

## **Representation of Visual and Gender Meanings in Indonesian High School Textbooks**

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### **A B S T R A C T**

Textbooks are learning media used by schools to convey knowledge that becomes a guide for teachers in the teaching and learning process. Visual text contained in Indonesian language teaching materials for high school students should be able to support understanding in the material to be taught, not make it more confused because of their limited understanding in interpreting the visual text. Visual text can create meaning in language learning. This study aims to analyze visual texts and describe gender representation in Indonesian textbooks for senior high school students. This research analyzes the meaning of representation of visual text and the position of visual text in the realm of gender. The method used is descriptive qualitative. The data is in the form of textual images that show gender identity. the data is collected from high school textbooks grade XI. Data collection was done by reading textbooks, marking, classifying, and counting gender identity markers. The data were analyzed by reducing, presenting, calculating the percentage of representation of visual text, representation of gender identity, interpreting and explaining the gender representation. The results showed that the representation of the meaning of visual text supports the theory of visual representation proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen. Images in the revised edition of Indonesian textbooks for Class X SMA play an important role in supporting students' understanding and engagement in learning, as well as strengthening understanding of social and cultural contexts. In addition, this textbook shows results that reflect unequal gender representation patterns. Male gender findings tend to be depicted more frequently and in a more dominating role.

*Keywords: gender, visual text, teaching materials, Indonesian language,*

### **INTRODUCTION**

An important component of the learning system is quality teaching materials for teachers. Learning can be carried out effectively if supported by a variety of relevant teaching materials such as textbooks, modules, student activity sheets, and others that can help the learning process run well and smoothly (Wijoyo, 2021). Books Textbooks, as one of the main teaching materials, are not only used by teachers but also help learners acquire information, concepts, and knowledge and develop their abilities. Presenting an object sequentially for learning purposes and providing a good touch of affective, social, and cultural values can make learners able to develop their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities comprehensively (Lasaiba, 2016).

Textbooks not only contain a collection of materials that must be understood by students, but can also encourage maximum creativity of students. Cunningsworth (1995) explains about four main criteria in textbooks, among others: suitability to students' needs, helping students use language effectively, providing linguistic items that are relevant to students' needs, and facilitating the teaching process in a fun way. A good Indonesian textbook will support the quality of learning. Conversely, books that do not meet the eligibility standards can cause failure to attract students' interest, which has a negative impact on motivation and learning achievement (Greene and Petty in Tarigan and Tarigan, 2009: 20). Thus, textbook design should consider various aspects, including visual elements, to enhance learning effectiveness. Textbooks are not only closely related to language literacy, but also visual literacy. Callow (2003) states that visual and multimodal texts have become an important part of the curriculum in many countries. However, the ability to read visual texts is still limited, including in Indonesia. To date, the pedagogical design of visual text learning in the Indonesian curriculum is still not optimal. Practices in the field show that monomodal writing aspects are more often the focus of attention than visual aspects (Wardoyo et al., 2020). In fact, the integration of visual texts in learning can train learners to synthesize modes, genres, and ideas, so that they can become more flexible writers (Yi & Hirvela, 2010). For example, Indonesian textbooks at the senior high school level can utilize visual texts to enhance the appeal of the material. learning while strengthening students' understanding.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) developed a theory showing that visual texts have important social, cultural and contextual aspects, just like written texts. Visual texts do not only function as ornaments, but also play a role in shaping learners' perceptions of the text being studied (Mulyani, 2014). This is relevant to the increasing awareness of teachers about the important role of visual text in textbooks to help learners understand the material better (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020).

In line with the relationship between visual texts or images and the accompanying text, Chapelle (2016) suggests five types of relationships between images and text. and text, namely task essential, text enhancing, generally orienting, theme building, and independent. Task essential is a situation where images are used as part of a learning task, without which learners cannot complete the task. Text enhancing refers to images that illustrate specific aspects of the text thus making the text more meaningful to learners meaning that the images selected support coherence with the text. Generally orienting refers to images that serve to direct learners towards the topic to be developed in the textbook section. Theme building refers to images that act with other images on the same page or nearby pages to build the meaning of the theme in a particular section of the textbook. Independent refers to images that must be interpreted independently because they do not have a clear relationship with the text or other images around them.

In addition to visual texts, gender representation in Indonesian textbooks is also an important issue. Certain language can reinforce ideas about the extent of male dominance and female inferiority. The roles of men and women are often portrayed unequally in textbooks, reflecting the social and cultural perceptions of society (Keplinger, Kowal & Mäkiö, 2016). For example, gender representation in textbooks can be seen in the roles assigned to men and women in illustrations and text descriptions. The relationship between language and gender is very close because gender is reflected in language, conversely language helps shape gender (Aydinoglu, 2014).

Research on the meaning of visual texts has been conducted by Primasari and Harni (2023) which focuses on the realm of representational meaning of visual texts and the relationship built between visual texts and reading texts in Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) teaching materials. The results showed that the selection and placement of visual texts in the SIUPB7 book were in accordance with the topic of the reading text. The meaning of representation in the SIUPB7 book consists of real-life photo images that are more dominantly represented by dynamic narrative images rather than conceptual ones. In addition, the selection of visual texts is also in accordance with the reading theme and is able to illustrate specific things so as to make the reading text potentially more meaningful for learners or readers. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the SIUPB7 book can be used in the process of learning and learning BIPA.

Another previous study, entitled "Visual Text Analysis of Doraemon-Canda Special Story Manga" conducted by Diputra et al. This study used a survey method to analyze the relationship between visual text and verbal text. This study states that visual text and verbal text have relevance, which is shown through the visualization of scenes by utilizing symbols and visual effects. These elements are able to direct or explain to the reader the impression of the scene or the background conditions of the story well.

In addition, research on gender representation of BIPA textbooks entitled *Let's Speak Indonesian: Ayo Berbahasa Indonesia 1* shows that the female gender has a greater percentage than the male gender representation. Thus it can be concluded that based on the percentage of visual gender, the research entitled *Gender Representation in BIPA Textbooks* has shown gender equality because it reflects less male dominance over women (Gatut, 2021). Exploration of gender in textbooks was also researched by Indriyani, et al (2024) with the results of the analysis concluded that there are still inequalities in gender representation that appear in textbooks.

Based on previous research, it is known that the study of representation of visual meaning and gender is more widely carried out on BIPA teaching materials than high school Indonesian textbooks. Therefore, researchers conducted this research to find out the representation of visual meaning and gender in Indonesian textbooks for high school students so that it can contribute to the development of textbooks that are more inclusive and effective in learning.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a content analysis approach to explore the representation of visual meaning and gender identity in Indonesian language textbooks of Class X SMA. Research data in the form of images that represent visual meaning and gender identity are analyzed based on relevant theories. The main data in the form of images in the revised edition of Indonesian language textbooks for class X high school have the potential to represent visual meaning and gender identity. The analysis was conducted using Kress & Van Leeuwen's (2006) rubric for visual meaning, and Chapelle's (2016) theory for the relationship between image and text. The following is the analysis rubric used:

**Table 1. Visual Text Analysis Rubric**

Aspects of Analysis	Category	Explanation
<b>Meaning Representation (Kress &amp; Van Leeuwen, 2006)</b>		
Process	Narrative/Conceptual	
Participants	Human/inanimate object	
Situation (circumstance)		
<b>Relationship between Image and Text (Chapelle, 2016)</b>		
Task essential		
Text enhancing		
Generally orienting		
Theme building		
Independent		

In representing gender identity through visuals, this study adopted a systematic approach. First, the researcher carefully identified all images in the textbook. Next, the number of single images featuring one male or one female was recorded and counted. Then, the number of group images featuring only males or only females was recorded and counted. Finally, the number of grouped images featuring both males and females together was recorded and counted.

Furthermore, the data was analyzed using content analysis techniques through several stages. First, data reduction was carried out by eliminating images that had identical patterns and selecting one image as a representation to avoid bias due to

repetition. Second, the data was presented by grouping it into two main categories, namely visual meaning and gender identity, then described in tabular form to facilitate the calculation of frequency and representation ratio. The next stage is data interpretation by calculating the percentage of gender identity representation based on image categories. Finally, the data is explained descriptively by linking the findings to the theoretical framework.

To increase the validity of the results, this study applied data triangulation by involving the supervisor in the process of verifying the findings. This approach not only resulted in an in-depth analysis of visual meaning and gender identity, but also ensured the accuracy of the data through systematic validation steps and the use of a structured analysis rubric.

## 1. Visual Representation

The results of the study on the representation of visual meaning and gender in the revised edition of Indonesian language textbooks for high school grade X are presented systematically in accordance with the research objectives. Before entering the discussion of the results of the analysis, it is important to understand that every visual element such as illustrations, photos, and diagrams not only functions as a complement to the material, but also has the potential to convey certain messages. These visual messages can influence the way learners interpret themselves, their social roles, and the environment around them. With this understanding, the analysis becomes more meaningful because it is able to reveal the dimensions of representation hidden behind the visual appearance in the textbook.

### Cover of Indonesian Language Textbook Class X SMA



Aspects of Analysis	Category	Explanation
<b>Meaning of Representation (Kress &amp; Van Leeuwen, 2006)</b>		
Image part	1	Image on page cover page of class X high school textbook.
Process	Narrative	Cover page images are categorized as narrative images because it shows an event of interaction between students. The process narrative process features students as the main actors in activities interactions learning.
Participants	Human	There are four participants in image page cover. The first participant is a female student who appears to be explaining something by holding a paper in her right hand, while her left hand is used to clarify the explanation. The second, third, and fourth participants are sitting together right in front of the first. They are listening to her explanation. This position shows their roles as actors in the learning process. learning process.
Situation (circumstance)	Environment outside the room	Picture shows the interaction taking place under a shady tree close to a river and a mountain. The environment this environment reflects a relaxed yet productive learning atmosphere. The identity of the participants participants' identities are also depicted visually, such as the long hair tied up on the first female student, the headscarf as a Muslim female identity on the second female student, and the short hair and identity of Muslim women on

		the second female student, and short hair and long pants on the second female student, long pants on the two male students. This description supports the narrative by clarifying cultural and social context.
<b>Relationship between Image and Text (Chapelle, 2016)</b>		
Category	Generally orienting	Images play a role in orienting students to some material topics that will be developed in the book. This is reinforced by the strategic location of the image at the beginning of the textbook cover. Visual elements such as students learning outdoors symbolically depict the symbolically illustrate theme of active and collaborative learning, providing context for the material in the book.



The first page of Chapter 1 of Indonesian Language Textbook Class X SMA

Aspect Analysis	Category	Explanation
<b>Meaning of Representation (Kress &amp; Van Leeuwen, 2006)</b>		
Image section	2	Figure 2 is the first page in chapter 1 which shows learning activities outdoors.
The process	Narrative	The image is categorized as narrative because depicts an active interaction between the teacher and the students. The teacher is giving direct directives, while students appear to be making observations using magnifying glass. This narrative process reflects the teacher's action that students respond to as part of the learning activity.
Participant	Human	There are two participants Main in picture. The first participant is a woman hijab who wearing work clothes, identified as a teacher. The second participant was a male student with short hair and wearing a school uniform. The teacher was



		seen giving instructions, while the student focused on making observation. The position of participant supports theme learning, i.e. interactive learning activities.
Situation (circumstance)	Environment Outdoors	Interaction takes place in outdoor environments, such as rice fields and mountains. This atmosphere reflects relaxed but serious learning. Environmental elements such as trees, grass and mountain backdrops reflect the local educational context that is closely related to the values of cultural wisdom.
<b>Relationship between Image and Text (Chapelle, 2016)</b>		
Category	Theme building	Images play a role in building the meaning of the theme in the content of the book. Visual elements, such as observation with a magnifying glass, represent direct relevance to the material in this chapter, namely "observation report text." The placement of the image at the beginning of the chapter reinforces the direction of the learning theme.



### The first page of Chapter 2 in the Indonesian Language Textbook for Grade X SMA

Aspect Analysis	Category	Explanation
<b>Meaning of Representation (Kress &amp; Van Leeuwen, 2006)</b>		
Image section	3	Figure 3 is the first page in chapter 2 which shows learning activities in indoors.
Process	Conceptual	The participant is seen in a static position, smiling while pointing to a collection of visual elements on the table. The visual elements in the air depict abstract ideas relevant to the creative thinking process. In addition, there is no direct interaction that depicting movement or specific activities.
Participants	Student and book	The participant in image 3 is a male student in school uniform, sitting in front of a study desk. The stacks of books and visual elements in the air show symbols of ideas that support learning and critical thinking.
Circumstance	Environment at in the room	Image shows benches and chairs in a study room. Elements such as neutral-colored walls and books on the table create an atmosphere that supports learning activities.
<b>Relationship between Image and Text (Chapelle, 2016)</b>		
Category	Theme building	Image contribute to building meaning in content of the book. Visual elements abstract such as symbols humor that float on air are relevant to the material topic "expressing criticism through humor." This image effectively supports the learning theme by illustrating the importance of creativity and critical thinking. critical thinking in delivering criticism.



The first page of Chapter 4 in the Indonesian Language Textbook for Grade X SMA

Aspect Analysis	Category	Explanation
<b>Meaning of Representation (Kress &amp; Van Leeuwen, 2006)</b>		
Image section	4	Image on the page of Chapter IV, "Learning Becoming Master Negotiator".
Process	Narrative	The image is narrative because shows active interaction between participants, i.e. discussion negotiation within the group.
Participants	Human	There are four participants, students who are interacting. Two students appear to be talking, while the other two are listening with serious expressions, showing serious, showing collaboration in the negotiation.

Circumstance	Environment at in the room	Interaction takes place in the classroom, visible from tables, chairs, and the blackboard in the background. The window light also gives the impression of a conducive discussion atmosphere conducive.
<b>Relationship between Image and Text (Chapelle, 2016)</b>		
Category	Theme building	The image supports the theme of the material "Learning to Become a Negotiator master". The negotiation activity depicted relevant with objectives learning objectives, which is the ability to communicate well in discussion.



#### Buying and selling activity

Aspect Analysis	Category	Explanation
<b>Representation Meaning (Kress &amp; Van Leeuwen, 2006)</b>		
Drawing part	5	Image shows transaction activity in a marketplace between a buyer and a seller.

The process	Narrative	The image is categorized as narrative because it shows There is direct interaction in the form of activity seller handing goods to the buyer, with clear hand gestures describing the transaction.
Participants	Human	The first participant was a male shopper in casual clothes, carrying a backpack, and wearing a mask. The second participant was a female seller wearing hijab.
Situation (circumstance)	Traditional market	The first participant is a male buyer in casual clothes, carrying a backpack, and wearing a mask. The second participant is a female seller wearing hijab.
<b>Relationship between Image and Text (Chapelle, 2016)</b>		
Category	Task essential	Image support the understanding of material relevant to the concept of buying and selling buying and selling, as well as clarifying social interactions in economic activities. Economic activities economic activities in everyday society.



The first page of Chapter 5 in the Indonesian Language Textbook Class X SMA

Aspect Analysis	Category	Explanation
<b>Meaning of Representation (Kress &amp; Van Leeuwen, 2006)</b>		
Part of the image	6	Image shows a school girl reading a book with visuals of inspirational figures that seem like to emerge from her imagination.
Process	Conceptual	The image belongs to the conceptual category because it shows the symbolic relationship between the activity of reading and the appearance of inspirational figures as as representati ons abstract ideas.

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Participant	Human and symbolic Elements	The main participant is a female student reading a book, surrounded by images of inspiring with distinctive outfits, such as warriors and intellectuals, who represent the idea of inspiration.
circumstance	Learning environment	The environment the learning environment is depicted with a study desk, books, and a simple background, emphasizing the learning atmosphere and reflection in-depth.
<b>Relationship between Image and Text (Chapelle, 2016)</b>		
Category	Theme building	Images help build the theme of the book's content, which is about exemplary inspirational figures. Visual elements reinforce the message that reading a character's biography can provide provide inspiration and lessons.



**Figure 7: Speaking activity using a microphone**

Aspect Analysis	Category	Explanation
<b>Meaning of Representation (Kress &amp; Van Leeuwen, 2006)</b>		
Image part	7	Image shows a person with the main focus on the subject who is speaking into a microphone.
Process	Narrative	The activity of reading or speaking into a microphone shows the a narrative action process.
Participants	Human	The main subject is a human being who is the main focus in the context of activities formal activity.
Situation (circumstance)	Environment outdoors	Background with decorations event show that activities taking place in a formal public area.
<b>Relationship between Image and Text (Chapelle, 2016)</b>		
Category	Generally orienting	The background text provides the general context of the event, supporting the the main message of the image.

The results of the image analysis in the revised edition of Indonesian Language Textbook Class X SMA show a clear tendency towards the use of images as a medium that not only describes information visually, but also builds deep meaning related to the learning context. The images tend to present human interactions, both between learners, teachers, and between individuals in a social context. The images are presented in various settings, such as indoors and outdoors. In addition, through themes that focus on learning activities, creativity, communication, and strengthening cultural and social values.

The tendency of visual representations found in textbooks shows four main patterns. First, collaborative interaction and active learning, which is shown through images that represent interactions between students in collaborative learning activities, such as in collaborative learning activities, such as discussion, observation or negotiation. The pictures reinforce the message of the importance of active and participatory learning. Secondly, abstract concepts and symbolism, which are manifested through symbolic visual elements, such as ideas visualized as if appearing in the air or



inspirational figures present in the imagination. These elements depict abstract concepts that are creative, inspiring and stimulate critical thinking. Third, social and cultural contextualization, which can be seen in the images that reflect social and cultural identity through visual elements such as learners' clothing that confirms a certain cultural background, as well as depiction of the environmental atmosphere that supports locality-based learning. Fourth, linkage to text material, which can be seen in the images designed to support the understanding of themes and material in a particular chapter through the presentation of relevant real situations, as well as introducing symbols that lead to the concepts described in the text.

Based on the analysis of visual theory from Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), it is stated that images not only present the physical world, but also the social, cultural, and symbolic world. In the revised edition of the Indonesian language textbook for class X SMA, it is found that images act as a medium of communication that conveys meaning through various visual elements both narratively and conceptually. Image representation theory also shows that images are often used to represent social identity and cultural context. Visual elements such as learners' clothing (headscarves, uniforms, haircuts) and settings (rice fields, mountains, and markets) build visual representations that are closely related to local social and cultural contexts.

Multimodal *discourse analysis* theory that examines the relationship between images and text serves to clarify and enrich meaning. Images serve as multimodal elements that help shape understanding of the topic being discussed in the textbook. As shown in the analysis, the images in each chapter support the learning themes presented in the text in accordance with the function of *theme building* or *task essential*.

Overall, the results of this analysis support the theory of visual representation proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen. In addition, the images in the revised edition of Indonesian textbooks for Class X SMA play an important role in supporting students' understanding and involvement in learning, as well as strengthening understanding of social and cultural contexts.

## 2. Gender Representation

In addition to visual meaning, this research also examines gender representation in the revised edition of Indonesian textbooks. Based on the images presented in the revised edition of Indonesian textbooks, it is known that female gender and male gender are manifested in four forms. Four forms

The pictures are 1) single male, 2) single female. 3) groups containing males only, 4). Groups containing both males and females.

- 1) Picture of a single male



(lesson Chapter V page 181)

- 2) Picture of a single female



(Chapter V lesson page 171)

- 3) Picture of a group of men only



(Chapter II lesson page 41)

- 4) Group picture of men and women



(Chapter IV lesson page 125)

Based on the analysis of gender representation of women and men, several important findings were obtained. First, there are 41 images that show individual gender identities. Of these, there are 27 images that represent men (66%), while there are only 14 images that represent women (34%). Secondly, in the category of group pictures, 1 picture was found that consisted entirely of men, while there were no group pictures that consisted only of women (0%). Third, in the category of group images based on gender composition, 1 image (13%) was found that showed a segender group, while images involving different genders were more dominant, as many as 7 images (87%). These findings provide an overview of the dominance of male representation, both individually and in groups, compared to women in the context of the images analyzed.

**Table 2. Gender Representation Distribution by Single and Group Image Categories in the Grade X Indonesian Language Textbook**

Gender	Single image		Group image		
	L	P	L	P	L&P
Total	27	14	1	0	7
Percentage	66%	34%	100%	0	
			13%		87%

Based on the summary of table 1, the results reflect the unequal gender representation patterns in the revised edition of Indonesian language textbooks for class X SMA. Male gender findings tend to be depicted more often and in a more dominant role. This can be compared with the gender theory proposed by Connell (1987) that society often reproduces "*hegemonic masculinity*", which is the strengthening of male dominance in the public sphere, including in learning media.

Learning media. If associated with the Indonesian cultural context, this result is in line with traditional views that often place men as symbols of strength, leadership, and activities in the public sphere. Meanwhile, women are more often associated with domestic or supporting roles for men.

The dominance of male gender roles in these single and group image categories

has the potential to reinforce unequal gender stereotypes among learners. This suggests the need for a more critical evaluation of visual content in Indonesian language textbooks for high school students, to better reflect gender equality that is relevant to the development of culture and education in the modern era. The findings also suggest that the role of teachers is crucial to critically explain to learners the biases that appear in textbooks. Teachers can help students understand that visual representations of images do not always reflect reality, but are often influenced by certain social and cultural biases.

In addition, curriculum developers and teaching materials compilers need to consider the diversity of gender representations in textbooks. The use of more inclusive image illustrations can help reduce gender stereotypes and encourage learners to see the roles of men and women more equally in various aspects of life. Collaborative efforts between curriculum developers, textbook authors and teachers are needed to create teaching materials that not only support academic learning but also teach young people the values of gender equality and social justice.

## CONCLUSIONS

The images in the revised edition of the Indonesian textbook for Class X SMA contain meaning as symbols of power relations and representations of identity that collectively shape social consciousness. In a metaphysical context these images are "texts within texts" which means that the images do not only stand alone, but also form a dialog with the written narrative and the wider cultural context. This visual element raises philosophical questions about the justice of representation, such as whether these images reflect diverse realities, or whether they are an attempt at maintaining the existing social status quo in society. Visual representations can also be seen as manifestations of the physical and the ideological. Physically, images are visible objects, but ideologically, images are reflections of social structures and cultural norms that influence the formation of individual identities.

Visual representations of gender identity can be understood as a reflection of the social, cultural and ideological order rooted in the education system. This visualization is not only a means of communication or teaching, but also a medium for transmitting implicit values that shape learners' perceptions of the environment in which they learn. The imbalance of gender representations, such as male dominance in numbers and roles compared to the female gender reflects social practices that reinforce hegemonic masculinity. This shows that these images not only communicate reality, but also create reality that influences the way learners understand gender and social relations. Therefore, critical and reflective efforts are needed to ensure that images in textbooks reflect equality and respect for diversity as the basis for building a just and harmonious society.

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The author realizes that this writing still has limitations. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are highly expected for the development of further research. Hopefully, the results of this writing can contribute to the development of a more inclusive and representative education, especially in the visual and gender aspects of teaching materials.

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