Neo-*Ibuism* in Education: Representation of Femininities in Indonesian EFL Textbooks for Junior High School Students

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Abstract. Textbooks play a crucial role in helping young people learning English as a foreign language (EFL) understand different cultures and societies. This knowledge also encompasses an understanding of attitudes toward gender. This essay examines the concept of femininity in Indonesian EFL textbooks aimed at junior high school students. This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze the textual and visual depictions of femininity in the magazines. This theoretical framework is based on Fairclough's (1995) CDA analysis and is also influenced by the way women and girls are portrayed in family, work, and public contexts. The findings indicate that Indonesian EFL textbooks tend to reinforce traditional gender roles while promoting a discourse of Neo-Motherism. Women are valued for their roles as mothers and caregivers, but they are also capable of working and leading, albeit with limitations. This portrayal may represent limited progress; however, it has the potential to normalize certain challenges, such as gender stereotypes and the gendered division of labor. Therefore, this study recommends a more diverse representation of femininity in Indonesian textbooks to achieve gender equality, both inside and outside the classroom.

Keywords: Femininities, Neo-Ibuism, Indonesian EFL Textbooks, Junior High School Students. CDA

Introduction

This article examines the representation of femininities in visual and non-visual representations in an EFL textbook used for junior high school students in Indonesia. This study aims to determine and analyze how gender is represented in English textbooks used by junior high school students in Indonesia. This research critically analyzes gender representation in two popular English textbooks in Indonesia: English for Nusantara (EFN) by Damayanti et al. (2022) and Bright an English (BAE) by Nur Zaida (2022-2024). This textbook was chosen because it had been formally approved in the Merdeka curriculum that laid it down, which made it very influential in creating the education of English to the students in the first semester of the entire Indonesian secondary school. Resolutions to analyze revised editions of this book as a text have the effect of ensuring a volume dedicated to pious discovery of contemporary standards of educational examples and practice. Continue further, the choice of this book is authorized by the users of this book (wide), and its authoritative quality (both written by) and the renowned performance of this book (their role) in the preservation or challenging of gender norms through a medium of expression and representation (language). Process methodology used in this research, regarding the use of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method to test representations of femininity in textbooks. CDA is chosen as an analytical approach based on its ability to unmask the relationship between language, power, and ideology in discourse. The focus of this research is based on the three levels of analysis of Fairclough (1995), i.e., (1) text analysis (micro level) based on the need to test

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linguistic features such as narrative and visual representation; (2), analysis of discursive practices (meso level) based on the need to understand how text is produced and consumed in the context of pedagogy; and (3) analysis of social practices (macro level) based on the In this approach, we will determine whether it will be representative of femininity in the book of texts perpetuating the conventional stereotyping or merely promoting gender equality. Continuing, this study will investigate further, the assumptions, bias and implications of power that may be more relevant to prescriptions of the construction of identities within gender contexts within the context of pedagogy of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL), all the way to the point of providing a more comprehensive understanding about this matter.

We argue that the books promote a new version of Ibuism according to the concept that promotes the ideal of neo-Ibuism femininity (aka Kabullah & Fajri, 2021; Eliyanah et al., 2023), to ensure women remain at home with their partners, and to protect their domestic roles as mothers. These books attempt to amend the concept of ideal Ibuism femininity to make it more flexible and to give women the opportunity and support they need to contribute to their performance, whether in work or study. However, these books return this role to a subordinate position to men in some areas, especially in the domestic sphere. With the aim of revitalizing values attached to the idea of interpretive gender in educational contexts, this book brings joy to the cause of traditional values attached to the role of women in relation to the modalities of changing the social context of learning, which is permeating at a steady rate. This shows that even though traditional norms still apply, this also pushes women's roles outside the domestic sphere.

The study of representation of roles and identity of gender in academic material has received significant scholarly attention, with several years being specifically during the last few years, especially in the field of analysis of the discourse of the critiques (CDA) and gender studies. As a tool of primary importance to transfer and disseminate knowledge in schools, textbooks play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of students towards social norms, including, but not limited to, gender roles. In Indonesia, a state with a complicated interaction between traditional, religious, and modern ideologies, feminist iconification in the contents of compulsory schooling to promote awareness of more gender-oriented social phenomena (Kitta and Cardona-Molto, 2022). Newer studies have already posed a challenge to the normativity of gender by posing what can and should be done to queer these matters or challenge the normativity of gender (Suryakusuma, 2004; Xiang and Yenika-Agbaw, 2021). On one hand, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education in Indonesia not only functions as a tool to teach language skills but also as a medium that reflects and shapes social values, including gender construction. EFL textbooks, which are one of the primary sources of learning for junior high school students, often carry representations of femininity influenced by local cultural ideologies. In Indonesian ideology, ideal femininity is a conceptualization that idealizes femininity as a key structure for understanding how femininity can be constructed and reproduced in educational discourse, including the discourse of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educators. This is important to analyze because students are at an age where active learning occurs, building their understanding of the concept of gender and social roles and identities. The presentation of femininity in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning materials, whether in narrative texts, dialogues, illustrations, or exercises, can subtly distort students' perceptions of the characteristics, behaviors, and expectations inherent in women (Driss Benattabou, 2021). Therefore, an in-depth study of the representation of femininity in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks in Indonesia is important to unmask the strength of bias, stereotyping, or prejudice that is less than ideal, which will culminate in the end to hamper the development of students' critical thinking on gender issues in line with the context of their culture

Julia Suryakusuma, a distinguished Indonesian sociologist, has provided profound analyses concerning the sociocultural fabrication of gender within Indonesia, with particular emphasis on the construct of idealized femininity. This construct pertains to the portrayal of socially engineered female archetypes compelled to adhere to dominant societal norms,

frequently influenced by prevailing cultural and social frameworks. In the heterogeneous context of Indonesia, marked by an array of cultural expressions, particularly the deeply ingrained Javanese culture, the articulations of ideal femininity become increasingly intricate and varied. Suryakusuma's empirical investigations scrutinize the ramifications of these societal expectations on the lived experiences of women, which subsequently inform their roles, behaviors, and self-conceptions (Suryakusuma, 2004). Within the cultural milieu of Java, representations of "pure women" (Suryakusuma, 2004), or authentic women, frequently underscore attributes such as obedience, humility, and a prioritization of domestic obligations. These societal prescriptions can constrain women's opportunities and aspirations, relegating them to traditional functions, thereby impeding their holistic engagement across diverse spheres of life.

Over time, due to the strengthening of feminist movements, anti-racism and other anti-discrimination movements, as well as socio-economic changes, the idealization of the construct of ideal femininity, which is centered on ensuring that women only play a role in the domestic sphere, is becoming less relevant (Antoniou & Akrivos, 2020). Such developments have precipitated the rise of an updated and modern version of the theoretical construct, known as neo-Ibuism, which attempts to tackle the multi-faceted and dynamic issues relating to the position of the woman in the contemporary society. Neo-Ibuism describes the reality of modern-day motherhood that is changing and embracing the needs of a dynamic and digitally connected space. Neo-Ibuism describes the tension that a lot of mothers experience when they are trying to reconcile work, home, and social norms as they negotiate the parenting ideals that are selectively presented on the social media platforms. The recent empirical studies, including the one by Nurrahma Ekasiwi and Teda Ena (2022) themselves, focus on the effect that mothers are usually caught in the dilemma between the old roles and the new demands of the modern life, and as they tend to achieve the impossible high standards of perfection. This effect is enhanced by the neoliberalist ideologies that promote individualism and unstopping self-enhancement, which results in an overwhelming feeling of devaluation and overwhelmedness among most women. In a nutshell, neo-motherism elucidates the realities of maternal experience providing a theoretical guide to comprehend how cultural, economic as well as technological changes are constantly redefining the nature of motherhood in the 21st century.

During the New Order era, a concept was created from the development of the concept of "Mother" or better known as "state motherism" through the work of Suryakusuma (1996) called Neo-Ibuism. This Neo-Ibuism emphasizes an ideology where women have the opportunity to have activities to be able to participate in activities outside the home and pursue a career in addition to their duties as mothers and household managers remain but remain subject to previous patriarchal values. In this ideology, women are offered an opportunity to be able to have a career and participate in the professional world, but are still have limitations that are still bound by their position as subordinate to men in social life (Kabullah & Fajri, 2021; Eliyanah et al., 2023). This kind of ideology is often depicted in various forms of image and written representation such as dialogue, narrative in textbooks, especially English as a Foreign Language (EFL) books where women are often depicted in roles that are still bound by traditional values such as being a mother, a companion or a caregiver while men are positioned in higher roles such as being a leader or a role with high status. Therefore, the relationship between ideologies such as Neo-Ibuism and learning materials such as EFL textbooks cannot be separated because they always have a relationship with each other in terms of conveying messages about the ideology of women's roles in social life that are in line with the conditions and culture that exist in Indonesia.

In recent years, many scholars have paid more attention to gender studies in EFL textbooks in Indonesia, particularly in junior high schools, where students have begun to develop logical and critical thinking (Ariyanto, 2018). Many approaches have been used in conducting gender studies research, one of which is Critical Discourse Analysis, better known as CDA. CDA has become an approach that is the basis for uncovering gender concepts that

have implicit meanings in a text in educational materials, including how femininity in the material is formed. In several previous studies, such as Lestariyana et al. (2020) concluded that traditional roles aimed at women are still clearly depicted in textbooks issued by the Indonesian government, depicting women in roles such as being mothers and wives in the household, while men are more superior in professional positions in the public sphere. In research by other authors, a similar phenomenon was also found by Tyarakanita et al. (2021), who found that women are still often depicted as subordinate and companions in various social aspects that are often found in various narratives and images in EFL materials. Similarly, what was found by Ahmadabadi & Azad (2023) strengthens the understanding that patriarchal ideology in EFL textbooks is difficult to avoid and has become a social norm and offers gender inequality where women are rarely highlighted to be able to challenge conventional norms. Orfan (2023) added in his findings that the strong influence of local culture in society is a barrier for femininity in efforts to challenge traditional norms even though on several occasions it is represented in various ways such as being a scientist or athlete, but it is still often associated with traditional traits such as obedience to husbands or gentle attitudes towards family. On the other hand, Nur Andini et al. (2023) conducted a gender study focusing on visual research using a CDA approach and found that there are still many stereotypical representations of women in domestic work and serving their husbands despite efforts to achieve equal representation. This suggests that there is still tension between ideological concepts within EFL text materials, particularly regarding the position of upholding traditional values with fair and inclusive gender equality in the context of global education (Weninger, 2020). The implications of these studies suggest that students' understanding of the teaching materials still severely limits their understanding of the role of women and their relationship to gender equality.

In this study, Neo-Ibiuism serves as the primary tool for analyzing the phenomenon of femininity in junior high school EFL textbooks. A crucial consideration behind the selection of this framework is to question the assumptions of previous studies that may have overlooked the dynamics of significant social change, particularly after the collapse of the New Order regime. As is well known, the New Order was a strong supporter of 'state Ibuism', an ideological construct actively promoted by the patriarchal state. The state at that time was interested in strengthening women's roles as mothers centered on reproductive functions, which was then reflected in various public policies. However, gender turmoil in Indonesia experienced a massive transition and change after the 1998 collapse, marked by various upheavals fighting for anti-discrimination rights and also the rights of citizens as equal individuals. This study argues that this fundamental social change has the potential to influence the construction and internalization of Ibuism in society, including in its representation in the media, such as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks. Thus, the main focus of this study lies in determining whether the concept of Ibuism remains intact in its original form after the New Order or whether it has evolved and changed in response to the increasingly strong discourse on gender equality. This research also offers a more contextual understanding of the phenomenon and its impacts through the lens of Neo-Ibuism.

After outlining several key points in the introduction, we provide a more detailed understanding of the relationship between the research tool we chose to uncover the concept of ideology in EFL textbooks, namely Neo-Ibuism, and the material contained in the educational materials. Next, we describe how the data was collected and processed in this study. Next, we present the results of our findings regarding the depiction of women in the books we have selected as the objects of our research. Finally, we summarize several points we discovered in this study and relate them to various concepts of femininity. We ask whether the ideology in the books attempts to challenge traditional concepts or actually reinforces existing social and cultural norms, as seen in the context of gender perceptions in contemporary Indonesian society outside the classroom. Thus, the contribution of this study lies not only in applied discourse research, but also in providing broader insights into how

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gender perceptions can be conveyed through educational materials, providing an understanding of how students view broader gender phenomena.

Theoretical Framework

Femininity in Education Resources: The Lens of Neo-Ibuism as a Framework

For some time, educational materials related to understanding the representation of femininity have generated considerable interest and debate regarding how society views gender roles within social norms. Traditionally, the concept of "ibuism"—emphasizing women as mothers or in various roles, such as moral educators, caregivers, and holders of tradition—has been a persistent part of educational content. The backlash against this traditional concept gave rise to Neo-Ibuism, a platform for women to be more inclusive in their social roles depicted in various school materials, such as textbooks. Historically, the concept of Neo-Ibuism was introduced by Suryakusuma (1998) as a critique of the New Order's conceptualization of women as solely mothers, symbolically representing the state's understanding of Ibuism. Unlike classical Ibuism, which places women exclusively in the domestic sphere, Neo-Ibuism accommodates women's participation in the public sphere but still limits their roles within a patriarchal framework that emphasizes reproductive and caregiving duties.

Neo-Ibuism, a concept that positions women as unpaid domestic workers, supports state capitalism. This concept not only celebrates women's traditional roles as mothers and caregivers but also recognizes and values women's active participation in the public and professional spheres. In the context of educational materials, traditional values and the role of mothers for women are often portrayed in a more rigid manner without being connected to other values that may exist within them. The role of Neo-Ibuism here is as a means of connecting traditional values with a more inclusive role for women as individuals in social life. Suryakusuma's (2019) research in his book "State Ibuism: The Social Construction of Women in the New Order" offers insight into how the concept of motherhood, as depicted in the New Order era, became a primary focus in constructing gender perceptions in educational materials.

Gender perceptions and understanding of the concept of femininity can be channeled through educational materials in schools (Widodo & Elyas, 2020). Critical discourse analysis can be used to reveal how the representation of women in educational materials is often influenced by gender bias and traditional stereotypes. One study, entitled "Critical Discourse Analysis of Gender Representation in EFL Textbooks," found that while attempts to represent femininity in textbooks place women in more active social roles, traditional values are still more prevalent and reinforce women's domestic roles (Kayed et al., 2020). Neo-Ibuism opens up space to analyze how domestic and maternal roles are interrelated.

Education is not limited to merely imparting knowledge but also serves as a vehicle for conveying gender concepts. In this regard, Neo-Ibuism serves as a bridge connecting how women should be empowered and have an inclusive role while maintaining their domestic roles. Rahman's (2021) research on Neo-Ibuism, "Neo-Ibuism and Women's Empowerment in Education," highlights the importance of incorporating Neo-Ibuism concepts into educational curricula and teaching materials as a way to empower women in their roles in social life. This includes the representation of women as leaders, scientists, and professionals, as well as the recognition of their roles as mothers and caregivers.

In the journey to implement a framework that challenges traditional, normative concepts, various challenges will inevitably be encountered, one of which is resistance to changing pre-existing gender concepts. Research conducted by Afifa (2023) in her dissertation, "Negotiating Neo-Ibuism: Women's Agency and Resistance in Contemporary Indonesia," shows that Indonesian women often have to negotiate their identities between traditional and modern roles. Therefore, various efforts are needed to transmit this Neo-Ibuism concept within the education system, including gender-sensitive and gender-based teacher

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training, gender-inclusive teaching materials, and the involvement of women in the development and preparation of teaching materials.

Material and Method

In this study, two selected textbooks were selected: "English for Nusantara" (EFN) and "Bright an English" (BAE). EFN, written by Damayanti et al. (2022), consists of 18 chapters and 826 pages, and BAE, written by Nur Zaida (2022-2024), consists of 21 chapters and 458 pages. Both textbooks use the same curriculum, the latest Merdeka Curriculum.

In the initial stage of this study, the researcher focused on finding data demonstrating gender depictions in textbooks. Textual materials (dialogue, narrative, description) and visual materials (pictures, illustrations, cartoons) served as the primary data for this study. Because this research uses Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model, description is the first step. In this stage, the researcher analyzes all aspects of the discourse on femininity contained in the data. Then, the results are interpreted and related to the research questions. Furthermore, the power relationships among the various forms of femininity identified are observed. Finally, the researcher concludes the research findings by linking them to gender-related theoretical perspectives, while still referring to previous research.

In the stage of reading the selected books, several images and supporting narratives of the images in each book are used to identify the ideology of each data point, and then determine the central ideology of each book. The photos and narratives include images represented in various aspects, including work, social, and domestic roles. Then, a careful reading instrument is designed to facilitate researchers in reading, identifying dominant discourses, and coding them, by covering keywords such as the author's views, implicit ideologies in the book, the meaning of women in several perspectives, and women's ideal representation in the books.

This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), an approach that emphasizes the multifaceted meanings and purposes of words depending on their use (Fairclough, 1995). Consequently, the keywords extracted from Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks are not treated as neutral linguistic elements. Instead, according to Blommaert and Bucean (2000), these keywords have different meanings and understandings and are more politicized within the social system of gender. For example, the depiction of men as superior to women in terms of social status and role. This is not merely a common representation, but also a social and political emphasis in constructing perceptions of gender.

Results and Discussion
Results

This study argues that the incorporation of neo-*Ibuism* ideals within Indonesian educational materials, while seemingly promoting female empowerment, ultimately reinforces traditional gender roles and limits the potential for true gender equality by perpetuating the notion that a woman's primary identity remains rooted in her domestic responsibilities. The study's argument is supported by two main findings, which are divided into two sub-sections: promoting women as primarily mothers and welcoming women as other than mothers, with implications that show that the books encourage neo-*Ibuism*.

Women's Traditional Role as Mothers

This section illustrates how the values and norms of women as moral educators within the family remain deeply rooted and deeply embedded. This depiction embodies the ideal femininity traditionally portrayed in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks. Some depictions of women are often tied to domestic work such as cleaning, preparing meals for the family, serving their husbands, and so on. This traditional depiction can limit students' understanding of the dynamics of gender perception. One example is found in the 8th-grade EFL textbook, Chapter 6, pages 112-113 and Chapter 3, page 58, which depicts women's roles in the domestic sphere, particularly within the family.

Figure 1.
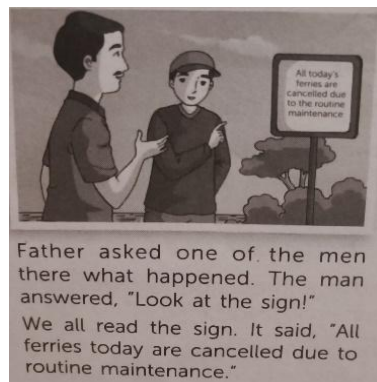Illustration for a Woman Preparing Food (BAE for Class 8, Chapter 6, Page 112)

Figure 2.
Illustration of a Man Asks for Information from an Officer

The two images above are examples of depictions of feminine roles and also comparative examples of men's roles towards women. These images appear on the topic of a family vacation trip. In Figure 1, a middle-aged woman is shown with several tools resembling food containers and a cheerful face depicting her preparing food for her family. The text below reads, "Look! I've cooked delicious food!" exclaimed the mother cheerfully. The context of the image clearly shows how the woman plays the role of a mother who carries out domestic roles such as cooking and preparing food for the family. This shows the traditional values that are strongly attached to women in the domestic sphere and at the same time become a responsibility for her family. On the masculinity side, Figure 2 shows the representation of men in active and informative roles in public spaces. On the same topic, the "Father" figure takes the initiative to find out information about the situation (the ferry cancellation) by asking other people. The man who was asked then gave a straightforward answer and directed them to the source of information (the noticeboard). This conversation does not demonstrate emotional masculinity. Instead, it focuses on solving issues or understanding circumstances by talking to each other directly and sharing facts. There is no emphasis on physical aspects or dominance, but rather on asking and answering questions to gain clarity.

This representation creates a fairly obvious gender contrast in one complete narrative. Women are associated with emotional expression and care roles in the domestic sphere, while men are associated with informational roles and decision-making in the public sphere. Although both are presented in the context of the family and without any extreme depictions or harsh stereotypes, this narrative still reinforces the division of traditional roles based on gender. Women (mothers) are present with smiles and enthusiasm in the context of providing food, which has historically been a symbol of femininity in many cultures, including Indonesia. Meanwhile, masculinity is depicted through the social agency and rationality shown by the father and other adult men in the story. Women (mothers) are there with smiles and excitement when they give food, which has long been a sign of femininity in many cultures, including

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Indonesia. At the same time, the father and other adult males in the novel display masculinity through their ability to act in society and think logically.
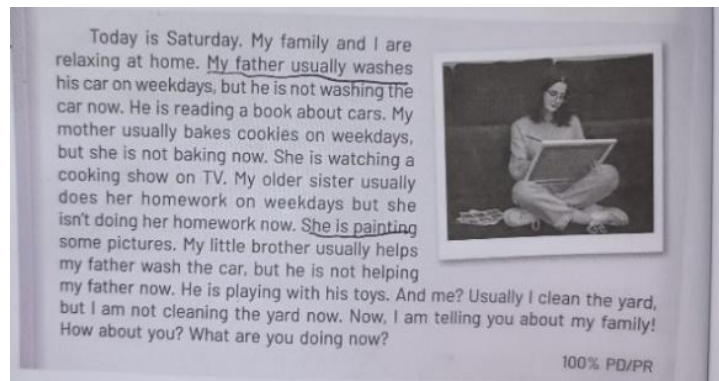

Figure 3.
Illustration of a woman painting and narration about family activities

In a different example and topic, Figure 3 presents an image and text narrative from the BAE book. The text narrative reveals that the image's theme coincides with a family's weekend activities. The picture depicts a woman in fairly casual clothes sitting as if she is about to paint something. Meanwhile, the narrative includes descriptions of the family's weekend activities: the father reading a book about cars, the mother watching a cooking show, the older sister staying home from school, and the younger brother playing with his toys. Although all family members appear to be taking a break from their daily routines, the division of activities mentioned implies conventional gender role patterns. The mother is associated with cooking (even when she is not doing it), the father with cars and technical reading, the daughter with painting—a domestic and artistic activity that tends to be seen as feminine—and the son with playing. This narrative reinforces that men remain associated with technical and exploratory spaces (cars, reading), while women are attached to expressive, domestic, or aesthetic realms.

The representation depicted in the image has values that seem equal in the gender roles of each individual. The activities depicted in the narrative divide gender roles into two types of values, where men are depicted as being involved in more active and technical activities, while women are depicted in passive, relaxed, and economically unproductive activities. The Neo-Ibuism pattern in the image is clearly visible, one of which is when the role of the mother is depicted as not cooking, but often watching cooking shows. This is a form of conveying the domestic role of women that is more subtle and does not explicitly symbolize the boundaries of domesticity for women.

Figure 4.
Illustration of a Woman Preparing Food for Her Family

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In another example from another author, Figure 4 appears in the folklore topic of the EFN book (Damayanti, 2022), which is part of the introduction to local culture through narrative text in English learning. The image shows a family enjoying their free time outside the home by cooking. There is a woman preparing food by cooking for several people who are enjoying the meal. This image provides a concept in gender perception that the task of cooking and providing food is the main task of women in a family. The woman in this image is seen busy working alone and is spatially separated from the main social activities, which are dominated by men. In contrast, masculinity is represented through a visually dominant giant figure and other male characters who play the role of service recipients or consumers. This shows the strengthening of the narrative of masculinity as the center of attention and recipient of comfort, while femininity remains attached to the realm of service and care.

The presence of a giant, masculine and visually dominant character also emphasizes the symbolic power contrast between aggressive, consumerist masculinity and productive yet subordinate femininity. Women are not only physically distanced from the center of action (the dinner table) but are also positioned as figures who support the comfort of others without participating in the main social activity. This is another example of neo-motherism, where women's "giving" behaviors are framed in a positive and maternal way but yet stay within the limits of their conventional duties. This kind of representation is important to critique because, despite appearing lighthearted or humorous, it still contains normative messages about how women "should" be present in social spaces, even in unrealistic narrative contexts.

Figure 5.
Illustration of a Group of Men Rescuing People from Flood Disaster

On a different topic, Figure 5 appears in the "Natural Disasters" section of the EFN book, which features a narrative of post-disaster evacuation. This image shows a line of male officers in military uniforms or volunteers assisting in the evacuation of residents. In the foreground, a man carries a large box filled with belongings while holding the hand of a woman carrying a small child. The woman is wearing pajamas, indicating the emergency situation in which she and her child have just been evacuated from their home. This image displays a rather typical separation of roles when it comes to gender representation: males are seen as defenders, powerful, and saviors, while women are shown as passive, weak, and in need of aid, especially when they are mothers and caretakers.

The image shows several men, acting as part of an evacuation team, helping several people, including women, during a flood disaster. The gender context in the image demonstrates how women remain inferior and weak. Although the narrative of gender equality has frequently been presented in various media, especially textbooks, this demonstrates that representations since the New Order era have not yet been fully replaced by the new neo-Ibuism ideology. Women are still depicted as figures who are always associated with caring for children and need male figures to help. Thus, this visual implies that although Indonesia has experienced various social transformations, the construction of gender roles in textbooks

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is still heavily influenced by traditional gender ideology, which is refined in the form of neo-Ibuism.

In sum, although both books were compiled by two different teams of authors and publishers, both books depict women in visuals and narratives in the same way. Women are consistently represented in domestic roles, as caregivers or as emotional support figures, while men are more often shown in active positions, as decision makers or protectors. This representation not only reinforces traditional gender constructions but also shows how the ideology of Neo-*Ibuism* works subtly in educational media—packaging women's domestic roles as something noble and irreplaceable but still limiting women's participation in the public sphere. In fact, in the social context of post-New Order Indonesia, when the discourse of gender equality and the dismantling of patriarchal norms is getting stronger, this kind of representation seems inconsistent with the spirit of social transformation. Thus, this analysis reveals that English textbooks at the junior high school level, regardless of the differences in publishers and curricula, still reproduce conservative gender ideology through visuals and narratives that appear "neutral" but are full of meaning.

Allowing Women to Play Roles Beyond the Role of Mother

This section discusses how the dynamics of femininity occur, where women have roles outside of domestic activities in EFL textbooks. This depiction implies challenging traditional gender representations, making femininity more flexible and not limiting women's roles in society. The discussion also discusses how this representation promotes gender equality in social roles for students in the learning materials.
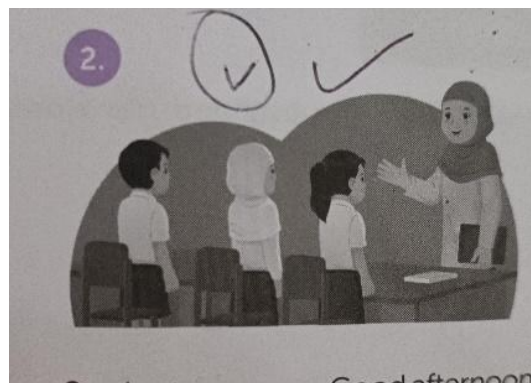

Figure 6.
Illustration of Woman Becoming Teacher

Figure 7.
Illustration of A Woman Becoming a Teacher for Online Class

In line with the concept of *Ibuism* during the post-reform era in Indonesia, these selected EFL textbooks indicate the acceptance of women to contribute to the public sphere

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and have careers. The depiction of women in the two images above implies how women actively participate in professional life and are not limited to roles solely related to the domestic sphere such as medical personnel, teachers, and others. In Figure 6, a woman is shown playing the role of a teacher, teaching in a classroom with a happy expression. This representation conveys the message that women can actively contribute to social roles such as teaching. However, this depiction is still strongly associated with traditional female values such as patience and gentleness in educating, which are traditional values. In another example, in Figure 7, a woman wearing glasses is shown teaching in an online meeting class attended by several students. The representation in this image has an implicit meaning that women have been active in technological developments to support their professional lives in teaching. However, traditional maternal values of patience and compassion in teaching still adhere to traditional values of ideal femininity. These two images show the development of women's dynamics in society as individuals who are active in social roles but remain limited by the expectations of ideal femininity that are still cultivated in Indonesia.

However, changes in women's roles create opportunities for gender perception, where they are seen as individuals with the potential to change existing patterns in society through active participation in social life. In Figures 6 and 7, for example, the use of the classroom environment, both alluring and bold, emphasizes the importance of education as a realm where women can exercise their authority and expertise, while remaining in line with the values of devotion held dear in Indonesian culture. However, the relationship between active roles in social life and traditional traits of ideal femininity continues to be at odds with efforts to establish equality. The representations depicted are still insufficient to fully abandon the ideal femininity that has historically existed in culture, particularly in Indonesia. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks demonstrate a complex relationship regarding the ideals of gender equality and harmony because they are always connected and in conflict with the values of ideal femininity that are very strong in society.

Figure 8.
Illustration of A Woman Singing with a Man (BAE Class 7 Chapter 3 Page 45)

Figure 9.
Illustration of A Woman Becoming a Model of the Show

In other cases, the selected books demonstrate a broader role for women in public self-expression to showcase their talents. For example, in Figure 8, a woman is shown enthusiastically singing while holding a microphone, while a man next to her, wearing glasses, gestures in praise and awe of her performance. This image creates a message that women have an active role in activities related to art and talent. However, idealized maternal feminine traits such as tenderness and beautiful feelings still accompany this representation in a construction of ideal femininity. In another example, in Figure 9, a woman is depicted modeling in a fashion show and taking center stage, displaying confidence and elegance that highlight her fashion flair. The accompanying narrative praises her "elegant and alluring appearance," but still associates her charm with traditional feminine appeal, thus maintaining the Ibuist element that associates public expression with "feminine" qualities. These two illustrations show that even though women are given space to showcase their talents in the public sphere, this representation is still colored by cultural expectations that limit a complete break from historical gender stereotypes in post-authoritarian Indonesian society.

Furthermore, the representation of women in several images found shows a complex relationship between the value of equality and ideal femininity. Women are depicted as having a broader and more active role in public activities but are still overshadowed and juxtaposed with traditional values of femininity and maternal traits in women. This representation is depicted as two sides of the same coin that have different roles but always accompany and are related to each other that are difficult to separate. In this case, it shows that although there has been a change in depicting the active role of women in the public sphere, it remains limited by traditional cultural values and limits more diverse representation because it is difficult to break away from traditional stereotypes about gender, especially femininity.

Discussion
EFL Textbooks as The Media to Transform Ideal Femininity

One of the most essential parts of a CDA study is reading a text from a socio-cultural context. In this section, I put the concept of State-*Ibuism* in the broader context of EFL textbooks as ideal femininity in Indonesia. As shown previously, *Ibuism* is still represented in the selected EFL textbooks as perfect femininity. However, while continuing to represent women as primary caregivers as mothers and wives, as well as submission to their families secondary to the men, as the center of *Ibuism* as ideal femininity, the EFL textbooks present openness to women for having public and contributing roles. Here, I will describe how the representation of women in selected EFL textbooks is intended to challenge the ideal femininity of *Ibuism* by Julia Suryakusuma and the transformation from the more traditional concept of *Ibuism* to a more modern form.

A team wrote the BAE and EFN books of authors with professional backgrounds in English language teaching, including Dr. Nur Zaida (BAE books) and Dr. Lita S. Damayanti (EFN books), also well-known in literacy and language education studies. Both books were published in the same year, 2022. Both books were compiled in the context of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, which carries the spirit of inclusive and contextual learning. However, although this curriculum seeks change towards justice and equality, findings show that gender representation in textbooks has not entirely moved away from traditional patterns. In the framework of post-New Order social change, where state *Ibuism* that dominates women's roles as homemakers began to be questioned, this visual shows a form of neo *Ibuism*, namely the strengthening of women's domestic roles in a more subtle and socially acceptable package. This representation indicates that, despite social pressure to be more equal, the old discourse on gender roles persists through symbolic and nuanced ways in learning media.

The gender bias that appears in the textbooks represents the rooted patriarchal culture in society. This is evidenced by the fact that women are still described as mothers and wives with various activities such as caring roles, cooking, shopping for family needs, cleaning the house, accompanying children to school, serving their husbands, and so on. In addition,

women are also depicted as subordinate or second-class figures under men in various social roles. For example, in work, women are shown working in the field of serving and giving attention, such as sales and teachers, but in contrast to men who are depicted as superior and higher in position, for example, becoming scientists who excel in intelligence or police who show physical strength. The ideology reinforced their dependence on men and kept them from leadership or independent decision-making roles in the public and political spheres. This clearly shows that the role of women in the domestic sphere cannot be eliminated and will continue to be a value that exists in society as a very established ideal value.

The paragraphs above highlight how selected EFL textbooks in post-authoritarian Indonesia reflect a shift in women's roles toward broader participation in the public sphere while remaining tied to the deeply rooted ideology of *Ibuism* in local culture. The representation of women as teachers, singers, and fashion models, as shown in Figures 6 to 9, signifies recognition of their capacity to contribute professionally and artistically beyond the domestic sphere. However, the narratives accompanying these illustrations—emphasizing qualities such as gentleness, care, and warmth—suggest that this progress does not entirely break away from traditional expectations. Within the concept of Ibuism, women still face ideological friction, where empowering women to play a more active role in society is continually hampered by traditional ideals of femininity that are difficult to eradicate. This creates a complex system where equality and a culture inherent in social life continue to impede women's role in society.

Furthermore, these representations indicate that EFL textbooks serve as language learning tools and function as media that reinforce and negotiate gender norms in societyFor example, Figures 6 and 7 illustrate their active role in the world of education, teaching, and involvement in the use of technology to support their active role in the world of education. However, roles in this field are often juxtaposed with maternal qualities such as patience, diligence, and responsibility in educating children, which are still framed within the boundaries of traditional ideal femininity. A similar pattern is also found in Figures 8 and 9, where women's contributions in fields related to talent and art, such as the ability to sing and model at a cultural festival, are still juxtaposed with maternal values such as grace, beauty, and so on. So, although women have wider opportunities to be able to appear in public, they remain limited by the standard values of ideal femininity that are historically attached to social culture.Traits like gentleness, elegance, and warmth continue to dominate how women are portrayed, indicating that their participation in public life is still conditional. Women can achieve success and gain recognition outside the domestic sphere, but only as long as they adhere to existing gender norms.

For the reasons mentioned above, these EFL textbooks attempt to modify the social construction of ideal femininity. Rather than completely rejecting the traditional role of women, these books attempt to transform the concept of *Ibuism* by Julia Suryakusuma (2004). Thus, these texts try to balance traditional values and the demands of modernity, creating a more complex representation of women still bound by existing social norms. This aligns with previous research on the concept of *Ibuism*, which was transformed into a more modern form, namely Neo-*Ibuism*, but in a different context (see Kabullah & Fajri, 2021, and Eliyanah et al., 2023). Neo-ibujism is a concept that describes a new social construction of women's roles. This concept is an evolution of traditional *Ibuism*, but with more modern packaging. If traditional *Ibuism* places women exclusively in domestic roles, neo-*Ibuism* offers slightly wider room for movement but still limits women to a relatively narrow scope. As a result, through diverse representations of women, these EFL textbooks act as agents of social change. The represented texts and images try to bridge traditional values and the demands of modernity to form a younger generation with a more inclusive view of gender.

The discourse in Indonesian EFL textbooks reflects a persistent gender imbalance, where women's involvement in the public sphere is acknowledged, but men's participation in domestic responsibilities is still very rarely represented. This remains a social phenomenon, particularly in Indonesia, where women's domestic roles are still confined to domestic and

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maternal duties, despite having greater opportunities to be more active in social roles. During the period in which these books were published, women's roles in various social fields, such as politics, entrepreneurship, and sports, have become increasingly prevalent, and they have become increasingly active in voicing changes in women's acceptance in various sectors of social life. In contrast to the increasingly active role of women in the social sphere, men's contributions to the domestic sphere remain minimal. Promotion of men's roles in the domestic sphere is still minimal in various media, particularly in educational materials. This perpetuates gender stereotypes regarding gender roles and tasks in social life.

Conclusion

This study aims to highlight the discourses found in selected EFL textbooks, particularly those related to the representation of femininity, by placing them in the contemporary context in Indonesia at the time of their publication. Based on the analysis that has been done, the books represent the phenomenon of Neo-*Ibuism*. The representation of women in these books still maintains the concept of state *Ibuism*, where women are socially expected to play the role of caregivers and supporters of men. This can be seen from the many illustrations and texts that depict women as housewives who care for children or accompany their families. However, at the same time, these books also accommodate social changes by presenting women in various activities in public spaces, such as becoming teachers or being active in artistic talents, indicating an adaptation to the demands of the times. In other words, these books reflect an attempt to preserve traditional values related to women's roles while simultaneously accommodating ongoing social changes. This suggests that while conventional norms still sway, there is also a push to expand women's roles beyond the domestic sphere. This neo-*Ibuism* phenomenon reflects the complex dynamics of changing gender roles in Indonesia at that time, where tradition and modernity interacted and negotiated with each other. However, despite the push to expand women's roles in the public sphere, the representation of men in domestic roles was still minimal. This suggests that the changes were more incremental and still within an ideological framework that maintained male dominance in the public sphere and women's dependence on domestic roles. In other words, women were allowed to participate in work or activities outside the home but were still expected not to abandon their primary responsibilities as wives and mothers. This phenomenon shows how gender discourse in textbooks, as part of the education system, still reflects the contradiction between conservatism and social change. On the one hand, the representation of women active in various professions and social activities shows recognition of the reality of women's involvement in the public sphere. On the other hand, traditional norms that emphasize women's primary duties as caregivers continue to be reproduced, creating a balance between the demands of modernity and long-rooted patriarchal values. Thus, the representation of femininity in these textbooks is not only a reflection of social change but also part of an ideological strategy that maintains the stability of gender norms while adapting them to the times. Neo-*Ibuism* in these textbooks shows that gender change in Indonesia does not occur in a revolutionary way, but rather through a process of negotiation that continues to develop between tradition and modernity.

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