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GENDER REPRESENTATION IN *PERPUSTAKAAN INTAN*: WHEN MOTHER IS GAINING ATTENTION, IS FATHER LOSING POWER?

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Abstract: There is little research on gender-related children's picture books in Indonesia. In this article, we discuss the disclosure of gender representation in a picture book entitled *Perpustakaan Intan*. The high number appearances of women, the actions pinned on women, and the clothes displayed in both text and images are materials for visualizing women and men. Previous studies have revealed that men dominate the number of appearances in books. However, this book displays women more often than men. On the one hand, this raises the question of whether this means women are in power, and on the other hand, men are portrayed as powerless. Utilizing the multimodality approach, the results show that although women appear more in the narrative, women are still represented as less powerful.

Keywords: *children's picture books, gender representation, multimodality, power, social semiotics*

INTRODUCTION

Picture books apparently make use of multiple semiotic resources (Eisenmann & Summer, 2020; Sunderland & Mcglashan, 2013). Most of their pages are colorful and mostly covered by images. Recently, picture books have been produced abundantly worldwide. In Indonesia, years earlier, picture books were dominantly for adults. We find no recorded data found on when Indonesian picture books started to fill the shelves of both bookshops and libraries nationwide. Indonesian children picture books presumably have just been widely produced in the last two decades. Long before, imported children picture books, mainly are from Disney, and colorful image-containing magazines were more dominant. Among hundreds of picture books produced recently, as we checked the total number of them in provincial central library of East Java in 2019 randomly, only few of them are about women and education. It approximately is of 7.5% out of 500 picture books' titles found in the East Java provincial library. The notion of education is seen through two descriptors: women (girls) and books. One book that finally suits to these criteria and allegedly is conceiving gender awareness is *Perpustakaan Intan* (Intan's Library).

Perpustakaan Intan is an Indonesian children's book written by Edy Mulyono, M. Ag., under the production of Diva Press in 2009. This children's book comprises 33 pages with a single-page illustration format, excluding half-title, title page, and preface. The book overall has 38 pages. There are 4 (four) characters in the book, i.e., Intan (the name of the little girl as the main character), Intan's mother (a woman), Intan's father (a man), and Intan's grandfather (a man). Thus, there are two women and two men described in the book. In the story, Intan has a library inherited from her mother, who is fond of books and inherits this hobby and interest. Intan's mother's hobby of book collecting is inherited from her grandfather. In this way, Intan's mother started to love books and collected more books since then. Due to the increasing number of books, a private library became a necessity, and this library is then given to Intan. The two main characters, Intan and her mother, appear more than the men character: Intan's father and grandfather. Their involvement in running the library which is a representation of education – a public area where characters involved are supposed to hold 'power' in society, left a question: Among those 16 single pages of the content, there are only 2 displaying the men in the family. Does this indicate women are more powerful than men? *Perpustakaan Intan* is one

chosen among hundreds of picture books Indonesian writers produced, due to some considerations: (1) It exposes females and their knowledge indicated by the juxtaposition of images of women and books; and (2) the number of the appearance of women is more than that of men.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social Semiotics

Social semiotics researchers must conduct thorough research on modes, see them as a distinctive entity, and see the potentials of other modes involved. Modes are both taking forms and meanings used by users as a means of communication (Bezemer & Kress, 2014; Kress, 2010). (Kress, 2010) explains further that modes are ones that should fulfill two criteria: first, modes should be one conceiving the same social representation of society. Thus, this mode should be regularly used and has shared meaning potentials. Inspired by Halliday, Kress adopts three metafunctions, to decipher its meanings. Therefore, the analysis of modes covers modes' utility in encoding and decoding activity in interpersonal communication. In sum, modes have meanings, and this meaning can exist through the forms it takes, the interplay between the modes, as modes cannot be treated as discrete texts (Bezemer & Kress, 2014; Kress, 2010). These modes have affordances, that is, the logic behind the modes, or the potentials and or limitations (Kress, 2010). The latter is used as a tool to see the meaning potentials behind the selected texts in the picture book.

Gender and the Related Researches

Researches on children's picture books are abundant (see Dale et al., 2016; Dallacqua, 2019; DeWitt et al., 2013; Filipović, 2018). However, they came to the surface after the 1970s (see Davis, 1984; Weitzman, 1972) due to the trend before the 1970s. Many types of research on picture books were monomodal - using only one mode-communication on writing (Bezemer & Kress, 2014; Kress, 2010). At the same time, gender awareness also grew after the 1970s, resulting in gender-related research growth (Lazar, 2014; Tepper & Cassidy, 1999; Turner-Bowker, 1996). Research on a children's picture book was also conducted by Guijarro and Sanz (in Ventola & Guijarro, 2009). They scrutinized the interplay between the images and verbal texts using Halliday's

Functional Linguistics. Clark and Fink (2004) also discussed some multicultural feminists on issues of oppressions in children's picture books around the globe.

Researches on gender in Indonesia are many, but only a few types of research gender in children's picture books. It was reported that most of the studies on similar topics lie in textbooks and some on folktales. Nasution (2018) investigates textbooks of Islamic civilization history for elementary school-aged children, and the result showed a gender bias in the books, either in topics discussed, pictures, characters, or subject materials. Irawati and Untari (2017) report a book containing 40 stories of Indonesian folktales conceiving gender bias. The study proved that only 30% of the stories are bias-free. Most research on Indonesian textbooks and other books for children reported gender bias. As children's books in Indonesia written by and read by Indonesians are not that many, few types of research on picture books were reported. In addition, some Indonesian children's picture books where women and girls dominate the stories generate a perspective that this gender-related topic was compelled by the Indonesian's commitment toward gender equality. This equality issue has been stipulated in the second amendment of the Indonesian Constitution of 1945. Gender might be represented in many forms, either obvious or subtle representation (Murachver & Janssen, 2007). It is depicted through the attire, the embedded activities, the role selection, even the books and news articles coming with the men or women (Murachver & Janssen, 2007). Concerning these, Ariyanto (2018), Key in Turner-Bowker (1996) Lee (2019), and Lee and Mahmoudi-Gahrouei (2020) argue that males are mostly described as the dominant, active characters, compared to passive females, ones with peripheral roles. Dale et al. (2016) also showcased that, in 58 princess picture books, gender stereotypes are present in the books—the female characters (princesses) were more likely to be nurturing, in distress, naïve, and homemakers than male characters (the princes).

The notion of gender equality lies in an idea when women are no longer working for domestic (in-house) jobs, relocating them to a non-subordinate position, unlike they used to be. They should work in public, not private areas as they used to be, as men used to dominate 'public' spaces. Other linguistic or non-linguistic modes are directed to this idea, on how women, in particular, are portrayed side by side to their counterpart, men. This idea becomes the core where the picture to reveal the meaning through used modes departs.

METHOD

This writing implements a qualitative method due to the use of text and images and one single idea as the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This qualitative method is suitable to use since all the data garnered are in the form of words, phrases, sentences and pictures, not in the form of numbers. The data source is a picture book entitled *Perpustakaan Intan* (trans: Intan's Library), comprising 16-single page illustrations including its narrations. Both the texts and images where gender issues are showcased either implicitly and explicitly or linguistically and visually used as the data. The approach we use is social semiotics, as Halliday in Machin and Mayr (2012) state, "Theory of Social Semiotics explains that words mean not only on their own but as part of a network meaning". Hence, to dismantle how the power of women is described in this picture book is none other than seeing how the women's counterparts that are men are juxtaposed with them. In this, we see Intan (the little girl's name) and her mother (no name addressed); there are two men in the story: Intan's grandfather and her father are told about, in the way of the attire they wore, the books they read, the roles assigned, the physical description, and the selections of activities of each. These are then addressed as modes (multimodal texts).

Multimodality is not an approach, not a particular field (Bezemer & Abdullahi, 2018; Bezemer & Kress, 2010; Kress, 2010). It helps us what forms of modes are used in the text. Thus, it is mainly concerned with the object to scrutinize; hence it does not provide any specific way to research it. It also does not provide how to examine something, yet it solely talks about the multimodal features. It is social semiotics (Kress, 2010) that helps reveal what and which meaning behind all texts yielded, including the critical notion that may come up along with modes exposed.

Data Collection

Based on the method, a formula to collect and interpret the data this research is done. First, only modes of colors, processes, and images, presumably conceiving gender power and representation are selected. Second, some tools working on images proposed by systemic functional for the linguistic texts are used to discover the meaning potentials. To interpret the data, the meanings revealed along with the analyzed texts are then appraised using the concept of gender power and representation. Thus, the data collection

procedure lies on purpose, enabling us to find the underlying issue (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Social Representation of the Women in the Book

Intan is described as a little girl, and she is the center of the story. The story focuses on Intan and her private library, handed down by her mother. Her hobby of book collecting and reading is also inherited from her mother. Intan and her mother dominate the storyline. Among the 16 pages mentioned earlier, 14 of them are where either Intan or her mother is one after another told and where both appear on one single page.

Intan and her mother appear on the left-hand side of the page seven times. It means that they have functioned as one presumably known by readers. It also implies that it is essential as it serves as the point of departure (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006) or given information (Chandler, 2017; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2021). Intan and her mother, respectively 3 and 5 times, are put on the right. This means that when the characters' images are placed on the right of the page, they are given the priority of the new information or one not yet known by the reader hence deserves his or her attention (Chandler, 2002; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2021). And in one page, Intan is placed in the center, as this becomes the prominent focus of attention. According to Bezemer and Mavers (2011), what is highlighted or salience is part of the readership, involving the relationship with the readers of the books. In this, the writer of the book intends to engage Intan and her mother with readers.

Table 1. Representation of activities embedded to Intan

Participant	Bahasa Indonesia	Translated into English
Intan	<i>punya perpustakaan</i>	has a library
	<i>Diajak</i>	is invited
	<i>Dibelian</i>	is bought
	<i>pegang buku</i>	holds books
	<i>Melihat</i>	sees
	<i>Membaca</i>	reads

Source: Mulyono, 2009

From Table 1, processes taken are mostly mental processes, in that one of them is perceptive ('sees') mental one and the other is 'has'. The material process is assigned to Intan. Yet, she acts as the goal and sometimes as a recipient. There are some material

processes, yet the processes are something to do with her hobby. This portrayal signifies that the activities embedded in Intan are hobby-related activity.

Her mother is showcased one close to Intan. Intan is a child, and as a child, she spends most of her time with her mother. In this way, we may assume that Intan's mother's activities are more or less similar to those of Intan. The following is the details of how Intan's mother's profile is depicted:

Table 2. Representation of activities embedded to Intan's Mother

	<i>Bahasa Indonesia</i>	Translated into ...
Intan's mother	<i>gemar membaca</i>	The hobby is reading books
	<i>suka membaca</i>	likes reading
	<i>membaca</i>	reads
	<i>tidak bosan melihat</i>	is not bored to see
	<i>masih suka membaca</i>	still likes to read
	<i>membeli</i>	buys
	<i>membuka taman (bacaan)</i>	opens library
	<i>cinta anak-anak</i>	loves children
	<i>suka bermain</i>	likes playing
	<i>suka juga mengajari</i>	likes to train
	<i>akan berusaha</i>	will try to ...
	<i>membendel beberapa majalah</i>	binds some magazines
	<i>membeli susu</i>	buys boxes of milk
	<i>suka sekali</i>	likes
	<i>memberikan</i>	gives
<i>bekerja</i>	works	

Source: Mulyono (2009)

The verbs mentioned above (processes) done by Intan and her mother are translated literally into English. The Indonesian text is displayed to get the sense of their Bahasa Indonesia's expressions. Those verbs, suffice it to say, are assigned to actions performed by Intan and her mother. As the topic is around book reading and collecting and the library where they conduct and share this hobby, their activities are supposed to be of such. The rest are likely to be emotive mental processes, such as 'like'; 'loves', which inflicts a presupposition that females are less likely powerful than those described with material processes. The only word we discerned to have the quality of power is '*bekerja*' (work). This lexis sounds powerful. Indeed, however, the image attuned to is unsatisfactorily opposed to what the wording described (in figure 1). The word 'work' in '*jika Ibu Intan lagi bekerja, ...*' (when her mother is working,..) is scantily expressed in the picture. In this, instead of displaying a working woman in an office or showing she is at work, Intan's mother is described as one holding a heating food, she would serve it to

Intan, as shown in figure 1. This food preparation is an indoor activity. The activity assigned to her mother is like what traditionally women are portrayed, responsible for taking care of their family members. Some current researches found that females are projected to be caregivers (Ariyanto, 2018; Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, 2020). Material processes, indeed, are given to Intan's mother. However, the processes are *membendel* (binds); *membeli* (buys), which are still closely related to the hobby and are not to be intended to earn money. These are concerning indoor activity, meaning that such activities are not profitable household jobs. This is stereotypically associated with women.



Figure 1. Intan's mother 'is working'?
Source: Mulyono, 2009:30-31

In sum, this picture book hesitantly depicts the female characters' power. Intan and her mother are 'powerful' in preserving the hobby and working for indoor activity, such as getting a hobby of book reading and collecting, running a private library like Intan and her mother shared, and preparing food as her mother does. However, the job her mother is described in the narration is not accentuated in the visual element. Looking at the visible job, readers might mistakenly perceive it as domestic work. The portrayal due to the narration is not vividly in sync with the pictorial representation. Figure 1 showcases a double burden of a woman, working as a career woman and serving the family at the same time. These findings align with what Keles et al. (2021) reported from their research that women are mostly characterized with nurturing roles while men are portrayed as relaxing or playing with their children. When they have a profession, men's professional representation focuses solely on their professional career, whereas women are represented regarding their domestic and caregiving roles.

Social Representation of the Men in the Book

The two only men in the book are placed on the right, emphasizing that this right of the center is new information, to gain the readers' attention. Thus, it is seemingly important or prominent. The picture below tells readers that the man, who is none other than Intan's grandfather or her mother's father, standing next to young Intan's mother - when she was a child or is at the same age as Intan's. Holding piles of books with such neatly looking attire, this good-looking middle-aged man with a thin mustache and neat hairstyle is likely assumed as an educated white-collar worker who is supposed to work as a lecturer or someone who works in education. He is apparently the breadwinner of the family. He appears to be one powerful in the family who imbued his experience or aspiration to his young child, that is Intan's mother. Because of him, Intan's mother started to love books. Likewise, the narration subtly implies the man's power, as it is written that "...*majalah yang dibawa ayahnya dari kantor*" (...magazines her father brought from his office). Thus, her father (Intan's grandfather) is assumed to be a worker, a breadwinner, who holds the 'power' to take magazines from his office and shares his aspiration with Intan's mother. In other words, Intan's mother's hobby of reading and collecting books is inspired by Intan's grandfather.

Formerly, mostly Indonesians think that, in a nuclear family, a father is the only source of the family's income. Only fathers work and earn money and while mothers are at home to serve domestic works. Although Intan's father is not frequently shown or opaquely involved in the family, it is quite obvious that her father holds an essential role in the family. His contribution to the existence of Intan's private library and the book collecting is clearly narrated.

Image and Social Representation

Table 3. Representation of Attires Embedded to All Characters

Modes	Attire Designing
(1) Intan	An ordinary little girl, with hairband on her head, a quite well neat girl
(2) Intan's mother	A well-fashioned woman: (1) a skirt; (2) not casual, more formal outfit; (3) neatly cut (bob) hair
(3) Intan's father	A casual man
(4) Intan's grandfather	A man with mustache, with a suit and a tie
(5) Other (Supporting characters)	Children, mostly women



Figure 2. The Only Appearance of Intan's Grandfather.

Source: Mulyono, 2009: 6 – 7

Intan's grandfather is one generating the idea of the book collecting. From his body posture, from his outfit, his image overall as seen in the book, we may him as a worker, a successful worker who could afford to buy Intan's mother some books. Books are exactly non-daily needs, rare stuff to buy by Indonesian families in the past. In this, it is assumed that only families with a higher standard of living in terms of education level and economy could buy the books.

Characters Imaging and Attire designing are representing works and social class they have. This book implies a changing shared knowledge we had. A long time ago, we knew only men worked as the breadwinner while women did domestic work. Intan's grandfather is one of the examples. He is the image of the past. The picture of Intan's grandfather portrays that he is someone from an upper-middle-class society, a white-collar worker, which means he is economically well established. Unlike Intan's grandfather, Intan's father is symbolized as one wearing casual dress, a typical young, easygoing man whose job is not clearly defined and or not that clear as that of her grandfather. Her mother is described as a woman who seems to have power. Her social level is determined by her attire, wearing a blue dress and elegant one showing a career woman. The blue dress, instead of pink, is really good selection to show more power and stability (Chandler, 2017). Her grandfather, in addition, is also given blue color on his shirt.



Figure 3. The Only Appearance of Intan's Father.

Source: Mulyono, 2009: 34-35

The third picture places the man, Intan's father, for the first and last appearance of him in the book. Surprisingly, there is not sufficient information about what he does and how he treats his family. The addressing *Bapak dan Ibu* (father and mother), as mentioned in the book, is meant to summon all fathers and mothers commonly. The quotation "*ajak dong bapak dan ibu ke toko buku...*" (Ask your father and mother to go to a book store...) is what is so-called functionalization. The writer addresses the function not as a noun (who they are), and this highlights only the roles (Machin and Mayr, 2012:81). Given this, it is implied that the fathers have their role in the family, due to the reality that fathers have still got the power to lead, to protect, the family.

The picture also shows how Intan's mother tilted her head to her husband (Intan's father). What is implied in the depiction is that she leans over her husband, meaning that her husband is described as one powerful. Even though his look does not represent his work, Intan's father still looks powerful with that comfy, laid-back appearance and height. Goffman (1979:28) explicated that the male's usual superiority of status over the female will be expressible in his greater girth and height. In addition, it aligns with the previous researches, from the body posture, a man is still – even vaguely- described as the protector, implying a reality that men are, however, still more powerful (Aley & Hahn, 2020; Ramdhan et al., 2021).

As mentioned previously that some researchers showcased that domestic works are attributed to women, while non-domestic roles are assigned to men (Ariyanto, 2018; Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, 2020). Van Dijk (2009) defines places as public and private places, as well as domestic and non-domestic places. And, the library in this context

represents both the private and public domains. A personal library is still in a domestic area, and it might be a public domain as long as the owner opens it to the public. In the Indonesian context, private libraries that are open to the public are usually non-profit. Intan's mother works in the library at home in the investigated picture book, which means she does not generate the family's economic resources. In this case, she is considered as someone who is not financially independent.

Social Context, Power and Gender, and Multimodality

This children's book entitled *Perpustakaan Intan* was written by Mulyono (2009). He has an Islamic education background and is a writer as well as the chief of a book publisher, namely Diva Press. Studies on gender have been evolved recently in Islamic education schools, like IAIN or STAIN (State Institute for Islamic Studies). This policy was enforced as in 1995, Indonesia agreed on the UN agreement on gender equality towards all, and other similar agreements and treaties came after. Thus, the gender-related topic is widespread, not only in the discussion forum, lectures but in media as well, including picture books.

Picture books are one of those mass media spread in the society and are ones where power is enacted; thus, it is opaque (Fairclough, 1989). Fairclough further explained that media operate as a means to express and reproduce the power of the dominant class and bloc (1989). The enactment of gender issues has a close relation to this recent change happening. Bezemer and Kress (2010) once stated that the text which involves modes is tightly connected to profound changes in the social world. Indeed text is not independent of the social world. Accordingly, the policy the government has set on gender issues resulting in the enactment of the idea within texts for the public.

Power is described as the asymmetrical relationship in the social-cultural context (Fowler, 1991). Thus, to decipher whether power is at issue, we need to see the modes in use due to their connection to meanings and context. One way to recognize the gender issue and power revelation is through transitivity as part of the ideational function, which is a fundamental and powerful semantic concept of Halliday. Fowler argues that a transitivity is an essential tool in the analysis of representation (1991:70). To discover the meaning in its visual cues are through vertical and horizontal dimensions and several linguistic forms used, such as addressing, imperative, polite forms, reciprocity, and

involvement – detachment (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Van Leeuwen, 2008). These multiple modes work hand in hand to construct an intended meaning (Kress, 2010); the combination of words and pictures offers more stimulation and understanding (Morgan, 2009).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Either with the mayor or the minor appearance in the book, it is still insufficient to say either gender is powerless or powerful unless we compare one after another between these two genders. Reading the obvious and subtle elements of the power and representation embedded in the women and men in the picture book, we conclude that the power of women in the book - either Intan or her mother is hesitantly accentuated. The wordings seem not to be the ones prominent, as participants involved and activities assigned are not those gender-equality conceiving materials. Activities embedded to both Intan and her mother as the main female characters are in between: indoor and outdoor activities. Moreover, the processes or activities they do are more emotive mental processes. Mental processes imply less power assigned to the represented (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Even though, some material processes are given to the female characters, these processes are hobby-related. This means that they are non-profitable, which strengthens a perspective that they are not ‘powerful’ enough. In addition, we noticed that the library might sound public, yet it started to be private, turning out to be a public library. Thus the nuance of this library is still in between: either private or public. Other modes indicate that women here are portrayed as those not that powerful, as it is expected to be. First is a domestic (in-house) job. The book seems reluctant to tell readers what Intan’s mother does. The written form says ‘she works,’ yet not concomitant with what is written, the visual depicts something else. In the written text, it is said that “...Intan’s mother works”, but visually the image shows she prepares food for Intan. In addition, more mental processes are imposed on either Intan or her mother. Mental processes are less likely to indicate power compared to the material. Even though there are some material processes found, these have something to do with non-profit activities, like buying books for their library’s book collection and reading books. Similarly, these processes may conceive another power issue, as argued by Tanenbaum and Peterson in Tepper and Cassidy (1999) that the male characters demonstrated more justice morality

while female characters demonstrated more care morality. In line with this, Intan's mother is depicted as one to educate and care about Intan, she raises her to love books and to run her private library. These activities conceive domestic work.

On the contrary, the men – either the grandfather or the father – signify powerful parties. Obviously, we see that the grandfather is visually a breadwinner through his attire and his contribution in helping Intan's mother to fund or set up the library. Intan's father, even though, is not portrayed as the breadwinner; his 'detachment' and his body posture imply power (Goffman, 1979; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

In short, both the number of appearances and the position, in terms of the image composition where the characters are placed, do not significantly contribute to equality in power. A writer, intentionally or not, often puts male and female characters in different modes, thus placing women in a minor position. It is what and how modes of gender and power issues are thoroughly utilized to construct the intended meaning.

Suggestions

This article is flawed, since this focuses on a few modes in relation to the revelation of gender and power issues. Thus, it is pivotal to note that, the interplay between the angle, the composition of the visual grammar in detail, etc. should be accounted for, in researches in the future. Apart from more modes to investigate, we expect there will be more books to research, so that results can be validated accurately.

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