Consciousness of ‘Political Correctness’ in Gender Matters: Lessons learned from textbooks published in 1960’s and 2000’s

Ika Lestari Damayanti
Introduction

Two ELT textbooks were chosen in order to see how females and males were portrayed in the early era of language awareness (1960s-1970s)


Two ELT textbooks published in 2000s

- 4 Indonesian English textbooks for Primary School, 2003
WHY TO BE AWARE?

- Social constructions on gender roles
- Long-term effects on children’s conception of roles and values of how women and men should behave in society (Kortenhaus, 1993); mothers at home, fathers at work (Zimet, 1976)
- BUT, depending on the background knowledge and experience (Wing, 1997; Balfour, 2003; Wharton, 2005)
HOW???

- Publication of *On Balance: Guidelines for material writers in EFL*
- The number of characters
- Attributes to characters
- Revisions of sexist words such as firefighter for fireman, police officer for policemen, chair person for chairman, and house manager for house wife
Choice of text
To compare how different and/or similar reading texts were in Indonesia, Malaysia and Great Britain in their representation of the female roles in 1970’s and 2000’s

- Texts relating to occupations (1970)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALAYSIA</th>
<th>ENGLAND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No visual illustration</td>
<td>Pictures as clues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text: 9</td>
<td>Text: 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F= 1</td>
<td>F= 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M = 9</td>
<td>M= 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Choice of Analytical Approach

Critical Discourse Analysis helps investigate, reveal, and clarify how power and discriminatory value are inscribed in and mediated through the linguistic system (Coulthard & Coulthard, 1996)

Tool:
The systemic functional concept of transitivity, with its categories of process and participants (see Eggins, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; and Bloor & Bloor, 2004).
## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Participants | F = 15%  
M = 85% | F = 46%  
M = 53% |
| Attributes  | Only ‘domestic-female related’ job. 
F: dietician 
M: the chairman, the secretary of school board, a member of editorial board, reporter, newspaper editor, personnel manager | More varieties of job 
F: teacher, nurse, computer programmer 
M: journalist, pop star, teacher |
| Activities  | Tend to be passive and invisible (depending on a man’s status) | More active but only one incident |
Things for further discussion

- Females in these two texts are represented as being competent but at the same time they are also regarded as either less desirable, or restricted from being more competent than males.

Example: a nurse and a computer programmer
Many times, the male participants through mental processes regret and wish that the female will realize that a woman’s job is to stay at home and look after the children.

I wish she would stay at home and look after the children

Senr Mental Phenomenon

That ‘s a woman’s job

Identified Pr: relational Identifier
Today…

We are now more than thirty years ahead,

Are we now free from such inequality?
## Findings from the 2000s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>M: 45%  F: 34%</td>
<td>M: 57%  F: 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F: happy, wonderful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M: patient, wise, happy, not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>angry, hardworking, handsome,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>intelligent, smart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Economic Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paid work</strong></td>
<td>Dentist (7), nurse (5), Librarian* (1), waitress (2)</td>
<td>Headmaster (11), painter* (2), Police officer* (2), postman* (2), becak driver* (1), pilot (2), soldier (6), shop assistant* (2), architect (2), truck/bus drivers* (5), farmer (5), cook (7), gardener* (6), vet (2), actor (3), restaurant owner,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-paid work</strong></td>
<td>Doing the laundry (7), preparing breakfast/dinner (7), shopping for groceries* (7), ironing* (1), picking and planting flowers (5)</td>
<td>Washing car (2), gardening (5), planting plants (5),</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What’s next?

- Teachers’ responsibility
- Material writers’ responsibility
- Government’s responsibility

Our responsibility
THANK YOU