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## GENDER STEREOTYPES IN SOME SELECTED ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS FOR SMP STUDENTS IN INDONESIA

Saifuddin Ahmad Husin\*

### *Abstract*

*Gender responsive teaching and learning material is very important element to reduce incident called gender stereotyping. In teacher-students interaction process, gender biased teaching and learning in the classroom is often reflected in a number of types of teaching and learning contents of material with gender stereotyping. Several studies on gender bias in language textbooks in several parts of the world have shown that gender bias and stereotyping still exist and are happening at schools. However, studies on gender analysis of the English language textbooks which are used in most Indonesian schools have been scarce and unknown, and therefore are open to be studied. This article is a research report on the frequency of use of masculine, feminine words and pronouns (she and he), and kinds of main verbs related to each gender, and common gender stereotyping roles of some selected SMP or junior high school English textbooks. Three junior high school English textbooks, that are currently used by Indonesia's junior high schools, were selected.*

Key words: gender streotype, bias, English school textbook.

### **A. Introduction**

The right for education is the basic right of every individual, because it makes possible (for the individual) to be aware of other rights and prepares individuals to be able to play a role as equal fellow citizens in the society.<sup>1</sup>

Educational processes and relations within the school system contribute to the formation of gender identity and

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<sup>1</sup> Fatma Gok, *Content Analysis for Gender Bias in Turkish Elementary School Textbooks*. Istanbul at the Bogazici University, 2002.p. *Ibid*, p.1



maintenance of socially accepted gender roles. Schools develop and reinforce gender bias, stereotypes, and even discriminations which exaggerate the negative aspects of sex roles in the outside world when they could be trying to alleviate them.<sup>2</sup>

Gender responsive teaching and learning material is also very important element to reduce incident called gender stereotyping. Male and female students need to understand that they have equal right and responsibility to learn anything thus the teaching and learning as well as the instructor can create gender equality.

In teacher-students interaction process, gender biased teaching and learning in the classroom is often reflected in a number of types of teaching and learning contents of material with gender stereotyping. Teachers are often unaware of the existence of special needs for boys and girls. Discrimination practices are often unintentionally carried out by not giving equal opportunity for boys and girls.<sup>3</sup>

Children's literature, in addition to being one of the favorite choices for reading among students as they are growing up, is commonly used in the context of reading practices in ESL/EFL classrooms (Lazar, 1993). A great number of teachers tend to employ picture books, chapter books, and fairy tales because they think these teaching materials can help students build a repertoire of narratives and create a world of their own while improving their literacy. However, many researchers point out that gender bias is still prevalent in contemporary children's and young adult literature and continues to fuel hot debate (Christensen, 2001; Evans, 1998; Garner, 1994; Louie, 2001). As a result, Mem Fox(1993) argues that teachers need to be sensitive to their teaching materials or they will easily fall into "a passive acceptance of everything literature presents to us" (p. 86).

Several studies on gender bias in language textbooks have been conducted by some experts. Sameer and Jalabneh, for example, paid maximum attention to the length of utterance related to the question of male and female dominance. They counted the number of turns in dialogues and they discovered that the male has the control in initial conversation. While Babaii and Ansary also made an experiment on secondary Iranian EFL textbooks and illustrated that male were present in 67 % of the topics as compared to female (209:52).<sup>4</sup> Their studies have shown that there is a gross bias in the representation of women and men in textbooks. Further, the roles assigned to women in some textbooks are the stereotypical roles of mother and homemaker. This depiction of women in such stereotyped roles only helps to reinforce the outdated notion that women stay at home and men go out to work. Ansary and Babii (2003) concluded that women often appeared less visible than men and women were more visible in indoor passive activities and were placed in traditional roles.<sup>5</sup>

John M. Kobia (2009:69) conducted study on English primary school textbooks in Kenya. The results were to be free from gender bias. This is because the government of Kenya has tried to achieve gender equity in various sectors of the country.<sup>6</sup>

In Indonesian school textbooks we can also find inequality of gender roles like Bahasa Indonesia, Physics, History, and etc. This is because gender is a construction of culture that can be

<sup>4</sup> Sameer Hamdan and Atef Jalabneh, *Topics in EFL Textbooks and the Question of Gender Dominance: A Case Study from Public School of Jordan*, Amman Arab University for Graduate Studies, the International Journal of Language and Culture, 2009, p. 52.

<sup>5</sup> Marcus Ottowski B. Ed. M.A., *Ethnic Diversity and Gender Bias in EFL Textbooks*, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> John M. Kobia, *Femininity and Masculinity in English Primary Textbooks in Kenya*, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, the International Journal of Language Society and Culture, 2009, <http://www.educ.utas.au/users/tle/JOURNAL/>, p.69.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p.2

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.



found in any cultures of ethnics in Indonesia. Construction of values and beliefs on gender in the cultures of Java, Bali, Minangkabau, Madura, Batak, and Bugis is obviously visible. In these ethnic cultures women are to work in domestic sector, while men dominated the of public sector. Construction of gender can also be found in cultures of formal religions in Indonesia. Semantically speaking, all of these religions made an impression that God is a man.<sup>7</sup>

Study about gender in Elementary School textbook in Indonesia has been done by Logdson in 1985 with the title *Gender Roles in Elementary School in Indonesia*. The result shown that textbooks used in Elementary school contain gender concept, as well as have a standard role for each gender expected to do.<sup>8</sup>

Similar study was also done by Astuti, Indati, and Sastriyani in 1999 with the title *Bias Gender dalam Buku Pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia*. The research revealed that content of gender bias can be found in Indonesian textbooks that are used in Elementary School, Junior High School, and Senior High School. The study confirmed that woman's public roles were lower than men's, access and control of woman to property of goods and decision making is much more lower than that of man.<sup>9</sup>

Studies on gender anaysis of the English language textbooks which are used in most Indonesian schools have been scarce and unknown, and therefore are open to be studied. This article is a research report on the frequency of use of masculine, feminine words and pronouns (*she* and *he*), and kinds of main verbs related to each gender, and common gender stereotyping roles of some selected SMP or junior high school English

<sup>7</sup> Achmad Muthali'in, *Bias Gender dalam Pendidikan*, (Surakarta: Muhammadiyah Press, 2001), p.2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p.3

<sup>9</sup> Mary Astuti and Friends, *Bias Gender dalam Buku Pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia (Gender Bias in Indonesia Language Texts)*, Vol.1, (1999), p.1.

textbooks. Three junior high school English textbooks, that are currently used by Indonesia's junior high schools, were selected, namely:

1. Artono Wardiman, Masduki B. Jahur, M. Sukirman Djusma's book *"English in Focus for Grade VII Junior High School (SMP/MTS)"*, (Jakarta: Pusat perbukuan Departement Pendidikan National 2008).
2. Shelma Shakira Bhakti and Tri Utami's book *"Let's Surf in English for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade"* (Jakarta, Rajawali Cilik 2009).
3. Th. Kumalarini, Achmad Munir, Helena Agustin, Muchlas Yusak's book *"Contextual Teaching and Learning Bahasa Inggris SMP"* (Jakarta, Pusat Perbukuan Departement Pendidikan National 2008), 4<sup>th</sup> Edition."

To justify even and fair distribution of the male and female authors, the gender of the authors of each book selected is taken into account. The first book is co-authored by three male writers; the second book, by all-female writers; and the third, by mixed gender, one male and two females.

Simple and basic frequency counting was used to find out the occurrence of pronouns *he* and *she* in each chapter of each each book. The same method was also employed to count the frequency of verbs and their association with each of the two pronouns. Each verb was analysed according to its use or context with respective gender- stereotyped role.

## B. Research Findings

The following table 1. contains data from the book *"English in Focus for Grade VII Junior High School (SMP/MTS)"* written by Artono Wardiman, Masduki B. Jahur, M. Sukirman Djusma, (Jakarta: Pusat Perbukuan Departement Pendidikan National 2008).



Table 1. Number of Pronouns

|                   | Pronoun( <i>she</i> ) |            | Pronoun( <i>he</i> ) |            | Total     |            |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|                   | Frequency             | Percentage | Frequency            | Percentage | Frequency | Difference |
| Chapter 1         | 8                     | 47%        | 9                    | 51%        | 17        | -1         |
| Chapter 2         | 3                     | 100%       | -                    | -          | 3         | 3          |
| Chapter 3         | 5                     | 26%        | 14                   | 74%        | 19        | -9         |
| Chapter 4         | 21                    | 78%        | 6                    | 22%        | 27        | 15         |
| Chapter 5         | 37                    | 43%        | 49                   | 57%        | 86        | -12        |
| Chapter 6         | 38                    | 48%        | 41                   | 52%        | 79        | -3         |
| Chapter 7         | 13                    | 93%        | 1                    | 7%         | 14        | 12         |
| Chapter 8         | 28                    | 47%        | 32                   | 53%        | 60        | -4         |
| Total and average | 147                   | 49%        | 152                  | 51%        | 299       | -5         |

Table 2. Verbs Associated with Male and Female

| Female-Related Verbs |           |              | Male-Related Verbs |             |              |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------|
| ask (2)              | find (2)  | meet (1)     | buy (1)            | take (1)    | work (5)     |
| bargain (1)          | join (1)  | miss (1)     | go (6)             | want (2)    | write (2)    |
| borrow (1)           | get (3)   | need (1)     | like (2)           | wear (2)    | plough (2)   |
| buy (1)              | give (1)  | prohibit (1) | lost (1)           | respect (1) | prohibit (2) |
| cheat (1)            | go (5)    | say (1)      | make (1)           | speak (1)   |              |
| cook (1)             | like (2)  | serve (1)    | obey (1)           | start (1)   |              |
| consume (1)          | look (1)  | stand (1)    | paint (1)          |             |              |
| exercise (2)         | want (2)  | study (1)    |                    |             |              |
| fill (1)             | work (3)  | take (1)     |                    |             |              |
| wait (1)             | write (2) | tell (1)     |                    |             |              |
| type (1)             |           | try (1)      |                    |             |              |

Data in table 1. illustrates that the first book shows only a very slight difference of the average use of pronouns *he* and *she*; the difference is only 1 percent, 49 % *she* and 51 % *he*. If we look at the gender of the authors of this book, interesting fact is worth noting; all of the authors are male, yet they show no tendency of preference to any gender. However, the fact that all of the writers of this book are male will not be automatically considered as a justification that there is no gender inequality in this book. To make it as a justification of the existence of such inequality a closer look into to each chapter of the book and each topic or theme and agent of the sentences in which pronoun *he* and *she* are used is needed. Unfortunately, this research has not yet taken those considerations into account for some reasons. The first reason being a preliminary research it does not involve a deeper or closer analysis of semantic and cognitive aspects of the data acquired for this study, although some socio-psychological views and analysis are used especially when it is deemed necessary.

The total number of main verb in this book is 112. Out of these, 53 are mentioned or used in association with females and 59 with males. The number within parenthesis presents the number of times the verb has occurred in the texts.

To present an elaborate explanation for each word is probably not necessary for some reasons. First, not all the verbs used in association with either gender can be said as gender specific or gender-stereotyping. Besides, it is also time and space-consuming to elaborate the verbs that are gender neutral such as *like*, *look*, *say*, ect. Accordingly, some selected verbs which traditionally associated with either of the genders are worth explaining. For example, the verbs *bargain*, *cook*, *serve*, and *consume* are all associated with females according to Indonesian culture. The word *bargain* associates with going shopping in traditional market for groceries, food, and kitchen-related articles in which negotiation of price is usually practiced. The verb *cook* and *serve* implies traditional domestic role of Indonesian women. Cooking is usually and generally done by women in Indonesian household. The same is true with the verb *serve*, which is closely



related to cooking and presenting the food by the women to the men, is also closely related to female role. In many Asian dining cultures, and Indonesia is no exception, men (including boys) eat first or are served first, women eat after the men. Likewise the word *consume* is associated with female activity. The occurrence of the verb *consume* in association with female shows that what women can do is only receiving from men and consuming what they receive in contrast with men being portrayed as agents of production who can give or provider.

On the contrary, the verbs *plough*, *prohibit*, and *work* are associated with male, although the verb *work* is also frequently used in association with female. The verb *plough* requires physical work and therefore implies hard work and strong physical state. This implication is a common gender bias in many cultures and traditions which dictates that labor division for men and women is rigid; outside of the house, hard and physically demanding job is delegated to men, while domestic and fine handling works are for women.

The verb *prohibit* demonstrates power of men over others. This indicates that men are the decision makers. Finally and interestingly, the verb *work* occurs almost evenly in association with both male and female. However, the frequency of this verb being associated with men is higher.

2. Data from book "Let's Surf in English for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade that written by Shelmia Shakira Bhakti and Tri Utami, (Jakarta, Rajawali Cilik 2009)."

Table 3. Number of Pronouns

|        | Pronoun( <i>she</i> ) |            | Pronoun( <i>he</i> ) |            | Total     |            |
|--------|-----------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|        | Frequency             | Percentage | Frequency            | Percentage | Frequency | Difference |
| Unit 1 | 15                    | 62.5%      | 9                    | 37.5%      | 24        | 6          |
| Unit 2 | 1                     | 100%       | -                    | -          | 1         | 1          |
| Unit 3 | 9                     | 43%        | 12                   | 57%        | 21        | -3         |

|        |    |     |     |     |     |     |
|--------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Unit 4 | 18 | 24% | 56  | 76% | 74  | -38 |
| Unit 5 | -  | -   | -   | -   | -   | -   |
| Unit 6 | 12 | 32% | 26  | 68% | 38  | -14 |
| Unit 7 | 23 | 85% | 4   | 15% | 27  | 19  |
| Total  | 78 | 42% | 107 | 58% | 185 | -29 |

Although the second book in this study is written by two female writers, nevertheless the disparity of pronoun use between male and female is higher than the first book which is *nota bene* written by all male writers. Data in table 3. illustrates that the second book shows considerable difference of the average use of pronouns *he* and *she*; the difference is 16 percent, 42 % of *she* and 58 % of *he*.

Table 3. presents the result of *she* and *he* in a book that is written by women, in the first unit, pronoun *she* frequency is 15 times out of 24 with the percentage of 37.5% as compared to the *he* occurred 9 times with percentage of 37.5%. In the second unit, there is only one pronoun, that is *she*. gets one point with the percentage 100%. Nine times of occurrence for *she* out of 21 with the percentage 43% in the third unit; while *he* dominates over 12 points with the percentage of 57%. Fourth unit also indicates *she* only has 18 points out of 74 with percentage 24%; but *he* covers more dominance in the sense that *he* dominates 56 points with the percentage 76%. Likewise, in unit six, 12 points out of 38 are dominated by *she* with the percentage 32%; while *he* dominates merely 26 points with the percentage 68%. In the ending of the units, frequency of *she* is 23 points out of 27 with the percentage 85%; and *he* does 4 points with the percentage 15%.

In short, this book contains seven units, the total number of females is 78 points out of 185 with the percentage 42, but males get 107 points with the percentage 58%. It shows males preference and gender bias are there.



If we look at the gender of the authors of this book, it is interesting to note the fact that all of the authors are male, yet statistically these female authors have, whether consciously or unconsciously, shown preference to male gender. This could mean that on individual personal level the two authors were not at all aware of gender equality and therefore did not consider making some balance in the frequency of use of male versus female pronouns during the process of writing and editing the book.

Table 4. Verbs Associated with Male and Female

| Male-Related Verbs |             | Female-Related Verbs |            |                |              |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| Appear(1)          | Think(1)    | Accept(1)            | Die(1)     | Light(1)       | Teach(1)     |
| Ask(1)             | Treat(1)    | Apologize(1)         | Deliver(1) | Listen(1)      | Think(3)     |
| Break(1)           | Turn(2)     | Ask(1)               | Drive(1)   | Looking for(1) | Threw(1)     |
| Cloth(1)           | Want(2)     | Attack(1)            | Explain(2) | Find(1)        | Write(1)     |
| Come(1)            | Warn(1)     | Attend(1)            | Get(2)     | Fix(1)         | Sacrifice(1) |
| Cry(1)             | Wash(2)     | Become(1)            | Grew(1)    | Make(2)        | Say(1)       |
| Die(1)             | Run(3)      | Brake(1)             | Hear(1)    | Move(1)        | Sell(1)      |
| give(1)            | Prepare(1)  | Call(1)              | Help(1)    | Recruit(1)     | Set(3)       |
| go(1)              | Spend(1)    | Claim(1)             | Invent(1)  | Repeat(1)      | Want(1)      |
| Live(1)            | Stand On(1) | Come(1)              | Join(1)    | Run(1)         | Work(4)      |
| Love(1)            | Start(1)    | Continue(2)          | Learn(1)   | Own(2)         | Use(1)       |
| Marry(2)           | Remember(1) | Create(1)            | Leave(1)   | Play(1)        | Take(1)      |
|                    |             | Dance(1)             |            |                |              |

The total number of main verbs that related with subject of gender words is 99. out of these, 37 are mentioned in association with females and 62 with males. Several verbs are used in connection with female and male with the same unit, such as *come* and *die*. The verbs *turn*, *wash*, and *marry* are used twice only for women; while, *continue*, *explain*, *set*, and *work* for men, never with female.

In this book, *get* appears once in association with women and twice with a man. This indicates that males more aggressive. Likewise, *think* is mentioned once in connection with woman and tree times with man. It appears as if men think more than women. The verb *want* shows twice with women and once with man. Moreover, as mentioned above, the verb *run* comes tree times in related with women and only once with man. This means that women are very aggressive than man and it's contrary to common belief.

From the point of view of Indonesian culture, some action verbs are believed to be more appropriately carried out by a specific gender. Such words include *invent*, *drive*, *attack*, *recruit*, *create*, and *fix (repair)* are verbs of male specific, while *accept*, *apologize*, *sacrifice*, etc. are of female specific. However, such stereotyping of these verbs are untrue in this book. Interestingly, verbs connoting activeness or even aggressiveness of a male gender are used with female pronoun. Such verbs include *invent*, *create*, *recruit*, *work*, and *attack*. Conversely, verbs involving the actions of caring, softness, and emotion are used with pronoun he in this book. Such verbs include *love*, *marry*, and *cry*.

3. Data of book "*Contextual Teaching and Learning Bahasa Inggris SMP* written by Th. Kumalarini, Achmad Munir, Helena Agustin, Muchlas Yusak, (Jakarta, Pusat perbukuan Departemen Pendidikan National 2008), 4<sup>th</sup> Edition."

Table 5. Number of Pronouns

|        | Pronoun (she) |            | Pronoun (he) |            | Total     |            |
|--------|---------------|------------|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|        | Frequency     | Percentage | Frequency    | Percentage | Frequency | Difference |
| Unit 1 | 1             | 33%        | 2            | 67%        | 3         | -1         |
| Unit 2 | 2             | 67%        | 1            | 33%        | 3         | 1          |
| Unit 3 | 6             | 60%        | 4            | 40%        | 10        | 2          |
| Unit 4 | 12            | 41%        | 17           | 59%        | 29        | -5         |
| Unit 5 | 10            | 53%        | 9            | 47%        | 19        | 1          |



|        |    |      |    |     |     |    |
|--------|----|------|----|-----|-----|----|
| Unit 6 | 47 | 61%  | 30 | 39% | 77  | 17 |
| Unit 7 | 2  | 17%  | 10 | 83% | 12  | -8 |
| Unit 8 | 1  | 100% | -  | -   | 1   | 1  |
| Total  | 81 | 53%  | 73 | 47% | 154 | 8  |

Table (8) above shows that, in the first unit, *she* dominates only one point out of 3 but *he* dominates 2 points; the former scores the percentage of 33% but the latter scores the percentage of 67%. In the second unit, *she* contributes 2 points out of 3 with the percentage 67%; while, *he* attends one point with the percentage 33%. In the third unit, *she* appears 6 points out of 10 with the percentage 60%; while, *he* is 4 points with the percentage 40%. *She* dominates 12 points out of 29 in the fourth unit; they score the percentage of 41%; however, *he* shows dominance over 17 points with the percentage 59%. In the fifth unit, ten points out of 19 represented in this unit with percentage 53%; while, *he* gets 9 points with the percentage 47%. In the sixth unit, *she* dominates 47 points out of 77 but *he* dominates only 30 points; the former scores the percentage of 61% but the latter scores the percentage of 39%. Frequency of the *she* in the seventh unit is 2 points out of 12 with the percentage 83%. In the eighth unit, *she* is absent but *he* contributes one point with the percentage 100%.

In short, data in the table eight (8) shows that pronoun (*she*) dominates over eighty one points out of 154 with the percentage 53%; while, pronoun (*he*) gives seventy tree points with the percentage 47%. Therefore, there isn't gender bias in using pronouns.

Table 6. Verbs Associated with Male and Female

| Male-Related Verbs |          | Female-Related Verbs |          |
|--------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|
| clean(1)           | need(1)  | arrange(1)           | plan(2)  |
| comb(1)            | make(2)  | become(1)            | play(1)  |
| cook(1)            | send(1)  | break(1)             | run(1)   |
| enjoy(1)           | stay(1)  | cook(1)              | sing(1)  |
| get(2)             | twist(1) | cut(1)               | tell(1)  |
| give(1)            | walk(1)  | finish(1)            | want(1)  |
| keep(1)            | want(1)  | help(1)              | wear(4)  |
| like(1)            | wear(1)  | get(1)               | win(3)   |
| live(2)            | love(1)  | give(1)              | write(1) |
| look like(1)       |          | join(1)              | move(1)  |
|                    |          | look like(1)         |          |

The table (9) shows the total number of main verbs in this book is 61. Out of these, thirty one are got in association with female and thirty with males. Looking at those verbs in the table, the verbs *cook*, *give*, *look like*, and *want*, appear with same number in association with females and males. Moreover, the verbs *like*, *make*, and *study* are used twice too in association with the women and never with man; while, the verb *plan* does twice with men and never with a woman.

### C. Analysis

In common gender stereotypes, the traits of women are submissive, emotional, quiet, clean, clumsy, arty, housewife, and childrearing; while, the traits of aggressive, no emotional, loud, messy, athletic, math and science oriented, money maker, and naughty for men. Other verbs that could be considered in this context are for example *get* is mentioned twice in association with the female and once with male, but the verb *win* shows tree times for males and never with woman. It indicates that male does most aggressive. The verb *wear* is used once in association with woman



and four times with males. It appears man artier than women. That is contrary to common gender stereotypes.

Gender bias as portrayed in children's literature is still as prevalent today as in past decades, and remains a problem in light of the fact that gender stereotypes and sexism in children's picture books affect the development of gender identity in young children. Numerous studies of children's literature content indicate that male figures dominate the majority of books. This condition affects children's development and perceptions. Children adopt certain roles and behaviors as part of their socialization process. Many of these gender-based, behavioral roles arise from identification with others. The development of gender-role identity is important to children's self-perception, and influences adults' and peers' treatment of children. Gender affects others' expectations of children and youngsters often do not understand the expected behavior. As for the English language textbooks for SMP (junior high), although pictures consist or appear less than those children's literature of picture books, however imbalance representation of certain gender group may affect expectations of these early teenagers about certain behaviors towards certain gender role. This, in turn, will shape their mind and perception towards gender equality. Given that there are still many imbalance practices and representations of gender equality in the books for junior high, more deliberate and direct actions to make junior high school stakeholders more aware of gender bias and gender inequality are urgently needed to be done.

As mentioned, literature is one of the homes of gender stereotypes. The books that children read and that are read to them have psycho-social uses at a time when children are continually constructing ideas from information around them and assimilating new knowledge with previous knowledge. In general, children's literature is said to provide characters and events with which children can identify and through which they can consider

their own actions, beliefs, and emotions. The characters and situations in books introduce children to what the world may look like through others' eyes, and offer opportunities for children to further construct their own views of self and the world.

Strictly speaking, everything that children read contributes to the formation of self-images that help to construct children's self-identity. For example, girls can imagine themselves as women and boys can imagine themselves as men (Singh; 1998). Images and specific language used in picture books have the potential to affect children's developmental processes in various ways as a result of reading at crucial stages of development.<sup>10</sup> Because that, changing the image of women or men represented in textbooks is on e way of raising the awareness for the issue of developing critical thinking and creating a new, more acceptable notion of world and the place of women it.<sup>11</sup>

Lawrence Kohlberg conceived of gender development as a three-stage process in which children first learn their identity ("I am a boy"), then gender stability ("I will always be a boy and grow up to be a man"), and finally gender constancy ("Even if I wore a dress, I would still be a boy").<sup>12</sup> Illene C. Noppe said, in the middle period is a time that parents and educator played a significant role in gender socialization when their children are very young. It is because before the period, children become aware of their gender, where play styles and behavior begin to crystallize around that core identity. After the period, Erik H. Erikson stated that adolescence represented a crucial turning point in the development of sense of identity.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_hb6516/is\\_3\\_45/ai\\_n28566596/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb6516/is_3_45/ai_n28566596/).

<sup>11</sup> Zinec-Anima, *Gender Stereotypes in elementary School Textbooks (Grades 1, 4 and 8) in Use in Montenegro*, p.1.

<sup>12</sup> Illene C. Noppe, *Gender-Role Development-the Development of Sex and Gender*, <<http://social.jrank.org/pages/272/Gender-Role-Development.htm>>

<sup>13</sup> Illene C. Noppe, *Ibid*



Gender bias in education means treating boys and girls differently at school. This can include how teachers respond to students, what students are encouraged to study, and how textbooks represent gender roles. Education researchers have studied gender bias in the schools for the past 20 years, but the subject did not receive widespread publicity until the early 1990s, with the publication of several landmark studies. A study commissioned by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in 1991 entitled "Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America," synthesized much earlier research and concluded that the average school is biased against girls in a number of ways. The study claimed that girls do not receive as much attention from teachers as boys, boys are called on to answer more abstract and complex questions than girls, teachers encourage boys to think for themselves more than girls, and many school books continue to present stereotypical images of women or ignore women's achievements. While elementary school girls report high self esteem, once they reach junior high, many girls think less well of themselves consciously. The findings of the AAUW study were amplified in a further report in 1992, called "How Schools Shortchange Girls," and in a book published in 1994 by two of the major researchers included in the earlier studies--Myra and David Sadker's *Failing at Fairness: How America's Schools Cheat Girls*. The Sadkers' work quantified classroom behavior and found, for example, that on average, boys are 12 times more likely than girls to talk in class and five times more likely to get the teacher's attention. Educational researchers are concerned that such bias against girls contributes to many adolescent girls' self-esteem. Compared to boys, girls think less of their academic skills and shy away particularly from math and science.

#### D. Conclusion and Recommendation

Many school textbooks still portray gender imbalance. Even a number of award winning books were still replete with traditional and passive female roles. These children's books, investigated from feminist perspectives, fall into two categories. The first category is sexist books, in which female characters are largely recognized and accepted through their domestic accomplishments, their timidity of soul, [and] their gentle appearance and manners. The second category is comprised of cop-out books which implicitly express gender biases only by a crucial line, a paragraph, or the last chapter.

After almost half a century of research studies since the 1970s, such an insensitive mentality toward sexual imbalance is still present in contemporary children's literature. Under such circumstances, a great many writers have become more aware of the gender issues in their books. Some authors attempt to increase the number of female characters in their books, and points out that many of their books are intentionally dominated by main characters who are either girls, female animals, or dynamic elderly women. Others explicitly indicate that the purposeful treatment and balance of female/male characters in a story, while admirable, are not a realistic standard for all children's literature, and in fact, is impossible to maintain given to the volume and variety of books in the trade book market every year. Nevertheless, they suggest that books portraying gender balance can be used and considered in the classroom to offer teachers different perspectives on gender issues and help them enrich their reading materials and discussions. According to this viewpoint, it would be more realistic and especially important to come up with more books with strong female characters who are active, inventive, and in charge of their own destinies, thus placing more emphasis on the quality of female roles.



The persistent imbalance of gender representation in children's literature highlights the importance of children's literature in greatly shaping many children's minds and consistently influencing different cultures in the world. The stereotypes and worldview embedded in children's books have become accepted knowledge, and such deep-seated socialized thinking has created barriers that prevent authors or teachers from implementing their democratic and egalitarian beliefs, whether it be writing or teaching. Coping with relentless gender stereotyping requires increasing awareness of gender issues on the part of authors and teachers. Authors should devote their attention to the representation of female and male roles in their writing process, while teachers should attempt to empower their students with critical thinking and alternative reading. What follows in the next section are some instructional principles or strategies that teachers can incorporate into their classroom teaching.

Since language is closely connected with culture, language textbooks contain both collective cultural loads and personal perspectives of the authors. Writers who are raised and heavily influenced by collective cultural views on roles and practices that treat male and female differently or give preference over certain gender group will consciously or unconsciously portray these perspectives in their works. In order to eliminate or at least to decrease such gender biases and unequal treatment of certain gender group, teachers need to be more sensitive to their teaching materials or they will easily fall into "a passive acceptance of everything literature presents to us".

Based on the findings of research, the writer would like to propose the following recommendations: Textbooks need to be revised especially where the role of female is portrayed only as good housewives. There is a need to include achievements and heroic instances of the female gender in equity to the men. Teachers have to choose those textbooks for children that can help

children recognize gender stereotypical message. For this, they have to choose those books in which girl are portrayed in a positive light with active, dynamic roles irrespective of their gender, the language used in the text is gender free, occupations are represented as gender free, achievement are not evaluated on basis of gender etc. Finally, a National Textbook Council should be set up to monitor textbooks.



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