

Making Representational Meanings of Gender Images in Malaysian School English Textbooks: The Corpus Way

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Abstract

Images are in fact representations of reality that are also instrumental in creating imaginary relations between the participants in the image and the viewers. School textbooks are abound with visual images that sometimes can articulate more forcefully social and cultural meanings more so than written texts. This article focusses on a preliminary investigation on the making of representational meanings associated with gender and to critique the patterns of images in relation to gender stereotyping in a selected Malaysian Primary school English textbook with a data of 78 images analysed. Using Kress & van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design (2006) as our method of analysis, we identify and describe gender representations through features of narrative, cultural and biological categorization and circumstance of setting. The analysis focuses on the results of three representational meanings of participant type, relational and institutional categories with the inclusion of ethnicity. Its preliminary findings reveal a predisposition towards gender stereotyping between male and female representation.

Keywords: corpus-based study, gender stereotyping, school textbooks, social semiotics, visual analysis