Gender Issues in Teacher Training Materials of ELTIS (English Language Training for Islamic Schools) A Study from Indonesia

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Abstract

The paper presents the results of evaluation done by evaluators of the training materials used for English Language Training for Islamic Schools in three provinces in Indonesia: East Java, West Nusa Tenggara and South Sulawesi. The evaluation focusing on gender issues was conducted using five criteria. The results show that the materials have fulfilled the gender criteria. The materials used for higher training level show better scores compared to the materials for the lower level. This might explain that the materials writers have learned from the previous evaluation given by the ELTIS gender adviser.

Key words: gender issues, ELTIS, teacher training, materials.

Gender Issues in Learning Materials

This study focuses on gender issues in training materials. A number of studies have been conducted on gender issues in classroom interactions (see, for example, Kramarae & Treichler, 1990; Miller, 1992; de Klerk & Hunt, 2000). In the teaching learning process in the classroom,

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teaching materials play a vital role. It often determines types of interactions there. However, no research has been done focusing on gender components in training materials.

Kramarae and Treichler (1990) studied what women and men said about their experience in university classrooms. The course they studied was an interdisciplinary postgraduate seminar. One among the many findings of their research showed that, to women's perception, discussion that moved more around intellectual confrontation rather than collaboration was typical of male talk. Besides, women enjoyed "open discussion" (p. 53) and are motivated to "support friends" (p. 54). Weinrich-Haste (in Thomas, 1990) also notes some differences between female-male undergraduate students; women are more democratic, oriented to other people and caring than men. Women emphasize more on community and interpersonal standards, less on institutions and hierarchical association.

In addition, Miller (1992) also found similar tendency in her study on conflict scripts of men and women. Although, she did not find differences in the components of the written scripts by male and female students, she noted that the tendency for outcomes in the women script to be influenced more by promise-breaker's behavior and in the men's scripts more by offended person's behavior. This suggests somewhat greater noted features of mutual altruism and responsibility among women and somewhat greater salience of selfishness among the men.

More specifically, de Klerk and Hunt (2000) studied the effect of the gender of participants on the discourse patterns of university seminars by focusing the research on turn-taking and interruption, in which power differential was examined. This study was done after seeing the fact that the students' attitude and achievement in university were influenced in a great extent by the quality of education they accepted in previous schooling, in which girls are treated differently from boys. Teachers were more likely to provide immediate answer to girls when they could not solve certain problems; instead of encouraging them to try to find the answer themselves (see Sadker and Sadker, 1990; Horgan, 1995).

Feminists often see this practice as disempowering women in the long run. In spite of this, de Klerk and Hunt (2000) found out that female participants dominate the turn and time in the seminar. Toward this phenomenon, they said they could not conclude that the differences come simply from gender. They would rather suggest that this fact occurred because the female students were more confident, as the influence of their perception of group membership in which the number of women was bigger than men and they had known each other, that enabled them to dominate the discussion. Thus, meanings in classroom context are achieved through negotiation with peer as well as the instructor.

Whilst most of the studies in classroom context show that female students prefer to have collaborative styles, no studies have been done on materials. Instructional materials often become the center of instructional processes. Materials may include textbooks or coursebooks,

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video and audio tapes, computer software, and visual aids. Coursebooks often determine the objectives of language learning and also often function as a lesson plan and working agenda for teachers and learners, although the ideal should be the vice versa.

Cunningsworth (1995) argues that textbooks are an effective resource for autonomous learning, an effective resource for presentation material, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain confidence. Coursebooks often influence the selection of the components and methods of learning. They also control the class and the learning processes.

Kitao & Kitao (1997) state that the choice of deductive vs. inductive learning, the role of memorization, the use of creativity and problem solving, production vs. reception, and the order in which materials are presented are all influenced by the materials. Hence, teaching materials play a vital role in any instructional activities (see e.g., Dow, 2004; Jahangard, 2007; Rahimi, 2008; Richards, 2007; Rohmah, 2009; Spratt et al. , 2005).

This study focuses on training materials used by English Language Training for Islamic Schools (ELTIS). This project trains Islamic secondary school English teachers in three provinces in Indonesia: East Java, West Nusa Tenggara and South Sulawesi. As part of activities funded by the Australian government, ELTIS tries to provide materials that are free from gender bias. The present study is aimed at looking at whether the materials have fulfilled the criteria.

Literature Review

This section discusses the concepts related to the criteria used in the evaluation.

Balance in the Illustrations of Females and Males

It refers to the number of pictures, diagrams, drawings, examples and explanations related to males and females. The number of the illustrations of males and females should be about the same. 2:3 is still considered balanced, but 2:6 is not balanced. The consideration of whether the illustrations are equal or not is done by examining the overall file as a unity. When the illustrations of female are lacking in certain sessions but apparent more in other sessions; the file can be considered as giving balanced illustrations of males and females.

Variety of Roles of Females and Males

The materials should provide variety of roles equally between males and females. There are roles that are given for females only, such as, giving birth and breast-feeding, but there are also roles

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that can be performed by both males and females. For the second types, the materials should provide the representation of both sexes equally in domestic and public life.

Provision of Ways to Raise Self-esteem and Aspirations of Males and Females

Self esteem in DeVito's term (1990) is defined as the way in which people see themselves and the value they put on themselves. In Tafarodi et.al (in Roberts, 2007) self-esteem is called self-concept which is defined as a valuative experience of the self. Self concept is related to the thoughts and beliefs people have concerning themselves. Self-esteem can be developed by engaging in self affirmation, seeking out nourishing/motivating people, working on projects that will lead on success, realizing that people do not have to succeed on everything they do, and recognizing that we do not have to be loved by everyone.

Use of Gender Fair Language and Instructions

It means the use of nonsexist language, that is, the use of language to represent with fairness the gender identified in many words. Gender-fair language minimizes unnecessary concern about gender in the subject matter, allowing both the writer and the reader to focus on what people do rather than on which sex they happen to be (Redfern, 2007:1). Redfern (2007:2-4) gives suggestions on how to use gender fair language as follows:

- Write the sentence without pronouns. Try to avoid conditional structures, generally introduced by "if" or "when," which often require the use of pronouns.
- Use gender-specific pronouns only to identify a specific gender or a specific person.
- Use plural nouns and pronouns if they do not change the meaning of the sentence.
- Use a first- or second-person perspective.
- Use a double pronoun, i.e. s/he, he or she, he/she, him and her.
- Use an article instead of a possessive pronoun as a modifier.
- Sparingly use the passive voice.
- Use *human, person, mortal,* and their variations: *humankind, humanity, human beings, human race, and people.*
- Use a more descriptive or inclusive compound word: workmen's = *workers'*; man-sized = *sizable, adult-sized*; chairman, chairwoman = *chair, chairperson, presider, convener*.

Provision of Teaching Models Free from Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotype is labeling and making generalizations of individuals' activities based on their social groups; either ethnicity, nationality or sex (Depdiknas, 2003). The labeling is not always true. In the context of gender stereotype, the difference in sexes influences people to perceive both sexes differently. Men are often seen as strong, powerful, more intelligent, may speak frankly and impolitely, have higher degree and job positions, etc. Unlike men, women are often

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expected to be soft, weak, less intelligent, speak politely, have lower degree and job positions, etc.

Gender stereotype can be grouped into gender characteristics, gender roles, gender values and gender status. Related to **gender characteristics**, feminine characteristics, like soft, polite, beautiful, passive, etc. are often labeled to women. Masculinity is often labeled to men. **Gender roles** refer to roles that are often labeled either sex differently. Women are labeled to domestic activities (cooking, child-caring, house-working, etc.). Men are labeled with public activities. **Gender values** refer to associating either sex with certain colors and belongings. For example, pink is related to women, and blue to men. Toys for boys are different from those of girls. **Gender status** means the position of men and women in families, and other social groups. Gender stereotyping, for example, sees women as the staff and men as the leaders.

Data Collection

The current evaluation to ELTIS training materials was done by a group of gender activists from 3 colleges in Indonesia, that is, IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya (2 people), IAIN Mataram (2 people), and STAIN Watampone (1 person), and ELTIS gender adviser and ELTIS materials adviser. Overall, ther were 7 people involved in the evaluation of the materials focusing on gender issues. Before the evaluation started, the ELTIS gender adviser explained the criteria to the evaluators and discussed them to get the same understanding on the criteria. After that, the evaluators analyzed the files individually using the provided sheets. In filling out the sheets, the evaluators put suitable grades for each criteria ranging from 1-4.

Score 1 means very poor, score 2 is poor, score 3 is good, score 4 is very good. In addition to the scores written on the provided space, the evaluators were provided with spaces to write down their explanation and reason for the scores given. The materials adviser was present there to give her evaluation and explanation when needed by the evaluators.

After the evaluation done by the evaluators had finished, the ELTIS gender adviser then gathered all data and wrote them in the report. In this paper, due to the limited space, only data collected from Communicative English Language Teacher Training (CELTT) level 2 and 4 are presented.

Findings

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Materials for CELTT 2

The following table shows data from evaluators to CELTT 2.

Criteria	Evaluators' Scores				
	Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	No Score
Do the files provide roughly equal numbers of illustrations of females and males?	0%	14%	72%	14%	0%
Do the illustrations show females and males in a variety of roles inside and outside of the home?	0%	28%	72%	0%	0%
Do the files help to raise the self-esteem and aspirations of both males and females?	0%	28%	58%	14%	0%
Do the files use gender fair language and instructions?	0%	14%	58%	28%	0%
Do the files provide models for teaching learning processes in the classroom which are free from gender stereotypes?	0%	14%	44%	28%	14%

Balance in the Illustrations of Females and Males

Most evaluators (72%) say that the balance between males and females illustrations is good and 14% say it is even very good. They say that the file generally provides equal number of illustrations of males and females. The balanced illustrations in this case can be in the form of the use of males' names (Pak Amin, Pak Harits, Pak Sholikhin, Pak Koes, Faisal, Syamsul, Makmun, Rahman), females' names (Bu Sinta, Bu Inayah, Bu Syafiyah, Laila, Yulfia, Siti, Zul), male and female pictures.

However, some illustrations need changes. Some pictures do not represent either sex clearly. It is better to make them clear. For example, pictures in day 1 session 1, page 2 (D1S1P2), and D1S4P2 only consist of sketches not clear whether they are males or females. The evaluator who says that the balance is poor as seen in material on D1S2P6 is dominated by boys, none in the picture is girl. This actually can be rectified by presenting more girls on another page.

Variety of Roles of Females and Males

Similar to the first point, most evaluators (72%) reveal that the variety of males and females inside and outside of home is good. The difference is that, at this point none says that it is very good—instead 28% state that it is poor. It is true that the file presents males and females in

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variety of roles both in domestic and public life. In domestic life, males are shown watching TV, sleeping reading newspaper, playing with a baby, playing guitar, etc.

Similarly, females are portrayed playing a violin, holding a baby, and doing household jobs. Outside of home, males are building a house, driving a car, teaching and distributing letters, while females are shown holding a baby cart, leaving home to work, teaching, and driving a car. Thus, the file presents both sexes in a variety of roles. The evaluators who say that it is poor might have missed some pictures.

Provision of Ways to Raise Self-esteem and Aspirations of Males and Females

28% evaluators view that the provision of ways to raise self-esteem and aspirations of males and females is poor, 58% see it as good and 14% evaluate it as very good. Those who see it as poor because it is shown in the file that a girl leaves her house crying. This might represent the idea that a girl is emotional—which is not good for female students' self esteem. Besides, Suzanne Vega's song 'Tom's Dinner' is not suitable for the context of *madrasah*.

In addition, pictures in D4S1P7 contains 5 pictures of famous people from overseas and 3 local famous people; only three of them are females. To increase self esteem of boys and girls, the pictures should be four Indonesian famous people and four international people; four of them males and four others are females.

Use of Gender Fair Language and Instructions

58% evaluators say that the use of fair language and instructions in the file is good and 28 % say it is very good. In general, the file uses gender fair language. 'He' and 'she' is mostly used only when the referents are clear. However, the word 'policeman' is still used when the reference is both male and female. It would have been better if the word 'police officer' is used.

Provision of Teaching Models Free from Gender Stereotypes

A large number of the evaluators say that the provision of teaching models free from gender stereotypes in the file is good, 28% say it is very good. None says very poor. Stereotype does not exist in this file.

Both males and females are apparent in both public and domestic life with various roles/jobs. Males are shown at home watching TV, sleeping reading newspaper, playing with a baby, playing guitar, etc. Similarly, females are portrayed playing a violin, holding a baby, and doing household jobs in their home. Outside of home, males are building a house, driving a car, teaching and distributing letters, while females are shown holding a baby cart, leaving home to work, teaching, and driving a car.

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The evaluator, who says that the provision of teaching models free from gender stereotypes in the file is poor, does not support her evaluation with evidence. And the file says the other way around.

Materials for CELTT4

Criteria	Evaluators' Scores				
	Very Poor	**Poor**	**Good**	**Very Good**	**No Score**
Do the files provide roughly equal numbers of illustrations of females and males?	0%	0%	43%	57%	0%
Do the illustrations show females and males in a variety of roles inside and outside of the home?	0%	0%	57%	43%	0%
Do the files help to raise the self-esteem and aspirations of both males and females?	0%	14%	43%	43%	0%
Do the files use gender fair language and instructions?	0%	0%	14%	86%	0%
Do the files provide models for teaching learning processes in the classroom which are free from gender stereotypes?	0%	0%	57%	43%	0%

Balance in the Illustrations of Females and Males

More than half of the evaluators (57%) state that the file provides balanced illustrations of males and females and 43% of them see that the balance of the male and female illustrations is good. None says that it is poor or very poor. This file presents fewer pictures/drawings compared to those apparent in CELTT 2 and CLETT3 modules. However, the illustrations depict males and females in an equal way.

This can be seen from the names mentioned and the pictures shown. For male names, it is mentioned, for example, 'Tom' (D1S4), Alfred Hitchock, Quentin Tarantino, Francis Ford Coppola, Rupert Grint, Dennis Bergkamp (D2S1), Allan, Bill, Rolf, Kit, Tony (D5S2). For female names, the file uses 'Kate' (D1S2), Patricia, Sofia Coppola, Winona Ryder(D2S1), Maria (D3S1), Dian Apsari (D3S1), Barbara, Elli, Laura, Silvana (D5S2). The number of male and female pictures/drawings is almost equal (15:13).

Variety of Roles of Females and Males

The highest percentage (57%) of the evaluators state that the variety of females' and males' role inside and outside of home is good. A bit lower percentage (43%) of them suggest that the

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variety of roles is very good. Similar to their comment on the illustrations of females and males, none of them state that the variety of roles is poor or very poor.

Males and females are also shown as having activities in public. Males are shown in a variety of public roles such as an actor, a footballer, a police officer, an army, and a computer programmer. In the materials for D2S3, Tanto is told to do activities in public life. Tanto is a computer programmer who writes programmes for travel companies. He likes to go walking. Females are also portrayed in the file doing various public jobs, for example, as an actress, an *anggar* athlete, a lecturer and a teacher. Jo, who is a female teacher, teaches English. She likes surfing at Sanur Beach.

In domestic life, however, only males are shown to enjoy the activities at home. For example, in materials for D2S3, Tanto is described as a computer programmer who likes foods and cooking very much. Females, on the other hand, are not described as doing domestic activities.

This is probably the reason why only 43% of the evaluators state that the portrait of males and females in a variety of roles is 'good,' not 'very good.' To improve the quality of the file in this respect, females need to be depicted as doing or loving domestic activities, too.

Provision of Ways to Raise Self-esteem and Aspirations of Males and Females

The evaluators' opinions in this aspect spread in three categories: poor (14%), good (43%), very good (43%). The evaluator, who says that the file poorly raises the self esteem for both males and females, explains that more males are shown in important position. This, in turn, causes bigger self esteem among males, but not among females. Those, who say that the file raises the students' self esteem well, state that the file is good except the presentation of party as mentioned in D3S4. This kind of party involving a romantic time between a male and a female is not really matched with the practice in *madrasah* and Indonesian teenagers in general.

Those who judge that the file raises the self esteem and aspiration of both male and female students mention an interesting topic, that is, 'Famous Fear and Phobia' (D2S1). This topic mentions that both males and females can be afraid of certain things. Thus, it helps students to feel alright when they are afraid of something. This creates good atmosphere for everybody, which is good and important for learning.

Another material that helps raise the students' self esteem is the role-play as a doctor and a patient (D1S4P1). By playing the role as a doctor which is a prestigious job, the students can feel to be in that position. This might help them build their dream and increase their confidence. In addition to that, the graded speaking and writing activities—from the easy to the more difficult ones—help the students do the activities more successfully. This increases their interests to the lesson and raises their confidence and self esteem.

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Use of Gender Fair Language and Instructions

Most evaluators (86%) state that the file uses gender fair language and instructions. The evaluators do not put a lot of comments on this section. Quite probably most of them do not really feel that they have adequate capabilities to evaluate the English language in relation to gender, because this is beyond their focus so far. Most of them did not have adequate training on gender and language. Yet, they trust the writers. Therefore, they gave score 4 (very good).

Provision of Teaching Models Free from Gender Stereotypes

More than half of the evaluators (57%) say that it is good and 43% of them comment it as 'very good.' The teaching model which incorporates various techniques in teaching and requires the students to be active in the teaching-learning activities generally can free itself from gender biases. However, the biases can still be minimized—which makes more number of evaluators score it as 'good' not 'very good.' The improvement can be in the form of grouping the students. The grouping should be emphasized to contain both sexes in every group. Besides, when nominating students, teacher should be suggested to call both boys and girls.

Conclusion

By looking at the tables summarizing the scores of the evaluators to ELTIS training materials, it can be seen that the evaluators agreed that the ELTIS training materials have fulfilled the gender criteria. However, the materials in CELTT 4 are scored better than the materials in CELTT 2. The highest percentages of aspects in the scores of CELTT2 materials are 3 (good). Unlike CELTT2, CELTT 4 materials have 3 aspects that most evaluators scored 4 (very good). The results are not surprising because the materials advisers had learnt from the previous materials evaluations focusing on gender issues where suggestions were put forth to improve the materials.

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