



## Gender Representation in *English On Sky 1: A Seventh Grade English Textbook*

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Article Info	Abstract
<b>Article History</b> Received: 2022-06-20 Revised: 2022-07-28 Published: 2022-08-09  <b>Keywords:</b> <i>Representation;</i> <i>Gender;</i> <i>English Textbook.</i>	<p>This study aims to determine the gender representation in <i>English on Sky 1: a seventh grade English textbook</i>. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions: 1) What gender representation in the textbook that are related to illustration, theme and language? 2) Is gender equally represented in the textbook? 3) How do these representations related to Indonesian culture? 4) What activities on teaching gender-equality can be formulated? Based on the result investigation, there is unequal representation of gender in the textbook. The book is dominated by female figures all throughout in terms of illustration, theme and language used. A total number of 297 female figures were noted against 252 males. The distributions are as follows: unit 1, 32 males (12.70%) and 41 females (13.80%); unit 2, 36 males (14.29%) and 49 females (16.50%); units 3, with 34 males (13.49%) and 52 females (17.51%); unit 4, 64 males (25.40%) and 54 females (18.18%); unit 5, 16 males (6.35%) and 21 females (7.07%); unit 6, with 45 males (17.86%) and 50 females (16.84%), and lastly, unit 7, with 25 males (9.92%) and 30 females (10.10%). Females are more visible in roles and role models. The female dominance was found in illustration and language used. This is probably because the author tried to minimize gender bias, not knowing that the number of females have already outnumbered males. Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn: The textbook is female-dominated in terms of illustration, theme and language used; gender is not equally represented in the textbook; the author was aware of gender-bias issue in Indonesia.</p>

Artikel Info	Abstrak
<b>Sejarah Artikel</b> Diterima: 2022-06-20 Direvisi: 2022-07-28 Dipublikasi: 2022-08-09  <b>Kata kunci:</b> <i>Representasi;</i> <i>Gender;</i> <i>Buku Teks Bahasa Inggris.</i>	<p>Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui representasi gender dalam buku teks <i>English on Sky 1: buku teks bahasa Inggris kelas tujuh</i>. Secara khusus, penelitian ini mencari jawaban atas pertanyaan-pertanyaan berikut: 1) Apa representasi gender dalam buku teks yang terkait dengan ilustrasi, tema, dan bahasa? 2) Apakah gender terwakili secara setara dalam buku teks? 3) Bagaimana representasi ini terkait dengan budaya Indonesia? 4) Kegiatan-kegiatan apa dalam pengajaran kesetaraan gender yang dapat dirumuskan? Berdasarkan hasil investigasi, ada representasi gender yang tidak setara dalam buku teks. Buku ini didominasi oleh tokoh-tokoh perempuan dari segi ilustrasi, tema dan bahasa yang digunakan. Jumlah total 297 tokoh perempuan dicatat melawan 252 laki-laki. Sebarannya adalah sebagai berikut: unit 1, 32 laki-laki (12,70%) dan 41 perempuan (13,80%); unit 2, 36 laki-laki (14,29%) dan 49 perempuan (16,50%); unit 3, dengan 34 laki-laki (13,49%) dan 52 perempuan (17,51%); unit 4, 64 laki-laki (25,40%) dan 54 perempuan (18,18%); unit 5, 16 laki-laki (6,35%) dan 21 perempuan (7,07%); unit 6, dengan 45 laki-laki (17,86%) dan 50 perempuan (16,84%), dan terakhir, unit 7, dengan 25 laki-laki (9,92%) dan 30 perempuan (10,10%). Perempuan lebih terlihat dalam peran dan panutan. Dominasi perempuan terdapat pada ilustrasi dan bahasa yang digunakan. Ini mungkin karena penulis mencoba meminimalkan bias gender, tidak mengetahui bahwa jumlah perempuan telah melebihi jumlah laki-laki. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, ditarik kesimpulan sebagai berikut: Buku teks ini didominasi perempuan dalam hal ilustrasi, tema dan bahasa yang digunakan; gender tidak terwakili secara setara dalam buku teks; penulis menyadari isu bias gender di Indonesia..</p>

### I. INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are time-tested, developmental and research-based instructional tools. With the strong influence of digital and communication technology, readers have the option either to use hard copies of books or use digital copies, now

called as e-books. Such situation is greatly determined by ones capacity to buy e-books that use gadgets or books. The teachers, as frontliners in the classrooms have not abandoned textbooks as their references, sources of course content and even classroom activities. It is already given that

textbooks provide rich source of information. Textbooks had been proven since before, to guide teachers in the teaching and learning process. By using a textbook, teachers know what to teach and what to do in the class. Besides, it may provide multiple resources like CDs, videos, workbooks, activities that supplement learning. According to Sasan (2011), a textbook assists and supports teachers to achieve their goals in teaching process. It allows teachers to adapt and modify it in order to meet students' needs. Further, it helps teachers to design activities in the class that motivate students. In addition, a textbook becomes one of the resources with linguistic significance/input (Jack C Richards, 2001). It is supported by Richards that a textbook provides an effective language model and input. Further, a textbook allows students to prepare what to learn next and to review what they have learned (Jeremy Harmer, 2007).

Therefore, choosing the most appropriate textbook is needed. However, the English teachers commonly use a textbook without analyzing the content. They usually rely on a textbook provided by the school. They state that they have less knowledge of textbook analysis. Also, they argue that textbook analysis takes time. They just consider the instructional materials. Whereas, other aspects of the textbook need to be analyzed like kinds of vocabularies developed, kinds of illustration, kinds of exercises, and social or cultural aspect like the concept of gender. Therefore, it is important to analyze the whole materials of the textbook. Textbook materials planned are closely related to wider educational and social contexts (Chi Cheung Ruby Yang, 2011). Indonesian social context, with different cultures, consists of different views about gender, and from the cultures students can learn how men and women play their social roles. As Taylor et al., (2006) states, "The ways that gender is portrayed or represented in the culture-in mass media, schools, public discussion-provides us with our conceptual tools for thinking about men and women". For example, in English the generic use of *man* and *he* can refer to both men and women. When the issue exists in a society, schools become an agent to socialize it through textbooks. If the textbook consists of such gender issue without further understanding, students may get confused. Hence, a textbook is one of agent to socialize cultures including the concept of gender. As an agent of socialization, the textbook have to describe the real world. Smith cited in Gupta and Lee (1990) states that, "One

would hope that the producers... [dictionaries and textbook] would be constrained by the criteria of objectivity and realism, at least at the level of constructing image that reflect the relative numbers of men and women in society, and the variety of roles that they perform".

As a result, gender bias that may be included in the textbook could influence students' thought about men and women. Although the students have little awareness about gender bias, the concept of gender bias presented in the textbook internalizes into their subconscious. For example, in the textbook women are described as child-rearing and do the household works. It could influence students thought that only those activities commonly done by women. Whereas, now women do not only relate to such activities, they also work outside as men commonly do. Departing from this point, it is important to study gender representation in textbooks. Such study will help teachers avoid a social issue that may exist in the textbooks such as gender bias that can be transferred in the course of instruction. Consequently, the teachers are able to select the most appropriate textbook for their students. The clamor on gender equality may be addressed if everyone is aware that there is equality of gender in the society regardless of race, religion, culture and tribe. Thus, the representation of gender in the English textbook entitled *English on Sky 1: for Junior High School Students Year VII* was investigated. The textbook was chosen because almost all schools in Indonesia use this textbook. Besides, this textbook is updated based from the 2013 curriculum.

## II. METHOD

### 1. Research Design

This study is a qualitative and quantitative in nature which uses content analysis as the method of the study. The method is used to describe the content of the textbook. One of the purposes of this method is to identify bias, prejudice, or propaganda in textbook presentation (Donald et al., 2010). In this study, the representation of males and females in the textbook was analyzed. Moreover, this study quantified the number of male and female in the textbook, which is presented in tabular format.

### 2. Object of the Research

The object of the research is the English textbook for the seventh grade students entitled *English on Sky 1: for Junior High School Students Year VII*. It is published by

Erlangga in 2014. The textbook consists of 7 units with illustrations. It presents expressions and grammar with exercises to ease students' understanding. This study examines all units of the textbook including illustrations, language used, examples, theme and activities. The textbook is chosen because it is the other textbook composed based on the Curriculum 2013 besides the textbooks published by Indonesia Ministry of Education.

### 3. Data Collections

The data were collected by using document analysis. The technique was used to describe written or text-based artifacts such as textbook, newspaper, journals, etc (Logsdon, 1985). In this study, the content of the English textbook, *English on Sky 1*, was analyzed including illustrations, language used, examples, theme and activities.

### 4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed based on the six aspects of gender representation in the textbook suggested by Logsdon (1985) as follows:

- a) Male/female pictures: the writer counted the number of male/female pictures presented in the *EOS*.
- b) Male/female mentioned: the male/female mentioned in the *EOS* was counted. It included both female and male names, personal pronoun (e.g. he, she, his, her), and male/female term (e.g. Sir, ma'am).
- c) Male/female roles: the occupational roles of male/female (e.g. student, teacher) were counted.
- d) Male/female games: the writer counted the number of male/female games or sports (e.g. football, tennis) found in the *EOS*.
- e) Male/female role models: the role models presented in texts or exercises were counted.
- f) Pattern of mentioning male/female namea: the order of mention of male and female names in a single phrase (Sally and John) was counted.

### 5. Statistical Tool

In order to determine the distribution of the predominant gender representation in the textbook, this research employs ordinary data/treatment which is based on the frequency through the percentage formula.

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

P = Percentage

F = Frequency

N= Total Distribution of Gender Representation




## III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is the discussion of the analysis and interpretation of the gender representation in *English on Sky 1*, a seventh grade English textbook. The result of analysis is presented in tabular form for detailed description and wider scope of investigation.

### 1. Gender Representation in the Textbook according to illustration, theme and language used.

Table 1 presents the data analysis on illustration. The pictures in the table were captured by the researcher as it appears in the textbook using a phone camera to provide the information about gender concepts in the book.

**Table 1.** Gender Representation in the Textbook related to illustration

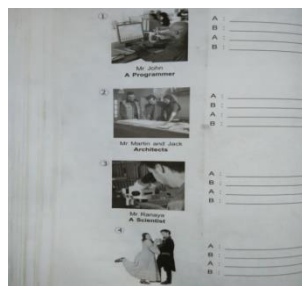
Sources	Gender representations	Analysis
Unit 1 page 5		From the six conversations, female figures are dominant. Only one male figure is presented in the illustration, which means females are more talkative than males.
Unit 1 page 17		The illustration shows that the main characters are all females.
Unit 1 page 22		The illustration shows the dominance of male against female, with 3:1 proportion favoring the male gender.

Unit 2  
page 40



4 out of 6 of the pictures shown are males.

Unit 4  
pages 88-89

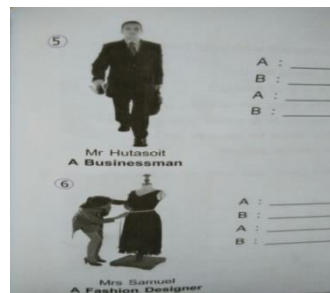


From the six types of profession listed, there are four males and two females.

Unit 3  
page 57



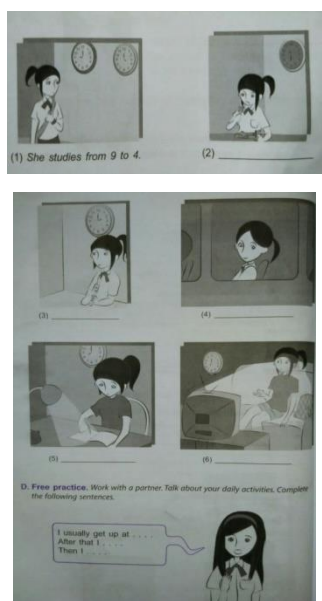
There are three females conversing with one another. There is no male figure in the illustration.



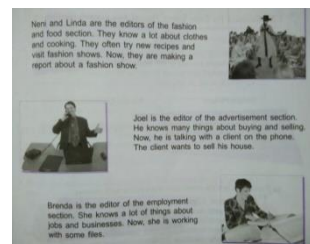
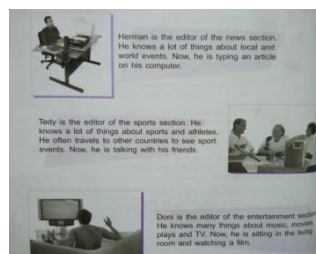
Unit 4  
pages 104-105

The illustration shows male types of professions.

Unit 3  
pages 65-66



All daily activities are illustrated by females as if females are more hardworking than males.

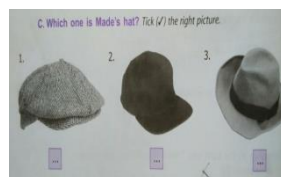


Unit 3  
page 68



Again, daily routines made use of females as examples.

Unit 5  
page 128



All the hats are for males, not one is for female.

Unit 4  
page 87



The example shows that a teacher is usually a female but security guards are males.

Unit 6  
page 148



All three singers in the sample are females. They are; Christina Aguilera, Britney Spears and Pink.

Unit 6  
page 150



Two female students are conversing with each other.

Male figure is not evident.

Unit 6  
page 153



Thirteen physical characteristics are dominated by females, with only three male figures.

Unit 6  
page 157-158



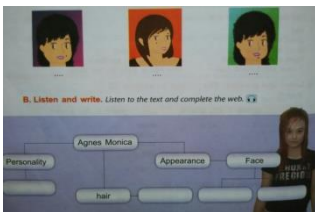
Twelve clothes in the list, nine are for males while three are for females.

Unit 6  
page 159



From the illustration, only one girl is shown as an example, but there are four males.

Unit 6  
page 160



From the given illustrations, all are female figures.

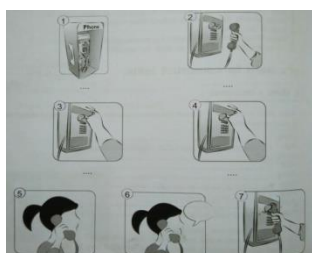
Unit 7  
pages 180-181



The conversations are female-dominated. Only one male figure is shown in the illustration.



Unit 7  
page 188



The illustration shows two female figures using the pay phone.

As seen in Table 1, there was a very obvious gender bias as shown in terms of illustration. The female gender roles are very dominating in Unit 1 page 5, Unit 1 page 17, Unit 3 page 57, Unit 3 page 65-66, Unit 3 page 68, Unit 6 page 148, Unit 6 page 150, Unit 6 page 153, Unit 6 page 160, Unit 7 page 180-181, and Unit 7 page 188. There are only a few images that show the dominance of the male roles, at Unit 1 page 22, unit 2page 40, unit 4 page 87, unit 4 page 88-89, unit 4 page 104-105, unit 5 page 128, unit 6 page 157-158, and unit 6 page 159.

## 2. Theme in the Textbook Table 2 presents the result of analysis based on the theme conveyed by the book.

Table 2. Theme in the Textbook

Unit	Theme	Gender Bias/gender stereotypes	Proof
Unit 1	A New School Year	None	-
Unit 2	Going to School	None	-
Unit 3	Around the School	None	-
Unit 4	Around Me	From sixteen professions ten of them are male figure and the rest were female	Page 86
Unit 5	A Big Clean School	None	-
Unit 6	My Favorite Star	None	-
Unit 7	Cut the Paper, Please	Using two names of females.	Page 187

Looking closely on the themes conveyed by the units, the result of interpretation divulged that units 4 (Around Me) and unit 7, (Cut the Paper, Please) distinctively and obviously depicted gender bias on females over males. Muthali'in (2001) states that textbooks which are published by *Depdiknas* (Department of National Education) or other publishers present gender bias in several items such as women and men's pictures, activities, descriptions, professions, roles, games, possession, duties, and responsibility. The studies about gender representation in language textbooks were also done by some researchers such as Chi Cheung Ruby Yang and Mukundan (2008). The first study was done by Yang is "Gender Representation in a Hong Kong Primary English Textbook Series: the

relationship between language planning and social policy". His study aimed to examine the extent to which the English textbook series for grade one of primary school students are consistent with the promotion of equality and equal opportunities of female and male as the social policy in Hong Kong. He used both qualitative and quantitative method to analyze the textbook.

The result showed that textbooks represent females and males almost equally, and they describe them in similar activities. Furthermore, females are also more visible in illustration and texts. Another study titled "Gender Representation in Malaysian Secondary School English Language Text-books done by Mukundan and Nimechisalem (2008) described the gender representation in forms 1 to 4 English textbooks in Malaysian secondary schools. They used computer analysis and manual analysis for content and linguistic analysis. The result showed that the textbooks present gender bias with males outnumbering females and certain nouns referring to males precede those referring to females. However, males are almost described as negative characters. As a summary, the results showed that gender is represented unequally in the *English on Sky 1*. Females are more visible in six units 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 regarding in illustration and language used. However, males outnumbered the females in unit 4. Thus, there are imbalance gender representations in the *English on Sky 1*. The book is more inclined to the female gender than to male.

3. Language used in the Textbook Table 3 presents the result of analysis on the language used for male and female gender as used in the textbook.

**Table 3.** Language used in the Textbook

Unit	Number of males	Percentage (%)	Number of females	Percentage (%)
Unit 1	136	18.66	128	14.92
Unit 2	35	4.80	75	8.74
Unit 3	65	8.92	127	14.80
Unit 4	218	29.90	180	20.98
Unit 5	57	7.82	88	10.26
Unit 6	140	19.20	181	21.10
Unit 7	78	10.70	79	9.21
Total	729	100%	858	100%

As can be seen by the results tabulated in Table 3, the distribution of language used of males against females is unequal. Specifically,

in unit 1 provides 136 males (18.66%) and 128 females (14.92%); unit 2, with 35 males (4.80%) and 75 females (8.74%); unit 3, 65 males (8.92%) and 127 females (14.80%); unit 4, 218 males (29.90%) and 180 females (20.98%); unit 5, 57 males (7.82%) and 88 females (10.26%); unit 6, 140 males (19.20%) and 181 females (21.10%); unit 7, 78 males (10.70%) and 79 females (9.21%). It was found in the textbook that male and female were presented unequally. The results show that there are more female mentioned than males. The total number of female mentioned is 858, while, males with 729. Females are more dominant in every unit except Unit 1 and Unit 4. H. Wu and W. L. Liu (2015) study on "Gender Representation in Primary English Textbooks in Mainland China 1978 to 2003" investigated the gender representation in three sets of primary English textbooks published by People's Education Press (PEP) from 1978 to 2003 in China. Results suggested that during the past over thirty years, although progress was perceived, gender bias was still persistent in primary English textbooks, with female invisibility in texts and illustrations, gender stereotypes in occupational and domestic roles, and domestic and school activities, and inequality in utterances and instances of female and male.

Seyran Jannati (2015) in her study on "Gender Representation in EFL Textbooks: A Case of ILI Pre-intermediate Series" intends to define how social gender identity is reflected via adjectives and pictures in order to facilitate cross-cultural comparison of gender roles and to shed light on the perception and significance of gender as reflected in textbook images. The textbooks examined in this study are the ILI pre-intermediate series, a three level course. A combination of linguistic and visual analyses is used to examine the reflection of gender in the textbooks. The findings clearly indicate gender imbalance in favor of males. The findings have implications for material designers, teachers, and teacher trainers and provide suggestions for further research. Abdullah Gharbavi and Seyyed Ahmad Mousavi (2012) in their paper "A Content Analysis of Textbooks: Investigating Gender Bias as a Social Prominence in Iranian High School English Textbooks" point to areas that remain problematical in the design of textbooks. Four English textbooks currently taught in the Iranian high schools were chosen

as a sample of this study. The results of chi-square test indicated that there is a significant difference between the frequencies of male and female for different categories of this study. The findings are followed by analysis and interpretation with special attention given to the relationship between language sexism and ideology. Pedagogical implications of the study have been discussed.

#### 4. Gender Representation in the Textbook

Based on the result of investigation, there is unequal representation of gender in the textbook. The book is dominated by female figures all throughout in terms of illustration, theme and language used. In contrast to this finding, the study presented by on gender bias in some English Language textbook in Malaysia, reported that gender bias was showed in the form gender bias against both sexes with males outnumbering females in texts and illustrations and males mainly associated with negative traits. However, discourse wise, males dominated females. Male students spoke more, talked first, and were more visible (Mukundan and Nimehchisalem 2008, in Birjandi 2012) as reported by Novi (2015). Table 4 presents the result of analysis as to the number of male and female representations.

**Table 4.** Distribution of gender by number

Unit	Number of males	Percentage (%)	Number of females	Percentage (%)
Unit 1	32	12.70	41	13.80
Unit 2	36	14.29	49	16.50
Unit 3	34	13.49	52	17.51
Unit 4	64	25.40	54	18.18
Unit 5	16	6.35	21	7.07
Unit 6	45	17.86	50	16.84
Unit 7	25	9.92	30	10.10
Total	252	100%	297	100%

As seen in the table 4, the distribution of males against females is unequal. A total number of 297 female figures were noted against 252 males. The distributions are as follows: unit 1, 32 males (12.70%) and 41 females (13.80%); unit 2, 36 males (14.29%) and 49 females (16.50%); units 3, with 34 males (13.49%) and 52 females (17.51%); unit 4, 64 males (25.40%) and 54 females (18.18%); unit 5, 16 males (6.35%) and 21 females (7.07%); unit 6, with 45 males (17.86%) and 50 females (16.84%), and lastly, unit 7, with 25 males (9.92%) and 30 females (10.10%). The total number of males is lower

than females. The author could have unconsciously preferred females over males by using more female-related examples.

#### 5. Gender Representation in Indonesian Culture

Culture means intellectual and creative products, including literature, music, drama, and painting. Another use of "culture" is to describe the beliefs and practices of another society, particularly where these are seen as closely linked with tradition or religion. But culture is more than that. Culture is part of the fabric of every society, including our own. It shapes "the way things are done" and our understanding of why this should be so. This more comprehensive approach is proposed in the definition of culture adopted at the World Conference on Cultural Policies (Mexico, 1982) and used in ongoing discussions on culture and development: "Culture... is... the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs (1982)". In Indonesia, the husband (male) is the head of the family. He is the main breadwinner and is responsible for his family. In the urban area many wives work outside of the home and could be more successful than her husband, but she will still respect him as the head of the family, she would give him credit for her success by "allowing her to have a career", "understanding from time to time she has to work overtime or go abroad by herself" etc.. In the family, decisions are made together but the husband still has the last word when it comes to really big decisions. The relationship between husband & wife might affect the workplace if the wife has to be sent out of town for a meeting, seminar or conference. The husband might not let her go for valid or non valid reasons and surprisingly to foreigners; she will usually respect his wishes.

According to Pater (2015), in her article on Gender Bias in Career Advancement in Indonesia reported that analyzing all companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange, IDX, for which annual reports were available, find that female members only made up 11.6 percent of the boards in 2011. While the study by the Centre for the Governance. Institutions and Organizations of the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Business School,

revealed that Indonesia is still ahead of the other Asian countries, this lack of gender balance is worrying. In this modern era, especially when gender equality and boardroom representation of women have been in focus, one would expect more female leaders to be promoted and represented at the management and board level. After all, a recent McKinsey study found that advancing women's equality can add US\$12 trillion to global growth. In the larger business environment, there may still be an inadvertent bias against women because of their previous jobs and assignments despite promotions being based on merit. Promotions are based on a supervisor's evaluation of what we could call 'promo ability'. While individuals are promoted in part because they performed well in their current jobs, they also move up after having undertaken challenging tasks. Individuals with challenging job experiences tend to be viewed as more capable, more willing to make the effort, and more ambitious to reach higher-level positions. Challenging assignments provide opportunities to learn, which are likely to result in the development of a wide range of skills, abilities, insights, knowledge and values that contribute towards effective management skills, and hence, career success. Within the formal legal context, Indonesian women have equal rights to the access to education. However, in practice and in reality, as reflected in the UNDP Human Development Report 2015, women's rate of participation to education in all levels is far lower than that of men's. Indonesian women lag behind compared to men in the education they complete. Population Census in 2010 shows that the percentage of women obtaining higher education is only 6.62% compared to 7.12% of men. The latest report of UNDP in 2015 shows that only 39.9% women actually complete their secondary education compared to 49.2% of men.

This means that roughly only one of three women finishes their secondary education compared to one of two men obtaining theirs. While in terms of literacy rate Indonesia is doing considerably well with 98.8% for both females and males, and is doing even better than Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines (UNDP Human Development Report 2015), Indonesia is only at the 110<sup>th</sup> place in the category of gender development index.

According to the report, the mean years of schooling for females in Indonesia are merely 7 years compared to 7.9 for males, making quite a significant gender gap of 0.9 year, which is the largest gap compared to other ASEAN countries such as Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines (2016). In contrast to the presentation of illustration and language used in the textbook, females are illustrated more than males. Females are more visible in roles and roles models. The female dominance was found in illustration and language used. This is probably because the author tried to minimize gender bias, not knowing that the number of females have already outnumbered males. The writer's background and exposure to Indonesian culture could be the reason why the emphasis on the female gender is greater than the male.

#### 6. Activities of Gender Equality

Based on the foregoing findings, the researcher strongly proposed activities of gender equality in the form of output of the present study as a guide towards teaching gender equality in the class specifically among Junior High School students. Topic and exercises were made clear and simple to facilitate learning, also to address students' need as an appropriate supplementary instructional tool that would help to increase the students understanding about gender equality.

### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

#### A. Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn: 1.) The textbook is female-dominated in terms of illustration, theme and language, 2.) Gender is not equally represented in the textbook, 3.) The author was aware of gender-bias issue in Indonesia thus the researcher found it difficult to spot gender-biased issues or concepts in the textbook.

#### B. Suggestions

Here are the suggestions of the study: 1) Teachers should spare the time to analyze textbooks, reference books, instructional materials in terms of issues related to gender. They should be aware that gender inequality is an issue that must be addressed even in books and publications, 2) The authors should invite an external reviewer or book analyst, teachers and experts before submitting the textbook for publication. The author himself/



herself should be aware that gender-bias may be reduced given the prover orientation, 3) using the activities written by the researcher may increase awareness on avoiding gender-bias and promote gender equality instead.

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