

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Textbook play an essential role in shaping students understanding of language, social values, and cultural identity In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, *English for Nusantara* presents English language materials along with Indonesian social values and cultural identity through various texts and illustrations. However, previous studies indicate that representation of gender, culture, and social values in textbook are often unbalanced (Fairclough, 2020) Therefore, this study includes the background, research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study, implication, and application to analysis how gender, Indonesian social values, and Indonesian cultural identity are represented in the English for Nusantara textbook for eighth-grade students.

1.1. Background

In the current era of globalization, English has become an international language that plays an important role in education, technology, and cross-cultural communication. English proficiency was considered a key to accessing global information and improving individual competitiveness in both academic and professional contexts. According to Rahmadani (2022) English serves as a gateway for students to gain global knowledge and wider opportunities to participate in international communication of the main components of English language learning in schools is the textbook, which not only functions as a source of linguistic material but also as a medium for

transmitting values, culture, certain ideologies, and Indonesian social norms. According to Fitriyah (2023) explains that school textbook often contain cultural messages and ideological elements that shape students perspectives on their social environment. Emphasizes that language in textbook is never neutral because it always carries specific social values and ideologies. Similarly, finds that learning materials often include representation of power, social norms, and certain constructions of identity. Therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an appropriate approach to examine how meaning, values, and ideology are constructed through textual and visual elements in the English for Nusantara textbook.

According to Yusuf (2024) one important aspect of textbook is gender representation, namely how males and females are depicted through texts and illustrations, including the roles, characteristics, and activities assigned to them Fitriyah (2023) notes that textbook still frequently present unequal gender roles, where males are more often portrayed as active, strong, or dominant figures, while female are depicted as supportive, passive, or associated with domestic activities. Such representation may influence students understanding of gender roles in real life and potentially reinforce stereotypes that contradict principles of equality.

States that textbook also play a role in conveying Indonesian social values and identity, such as mutual cooperation, respect for diversity, national spirit, and appreciation of local culture. These representation help shape students understanding of their social roles and foster a sense of pride as members of Indonesian society.

In the context of English language learning in Indonesia, *English for Nusantara* is one of the official English textbooks developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology to support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum for junior high school students. The textbook is designed to provide communicative, relevant, and student centered learning materials while integrating Indonesian social values and cultural identity. Since the textbook is widely used in Indonesian schools, it is important to examine how gender representation, Indonesian social values, and cultural identity are presented in its content. Previous studies have shown that English textbooks may contain unequal gender representation, stereotypical gender roles, and recurring portrayals of male and female characters. For example, Rahmawati (2023) found that some English textbooks reflected gender stereotypes through unequal role distribution and gender-linked characteristics. These findings highlighted the need for a deeper analysis of the *English for Nusantara* textbook to determine whether it represented gender fairly and promoted Indonesian social values and cultural identity appropriately.

To address this issue, this study employed Faircloughs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the analytical framework. CDA enabled the researcher to examine how language, texts, and visual images represented gender, Indonesian social values, and cultural identity in the textbook. In addition, CDA helped reveal the underlying ideologies and meanings embedded in the textbook that might influence students understanding of gender roles, social values, and cultural identity. Therefore, Faircloughs CDA

was considered an appropriate analytical approach to achieve the objectives of this study.

This study is important because junior high school students are at a developmental stage where they are highly influenced by what they read and learn. If textbook present unbalanced gender roles, this can shape students perceptions of what is considered normal or appropriate for males and females. Such conditions are inconsistent with educational goals that promote equality, inclusivity, and respect for all groups. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to provide meaningful contributions to the improvement of learning materials and to encourage more positive social understanding among students.

1.2. Research question

Based on the background of this study the writer formulate two research questions as follows :

1. How are gender represented through the English Nusantara textbook for 8th grade junior high school students ?
2. How are Indonesian social values and cultural identity depicted in the English for Nusantara?

1.3. Aims of Study

This section explains the objectives to be achieved in this study, which serve as the basis for answering the research questions. The objectives are formulated to provide a clear understanding of the focus of the study on the English for Nusantara textbook for 8th-grade junior high school students.

Specifically, this research aims to find out and describe two main aspects presented in the textbook : gender representation and Indonesian social values and identity.

1. This study aims to find out and describe how gender representation is portrayed through dialogues, illustrations, and reading texts in the English for Nusantara textbook.
2. This study aims to find out and describe how Indonesian social values and identity are represented in the textbook.

1.4. Significance of Study

This study is expected to provide a clear picture of how Indonesian social values and identity are represented in the book English for Nusantara. The findings of this study can help provide more structured and accountable information about the content of the discourse in the book.

1.4.1. Implication

According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2022) the development of teaching materials in the Merdeka Curriculum must reflect principles of equality and diversity. Widodo (2021) However, research gaps indicate that some previous textbook still show unequal gender representation, such as male characters appearing more frequently or being portrayed as more dominant. Based on this gap Fitriyah (2023), material developers need to ensure that male and female characters are represented equally and fairly in texts, illustrations, and learning activities.

English learning materials should also highlight Indonesian social values, because textbooks serve not only as language learning resources but also as a medium for promoting cultural understanding, social values, and students character development (Widodo, 2021). such as cooperation, politeness, tolerance, and mutual support. However, research gaps show that some EFL textbook in Indonesia have not yet presented Indonesian social values clearly and consistently, which makes it is difficult for students to see the connection between language learning and their social environment. Therefore, material developers are encouraged to present examples and contexts that are more relevant to students daily lives so that Indonesian social values become more visible in the learning process.

According to Haryanto (2021) textbook should present Indonesian cultural identity more prominently reveal that many textbook still highlight Western culture more strongly, while Indonesian local culture is shown only in a limited way. The implication of this gap is that elements of Indonesian culture-such as traditions, community practices, local foods, traditional clothing, and regional stories-should be represented more diversely and proportionally so that students develop a stronger sense of pride in their cultural identity.

In addition, Haryanto (2021) states that inclusive visual design is an important aspect of textbook development show that illustrations in textbook still do not fully reflect Indonesian diversity, whether in terms of region, physical characteristics, or social background. Therefore, material developers need to ensure that visual representations in textbook genuinely reflect the

diversity of Indonesian students and avoid focus on a single dominant type of representation.

Overall, the implications of this study indicate that the development of English learning materials must pay attention to three key aspects-gender equality, Indonesian social values, and Indonesian cultural identity-while addressing the representation gaps that frequently appear in textbook. By doing so, learning materials can become more inclusive, relevant, and aligned with the real context of students lives in Indonesia.

1.4.2. Application

The findings of this study can be applied to provide a clear understanding of how the English for Nusantara textbook presents gender, Indonesian cultural identity, and Indonesian social values. These three aspects are reflected through content selection, visual design, and the way the texts are structured by the textbook designers.

According to Wahyuni (2020) the findings can be used to assess whether gender representation in dialogues, illustrations, and learning activities is balanced. This includes examining whether male and female characters receive equal visibility, roles, and participation without reinforcing gender stereotypes.

As described by Sari (2022) the findings can be used to understand how the textbook presents Indonesian cultural identity and social values, such as politeness, cooperation, appreciation of diversity, and local traditions. These elements play an important role in shaping students understanding of Indonesian identity within English language learning.

Based on Rahmawati (2023) the results can be applied to evaluate how the textbook design- including layout, images, content organization, and task presentation - supports the representation of cultural identity, social values, and gender. This analysis helps reveal how cultural messages and gender portrayals are constructed through design decisions in the textbook.

Overall, this study provides practical insights into how gender, Indonesian cultural identity, and Indonesian social values are represented in the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade 8th students.