

Gendered Performances in Social Media Promotions for English Learning

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Abstract

This study explores how gender is represented in English language education promotions on social media, focusing on Instagram content by @kampunginggrislc, a well-known English course provider in Pare, Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) based on Fairclough's model and Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, this research investigates six selected video posts. The findings show that male and female figures are portrayed differently in both verbal and visual elements. Male speakers are often positioned as authoritative and logical, while female speakers are associated with emotional, polite, and aesthetic values. These gendered performances reflect broader cultural expectations in Indonesian society. The study concludes that English language promotional content on social media not only serves educational purposes but also functions as a space where gender ideologies are reproduced and normalized. The research calls for greater awareness in creating inclusive educational media that supports gender equality.

Keywords: *gender discourse; English language teaching; social media; critical discourse analysis; educational advertising*

Introduction

Social media has become an important place for learning in the last few years. Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are not just places to have fun anymore. Students, teachers, and even schools now use them to share information, promote classes, and build learning communities. Social media makes it easier and more fun to talk about school things. People can leave comments, ask questions, and even join discussions outside the classroom. Sindoni, Ho, and Wei (2025) say that social media makes it possible for people to share language and ideas in a flexible and multimodal way. This means users can mix text, pictures, and videos together to send educational messages more clearly. They also found that these platforms help people learn in different ways, especially languages, by letting them be creative and express themselves. Because of that, social media is not only a tool for promotion, but also a space where users create and recreate educational conversations.

The English classes in Pare, a small town in East Java, Indonesia, has got a lot of attention across the country. This area, often called Kampung Inggris or the English Village, became a favorite place for students from many regions who want to learn English fast. The growth of English classes in Pare shows a trend in both education and language practice. People come to Pare not only for studying reasons but also for social and economic ones. Many students believe that being good in English will help them find

better jobs and get more respect in society. Pratiwi (2024) says that the rising number of students in Pare shows how English connects to social mobility and modern identity in Indonesia. This trend also supports local businesses, like dorms, food stalls, transport, and printing shops, which all earn from the constant flow of students. That's why learning English in Pare is more than just studying a language. It has become a social norm that links language with money, status, and self-growth.

Gender plays a big role in how educational promotions are made and shared on social media. When schools or other organizations post ads for classes online, they often use words, colors, and pictures that match certain gender norms. For example, some ads show women as emotional and hardworking, while men are shown as smart and confident. There is a reason behind these differences. They come from social ideas about how men and women should act. Caputo, D'Errico, and Flagiello (2025) say that media often sends strong messages about gender, even in educational settings. Their study explains how promotional materials sometimes repeat stereotypes instead of challenging them. On sites like Instagram or TikTok, gendered images and captions can affect how people think about learning, success, and what makes someone a "good" student. These gendered styles also change how people respond to the content and who feels they belong to the class. That's why it's important to see how gender is used in school promotions to make sure they are fair and inclusive.

Discourse analysis is a method to study how language is used in daily life. It focuses on how people communicate in real situations and how language shows and shapes social meaning. Instead of only looking at grammar or sentence pattern, discourse analysis tries to understand how words connect with social context, power, and identity. This kind of analysis help to find hidden meaning and assumption inside text, speech, or conversation. According to Sadigova et al. (2025), discourse analysis explores how language reflects social structures, cultural values, and ideology in different context. It allows researchers to see language as a tool that not only communicate ideas but also keep or challenge power relation in society. Therefore, discourse analysis is very useful in many areas like media study, politics, education, and gender study, where understanding the deeper meaning behind language becomes important.

In English Language Teaching (ELT), gender discourse shapes both what is taught and how it is taught. Textbooks, videos, and classroom talks are examples of materials that often give messages about gender roles, even when it's unintentional. For instance, male characters in books may appear as leaders or experts, while female ones often take supporting or quiet roles. These portrayals can shape how students see gender in real life. Prasasti, Nurkamto, and Zainnuri (2025) found that sexism still appears in many English textbooks used in Indonesian schools. Their study shows that some learning materials keep old-fashioned gender roles, which might limit students' way of thinking. This matters because language learning is not only about grammar or vocabulary; it's also about values and identity. When gender bias appears in ELT, it can affect how students see themselves and others. Teachers should be aware of this issue and try to pick or adapt materials that promote gender equality. By doing so, English classes can become places that encourage fairness and critical thinking about gender.

It's important to think critically about this kind of talk because what people post on social media is not always neutral. There are beliefs and values behind every image, word, and video that shape how people view language, gender, and education. We might accept these ideas easily if we don't think carefully. Some ads may look harmless, but they can actually keep gender stereotypes alive or make unfair standards. When we look closer at such messages, we can ask why certain pictures are used, who is shown, and who is left

out. This analysis helps us understand the deeper meaning of what we see online. It also helps us see how power works in language and media. By studying these discourses critically, we can be more aware and responsible as learners and social media users.

This topic is socially meaningful because it connects to how people see gender and education in daily life. Many people, especially the young, use social media to learn and decide things. When educational promotions show unfair or limited gender views, they can change how students think about themselves and others. This might lead to discrimination, missed chances, or low self-esteem. That's why it's important to pay attention to how gender appears in these messages. If we understand the issue, we can create content that supports equality and respect for everyone. This is not only about education, but also about building a more fair and welcoming society. Raising awareness can make schools, course organizers, and media creators more careful and responsible in how they deliver their messages.

Methods

Method and Design of the Research

This research used a qualitative descriptive method that focused on how language used in digital media. The method is suitable to understand how gender represented in English language learning content, especially in video posts uploaded on Instagram. The data was taken from the Instagram account @kampuninggrislc and analyzed by using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA helps the researchers to explore not only what is said, but also the meaning and ideology behind the language used (Fairclough, 2013). Because this study tries to look at discourse, context, and representation, the qualitative approach is more proper than the quantitative one.

Participants

The participants in this research are not people who are directly interviewed or given survey. Instead, the study observes digital participants, which means English tutors and students that appear in the videos from @kampuninggrislc Instagram account. Their spoken words, visual look, roles, and interaction inside the videos are used as the data source. This matches with discourse analysis approach that usually use real data from daily life context (Gee, 2011).

Research Instruments

The main instrument in this research is the researcher itself. In qualitative study, the researcher has the main role to interpret and analyze the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The other tools include a data collection sheet for noting observation from the videos, and a checklist based on gender representation indicators. These tools help to make sure that the analysis is done in an organized and systematic way.

Technique of Data Collection

The data was collected through document analysis. The videos were chosen from the @kampuninggrislc Instagram feed, focusing on the post that show English learning activity. The selected videos were downloaded and then transcribed. Contextual information like video captions, hashtags, and visual element also were noted. According to Flick (2014), collecting multimodal data such as audio, visual, and written texts is important in social media research.

Technique of Data Analysis

The data analyzed by using Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis. This model has three step:

- 1) Text analysis: Looking at the language used in the videos, like vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.
- 2) Discourse practice: Understanding how the texts are made and understood in the learning environment.
- 3) Social practice: Interpreting the texts in connection with bigger issues such as gender role and power relation.

This analysis helps the researchers to find patterns in how male and female roles are shown and how these patterns reflect or maybe challenge the traditional gender idea. As said by Tannen (1994), the gender difference in communication often shaped by social expectation and cultural norm, and this can be seen in learning materials and class interaction, even in informal digital platform like Instagram.

Results



*Next mau liburan
kemana nih? Terus
pake kendaraan apa?
[Data 1]*

*Berawal dari catwalk bikin kak
Vina jadi punya pengalaman tak
terlupakan bareng Kampung
Inggris LC
Yuk, simak cerita selengkapnya
[Data 2]*

*Pasang telinga baik-baik
ya.. [Data 3]*



*Siapa yang
relate sama
kesenjangan bahasa
inggris ini? [Data 4]*

*Minal Aidzin Wal Faidzin.
Kalau ada rasa yang dipendam
silahkan diungkapin [Data 5]*

*Selamat Hari Raya
Idul Fitri 1445 H! 🌙✨
Kami, segenap keluarga
besar Kampung Inggris LC,*

*mengucapkan
Taqabbalallahu minna wa
minkum. Mohon maaf lahir
dan batin. Semoga
kebahagiaan, keberkahan,
dan kedamaian selalu
menyertai kita semua.
[Data 6]*

The first video features a male teacher explaining English prepositions for transportation. His confident and structured style, combined with a topic often associated with men (cars, trains, vehicles), subtly reinforces masculine expertise. Through a CDA lens, the visuals and topic position him as knowledgeable and in control, strengthening gendered assumptions that men fit logical or technical subjects in educational ads.

The second video shows Vina sharing her experience at Kampung Inggris LC, framed through beauty, confidence, and her past pageant experience. The catwalk scene and soft visuals highlight femininity and emotional expression. CDA reveals how the video links women to appearance, personal growth, and charm, reinforcing gendered contrasts with the logical, technical teaching style in the first video.

The third video plays with the phrase “Aku Ga Papa,” performed by a hijab-wearing speaker. It mixes English learning with emotional expression often tied to women. The short, polite dialogue reflects norms expecting women to stay gentle and indirect. CDA shows how this reinforces cultural ideas of women as emotionally deep but polite, making femininity central to the learning content.

The fourth video presents two young women joking about their English skills. Words like “bestie,” playful tone, and laughter create a feminine, relational atmosphere. Instead of authority, the focus is on bonding and fun. CDA highlights how the video constructs female learners as expressive, friendly, and supportive—traits often linked with femininity in educational media.

The fifth video features a hijab-wearing woman explaining Eid vocabulary with warmth and friendliness. Her appearance and tone reflect modesty, care, and cultural values. CDA shows how language learning is blended with religious identity, reinforcing traditional expectations of women as gentle, polite, and emotionally supportive during family-oriented celebrations.

The sixth video shows both men and women giving Eid greetings. Although it appears balanced, visuals still reflect traditional roles: women shown as gentle and warm, men as calm and composed. CDA reveals how the message promotes unity while quietly maintaining conventional gender norms within a religious and cultural context.

Table 1. Thematic Categorization

Video	Focus	Gender Representation	CDA Insight
1. Male tutor & transport	Grammar (prepositions)	Male = confident, logical, technical	Masculine authority in knowledge
2. Vina & catwalk	Personal growth	Female = graceful, emotional, beautiful	Femininity as inspiration

3. “Aku Ga Papa”	Emotional expression	Female = polite, reserved	Emotional restraint & indirectness as feminine traits
4. “Bestie” & bilingual jokes	Friendship in learning	Female = social, funny, expressive	Learning as relational for women
5. Hijab girl Eid vocab	Religion & language	Female = modest, warm, cultural values	Hijab = religious and gender identity
6. Group Eid greeting	Unity in celebration	Men & women = balanced, but traditional roles	Cultural harmony with preserved gender norms

Judith Butler argues that gender is not something people *are*, but something they *do* through repeated actions. In the first video, the male tutor explains English prepositions with confidence, clarity, and structure. These behaviors align with masculine performativity often associated with rationality and technical knowledge, reinforcing who is seen as legitimate to teach certain topics in ELT.

In the second video, Vina speaks with a soft tone, aesthetic visuals, and an emotional narrative about her personal growth. This reflects feminine performativity, where expressions of feeling, charm, and beauty are emphasized. Butler’s ideas help show how such actions continually shape cultural meanings of “femininity” in educational media.

The third video discusses the phrase “Aku Ga Papa,” framed as polite emotional denial commonly linked to women. Through Fairclough’s CDA, the soft language reflects norms that expect women to maintain harmony. Van Dijk’s view supports this, showing how repeated discourse patterns reproduce gendered ideologies.

In the fourth video, two young women joke and chat while talking about what they learned. The relaxed tone, laughter, and terms like “bestie” create a feminine situation model focused on connection. This blend of friendship talk and learning talk (interdiscursivity) reinforces the image of female learners as expressive and relational.

The fifth video features a hijab-wearing woman teaching Eid-related vocabulary. Here, language learning merges with religious and cultural symbols. CDA shows how this representation highlights warmth, modesty, and family values qualities socially tied to women supporting van Dijk’s idea of positive self-presentation.

The sixth video shows a male and female speaker greeting viewers together. Although it appears equal, the visuals still reproduce traditional roles: women shown as gentle, men as calm. Using CDA and van Dijk’s ideological framework, this “balanced” representation still maintains conventional gender norms in a safe, culturally accepted way.

Conclusion

This study investigated the implementation and impact of formative assessment in supporting the development of speaking skills among fourth-grade EFL learners in an Indonesian primary school. The findings revealed that formative assessment was integrated into classroom practice through teacher observation, immediate oral feedback, and structured opportunities for peer and self-assessment. These strategies were found to enhance students’ fluency, confidence, and motivation, showing that even young learners are capable of benefiting from continuous and supportive feedback when applied consistently. Triangulation of data from interviews, focus group discussions, and

classroom observations confirmed that formative assessment was not only understood by the teacher but also valued and internalized by students, contributing to their oral language growth.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study also identified practical challenges, such as large class sizes, limited time, and student shyness, which at times hindered the effective delivery of feedback. These limitations suggest that while formative assessment has strong potential to enhance speaking instruction, its impact depends on adequate classroom conditions and teacher support. The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on formative assessment by demonstrating its applicability and benefits in young EFL contexts, particularly in Indonesia, where research on primary-level speaking instruction remains limited.

This study has showed that gender discourse give big influence in promoting English language education on social media, especially on platforms like Instagram. The research use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to look at six video posts from @kampunginggrislc, showing how male and female identities are built differently through language, visuals, and topic. These differences are not neutral; they are shaped by culture and repeated through many media representation. The research also use Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity to show that gender is something acted out in these videos, not just shown. For example, the male tutor in the first video show his masculinity by explaining things logically, teaching technical topics, and looking sure of himself. On the other side, female speakers were shown as feminine by sharing emotional story, talking politely, and presenting themselves in a soft and kind way. These performances follow social norms that connect men with rationality and power, and women with warmth, emotions, and beauty.

The use of Fairclough's CDA model also help to understand how text, discourse practice, and social structure work together in forming educational messages. The words used in the videos, the roles given to speakers, and the meanings in the visuals all combine to support traditional gender roles. For example, the hijab as a sign of religion and gender, or the idea that women should hide emotions, are examples of how society expect men and women to behave. Van Dijk's idea about discourse and ideology also support this, showing how repeated patterns of talk help to keep strong cultural values alive, often without people realize it. Even when some content looks balanced, like the group Eid greeting, a deeper look shows that even the message of togetherness and peace still keep traditional gender ideas. Women are often shown as gentle, expressive, and modest, while men appear calm, logical, and polite. These portrayals, even if they look positive, still limit how both genders can be represented in education.

In conclusion, this study point sout the importance of looking critically at gendered discourse in educational ads on social media. It shows that learning content is not only about language skills, but also about social messages that shape how people think about gender, education, and identity. Teachers, creators, and institutions should work together to make more inclusive and fair representations that challenge stereotypes instead of repeating them.

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