

Revealing Hidden Gender Bias: A Critical Discourse Analysis Of Sara Mills In The Textbook *Cerdas Cergas Berbahasa Dan Bersastra Indonesia* For Senior High School

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Abstract: The role of textbooks, which are widely used and serve as official references in the learning process, makes the study of gender representation within them highly important. This research aims to analyze gender bias in Indonesian language textbooks for senior high schools using Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis, focusing on the subject-object and writer-reader positions. The method employed is descriptive qualitative, with Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis as the analytical technique. The data sources are the *Cerdas Cergas Berbahasa dan Bersastra Indonesia* textbooks for Grades X, XI, and XII, published by the Ministry of Education. The data consist of textual excerpts that reveal gender relations. Data were collected through documentation studies, and data validity was ensured using theory triangulation. The results show that: (1) gender bias in the subject-object position appears in the forms of subordination, stereotyping, and violence against women; and (2) gender bias in the writer-reader position is reflected through direct address using first- and third-person pronouns.

Keywords: Textbook, Gender Bias, Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are one of the main media used in educational activities in schools, playing a crucial role in supporting the achievement of educational goals. Textbooks serve as an essential primary learning resource at every level of education (Torkar, 2022). A textbook is a book used by students as a tool to support the learning process. It contains explanations of specific topics that are organized systematically and have clear learning objectives (Debi, 2024). Textbooks are the primary guide used across educational institutions, from elementary to secondary schools, and even in higher education. They are designed with content that aligns with the national education goals, adhering to the current curriculum, so that the learning process can proceed in a systematic and focused manner (Susanto, 2022). Moreover, textbooks play an important role in presenting learning material in a structured way that aligns with curriculum objectives, while also incorporating values related to affective, social, and cultural aspects. Textbooks not only function to develop students' cognitive abilities, but they also help in shaping their affective and psychomotor skills comprehensively (Lasaiba, 2016).

In line with the development of education that emphasizes equality, textbooks used today need to be designed with a gender-equality perspective in order to prevent the emergence of gender bias in learning content (Wahyudi, 2023). According to the National Education Standards Agency (BSNP), a high-quality textbook must meet four key criteria: content feasibility, presentation, language, and graphics. Each of these aspects has specific indicators that help teachers implement them effectively in the learning process. In the context of education, both textbooks and non-textbooks serve as important supporting resources for teachers and students. The primary goal of developing these books is to help learners acquire the essential foundational knowledge they need. Therefore, the information presented in the books must be engaging, easy to understand, and easy to read, while

also adhering to prevailing social standards. The content must not contain elements of pornography, violence, extremism, radicalism, ethnic or religious intolerance, gender bias, or any other form of harmful deviation (Hafidhatur, 2024).

The curriculum, as the primary guideline for implementing instruction, greatly influences all educational components, including learning materials. However, its implementation in the field still shows inconsistencies with Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 on gender mainstreaming in national development, which emphasizes the importance of improving the status, roles, and quality of women in order to achieve gender equality and justice across various aspects of life. To ensure gender equality in textbooks, the government further regulates this matter through the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 8 of 2016, Article 2 paragraph (2), which states that books used by educational institutions must not contain gender bias. Nevertheless, despite the existence of regulations regarding gender equality in textbooks, misunderstandings surrounding gender-equality issues remain widespread (Alifia, 2025).

This inconsistency is reflected in the continued presence of gender bias in textbooks used in schools. In reality, gender bias is still frequently found in educational materials in Indonesia. One way to identify such bias is by observing how men and women are portrayed differently in both the text and illustrations, which indirectly reinforce the gender stereotypes that are already ingrained (Hafidhatur, 2024). Stereotypes represent a form of gender injustice that women, especially those in the role of housewives, continue to experience (Nadia, 2022). A different portrayal in text may involve positioning one gender whether male or female unfairly, often by assigning them an unequal burden of responsibility. In illustrations, this discrepancy may be reflected through images that degrade either men or women (Maulida, 2023). Gender bias can manifest in various forms, such as subordination, stereotyping, violence, marginalization, and an unequal division of labor (Faqih, 2008). This phenomenon occurs at all levels of society, from the family environment and educational institutions to workplaces and government agencies. Such bias creates a tendency to favor one gender over the other, leading to the use of the term "gender bias" to describe this condition.

These conditions make the study of Indonesian language textbooks increasingly important. As a subject designed to develop students' literacy skills, character, and social perspectives, Indonesian language textbooks hold significant potential to impart particular values through the language, narratives, and illustrations they contain. The discourse presented in these textbooks functions not only as a linguistic learning tool but also as an ideological medium that represents social structures, including gender relations (Kusmana, 2020). Therefore, analyzing Indonesian language textbooks is essential to identify how gender bias is constructed through language and visual representations, as well as how these constructions may influence students' perceptions of equality and social roles. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to uncover gender bias found in the Indonesian language textbook *Cerdas Cergas Berbahasa dan Bersastra Indonesia* for grades X, XI, and XII, published by the Ministry of Education. This textbook was selected because it is widely used and serves as an official reference in the learning process throughout Indonesia.

Relevant studies related to this research include the work of Adin Nur Kholiza and Ningsih Fadhillah (2021), titled *Gender Bias in the Arabic Language Textbook by Faruq Baharudin: An Analytical Study of the Seventh-Grade Madrasah Tsanawiyah Textbook*. Their study aimed to identify gender bias in both the material and illustrative images contained in Faruq Baharudin's Arabic language textbook for seventh-grade students at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level. Meanwhile, a study conducted by Lu'luil Maknun (2023), titled *Women's Discrimination in Beauty Is a Wound: A Feminist Stylistics Approach of Sara Mills*, also employed a descriptive qualitative approach. This research examined discrimination against women by applying Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis to Eka Kurniawan's novel *Beauty Is a Wound*. Furthermore, a study by Nurul Atikah (2024), titled *The Image of Women in the Dove Shampoo Advertisement "Rambutku Mahkotaku": A Critical Discourse Analysis Using Sara Mills' Framework*, aimed to uncover the constructed image of women in the Dove "Rambutku Mahkotaku" shampoo advertisement using Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis theory.

Although the three previous studies share similarities in their use of a descriptive qualitative approach and their focus on analyzing gender equality, the present study demonstrates fundamental differences and offers a distinct contribution. Unlike the study by Adin Nur Kholiza and Ningsih

Fadhilah (2021), which focused on an Arabic language textbook for seventh-grade Madrasah Tsanawiyah students; the research by Lu'luil Maknun (2023), which examined discrimination against women; and the study by Nurul Atikah (2024), which explored the representation of women, the current research specifically concentrates on the *Cerdas Cergas Berbahasa dan Bersastra Indonesia* textbooks for grades X, XI, and XII, particularly on the passages that contain gender bias. This study applies Sara Mills' analytical framework, focusing on two positional analyses: the subject-object position and the writer-reader position. The findings are expected to contribute to the understanding of gender bias in Indonesian language textbooks for grades X, XI, and XII, addressing a gap that has not yet been explored in depth.

This study makes an important contribution to the fields of education and critical discourse analysis by revealing how gender bias is reproduced through language and narrative in the *Cerdas Cergas Berbahasa dan Bersastra Indonesia* high school textbooks. By applying Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis framework to two key aspects the subject-object position and the writer-reader position this research extends the use of this feminist approach into the context of formal education, where it has previously been applied more frequently to media, literature, and advertising. Empirically, the study shows that male figures continue to be predominantly represented as active subjects, while female figures are often positioned as passive objects or complements, directing readers to adopt a male-centered perspective. These findings highlight that textbooks used in schools still contain tendencies toward gender bias. Therefore, this research can serve as a foundation for evaluation by textbook authors, teachers, and policymakers in developing learning materials that promote gender equality and support inclusive education.

Gender bias can be understood as a form of inequality in the distribution of social roles between men and women in society, often referred to as gender injustice (Tabah, 2020). Gender differences that emerge within society lead to variations in roles, responsibilities, functions, and the space individuals occupy in carrying out various life activities (Nurliana, 2021). Gender mainstreaming is a development strategy aimed at strengthening the role of women by applying the principles of gender equality and justice as the foundation for all development policies (Cahyani, 2023). Faqih (1997) in Sugihastuti (2010:278) explains that gender differences shaped by social perceptions and judgments give rise to stereotypes that are treated as cultural norms. Over a long process, these views ultimately produce various forms of injustice toward both women and men.

Gender injustice itself is a social system or structure that positions both men and women as victims of patriarchal domination (Hermanto, 2017). According to Faqih (2008), several forms of gender injustice commonly appear in society, including stereotyping, subordination, marginalization, violence, and unequal distribution of workload. Such injustices can occur across various spheres of life, from the family environment, schools, and workplaces to the national level. This situation reflects a tendency to favor one gender either men or women which is referred to as gender bias. This phenomenon can be found across multiple layers of life, from family settings to educational institutions, workplaces, and government structures. These conditions demonstrate a pattern of partiality toward one gender, and the term gender bias is used to describe this imbalance.

Discourse is one of the objects of study in linguistics, falling within the field of pragmatics. It has a broader scope than a clause or sentence because it encompasses ideas and concepts that together form a coherent text (Rohana, 2015:3). In English, the term discourse refers to an expression of communication within an interaction. According to Foucault, as cited in Rohana (2015:3), discourse is a series of complete utterances within a structured and meaningful act of communication that includes specific ideas, concepts, or effects according to its context. Every communicative activity can be categorized as discourse, as it involves a sender, a receiver, and the intended meaning conveyed as a whole. Discourse analysis, therefore, is a study that examines how language is used naturally in real-life situations, either through spoken or written texts. This research specifically focuses on critical discourse analysis, which explores how language reflects and constructs social power, ideology, and inequality within texts.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) examines social interactions by highlighting linguistic aspects to uncover the underlying factors that shape social relations and the latent effects embedded within those systems (Diah Kristina, 2020). Discourse analysis that connects language with its socio-cultural context is known as critical discourse analysis, pioneered by Fairclough (1995). According

to Fairclough, as cited in Zamzani (2017), discourse is understood as the use of language within social practice, encompassing three dimensions: text, discursive practice (the processes of production and interpretation), and sociocultural practice (the influence of culture, ideology, and social change on discourse). Thus, critical discourse analysis emphasizes that the study of language cannot be separated from the social, political, cultural, and ideological contexts that shape it. CDA serves as a framework to examine whether a discourse is influenced by certain interests and how such influences affect society as readers or participants. This view aligns with Van Dijk's perspective, as cited in (Dewi 2019:2), which states that critical discourse analysis functions to investigate discourses that contain significant social issues such as politics, race, gender, social class, and hegemony. This research focuses on critical discourse analysis as an approach to examining texts in order to reveal elements of discourse that represent power relations, ideology, and social inequality specifically in the form of gender bias.

This study employs the Discourse Analysis theory developed by Sara Mills. According to Mills (1995:2), women have long been treated differently from men and are often the ones who experience discrimination. As noted by Yani (2022), Sara Mills is recognized as a prominent scholar in discourse theory, with her primary focus being feminist discourse analysis. The feminist approach she developed highlights how women are represented across various forms of texts, such as novels, short stories, news articles, images, and photographs. Feminism centers its attention on issues of gender and the principles governing social life, which are heavily influenced by power relations. Feminist scholars argue that the subordination of women occurs across multiple institutions and social practices, making it a structural issue. This structural subordination experienced by women is referred to as patriarchy a system that reflects male dominance within the family and reinforces control and superiority over women (Barker, 2011). This approach is commonly known as the Sara Mills perspective, which emphasizes how women are represented in texts. In many cases, women are portrayed as wrong, weak, or marginalized compared to men. In her discourse analysis, Sara Mills introduces two key concepts: the position of the subject and the position of the writer-reader. In her analysis of texts, Mills focuses on how actors' positions as well as those of the writer and reader are constructed and represented. The position of the actor refers to who serves as the subject or object of narration, as this significantly influences the structure of the text and the meaning it conveys as a whole. Thus, the way these positions are arranged and depicted in a text can make one party appear legitimate while rendering the other illegitimate Mills in Eriyanto (2003).

Furthermore, the concept of writer and reader positions is also a key focus in Mills's framework. She views a text as the result of a negotiation process between the writer and the reader. Therefore, the reader is not merely a passive recipient but an active participant in meaning-making through the interactions reflected within the text Mills in Eriyanto (2003). Sara Mills emphasizes that readers play a crucial role in shaping the meaning of a text. Discourse analysis, in her view, not only examines the process of text production but also explores how texts are received and interpreted by readers. According to Mills, women are often marginalized within texts, whether in news media or television broadcasts. They are frequently portrayed as objects, represented through the perspectives of others, and denied the space to voice their own experiences. In this context, Mills also highlights gender differences in textual interpretation: men and women often perceive and position themselves differently when reading or viewing a text, leading to distinct understandings and representations within the discourse.

The Sara Mills approach is highly relevant to this study as it provides a feminist and interpretive perspective in analyzing educational discourse. This theory helps reveal not only what is expressed in a text but also who is speaking, to whom, and from whose point of view the reality is presented. Through this framework, the analysis of Indonesian language textbooks can identify how language and discourse function as tools for reproducing social values and gender ideologies. Thus, Sara Mills' theory offers a strong foundation for understanding how gender bias is represented in educational texts and how such representations may shape students' social awareness of equality and gender roles.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive qualitative research is conducted to understand the meanings that emerge from data in the form of words, texts, or human behavior within their natural context. The researcher serves as the primary instrument, interpreting the data holistically through a gradual analytic process to uncover hidden meanings within the phenomenon being studied. The data source for this research consists of the *Cerdas Cergas Berbahasa dan Bersastra Indonesia* Indonesian language textbooks for grades X, XI, and XII, published by the Ministry of Education and widely used as primary instructional materials in schools nationwide. The research data take the form of narrative excerpts from the textbooks that depict gender relations between men and women across various life contexts, specifically from grade X (Chapters 2, 3, and 5), grade XI (Chapters 3, 4, and 5), and grade XII (Chapters 4, 5, and 6). Data collection was carried out through documentation techniques, involving careful reading and selection of text segments that showed indications of gender bias, whether verbal or visual. Each relevant excerpt was recorded and classified according to the context of gender representation that appeared. To ensure data validity, this study employed theoretical triangulation by comparing the findings obtained through Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis framework with other relevant theories of representation and gender. Data analysis was conducted using Sara Mills' model of Critical Discourse Analysis, focusing on two main aspects: the subject–object position and the writer–reader position.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Table 1. Data Analysis Results of the Textbook *Cerdas Cergas Berbahasa dan Bersastra Indonesia* for Grades X, XI, and XII

No	Class	Stories Containing Gender Bias	Subordination	Stereotyping	Marginalization	Violence	Workload
1.	X	4	4	4	-	-	-
2.	XI	4	2	4	-	7	-
3.	XII	4	2	6	-	1	-
		12	8	14	-	8	-

1.1 Analysis

Based on the table above, the researcher identified 30 instances related to gender bias found in the Bahasa Indonesia textbooks for Grades X, XI, and XII. However, not all of these instances were included in the article discussion. Only several representative examples were selected to illustrate the recurring patterns and tendencies of gender bias present in the textbooks. The findings of this study reveal two main forms of gender bias: (1) Gender bias based on subject–object positioning, which includes: (a) subordination, (b) stereotyping, and (c) violence. (2) Gender bias based on writer–reader positioning, which includes: (a) indirect address through mediation and cultural codes, and (b) direct address through the use of first-person, second-person, and third-person pronouns. The detailed explanation of these findings is presented in the following sections.

1.2 Subject–Object Position

In this study, the term subject–object position refers to the researcher's effort to identify the characters or actors who function as the subject or object within the narrative of the text. Based on

the analysis, three main forms of inequality were identified: subordination, stereotyping, and violence against women. Subordination refers to the perception or social construct that places one gender typically women in a lower or less significant position compared to the other gender. This form of bias often manifests through depictions that limit women's roles or portray them as dependent on men. Stereotyping involves labeling or attributing negative traits to a particular group, in this case women, which may lead to unequal treatment or reinforce restrictive gender norms. Such portrayals can perpetuate the belief that certain characteristics or roles are inherently tied to gender. Meanwhile, violence is understood as any act or expression whether physical, verbal, or psychological that harms or undermines a person's dignity. In the context of this research, violence against women includes not only physical aggression but also offensive remarks, discriminatory language, or depictions that demean women's value and agency.

1.3 Subordination

Data (1)

"After some time, the Poor Man's wife became three months pregnant. Then, she began to cry, longing to eat a mango from the king's garden. She refused to eat anything unless it was the mango from that garden. 'Let me die once and for all,' she said. 'Calm down, my dear, don't cry!' said her husband. 'Let me go and look for that mango for you. If I manage to get it, I'll give it to you.'" (Hikayat Si Miskin, p.60/X)

Based on Data (1), the subject position is assigned to Si Miskin (the husband), while the object position is given to the wife. In this excerpt, the Poor Man's wife is portrayed as someone entirely dependent on her husband, both emotionally and economically. She has no autonomy to fulfill her own needs and even expresses a willingness to die if her desires are not met by a man. According to Faqih (2008:14), such a form of subordination emerges when women are positioned as dependent and powerless, while men are portrayed as providers and decision-makers. This depiction reinforces the patriarchal pattern that views women as socially and mentally weak.

Data (2)

"For her household life, R.A. Kartini married K.R.M. Adipati Ario Singgih Djojo Adhinigrat, the Regent of Rembang, based on her father's decision and choice at that time." (Biography of R.A. Kartini, p.131/X)

Based on data (2), the subject position is given to the father, while the object position is assigned to R.A. Kartini. This excerpt illustrates that women have no control over major decisions in their lives, including marriage. The decision is made by the father as a patriarchal figure. Walby (as cited in Wiyatmi, 2019) explains that patriarchy is a system composed of social structures and practices that place men in dominant positions across various aspects of social life. This reflects a form of social and cultural subordination in which male authority is regarded as absolute. Faqih (2008:14) emphasizes that the subordination of women within the family sphere serves as the root of broader injustices in society. In this context, Kartini symbolizes the struggle against the social structures that restrict women's personal freedom.

Data (3)

"The sky seemed to understand the meaning of Aura's glance. 'I'm just giving Katrissa a ride. Poor girl, she's carrying such heavy stuff. A good guy should help a girl, right?'" (Itik dan Angsa, p.115/XII)

Based on Data (3), the subject position is given to Langit (the male), and the object position is assigned to Katrissa (the female). This excerpt shows how women are perceived as needing men's help in daily activities. Implicitly, women are placed in a position of weakness and dependency. This view falls under the category of subordination because it positions women as inferior and reliant on men's benevolence. Faqih (2008:14) emphasizes that the belief that women are incapable of independence leads to their treatment as objects of protection rather than autonomous subjects.

1.4 Stereotype

Data (4)

“In the schoolyard, the male students were skillfully playing basketball, while some of the female students were casually chatting.” (Tarian Pena, p.64/X)

Based on Data (4), the subject position is given to the male students, while the object position is assigned to the female students. The male students become the focus of the narrative as active subjects, whereas the female students merely appear as passive observers or complements. This excerpt reveals a strong reinforcement of gender-based social roles. The male students are portrayed as active, competitive, and achievement-oriented individuals, engaging in activities like basketball often associated with strength, agility, and courage. Meanwhile, the female students are depicted as passive, merely “chatting casually.” The narrative reinforces the idea that public spaces and productive activities (such as sports or other achievement-driven pursuits) are more appropriate for men, while women are better suited for light social interactions that do not require physical strength or assertiveness.

Data (5)

“I recommended a few names, and they were the ones who made the choice. I had no power to influence them. But according to Satoshi, it was because you’re beautiful.” (Hatarakibachi, p.113/XI)

Based on Data (5), the subject position is assigned to Satoshi, while the object position is given to the character “you” (the woman). In this excerpt, the woman is reduced to a visual object. Professional decisions are not based on competence but on appearance. This phenomenon reflects deep-rooted discrimination in the workplace, where women are often chosen for their looks rather than their abilities. Faqih (2008:17) emphasizes that such stereotypes place women in a symbolic position and reinforce the bias that men are more rational and productive.

Data (6)

“Sometimes Katrissa forgets that boys are stronger than girls.” (Itik dan Angsa, p.115/XII)

Based on Data (6), the subject position is assigned to Langit (the boy), and the object position to Katrissa (the girl). This excerpt reflects the classic stereotype that men (boys) are stronger than women (girls). The statement instills the notion that physical strength defines male superiority, while women are associated with weakness. According to Faqih (2008:15), such stereotypes serve to maintain male dominance across various spheres of life from family and school to the broader society. Gender stereotypes lead to unequal roles and social positions: men are perceived as strong and rational, whereas women are seen as weak and emotional.

1.5 Violence

Data (7)

“Suddenly, the gun went off, its sound deafening my ears, and the smell of gunpowder instantly filled the air as the woman’s body collapsed before me. ‘She’s the rebel’s wife!’ that was all I could make out from his broken and faint Indonesian.” (Mengapa Mereka Berdoa kepada Pohon, p.61/XI)

Based on Data (7), the subject position is assigned to the shooter (male), while the object position is given to the wife (female). In this excerpt, the woman is not mentioned by name and is

identified merely as “the rebel’s wife.” This reflects the erasure of a woman’s identity as an independent individual, reducing her to a mere symbol of her husband’s status. The violence inflicted upon her also highlights how women often become victims in conflicts created and dominated by male power structures. According to Faqih (2008:20), this erasure of female identity represents a form of symbolic violence in which women’s existence as subjects is denied. Women are frequently positioned not as autonomous individuals, but as beings defined solely by their relationship to the men around them.

Data (8)

“As I’ve known him for more than half a century. He was a respected sports journalist for an evening newspaper. They said he often peeked at me from the Tjandra Naja gate.” (Tanah Air, p.76/XI)

Based on Data (8), the subject position is assigned to the character he (male), while the object position is given to I (female). This excerpt illustrates how a woman becomes the object of a man’s gaze without her consent, indicating an act of symbolic harassment. The act of “peeking” represents a form of non-physical violence that violates a woman’s dignity. According to Faqih (2008:18), violence is not limited to physical acts but also includes degrading treatment such as verbal harassment, demeaning stares, or the denial of a woman’s existence. This behavior reflects how women are often subjected to male control and objectification through subtle yet harmful social interactions.

Data (9)

“I began wearing loose clothing so people wouldn’t see the shape of my body. I started choosing what I ate—maybe my weight was the problem. I also began shutting myself off from many people. Maybe if I ‘didn’t appear,’ they wouldn’t hurt me.” (Dia Merundungku dengan Menjadi Aku dalam Halloween, p.129)

Based on Data (9), the subject position is assigned to “they,” while the object position is given to “I” (the female character). This excerpt reveals the psychological pressure experienced by women due to societal judgment of their bodies. The character feels compelled to hide her body to avoid harm or ridicule, showing how the female body is politicized by social standards. Faqih (2008:18) explains that violence against women is not limited to physical abuse but also includes symbolic violence, such as ridicule, surveillance, and social pressure that erodes one’s sense of safety. Symbolic violence operates through value systems that make women feel guilty or ashamed of their own bodies.

1.6 Writer–Reader Position

Data (10)

“Awesome, Mom! When I grow up, I want to be a construction worker.”
“Hey, girls can’t be construction workers.”
(Liburan Kuli Bangunan, p.30/X)

Based on Data (10), the excerpt employs direct address through the use of the first-person pronoun “I” and the third-person form of address “Mom”. The dialogue explicitly reflects gender stereotypes in the division of labor between men and women. The use of direct address (“I” and “Mom”) enhances the sense of intimacy in the conversation, yet within it lies an ideology that restricts women’s mobility and occupational freedom based on gender. The statement “Hey, girls can’t be construction workers” reveals a perspective that associates physical and labor-intensive work with men, while perceiving women as weak, unfit, and unsuitable for such jobs. This view represents a form of gender inequality in the form of stereotyping women in the workforce. The reader is subtly guided to perceive the rejecting statement as normal, thereby reinforcing patriarchal beliefs about gender roles and occupational boundaries.

Data (11)

“An old woman greeted me warmly. Plates of rice and side dishes were neatly arranged on the dining table.” (Tarian Pena, p.63/X)

Based on Data (11), this excerpt employs direct address through the use of the first-person pronoun “me” and the third-person noun phrase “an old woman.” The excerpt portrays women in traditional domestic roles welcoming guests, preparing meals, and symbolizing household warmth. This depiction reinforces the stereotype that a woman’s rightful sphere is the home and service to others. Faqih (2008:15) explains that such domestic roles attached to women are not biological destinies but products of social construction. In this context, the text guides readers to perceive women’s roles as naturally confined to domestic spaces such as the kitchen and caregiving thereby normalizing gender-based role limitations.

Data (12)

“However, at the age of twelve, she had to stay home because she was to be secluded. At that time, it was customary for girls of age to remain at home in seclusion. R.A. Kartini was therefore forced to suppress her desire for higher education.” (Biography of R.A. Kartini, p.131/X)

Based on Data (12), the excerpt uses direct reference through the third-person pronoun “she”. This passage clearly illustrates the subordination of women within a patriarchal social system, in which women are placed in a lower position than men, particularly regarding access to education and public life. The practice of “pingit” secluding young women once they reach a certain age reflects a belief that women are unworthy or undeserving of freedom to learn, socialize, or develop their potential beyond the domestic sphere. This shows that from an early age, women were taught to conform to social norms that restrict them to private, home-bound roles, while men were granted the freedom to learn, grow, and participate in public life.

Data (13)

“‘The doctor will come soon,’ I reassured her. I excused myself to throw out the trash, water the plants on the porch, wash the dishes, and tidy up the living room. I cleaned the bathroom. Scrubbed the toilet. As I carried the vacuum cleaner into the bedroom, I was startled by the curtains fluttering wildly in the wind.” (Tanah Air, p.80/XI)

Based on Data (13), this excerpt employs direct address through the use of the first-person pronoun “I”. The passage portrays a woman trapped in traditional domestic roles, where all household responsibilities are placed entirely upon her. The use of the first-person pronoun emphasizes the narrator’s position as a diligent, obedient, and tireless woman confined within domestic boundaries. Activities such as taking out the trash, watering plants, washing dishes, tidying the living room, cleaning the bathroom, and scrubbing the toilet serve as concrete symbols of the domestic labor burden socially attached to women. Through this narrative, readers are subtly guided to perceive housework as a natural duty of women a perspective that reflects gender inequality in the form of occupational and role-based stereotypes.

Data (14)

“Endo laughed while reaching for my hand. I quickly pulled it away. Just met me, and already flirting! I don’t like Endo’s words.” (Hatarakibachi, p.113/XI)

Based on Data (14), the excerpt uses direct address through the first-person pronoun “I” (aku) and the third-person name “Endo.” In this context, the woman becomes the party who rejects the unsolicited advances made by a man. The expression “just met me, and already flirting” reflects an imbalance of power between men and women, where men feel entitled to comment on or flirt with women without considering their comfort or consent. Such behavior constitutes a form of

verbal violence demeaning or objectifying women through words, jokes, or comments that undermine their dignity and identity. According to Faqih (2008:18), violence against women is not limited to physical acts but also includes psychological, symbolic, and verbal violence often embedded in everyday behavior. Seemingly harmless jokes or flirtations are, in fact, manifestations of patriarchal culture that positions women as objects of male gaze and desire. This form of verbal violence can have psychological impacts, such as discomfort, loss of self-confidence, or fear of expressing oneself in social spaces. Readers are guided to recognize that women frequently become the targets of verbal violence, even in ordinary interpersonal interactions.

Data (15)

“She had a tall and slender body fit to be a model, along with beautiful eyes, a pointed nose, fair skin of Chinese-Sundanese descent, and most importantly, the most beautiful smile in Egan.” (Itik dan Angsa, p.115/XII)

Based on Data (15), the excerpt employs direct reference through the third-person pronoun “she”, depicting the female character from an external point of view rather than her own perspective. The physical descriptions such as tall and slender body, beautiful eyes, pointed nose, and fair skin of Chinese-Sundanese descent reflect how women are judged based on physical traits that conform to socially constructed beauty standards rooted in patriarchal culture. According to Faqih (2008:15), one form of gender inequality is stereotyping the labeling or limitation of women based on biased social perceptions. These beauty standards act as a form of social control, pushing women to focus on their bodies and appearances rather than on their intellectual or professional potential. The text positions readers to internalize this perspective by framing female beauty as the central marker of value and meaning.

Data (16)

“In terms of her face, Milani was actually beautiful, thanks to her mother, who had half-English blood. But at the same time, Milani inherited her mother’s large and easily fattened body. As a result, everything that should have looked beautiful on Milani’s face appeared oversized her eyes, her nose, and even her lips.” (Itik dan Angsa, p.115/XII)

Based on Data (16), this excerpt uses direct reference through the third-person name “Milani,” indicating that the female character is portrayed from an external, observational perspective rather than her own voice. Such narration implicitly positions the woman as the object of observation rather than as a subject with her own agency or experiences. The descriptions emphasizing physical aspects—“beautiful,” “half-English blood,” “large body,” and “easily fattened”—illustrate how a woman’s value is linked almost entirely to her physical appearance. In this text, the female body becomes a measure of social and aesthetic worth, rather than an integral part of her identity or humanity. Consequently, readers are led to believe that ideal beauty standards require women to be slim, fair-skinned, and proportionally featured, while those who do not fit these criteria are considered less attractive.

2.1. Result

2.2. Subject–Object Position

Based on the analysis of subject–object positions using Sara Mills’ theory, various forms of gender bias were identified in the text, particularly in the form of subordination, stereotyping, and violence against women. Subordination is evident in how women are positioned in roles or statuses lower than men, both in terms of decision-making, the division of responsibilities, and the unequal social treatment between genders. The subordination of women to men, especially in decision-making processes, power control, and dependence on men, also falls within this category. According to Soenarjati Djajanegara in Sugihastuti (2010:300), one characteristic often associated with the feminine gender is dependency, which stems from vicarious tendencies or the inclination to act for the benefit of others. In Soenarjati-Djajanegara’s view, traditional values consider this trait natural,

as women are often perceived as weak, powerless, lacking initiative, and incapable of acting independently. As a result, dependency becomes an ingrained attitude among women. Women are then expected to rely on their husbands, sons, or employers in economic, social, status, and psychological aspects. Meanwhile, men are regarded as active and dominant subjects within the family structure. In the family sphere, the man's active role is clearly reflected in various aspects such as naming children, making major decisions, determining whether the wife may work, controlling social interactions, and shaping the woman's attitude toward men (Sugihastuti, 2010:322).

Meanwhile, the form of stereotyping appears through deeply ingrained labeling within society, where women are often portrayed as weak, emotional, irrational, obedient, and submissive, and are consistently associated with domestic roles. In contrast, men are depicted as assertive, rational, leadership-oriented, and active in the public sphere, which positions them as the primary decision-makers and authority figures. Stereotyping serves as a form of ideological and cultural oppression, manifested through the assignment of harmful labels that disadvantage women and place them in subordinate positions. Various forms of gender-based injustice, particularly toward women, often arise as a result of these imposed labels. For instance, the belief that women dress up merely to attract the opposite sex reinforces negative stereotypes, leading to situations in which incidents of violence or sexual harassment are unjustly attributed to women's appearance or behavior (Faqih, 2008:17).

In this study, stereotypes were identified in the depiction of men who perceive women merely in terms of their physical appearance or beauty, reducing them to visual objects. The findings also show that women are portrayed as weak and passive, while men are characterized as strong and active. Other data reveal that women are frequently confined to the domestic sphere. According to Soenarjati Djajanegara in Sugihastuti (2010:280–281), male dominance is rooted in the belief that men are strong, assertive, and resilient, whereas women are perceived as small, weak, gentle, and delicate. Because men are viewed as stronger, they are positioned as possessing greater authority than women. This power imbalance fosters condescending attitudes toward women, which in turn influences the types and levels of work assigned to them. As the supposedly superior group, men delegate domestic work to women, assuming it aligns with their physical and emotional nature. Furthermore, women are often believed to possess innate qualities that men lack such as the ability to give birth, nurture, and raise children further reinforcing gendered divisions of roles and responsibilities.

Meanwhile, forms of violence identified in the study include physical violence, verbal or psychological violence, and symbolic violence. According to Faqih (2008:18), violence refers to acts of aggression or violations against an individual's physical, mental, or psychological integrity. Interpersonal violence may arise from various factors; however, one particular form of violence directed at a specific gender is rooted in gender constructions. Violence that emerges as a result of gendered perceptions or biases is referred to as gender-related violence. In general, gender-based violence occurs due to power imbalances within society. There are several types and forms of actions categorized as gender-based violence, including physical and verbal or psychological violence. The data collected in this study reveal instances of violence against women that stem from male dominance and social positioning. According to Soenarjati-Djajanegara in Sugihastuti (2010:296–297), in addition to being regarded as companions or supporters of their husbands, women are also perceived as symbols of their husbands' success. This perception reinforces gendered hierarchies in which women's identities and worth are defined through their relationships with men, further perpetuating systemic inequality and symbolic violence.

Status or social position is something men acquire through their activities and achievements in society. In contrast, women often gain their status through their husbands' accomplishments. Since women's roles are more closely associated with domestic and family matters, their social standing largely depends on that of their husbands. Consequently, a woman's identity is generally measured by the success or achievements attained by her husband. For example, in data (7), the phrase "the rebel's wife" illustrates this bias. The actual rebel in this context is the husband, yet the wife bears the consequences of his actions merely because of her position as his spouse. The gender bias reflected in this text stems from the author's perspective, which is shaped by the social environment

in which they live. The social context plays a significant role in forming an individual's perceptions and viewpoints toward the surrounding reality. In other words, the discourse created by the author cannot be separated from the broader social and cultural context. A society that continues to uphold patriarchal values indirectly influences how writers portray relationships between men and women. As a result, gender bias within the text becomes a mirror of the existing social structures and cultural norms within that society.

2.3 Writer–Reader Position

Based on the analysis of the writer–reader position using Sara Mills' theory, it was found that the relationship between the two in the textbook *Cerdas Cergas Berbahasa dan Bersastra Indonesia* is constructed through direct address and the use of specific pronouns that implicitly guide the reader's perspective toward female characters. This form of direct address is evident through the use of first-person pronouns such as “aku” (I) and “saya” (I), as well as emotional address terms like “Mah” (Mom), and third-person pronouns such as “ia” (she/he), “istri” (wife), or “perempuan tua” (old woman). These word choices demonstrate how the author builds a sense of closeness and emotional engagement between the text and the reader. However, at the same time, they also reinforce certain social constructions that position women in a subordinate role. Sara Mills (as cited in Eriyanto, 2003) emphasizes that within a text, readers are not merely passive recipients of meaning but active participants who negotiate meaning together with the author.

This relationship is transactional in nature, as readers are invited to actively participate in constructing an understanding of the text's content. In the context of textbooks, such forms of direct address make readers feel as though they are witnessing, understanding, and even justifying the gender relations depicted in the text. For instance, in excerpts that portray women as homemakers, readers are subtly guided to perceive domestic roles as natural and acceptable. Thus, the text functions not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a tool for embedding certain social values including patriarchal views that remain deeply rooted in cultural norms. Furthermore, the use of pronouns such as “ia” (she/he), “istri” (wife), or “perempuan tua” (old woman) constructs women as figures viewed from an external perspective. This narrative standpoint implies that women are more often portrayed as objects of representation rather than as subjects with their own voice and consciousness. Such a portrayal reinforces Sara Mills' argument that in many texts, women are positioned in marginal or peripheral roles because they are denied the space to narrate their experiences from their own point of view. Consequently, readers are led to perceive women through the lens of others reducing them to supporting figures within broader social and cultural discourse.

In the context of education, this strategy of direct address carries significant ideological implications. Textbooks serve as a medium for shaping students' ways of thinking about social reality. When a text repeatedly employs forms of address and narratives that position women within domestic spheres or passive roles, students are likely to internalize and normalize these portrayals as social truths. This aligns with Fairclough's view as cited in Zamzani (2017) that discourse within educational texts functions as a form of social practice one that indirectly reproduces dominant ideologies, including patriarchy. In other words, the language used in textbooks acts as a tool for shaping social consciousness and behavior, which can either reinforce or challenge existing power structures. However, direct address also opens up the possibility for readers to critically engage with and reinterpret the text. According to Mills (1995), readers possess the potential to resist the meanings offered by the author and reinterpret them based on their own experiences. This means that while the textbook may attempt to guide readers toward certain ideological positions, the process of reading itself remains dialogic allowing space for reinterpretation, negotiation, and even resistance to dominant narratives.

In the context of this study, female readers may recognize the presence of inequality within the narrative and develop a critical awareness of the unbalanced portrayal of gender roles. Thus, the author–reader analysis not only highlights the reproduction of patriarchal ideology but also reveals a space for resistance and alternative interpretations among gender-conscious audiences. Overall, the findings indicate that the author–reader relationship in the textbook *Cerdas Cergas Berbahasa dan Bersastra Indonesia* still reflects gender biased social relations. The author positions readers to accept traditional constructions of femininity such as motherliness, modesty, and domestic responsibility as normative traits. This representation shows that educational texts are not entirely

neutral, but rather serve as vehicles for ideological transmission, reinforcing patriarchal cultural values. Therefore, it is crucial for textbook authors and curriculum developers to adopt a more critical and reflective approach to language use and narrative style. By doing so, they can avoid perpetuating gender stereotypes and instead promote equitable, inclusive, and empowering narratives within educational contexts.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the Indonesian language textbooks *Cerdas Cergas Berbahasa dan Bersastra Indonesia* for grades X, XI, and XII, published by the Ministry of Education, still contain elements of gender bias. (1) In the subject-object position, the forms of bias identified include subordination, stereotyping, and violence against women. Subordination is reflected in the portrayal of women as being positioned beneath men and lacking authority in decision-making processes. Meanwhile, stereotypes appear through social labeling that depicts women as weak, emotional, and irrational, as well as being closely associated with domestic roles. The forms of violence found in the texts include physical violence, verbal or psychological violence, and symbolic violence. (2) In the author-reader position, the analysis reveals the use of direct address as a narrative strategy. This direct address is evident through the use of third-person and first-person pronouns, which serve to present female characters and construct a particular relationship between the author and the reader within the text.

Based on these findings, it is expected that textbook authors will pay greater attention to the aspect of gender equality when composing discourse, so that the resulting texts do not contain bias or discriminatory views toward either gender. Teachers and schools, as users of these textbooks, are also encouraged to be more careful and selective in choosing learning materials that are free from gender bias, considering that textbooks play an important role in shaping students' perspectives on social values. Furthermore, the government, as the regulator and publisher of educational materials, is expected to establish stricter standards for evaluating and screening textbook content before it is distributed to schools. Since this study focuses solely on discourse analysis in reading texts, future researchers are advised to expand the scope of study to include other aspects such as illustrations, exercises, and material presentation. This will allow for a more comprehensive mapping of gender bias in educational textbooks.

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