



A Discourse Viewpoint on Visual Semiotics and Ideological Messages in English Textbooks for Secondary Schools

Dias Andris Susanto¹

¹Universitas PGRI Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

English books have a big influence on students' linguistic ability and way of thinking. Beyond verbal information, visual components included in textbooks act as semiotic tools for expressing political and cultural ideas. This investigation looks into how visual semiotics create and communicate political ideas in Indonesian secondary school English literature. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study examines Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar framework from a discourse-analytic angle. Intententionally chosen were two often used national curriculum textbooks. Backed by contextual interpretation and sociopragmatic reflection, the study examined representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions of photographs. Visual cues sometimes stand for Western cultural hegemony, gender stereotyping, and urban-oriented lifestyles, according to research results. Although some visuals encourage inclusiveness and multiculturalism, others subtly strengthen the unequal power dynamics between regional and world identities. Color, gaze, spatial positioning, and symbol choice reveal subtle ideological leanings favoring globalization and modernity discourses. These graphic decisions imply that English books function not only as linguistic objects but also as ideological tools influencing pupils' views of culture and identity. Pedagogically, knowing semiotic meanings helps instructors to direct their classroom discussions and critical material analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

Particularly in EFL contexts where they control teaching and learning techniques, English books are still the most widely used tools in language classrooms all across the globe. Through written and visual material, textbooks serve as vessels of ideology and culture, conveying particular worldviews as well as help teachers organize sessions. Adding images, color schemes, and spatial layouts doesn't just show things as they are; it creates meanings that go beyond what words can say (Cheng, 2021). English books therefore serve as semiotic landscapes where cultural, societal, and ideological beliefs are buried into teaching materials. Students implicitly pick up ideas of modernity, gender roles, and world citizenship as they engage with these visual materials. Such images are quite powerful in secondary school, where students are still forming their cognitive and cultural identities. Therefore, it is very important to find out the underlying ideas that influence students' cultural attitudes and

*Corresponding author(s):

Email: diasandris@upgris.ac.id (Dias Andris Susanto)
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Universitas PGRI Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

language learning experiences in the wider setting of globalized English education by studying how visual semiotics works in books.

By stressing that meaning is produced via several semiotic modes, including visual, linguistic, and spatial systems, multimodal discourse analysis has changed conventional methods of text interpretation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020). Based on social semiotic theory, visual semiotics offers a structure for interpreting how pictures communicate ideological and cultural messages (Jewitt, 2021). Multimodality in English textbooks shows itself in the way images, typography, and design work together to create messages alongside the words. These multimodal ensembles not only supplement linguistic knowledge but also shape students' perception of personal relationships, social roles, and cultural values. Research have shown that even apparently straightforward textbook graphics like smiling figures, family scenes, or metropolitan environments bear underlying cultural hierarchies. Therefore, visual semiotic analysis offers an important lens for identifying how visual communication functions as a tool of representation, persuasion, and ideological formation in educational context. Such points of view are essential in ELT debate to raise awareness of the cultural and ideological prejudices that support world English teaching resources (Rahimi & Fallahi, 2021).

Approved English textbooks under the Kurikulum 2013 and Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia are instrumental in deciding not just the linguistic material but also the socio-cultural values included in the classroom. For many pupils, these books are their first introduction to world communication standards, cultural allusions, and moral principles linked to English-speaking countries. But studies have found that many of these items reflect Western ideals, urban life, and consumerist images more than they reflect local and indigenous values, which stay hidden. Such control of Western-centric images can help to what Canagarajah (2021) refers to as symbolic imperialism, in which students link English fluency with modernity and social status. This phenomenon begs concerns about identity building because kids might internalize world standards at the expense of regional ethnic identity. Therefore, in order to expose how visual representations reproduce, negotiate, or resist these ideological tensions, a semiotic and discourse-based investigation of Indonesian English textbooks is absolutely vital.

By focusing on visual and multimodal aspects of meaning from linguistic ones, semiotic investigation complements critical discourse analysis (Machin, 2020). The visual grammar model put out by Kress and van Leeuwen (2020) fits within this framework and says that there are three metafunctions representational, interactive, and compositional that show how images send ideological messages. Representational meaning has to do with who and what is shown; interactive meaning has to do with the relationship between the viewer and the participant; and compositional meaning has to do with how visual elements are put together to create emphasis or a sense of importance. These metafunctions, when applied to textbooks, can reveal how visual features favor particular cultural groups, legitimize gender roles, or support particular power dynamics. For instance, the repeated depiction of Western students in modern contexts or leadership positions might imply cultural superiority. Such results support more general discourse studies exposing how text, ideas, and authority interact (van Dijk, 2021). Thus, semiotic discourse analysis bridges visual and linguistic meaning to provide more in-depth understanding of how educational media influence society's ideas.

Recent advances in multimodal literacy underline that students should be able to understand not only written language but also the visual and semiotic signals that shape communication (Serafini, 2022). In EFL settings, where visual portrayal sometimes enhances constrained contact to real English speech, the ideological influence of textbook visuals is especially clear. Images of social harmony, gender equality, or multicultural cooperation can improve students' intercultural awareness when carefully produced (Choi, 2024). But by blindly reproducing worldwide biases including linking English with whiteness or urban luxury, these images run the risk of reinforcing symbolic inequalities. Therefore, knowledge of the semiotic processes of such depictions is essential not just for book review but also for teacher education and curriculum revision. Since visual literacy is becoming more and

more important in contemporary teaching, investigating how ideology works via semiotic clues provides a current contribution to critical ELT study.

From a socio pragmatic point of view, English textbook images could be seen as carrying out pragmatic actions to convey interpersonal meanings, values, and intentions. Depending on their semiotic make-up, visual depictions can convey politeness, power distance, solidarity, or persuasion. For instance, a graphic of a youngster boldly speaking to a foreign audience might index qualities like confidence and international awareness valued in contemporary education (Swarniti et al., 2025). Still, such representations could support certain cultural norms on self-presentation and communication methods. Therefore, sociopragmatic interpretation completes semiotic analysis by exposing how pictures operate as social actions rooted in particular educational philosophies (Leech & McCarthy, 2020). This research offers a multidimensional perspective on how meaning works across visual and verbal forms by combining semiotics and pragmatics, hence exposing the subtle ideological role played by textbook images.

The goal of this research is to find out how visual semiotics in Indonesian secondary school English textbooks build and convey ideological messages. The research explores how graphic components including gaze, color, spatial arrangement, and participant roles help to create representational, interactive, and compositional meanings (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020). It also investigates how these semiotic components capture more general societal values like Westernization, gender equality, and national identity. This study aims to understand the cultural and political consequences of visual decisions by combining social semiotic theory with discourse analysis (Zhang & Xie, 2024). The aim is not only to criticize but also to find out how textbooks transmit cultural messages and influence pupils' perspective of the world. Such a critical attitude fits with worldwide efforts to decolonize ELT resources and foster intercultural understanding (Canagarajah, 2021).

This study is important since it helps to improve English education, semiotic literacy, and curriculum design. Exposing the ideological underpinnings of visual images inspires teachers, legislators, and book writers to be more critical of resources creation. Future textbook updates stressing inclusiveness, cultural balance, and critical awareness should be guided by the results. Encouragement of semiotic and visual literacy among pupils will also help them to more deliberately read educational resources and reject unquestioned ideological influences (Serafini, 2022). Knowing the semiotic and linguistic character of English textbooks helps to produce a more reflective, fair, and culturally responsive ELT approach that supports world educational aims for critical literacy and cross-cultural awareness (UNESCO, 2023; Choi, 2024).

Research Problems: 1) How are ideological messages represented through visual semiotic elements in English textbooks for secondary schools? 2) In what ways do visual and textual discourses in English textbooks interact to reproduce or challenge dominant social ideologies in educational contexts?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Semiotics and Meaning Construction

As the study of signs and meanings, semiotics offers a potent tool for investigating how visual and verbal components collaborate to create meaning in texts targeting learners. In language teaching, semiotics moves beyond symbols and words to consider how visual images, colours, gestures and layouts are meaning-making (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). The sign system between the signified and signifier in textbooks does not only signal pedagogical aim, but also inherent socio-cultural beliefs (Machin, 2020). Visually, gaze, modality and composition take on meaning with regard to power relations and learner positioning in the classrooms through visual grammar. New research demonstrates that textbook images frequently support hegemonic gendered, cultural or linguistic orders

Discourse and Ideological Representation

Discourse analysis is an interpretive method that shows how social power is either reproduced or contested through language practices (Fairclough, 2020). Textbooks used in English Language Teaching (ELT) are associated with institutional discourse wherein the reading and viewing of the suchworldviews are implicitly done (Barkhuizen, 2018). Ideology operates in the background of discourse by determining the contents of what is spoken, what is not spoken, and whose voices are louder. Halliday's systemic-functional linguistics implies that all linguistic choices express ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings which are an indication of the producer's worldview (Eggins, 2021). When working together with semiotics, discourse analysis is able to show that linguistic and visual codes together build ideological narratives (Christie, 2019). For example, textbook dialogues and pictures may present Western modernity as the only one, and this may influence the students' cultural orientation unconsciously. The confluence of semiotic and discourse approaches therefore results in the delivery of a multilayered insight of ideology in the English educational context.

English Textbooks and Ideological Dimensions

English textbooks are cultural artifacts that have a significant influence on the linguistic and sociocultural identities of the students. Besides being pedagogical tools they also represent ideologies and mediate global and local discourses (Gray, 2021). Theorists assert that the design of the textbooks usually mirrors neoliberal, gendered, or Western-centric perspectives, which in turn, affect the learners' self-perception and their perception of others (Apple & Christian-Smith, 2018; Keles & Yazan, 2023). The case in point is the constant portrayal of "native speakers" as the ultimate authorities over the language, which in turn, has a negative effect on the cultural and linguistic interdependency.

In Indonesia, textbooks that have been approved by the Ministry of Education often highlight the moral, nationalistic, and global citizenship values at the same time. The blending of these values, however, might create an ideological conflict between the global standards of English language and the local identities. It is therefore important to examine English textbooks in the light of discourse-semiotic theory to see how the visual and textual components work together to express the ideologies that are not explicitly stated. This analytical viewpoint is aimed at developing more culturally sensitive learning materials by educators and policymakers (Muslim, 2025).

Previous Studies

Discourse-based research in ELT which is increasing in volume, is showing that language, ideology, and semiotic interpretation are all significant factors in meaning construction. Susanto and his team have significantly impacted this area by conducting a number of studies that highlight discourse realization in both spoken and written contexts in English. For example, Zabella, Susanto, and Setyaji (2025) investigated directive speech acts in *Jumanji: The Next Level*, and thereby showed that pragmatic structures are used by cinematic texts in a very subtle way to give out person-to-person power relations.

In a similar vein, Zainudin, Wiyaka, and Susanto (2025) put forth the Core-iFree Model which is a combination of Padlet and deep learning specifically aimed at improving the coherence of students' descriptive writing. Susanto (2025a) looked into journaling as a reflective medium to promote narrative discourse and pointed out that textual decisions are the very embodiment of personal meaning-making. In spoken discourse, Susanto (2025b) scrutinized the appraisal systems with the intention of bringing out the interpersonal meaning that is embedded in the communication happening in the classroom. At the same time, Susanto, Bimo, and Pinandhita (2025) studied the use of discourse strategies in the process of developing speaking competence. All these research works together highlight the complex interrelationship between discourse, meaning, and teaching practice in EFL contexts. Nevertheless, there have been very few studies that considered the visual semiotics in English textbooks as a source of ideological positioning. This study which employs multimodal discourse analysis is thus aimed at filling this research gap.

The latest studies in ELT and discourse research still show that there is a great deal of interest in the way language acts as a medium of ideology and representation. Susanto (2025) pointed out that analysts consider classroom discourse to be both pedagogical and ideological at the same time, where the use of a language by teachers influences the students' views of authority and participation. In terms of loquacity, Alruwani and Susanto (2025) pointed out that the unpunctuated texts of Libyan EFL students not only had problems with coherence but also with their awareness of the syntax of the text and that the skill of discourse goes beyond the aspect of grammar correctness. Samad (2025) proposed a framework based on an action-based approach combined with kinetic involvement that would enhance both fluency and pragmatic awareness thus supporting the notion of the embodied nature of meaning in communication. Maret, Susanto, and Lestari (2025) were also on the same path when they studied Close to You, the song by The Carpenters and revealed that the emotional discourse and interpersonal stance were expressed by the very textual and stylistic features of the work. Alongside these views, Arianto et al. (2025) looked into the interaction of language, gender, and power in the definition of social identities, thus confirming the ideological aspect of linguistic expression. The totality of the studies asserts that the meaning is both created and contested through the use of linguistic and multimodal forms which is a central concept in semiotic analysis of English textbooks.

The latest empirical research has brought to light the changing relationships between English language teaching, digitized media, and communicative competence in both global and local environments. The study of Ardita, Susanto and Sodiq (2025) on the international workplace showed that very perceptions of the employees and unofficial assessments levelled the use of the English language in the workplace and its sociolinguistic implications as belonging to the 'marked' and 'unmarked' categories respectively. In the same year, Budiono, Senowarsito and Susanto presented a case where the striking application helped the students with metacognitive awareness and self-reliance in talking, thus demonstrating that hardly any other mode of learning could be so effective in guiding discourse practices as the visual one. A similar vein of research was followed by Susanto et al. (2024) that opened up discussions around the infrastructural integration of ChatGPT in ELT material development, arguing that digital discourse technologies have a role in moderation of teacher creativity and ideological framing. In an earlier paper coauthored by Wulandari, Susanto, and Hawa (2024), game-based tools such as Bamboozle were reported to have made the vocabulary learning process more dynamic and engaging through semiotic interaction while in another study by Tonapa, Susanto, and Sukmaningrum (2024) the use of visual aids such as flashcards was confirmed to be beneficial for linking of linguistic symbols with concrete meaning which ultimately leads to supporting early language acquisition. All this research work forms a solid basis for the argument that multimodality, semiotic awareness, and discourse context are crucial for the innovations in English language teaching. But, research on the representations constructed through visual and textual semiotics in printed English textbooks has been extremely limited, which is exactly the critical gap this study aims to bridge.

METHODS

Research Design

The research design in this work was a qualitative descriptive study through a semiotic discourse analysis. It was designed to reveal the interaction between the visual and textual modes to bring out ideological meanings in English textbooks (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2021). The qualitative enquiry provides an opportunity to explore the meaning construction as a social, cultural process based on the sign systems (Machin, 2020). Such a course of action corresponds to the idea of discourse as an ideological battleground offered by Fairclough (2020), according to which the linguistic and visual decisions will reflect the latent social values. The study integrated both social semiotics as a method of studying the visual representation and the critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a method of the textual study. These approaches were integrated to allow a holistic understanding of multimodal meanings in learning resources. It was an interpretivist study, focusing on reflexivity and contextual cognition by the researcher (Christie, 2019). Using visual analysis, layout and linguistic framing, the

research design aimed to uncover the presence of ideological positions embedded in the visual grammar of ELT textbooks in Indonesian secondary schools.

Subject and Object of the Study

The texts of the two studies were two national texts of Indonesian English used in secondary schools published by Ministry of Education, when English Rings a Bell (Grade 8) and Think Globally, Act Locally (Grade 9). The books were selected because of their massive use in the 2013 Curriculum (K13) and their incorporation of the themes of global citizenship and moral education. The study object was centered on visual and textual elements as the cultural, gender and ideological elements. The main semiotic information was visual images (photographs, illustrations, layout design) and accompanying textual information (dialogues, reading passages, captions) was discursively analyzed. The thematic relevance, frequency of visual representations, and sociocultural content were used to select each of the chosen units. Such two-sided attention to the subject (educational context and audience) and object (semiotic content) enabled the study to explain how multimodal resources form ideological messages, which are in line or antithetical to national and global educational values (Rahmawati and Wulandari, 2024).

Research Instruments

The primary tool was a semiotic discourse analysis checklist created based on Visual Grammar presented by Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) and modified to an ELT material. The checklist included three meta-functions, including (1) Representational meaning (participants, actions, setting); (2) Interactive meaning (gaze, distance, angle, and engagement); and (3) Compositional meaning (information value, salience, framing). Moreover, textual ideology was analyzed with the help of discourse analysis grid on the model by Fairclough (2020) using the choice of vocabulary, modality, and theme. All the pictures and their texts were coded on the basis of frequency and interpretive significance. To guarantee reliability, the instrument was tested and validated by two expert coders who had ELT and linguistics backgrounds and gave an intercoder agreement of 0.87 based on the Cohen Kappa. The checklist was supplemented with field notes and analytic memos that were used to do the reflexive interpretation. Such instruments combination guaranteed the methodological rigor and triangulation of visual and textual data, which boosted the validity of the study (Tan and Lee, 2023).

Data Collection Procedure

Documents were examined within two months (January -February 2025) and this was the period data were gathered. The individual textbooks were considered one unit at a time in order to find the elements of visuals that were related to the major social themes, including culture, gender, and global identity. The chosen visualtextual pairs were photographed or scanned to be annotated digitally. To systematize data according to semiotic categories, a coding sheet was created; reflective journal entries enabled putting in mind the reflections of the researcher during the interpretation process (Eggins, 2021). It entailed three phases of the triangulation process: (1) two raters were coding independently; (2) peer debriefing sessions took place to clarify interpretive differences; and (3) cross-validation with discourse categories of CDA frameworks. All data were interpreted in the conceptual framework of the entire socio-pedagogical picture of the Indonesian ELT and did not lose their ideological contexts. A responsible approach to handling data and recognition of the copyright holders of textbooks was ensured by seeking ethical clearance with the institutional research committee (Barkhuizen, 2018).

Data Analysis

The analysis of data was carried out in three stages of an interpretative process: description, interpretation, and explanation (Fairclough, 2020). The semiotic checklist that was used to categorize visual elements in the description phase relied on the semiotic representational, interactive, and

compositional meanings (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2021). During the interpretation stage, linguistic and visual signs were examined with respect to one another and identified ideological meaning, such as the domination of the West, the gender stereotype, or the moral standards. Lastly, the explanation stage entailed putting results into perspective in the sociocultural field of Indonesian education and ELT policy (Gray, 2021). The data was coded and segregated into categories using NVivo 14 software to enable the frequency to be tracked of the recurring ideological trends. Triangulation of semiotic, linguistic and contextual dimensions contributed to the validity of analysis. Cross-checking of the interpretations was done with prior research and national curriculum guidelines so that the interpretations were relevant and reliable (Suryani, 2023). Such an analytical treatment allowed the study to unveil the hidden ideological narrations in the multimodal nature of the English textbooks.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Representation of Ideological Messages through Visual Semiotic Elements

The visual semiotic analysis, which was directed by the Visual Grammar Instrument of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), showed that the English textbooks designed to be used in the secondary schools are able to insert ideological meanings hidden within their imagery. The representational meaning revealed that men characters often held active and professional roles (e.g. scientists, leaders, travelers) whereas female characters were shown in passive, domestic, or supportive roles. Such imbalance in role distribution implies that there is an ideology of gender that has existed and still exists, which is that men are in charge and that women are subordinate.

Table 1. *The Visual Grammar Analysis Sheet Based on Three Dimensions: Representational, Interactive, and Compositional Meanings*

Semiotic Feature	Example from Textbook	Observation	Ideological Implication
Participant Role (Representational)	Unit 2: “ <i>My Dream Job</i> ” – image of a male pilot vs. female teacher	Male portrayed as adventurous, professional; female as nurturing	Reinforces gender stereotype—men in public domains, women in domestic roles
Gaze and Angle (Interactive)	Unit 4: “ <i>At the Hospital</i> ” – male doctor looks directly at reader; female nurse looks downward	Frontal gaze creates authority, oblique gaze conveys subordination	Reflects patriarchal ideology
Layout & Information Value (Compositional)	Unit 6: “ <i>Around the World</i> ” – photos of London, New York in top zone; Borobudur in bottom corner	Western imagery dominates “ideal” zone	Constructs Western cultural hierarchy
Color and Salience	Bright colors for Western scenes; muted tones for local contexts	Visual emphasis on modernity = progress	Promotes globalist ideology

The interactive meaning conveyed by gaze and camera angle as well expressed social hierarchy where male figures were mostly frontally gazed, thus generating authority, and their female counterparts were often oblique which conveyed the meaning of politeness and low power distance. In the meantime, compositional meaning (color, salience, information value) put Western or urban cultural subjects on the ideal area of pages, whereas the local or traditional identity was on the real or marginal area. These types of semiotic configurations together amount to creation of a hierarchical ideology which biases global, modern, and masculine views implicitly assigning English proficiency as based on Western superiority and modernity.

Coding frequency indicated that 72% of male figures were positioned as “actor” participants, while 64% of female figures were “reactors.” The recurring salience of Western settings (e.g., Big

Ben, Statue of Liberty) across units revealed a consistent ideological narrative English as a gateway to global modernity. This aligns with Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) *compositional hierarchy*, showing that layout position mirrors social value.

Interaction of Visual and Textual Discourses in Reproducing or Challenging Dominant Ideologies

The discourse-semiotic integration analysis used three-dimensional analysis of Fairclough, and a Visual Verbal Correlation Checklist that was developed to conduct the analysis. The results indicated that written accounts tended to support, and not to question, the ideologies that were enshrined in images. As an example, a conversation about an image of a businessman speaking English focused on accentuating success, cleverness, and international mobility lexical decisions which appeal to the discourse of neoliberalism and globalism (Fairclough, 2013).

In the same way, a description of cultural festivals was used to depict English speaking youth as contemporary and civilized, and non-English speaking locals as being traditional or less developed. Nevertheless, some of the newer textbooks started to break down the prevailing ideologies incorporating images of female students as the leaders of school projects or rural settings depicted as innovative and viable. By such instances, visual and textual effects met each other to provide an inclusive ideology of English as a means of empowerment and not domination. Even these progressive efforts, the most important discourse in the textbooks, however, was tilted toward western-centric images and status oriented English identity which is an indication of some lack of semiotic diversity in multicultural representation in the Indonesian education.

Table 2. The Visual-Verbal Correlation Checklist and Discourse Analysis Coding Frame

Extract	Visual Description	Textual Analysis	Interpretation
“English helps you travel and connect with the world.” (Unit 7)	Image: smiling students holding globe; flags of UK, USA, Australia	Lexical field: <i>connect, world, success, modern</i>	Supports globalist discourse and linguistic imperialism
“Rina presents her eco-project in English.” (Unit 9)	Female student speaking confidently at school stage	Action verb <i>presents</i> , foregrounding female leadership	Challenges gender ideology by depicting empowered female agency
“Let’s respect our diverse cultures.” (Unit 10)	Visuals: students in traditional clothes, smiling together	Multicultural inclusion; balanced layout	Reflects emerging inclusive ideology in recent editions

Of 84 analyzed image–text pairs, 63% showed ideological alignment (reinforcing hierarchy), 22% showed neutral balance, and 15% represented ideological resistance (e.g., gender equity, local empowerment). The lexical analysis identified recurrent collocations like *smart-modern*, *English-success*, and *local-traditional*, reinforcing binary oppositions typical in globalist discourse (Fairclough, 2013). However, recent textbooks (2023–2024) included *critical multimodal texts* promoting inclusivity and sustainability—evidence of gradual ideological shift.

DISCUSSION

Ideological Messages Represented through Visual Semiotic Elements

The results showed that the visual semiotic representations in English textbooks create ideological meanings that are not limited to the superficial pedagogy. Such a gendered semiotic hierarchy in the abundance of male characters in active positions and female characters in supporting roles indicates the idea of representational meaning, proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), in which the role of a participant represents social organization in a general sense. These imagery displays reflect the views of van Dijk (2015) that discursively recreates power relations by normalizing hegemonic

ideologies in this example, patriarchal, and globalist values in the educational image. Also, the compositional prominence of the Western landmarks and urban modernity as ideal areas in page formation underlines what Fairclough (2013) refers to naturalized discourse: ideologies that are seemingly neutral yet justify social inequality.

The thematic color dichotomy between modern-bright and traditional-muted imagery also carries symbolic levels of hierarchies, which tie the mastery of the English language to progress and the local identity to backwardness. Critical findings were also found by Barozzi (2023), in which ELT visuals seem to romanticize Western lifestyles. Therefore, the visuals on the textbooks do not only reflect linguistic knowledge but also pass symbolic power, influencing the identity perception of gender and cultural value of the learners.

Interaction between Visual and Textual Discourses in Reproducing or Challenging Ideologies

The interaction of the visual and textual discourses showed how the multimodal resources combined create ideological unity or sometimes resistance in English textbooks. Machin and Mayr (2012) also state that visuals, as well as texts constitute semiotic ensembles that co-produce meaning. Image-text integrations with an emphasis on success, traveling, and global citizenship in this research found out that there was an intermodal alignment that perpetuates the neoliberal and globalist discourses. This confirms what Fairclough (2013) asserts that educational discourse is involved in the ideological reproduction, instilling values of competition and modernization in the ostensibly neutral discourse.

Nevertheless, the materials created by the women which depict the agency of female and multicultural cooperation are the evidences of the early ideological change. By illustrating a female student as a project leader and positioning her linguistically as a strong, inventive person, the textbook is, according to Luke (2018), a critical counter-discourse textual work to democratize the representation and undermine the conventional hierarchies. Even then, these progressive images are numerically insignificant in comparison to prevailing globalist images. In this way, it can be observed that although the direction of English textbooks is shifting to more inclusive semiotic views, there is still a tendency to use Western-centric status-focused ideological perspectives in these texts, which shows how slowly ELT media in Indonesia diversify their own ideologies.

CONCLUSION

This paper concludes that English secondary school textbooks are not only functional as a teaching aid but also ideological tools that convey social messages using both visual and textual codes. The former result proves that ideological messages are manifested in gendered, cultural, and globalist patterns of semiotic representation. Male characters are often presented as bosses and workers whereas females as mothers or admirers. The domination of Western icons, vivid color palette, city modernity build the implicit message to equate English knowledge with success, modernity and international citizenship. These visual hierarchies are similar to what Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) explain as compositional salience, a pattern of expressing social power using visual organization. The second discovery is that visual and textual discourses engage in a way so as to reproduce or in some cases challenge dominant ideologies. The majority of the verbal texts are advocating the ideological position of the visuals, promoting neoliberal, globalist, and patriarchal ideologies by using such positive terms as smart, modern and successful. Nevertheless, some of them show ideological opposition and present female students as innovators or rural communities as creators. These advanced images are indicators of a new critical consciousness of textbook designers, but in a very narrow sense. In general, the multimodal discourse in the textbooks still perpetuates the Western-centric values but implicitly shifting the view of the students on what English is about prestige and modernity instead of intercultural empathy and equality.

IMPLICATION

This implication concludes that English secondary school textbooks are not only functional as a teaching aid but also ideological tools that convey social messages using both visual and textual codes. The former result proves that ideological messages are manifested in gendered, cultural, and globalist patterns of semiotic representation. Male characters are often presented as bosses and workers whereas females as mothers or admirers. The domination of Western icons, vivid color palette, city modernity builds the implicit message to equate English knowledge with success, modernity and international citizenship. These visual hierarchies are similar to what Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) explain as compositional salience, a pattern of expressing social power using visual organization.

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