasted 12 seconds and they flew for 120 feet.

Wilbur : we have worked and experimented with gliders to perfect the wing design and controls since then.

Host : I see. So you've had the newest version of your airplane?

Wilbur : Yes. Recently, I took a newly designed airplane that we called the Flyer II for the first flight lasting over 5 minutes.

Host : How amazing! I think this invention will be a big thing soon.

Orville : Yes, we will continue making more experiment so that airplane will be available for everyone soon.

Host : Okay, we wish you good luck with the next experiments.

The texts are proven to contain Gender Stereotype based on Setyono (2018) and Yonata and Mujiyanto (2017). The researcher gave both of the texts to the participants and let them analyzed it while they were not given any clue about the texts' being gendered. After letting them read and analyzed the texts, the researcher posed two questions:

- 1) Would you want to adapt any of the following texts if they appeared in a course book you were using? If so, which and why?
- 2) What changes would you make? Try to be as specific as possible.

Based on the findings, the researcher found three kind of responds according to the two questions. The findings were obtained from six different participants divided equally by 3 males and 3 females. The researcher categorized the findings into three categories. The findings discussed below are the pre-service teacher will use both of the texts without changing anything, they will use both of the texts with a little change, they will use one of the text without changing anything.

Identifying Pre-service Teachers' Understanding about Gender Bias

In this part, the researcher tried to find out the pre-service teachers' understanding on Gender Bias, the researcher formed three questions for the interview and the questions are posed below:

- 1) Have you ever heard about Gender Bias or Sexism?
- 2) Explain your understanding of Gender Bias or Sexism!
- 3) Do you often find a case involving Gender Bias in a textbook material?

Based on the findings from three questions posed above, the researcher found 4 main findings and will be categorized. The participants are having a little understanding about Gender Bias but unable to explain it in detail, there are participants who never heard the term of Gender Bias before, the participants have found a case about gender bias in a textbook material, and the participants have never found a case involving gender bias in a textbook material.

Finding out the strategy to raise awareness towards Gender Bias.

In this part, the researcher tried to find out the strategy that pre-service teacher will use to raise awareness towards gender bias. In order to obtain the findings, the researcher formed two interview's questions which will be elaborated below:

- 1) Do you think it is important to be aware of Gender Bias or Sexism as a pre-service teacher?
- 2) Would you do something to raise awareness about Gender Bias? If so, how?

Based on the questions above, the researcher found and categorized two main findings. The participants will educate the students and peer teacher about gender bias and the participant will do a little act to correct the wrongs which going to be done daily.

DISCUSSION

Based on the result, the researcher will discuss some of the research questions in this study. The first question of this study is "How do the pre-service teachers comprehend the idea of Gender Biased text in the EFL textbook?". To answer this formulation problem, the researcher gave two kind of text to be read and analyzed by the participants without mentioning that the texts are gendered.

Refers on the result, all of the participants are unable to identify that the text are gendered. The participants are either found nothing is wrong with the texts or found some politeness condition in the texts. While on the other hand, the first text were proven to have a stereotyped expression illustrating the social domestic activities that girls and women commonly do, based on Setyono (2018) this clearly suggests that, culturally speaking, Indonesian girls and women (regardless of their social status) are obligated to fulfill their dual duties both as a wife (who is responsible for household activities) and as a professional woman (who is also responsible for earning money) for their families.

In the second text, Yonata and Mujiyanto (2017) believed that male characters were depicted as inventors, as in the case of the Wright brothers who invented the aircraft. In this situation, technology and engineering were a fieldwork area closely linked to men, as Wright's brothers first designed a plane based on their talent in science and had previous studies as engineers.

The prevalence of masculine-related themes indicates that writers prefer to put male as central to texts. It is not shocking that males represent the field of education since the Indonesian Statistics Bureau (2015) found about 5.95 per cent of females and only 2.61 per cent of males were illiterate.

According to the findings, only a small amount of the participants who claimed to understand the term gender bias or sexism and the rest happened to not knowing what it means. Shannon et al (2019) explained that restrictive gender norms influence everything. Gender discrimination at all of these stages is harmful to health and social outcomes. For example, interpersonal abuse, particularly violence against women, is conditioned by harmful social roles and wider mechanisms of oppression; discussing these gendered constructs is important to all individuals. More insidiously, gender differences lead to elevated levels of stress and anxiety: among women, through their socially prescribed role as caregivers, among men, through their socially prescribed role as breadwinners, and among transgender people, among whom non-compliance with gender expectations is often socially penalized.

There are participants who answered they found cases about gender bias but are defining the cases differently. More like a case about gender not gender bias. They still can not really differentiate between gender and gender bias. Some participants seem to be indifferent about gender bias in a textbook because they do not really understand what it means before. However, after finding out what it really means, the participants decided that it is important to be aware of the case involving gender bias in order to manifest gender equality in all of life sectors.

Then to answer the second research question, "What is the strategy to raise awareness about gender bias to students and peer teachers?" the researcher found out

that most of the participants will take an action by educating students and peer teachers, the kind of education varies from choosing a better and more careful text to be discussed in the class or by giving an explanation on gender bias definition and the impact of it. While one of the participant prefer to do small act every day to raise awareness such as letting women do what usually only men do and so on. The participant believes that this will slowly manifest the practice of gender equality.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Conclusion

After conducting the study and knowing all the data, the researcher concluded that pre-service teachers in Karawang still unable to comprehend the idea of gender bias and failed to notice gendered texts existed in the EFL textbook. However, after they received the explanation about gender bias and how it is important to notice the condition which exist in some textbook material, the pre-service teachers are willing to do better at choosing texts for learning material. The pre-service teachers will also educate students and other teachers about the situation in order to manifest the ideal condition namely gender equal in all aspect of life.

Implication

Based on the findings and discussions above, the researcher would give some suggestion as the following is for pre-service teachers and even teachers to pay more attention on the textbook material, there are some texts proven to be gendered and even to some degree the gendered text are implicitly put in the textbook.

Pre-service teachers and teachers also need to help raising awareness about gender condition for the reason that if gender bias and sexism is perpetuated it will lead to serious problems involving society and human life in general.

Many researchers are supposed to provide useful feedback from the findings of this research for other researchers who plan to perform similar research. Further analysis on finding out the background reason why many pre-service teachers still indifferent about gender situation is recommended for other researchers.

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