

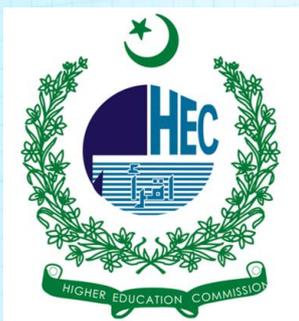
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**Analysing the Construction of Gender Identities: A Critical  
Discourse Study of Pakistani Secondary English Textbooks**



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**Abstract**

This paper analyses the construction of gender identities in English textbooks at the secondary level in Pakistan using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This study provides textual and visual analysis of textbook and image presentation in four popular textbook series (Grades 9-10), published by the Punjab Textbook Board, and Sindh Textbook Board between 2016-2022 based on the three-dimensional system of Fairclough and the socio-semantic inventory provided by van Leeuwen. The results show some systemic tendencies in gender inequality: male characters are occupied by more jobs (73-27), daily activities in the public sphere and power positions, and female characters are shown as mostly confined to the domestic sphere, as passive objects of action, and mostly as depicted in connection with their relationships with men. The analysis establishes three prevailing discursive practices, namely nominalisation of male agency, and collectivisation of female experience and aestheticisation of domestic labour as a set of discursive practices that naturalise patriarchal gender ideologies. These images are not only the reflections of the social inequalities currently present in our society but are also actively involved in their reproduction by justifying certain gendered subject positions. The article states that textbooks in English language in Pakistan serve as technologies of governmentality and that they are creating learners as gendered subjects using an apparently neutral educational material. The implications of the findings have great impacts on the textbook policy, training of teachers and curriculum development in the postcolonial education systems.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, gender representation, English textbooks, Pakistan, secondary education, identity construction, curriculum studies

**1. Introduction**

The textbooks assume a paradoxical position in all educational systems across the world. At the same time, as the bearers of approved knowledge and criticised as a means of spreading ideology, they continue to be the main intermediaries between the policy of curriculum and the practice in the classroom (Apple, 2019; Luke, 1988). English language textbooks have a special symbolic charge in postcolonial settings

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like Pakistan where English serves as a colonial legacy, a social access point to prestige and a gateway to economic access. they are not only the instillment of the linguistic competence; they are the embodiment of the specific world-views, glorification of certain social configurations, creation of the authoritative ways of subjectivity (Pennycook, 1994; Canagarajah, 1999).

The importance of textbook analysis is increased with regard to gender. Educational materials do not passively mediate gender relations in the society; they are also involved actively in their constitutive in the sense that they offer templates of the self (Kress, 1989, p. 12). By being repeatedly exposed to patterned representations, learners do not just learn linguistic structures, but also the gendered subject positions that these structures represent. In the adolescent learner, whose secondary school is a crucial phase of identity development, the information contained in the school content can be internationally regarded as potentially having long-term consequences on the development of the self-concept, the aspiration development and social orientation (Weiner, 1994).

Pakistan is a particularly interesting country when it comes to exploring the gender representation in the textbooks. The country is ranked number 142 out of 146 countries on the Global Gender Gap Report (2023) provided by the World Economic Forum, and the country experiences strong gender inequality in the areas of economic participation, education, health, as well as political empowerment. Although the literacy rates found among females are on the rise (49.6% as of 2021), there are still notable disparities, especially in the rural regions and when considering the older generations (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Textbook reform is one of the educational interventions that have been found to play a key role in helping to address these inequalities (UNESCO, 2020). Nevertheless, in absence of systematic study of the current method of gendering textbooks, the interventions may tend to reproduce as opposed to changing the existent ideologies.

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

The major methodological and theoretical orientation used in this study is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to the formulations of Fairclough (1992, 2003), Wodak (2001), and van Dijk (1993), CDA takes discourse as a type of social practice that is both produced and productive of social structures. In contrast to the descriptive

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linguistic analysis, CDA examines linguistic functioning to uphold, authorise, or disrupt the relations of power and dominance.

This analysis takes the form of a three-dimensional framework described by Fairclough (1992):

1. Textual analysis: Analysis of linguistic means of vocabulary, transitivity, modality and cohesion.
2. Discursive practice: The production, distribution and consumption of text, intertextuality and interdiscursivity.
3. Social practice: Investigation of the relationship between textual practices and discursive practices to larger sociocultural and political situations.

In order to make the analysis of gender operational in particular, the analysis is inspired by the socio-semantic inventory that van Leeuwen (1996, 2008) uses to describe social actors. The framework allows the systematic analysis of the presence or absence, activation and passive, personalisation and impersonalisation of social actors of discourse. Moreover, the gendered discourses concept introduced by Sunderland (2004) as identifiable forms of creating gender which move through texts can be adopted as analytical categories in identifying patterned representations.

The conceptual framework is also informed by the poststructuralist feminist theory especially the concept of gender as the performative and discursively constructed (Butler, 1990). This is the view that gender is neither pre-discursive nor necessary, but is a result of textual practices in creating the illusion of fixed gender categories via repetitive citation of norms.

The objective and questions of the research.

This study aims to:

1. Determine patterns of gender representation which are predominant in Pakistani secondary English textbooks.
2. Analyze the verbal and visual mechanisms of construction of gendered identities.
3. Examine the connection of these representations to more wide sociopolitical contexts and ideologies.
4. Evaluate the educative gender equity implications.

The study has the following questions as a guiding factor:

1. How is it that the male and female characters in the textbooks are assigned social roles and activities?
2. What linguistic tools (transitivity, nominalisation, the agency) form the ways of making gendered subjects?
3. What do the visual representations of the male and female characters as well as the construction of gender difference in terms of semiotic resources entail?
4. What the gendered discourses are spread throughout the corpus of textbooks and how do these discourses locate the learner?

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study is related to a number of academic discussions. To start with, it represents a significant contribution to the research on the textbook analysis (e.g., Blumberg, 2008; Lee and Collins, 2008; Gharbavi and Mousavi, 2012) in the context of Pakistan, which has not been studied in detail previously. Although research has examined the Pakistani textbooks in terms of how they have been biased in religion (Nayyar and Salim, 2003) or how they represent history (Aziz, 1993), the systematic CDA of gender in English language products has not been extensively studied.

Second, the research reacts to the demand of more contextually oriented CDA, which explores the functioning of global analytical paradigms in particular postcolonial context (Bhabha, 1994; Canagarajah, 2002). This study does not impose Western feminism theories but takes into account the role of gender and how it is connected to class, religion, and postcoloniality as determinants of education discourse in Pakistani context.

Third, the findings have practical implications as they relate to curriculum development, teacher education and policy formulation. This study offers a basis to evidence-based reform of textbooks because it will offer empirical evidence on how textbooks create gender.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Ideological Apparatus as Textbooks**

The conceptualisation of textbooks as ideological artefacts has significantly changed since Althusser (1971) discovered that education is one of the most important ideological state apparatuses. Although Althusser stressed the role played by

schooling in reproducing capitalist relations, the mechanisms reproducing it on the textual level have since been discussed by other scholars.

According to Apple (2019), its substantial research on curriculum and ideology claims that textbooks represent the so-called official knowledge, or knowledge that the dominant forces have established as legitimate, valuable, and required to transmit culture. This state knowledge will never be neutral; it expresses specific class, gender and racial interests as being universal. The textbook selection processes are portrayed by Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) as a non-technical or more accurately political process of deciding whose knowledge is important enough to be preserved and passed down.

This ideological aspect is especially complicated in the framework of language teaching. The English language textbooks are not simply the transmitters of something; they are the imitators of communicative practices, they model the cultural values, and they construct the identities of the target language (Kramsch, 2009; Risager, 2006). In the case of learners in the expanding circle contexts such as Pakistan, English textbooks act as an interface of local identities and global linguistic capital whereby the Western cultural norms are imposed by means of language education or what Canagarajah (1999) describes as linguistic imperialism.

## **2.2 Gender on Educational Materials**

The study of gender and textbooks has gone through a number of stages. The quantitative content analysis was used in early research (1970s-1980s) to record the gross differences in visibility, i.e. merely counting the number of male and female characters, images, and mentions (Treichler and Frank, 1989). Results of these studies have demonstrated male dominance in all areas of subjects and national settings.

This was followed by work that took a more rigorous approach to analytical framework. Sunderland and colleagues (Sunderland, 2000; Sunderland et al., 2001) created the "gender representation checklist," which considers not only the presence but also the role, characteristic, and relationship aspects. The gender biases that Mills (1989) and Pauwels (1998) examined were linguistic sexism and its generic masculines, lopsided pairings (men and girls) and semantic derogation.

Recent research has been moving to discourse-analytical and multimodal methods. Lee and Collins (2008, 2010) used CDA to analyze Hong Kong textbooks, where they

discovered that there is a still prevalence of stereotyping although there are policy promises of gender equity in text books. Giaschi (2000) examined the issue of visual representation and showed how gaze, angle, and composition are engaged in gendered power relations. Ataibis and Daskalovska (2021) studied textbooks on EFL in Macedonia and found what they refer to as benevolent sexism, i.e., seemingly positive depictions, though, which, however, reaffirm traditional gender roles.

Meta-analyses are pointing at slow and disproportionate improvements. In-depth analysis by Blumberg (2008) revealed that, although visibility gaps have been minimized in most settings, the issue of qualitative representation, especially when it comes to both female agency and intellectual authority combined with the issue of occupational diversity, is still a problem. In an analysis of textbooks of the 21st century, Sheehan (2019) concluded that the modern form of sexism has substituted overt prejudice, with textbooks depicting women in more liberalized positions and preserving the insidious patterns of inferiority.

### **2.3 Education, Gender and Development in Pakistan**

There are major gender discrepancies in the educational setting of Pakistan. The net enrolment rates of females in secondary level is 44 percent against a male rate of 56 percent (UNESCO, 2021). In addition to access, there is an issue of content in the curriculum, pedagogy, and gender socialisation as the hidden curriculum.

The studies of Pakistani textbooks have mainly been conducted on the materials of the Islamic Studies and Social Studies and found that it is systematically biased on historical presentation and religious perception (Nayyar and Salim, 2003; Saigol, 2003). Textbooks on the English language have been accorded a lower critical level of concern though they are key in the curriculum and they are high stakes examination subjects.

Available research on the topic of gender within Pakistani educational resources indicates multifaceted points of intersection between tradition and modernity. Through the analysis of Punjab textbooks, Durrani and Dunne (2010) discovered that although the education of girls is clearly appreciated, the representations support domestic femininity and male dominance. Ali and colleagues (2021) reviewed secondary English resources, noting that even though occupational stereotypes remain apparent, there is some increased visibility. These studies,

however, do not offer a methodical linguistic analysis that CDA offers, which restricts them in determining the particular textual process of gender construction.

#### **2.4 Gender and Critical Discourse Analysis**

The CDA provides especially fruitful instruments of textual analysis of gender. CA as opposed to other approaches that consider gender as a demographic variable, to be tallied, studies gender as done in discourse, how language selections create masculinity and femininity as significant categories (Lazar, 2005; Mills and Mullany, 2011).

Important concepts of analysis are:

- Transitivity (Halliday, 1994): The distribution of processes (material, mental, relational) between female and male actors and the identification of those who act, those who feel and those who are described only.
- Nominalisation: Processes are transformed into nouns and this tends to mask the agency and to normalise social orders (Fairclough, 2003).

Modality: The term of obligation, probability, and ability, which creates various levels of power and restraint of gendered objects.

- Visual semiotics (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006): The way pictures create a kind of visual grammar such as gaze, perspective, and composition that either supports or undermines ideologies of gender in the text.

The feminist CDA framework by Lazar (2005) is a very clear attempt to tie linguistic analysis with the feminist political initiative, which suggests that discourse analysis should not merely describe but also confront gendered power dynamics. Such critical orientation will be taken in this research to bring into view the naturalised gender ideologies in education materials.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This research uses the qualitative Critical Discourse Analysis featuring quantitative aspects. The structure is based on the three-dimensional framework by Fairclough (1992) in which the text is described, then the text is interpreted discursively to eventually be explained socially. In this way, systematic linguistic analysis becomes possible as well as contextualised criticism of ideological impacts.

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## **3.2 Corpus Selection**

The corpus is the four series of English textbooks, which have been accepted by Pakistani provincial textbook boards to be used in the secondary level (Grades 9-10):

1. English 9 and 10 (Punjab Textbook Board, 2020-2022 editions)
2. Sindh English Reader 9 and 10 (2019-2021 ed. Sindh Textbook Board, 2019).
3. English 9 and 10 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa English (KPTBB, 2018-2020 editions).
4. Balochistan English 9 and 10 (BTBB, 2017-2019 editions).

The reason why these textbooks were chosen was:

- They are compulsory to the government and most of the privates in their respective provinces.

They combined have a population of about 85 percent of the secondary students of Pakistan.

They are the various regional contexts in Pakistan.

They were also not printed prior to the 2017 reforms of the Single National Curriculum, and thus are current.

The corpus is made up of 24 textbooks (4 series 2 grades 3 years of editions) and it was made up of about 2,400 pages of text and 890 visual images.

## **3.3 Analytical Framework**

The analysis was conducted in three phases connected to each other:

Phase 1: Content Survey- Quantitative.

- Names and unnamed frequency counts of characters.
- Oriental: Occupational role inventory.
- The type of activity (public/ private, productive/ reproduction, paid / unpaid)
- Measures of visual representation (presence, positioning, gaze)

Phase 2: Qualitative Linguistic Analysis: The socio-semantic categories of van Leeuwen (1996):

Specific to inclusion/exclusion: What social actors are called, genericised or nonexistent?

- Role assignment Are actors modeled as agents (doing) or patients (being done to)?
- Genericisation/specification: Do the actors consider themselves as individuals or as members of categories?

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- Assimilation/individualisation: Do the actors appear in groups or individuals?
- Activation/passivation Who acts, who is acted upon?

Also, Hallidayan transitivity analysis was analyzed:

- Types of processes (material, mental, verbal, relational, existential)

Participant role/Actor, Goal, Sensor, Phenomenon, Sayer, Receiver.

- Circumstantial factors (location, manner, cause, contingency)

Phase 3 Multimodal, Interdiscursive Analysis.

- Semiotic analysis of visual elements after Kress and van Leeuwen (2006).
- Analysis of image-text correlation (complementary, contradictory, elaborative)
- Discourse of interdiscursive elements (that which discourses are invoked?)<sup>3.4</sup>

## **Data Analysis Procedure**

There was an iterative, cyclical process of analysis:

1. Familiarisation: Extensive reading of all the textbooks in order to determine patterns and exceptions.
2. Coding: The use of analytical terms on sample units (chapters, units, spreads)
3. Pattern identification: The identification of coded elements in thematic categories.
4. Linguistic analysis: Critical analysis of the chosen extracts with the help of the CDA tools.
5. Contextualisation: The trending of textual patterns to larger sociopolitical contexts.
6. Confirmation: Triangulation, between researchers and member checking involving the Pakistani education specialists.

In order to achieve the level of analytical rigour, the study used:

- Inter-rater reliability: 20 percent of the corpus was coded by two researchers who agreed on 87 percent (Cohen 82) of the codes.

Negative case analysis This method actively seeks examples that do not conform to emerging trends.

- Reflexivity: Continuous investigation of the researcher positionality and the possible bias.

## **3.5 Ethical Considerations**

The study examined open educational resources, which did not need consent of

human subjects. But within ethical concerns representation and voice was taken care of by:

- Evading deficit frames on Pakistani education or culture.
- Contact with the Pakistani scholars and educators during the process of the research.
- Desire to engage in constructive criticism to achieve betterment not criticism.

#### **4. Findings**

The results are introduced in three related dimensions, which include: quantitative trends of representation, linguistic creation of gender as well as visual-semiotic tactics. The dimensions are then synthesised in order to come up with the dominant gendered discourses that are propagated by the textbook corpus.

##### **Patterns (quantitative) 4.1. Visibility and Distribution**

###### **Frequency and Prominence of Characters**

Quantitative analysis of the 24 textbooks shows that there are gross gender imbalances in the depiction of characters. Among these 1,247 characters, whose names are given in reading texts, dialogues and exercises, 712 (57.1) are men and 535 (42.9) are women. Although it is a smaller disparity than that within the studies of historical texts (Blumberg, 2008), it demonstrates the presence of male overrepresentation as the sex ratio in Pakistan is nearly equal.

Of more importance than raw figures is the assigning of prominence - that is, the occurrence in titular naming or first position naming or protagonist in a narrative text. Most of the dominant roles are held by male characters as compared to 32% of female characters. In particular, this gap is most notable in:

Historical and biographical work (78 percent male protagonists).

- The context of science and technology (82% male)
- Content of political and civic education (71% male)

Women dominance is focussed into:

- Home and family story settings (64% of the female heroes)
- 40% female, health and nutrition issues (58).
- 61% female: stories of moral education.

###### **Occupational Representation**

Gender segregation is evident with regard to the analysis of occupational roles

allocated to adult characters (Table 1).

<b>Occupational Category</b>	<b>Male Characters (%)</b>	<b>Female Characters (%)</b>
Professional/Technical (doctor, engineer, lawyer, scientist)	73	27
Political/Leadership (politician, activist, community leader)	81	19
Educational (teacher, professor, researcher)	52	48
Commercial/Business (entrepreneur, manager, trader)	69	31
Agricultural (farmer, livestock keeper)	87	13
Domestic service (cook, cleaner, childcare)	23	77
Unpaid domestic labour (homemaker, family care)	8	92

**Table 1: Gender distribution across occupational categories (n=412 occupational attributions)**

The statistics indicate what may be called vertical and horizontal segregation. Across the horizontal, there are some sectors that are virtually gendered, i.e., agriculture as a male occupation, domestic service as a female one. On a vertical perspective, even in such occupations as education, which can be called neutral, male occupies higher status jobs (principals, professors, researchers) whereas female is concentrated in the school teaching jobs.

### **Activity Types**

The division of activities represented in the text and image displays gendered spatial organisation:

- Actions in the sphere of social life (paying work, participating in political actions, civic participation, traveling, trading): 71% men, 29% women.
- Activities of the activities of the private sphere (household maintenance, childcare, family care, domestic consumption): 24 percent male, and 76 percent female.

54/46 percent male/female educational activities (studying, teaching, research).

Recreation (sports, hobbies, entertainment): 63/37/38.

It is worth noting that even in educational settings, the male gender is more often represented in active learning positions (experimenting, debating, leading) as opposed to the female gender, who seem to be in passive positions (listening, reading silently, following instructions).

## **4.2 Gender as a Linguistic Construction**

### **Transitivity and Agency**

A systematic analysis of 150 narrative and expository passages by transitivity demonstrates that there is systematic distribution of agency. In clauses of material process (clauses denoting action and events):

- 67% of clauses involve male actors taking action (Actor role).
- In 58 percent of the clauses in which they are mentioned, female actors are the Goals (receivers of action).

Male actors do transformative action (altering physical or social reality) in 71% of instances.

The maintenance action of female actors (conserving existing states) is 64 percent.

In example 1, the rent curve is shown to follow the following pattern:

Ahmed had the idea of making a better village. He mobilised the young men and they constructed a new school. The village women were thankful of his leadership. (Punjab English 10, Unit 3, p. 45)

In this case, Ahmed holds the Actor position in material processes (decided, organised, built), and women are passivised (were grateful) and are not included in the collective they in the transformative action.

### **Agency Obscuring and Nominalisation.**

Nominalisation representing transformation of processes into noun phrases serves to hide agency and to naturalise social arrangements. The systematic patterns are determined:

**Male associated activities are likely to be kept active (verbalised):** He leads, He decides, He creates.

**Female-related activities are often nominalised:** the care of children, house management, family welfare.

There is an ideological impact of this grammatical option. Compare:

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- She is a family nurturer (verbal, agentive)

The family will be her responsibility (nominalised, responsibility assigned).

In the second construction, which is more prevalent in the corpus, the active work done is backgrounded and the arrangement is shown as state of nature and not as constructed practice.

## **Modality and Social Futures**

Various levels of possibility, necessity, and capability are built on modal verbs (can, could, may, might, must, should, will, would) to male and female characters:

- Male characters are linked to ability modality (can, could, able to) in 61 percent of modal situations, and they are building capability and potential.

Female characters- Female characters are linked with obligation modality (must, should, have to) in 54% modal contexts that create duty and constraint.

- Male characters are represented with probability modality ("will," "would," going to) as to future achievement in 68% predictive situations.

## **Example 2 demonstrates:**

Khalid will grow up to be a great engineer. He can solve any problem. Cooking should be taught to Sara so that she is capable of running her home in future. (Sindh English Reader 9, Unit 5, p. 78)

The modal options form radically different social futures: the ability of Khalid and the likely success in his case versus the need of Sara to learn domestic skills.

## **Naming and Address**

The patterns of addressing and naming create varying levels of individuality and status:

Male characters are also more often full-named and titled 73% of titled references: 73% with titles.

Female characters are more often referred to relational terms (Mother, Sister, Mrs. Ahmad husband): 58% of the references of the female characters.

Male characters have professional titles, female characters have familial or honorific titles.

This trend makes males professionally oriented and females relational individuals who are characterized by the connection with others.

### **4.3 Visual Representation**

#### **Presence and Positioning**

The visual analysis of 890 pictures shows:

- There are 62% men in the images, 48% women (more than 100 percent because of the mixed-gender images).

- Males are placed in the middle in mixed-gender pictures 71 per cent.

Of 68 per cent of compositions males are depicted in foreground (larger, more detailed).

Females are represented in the background or peripheral roles in 64 percent of the cases.

#### **Gaze and Perspective**

In accordance with the model of visual social distance and power by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006):

- Demand images (subjects facing directly on the viewer, establish interpersonal contact): 54% male, 46% female.

- Provide pictorial images (people looking away, so that they can be inspected by the viewer): 41 per cent men, 59 per cent women.

Males are more often built as active characters with which a viewer communicates; females as objects to be watched.

#### **Angle and Power**

Low angle shots (viewer looks up, power is built): 67% male subjects.

High angle shots (viewer looks down, building the subordination): 58 per cent female subjects.

1. Equal distribution (52 percent male, 48 percent female) on eye level shots (equality).

#### **Setting and Activity**

Words are supported by visual images:

- Males in outdoor/public place pictured: 64%

Females (in domestic/indoor) 71%

Male: active/physical activities: 58%.

Females who were involved in not exercising: 63%

#### **4.4 Pre-eminent Gendered Discourses.**

Through synthesis of patterns of textual and visuality, there are three hegemonic gendered discourses uncovered throughout the corpus:

**Discourse 1: Men Agency and Citizenship of the people.**

This discussion builds males as participants of the reshaping of the public sphere. It appeals to the developmental and nationalistic discourse and makes men the creators of the nation, innovators, and leaders. Major linguistic distinguishing features are:

V. of transformation Transitive (develop, build, lead, reform, and so on).

- Dynamic and authority visual norms.
- Connection with technology, politics and the production of the economy.

Such a discussion places the male learners as prospective actors in the society with mandate to foster the overall development.

**Discourse 2: Female Home and Nurse.**

This discussion forms femininity as a domestic competence and relationship care. It is based on traditional and religious discourses of separate spheres which places women as custodians of family welfare and moral transmission. Key markers include:

- Nominalised care and maintenance processes.
- Aesthetic lock in on home furnishings.
- Identification with nurture, sacrifice as well as emotional labour.

This discussion makes female students future wives and mothers whose main role is played in the intimate area.

**Discourse 3: Complementary and Unqualified Partnership.**

A discourse of modernisation which recognises female education and respecting the female but not neglecting the hierarchy. It shows gender relations as complementary union where the two sexes play significant roles though these are well distinguished and separated by space. Key markers include:

- Parallel is used in the accentuation of difference: Men work outside, Women work inside.
- Visual contrasting between male working and female housewife scenes.
- Modality of obligation was used differently in each of them (Men must provide, Women must protect family honour)

The insidious nature of this discourse is especially strong because it seems

progressive, whereas the conventional arrangement is strengthened.

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1 Theoretical Implications**

The results show that English textbooks in the Pakistani secondary schools are technologies of gender governmentality (Foucault, 1978; McNay, 1992). By being subjected to patterned representations repeatedly, learners are not informed about gender but constituted as gendered subjects. The textbooks present imaginary relations (Althusser, 1971) which place the learners in gendered subject positions.

There are three theoretical findings:

To begin with, the paper supports the claims that Fairclough (2003) makes when he suggests that naturalisation of social arrangement occurs when language and visual decisions are made which may seem to be descriptive and not constructive. The textbooks fail to explicitly define that men are expected to lead and women follow but instead they are woven as a transitivity pattern, visual composition, and choice of words.

Second, the analysis displays what can be called the postcolonial patriarchy a setup in which the conventional gender structures are solidified with the help of contemporary pedagogical technologies. The textbooks use the modern pedagogical practices (communicative language teaching, learner-centred activities) and reproduce the traditional gender ideologies. This implies that, pedagogical modernisation does not invariably imply social modernisation.

Third, the results confirm the concept of gender as performative and citational suggested by Butler (1990). The textbooks are not elaborating the already existing gender identities but are giving the script or the way in which gender identities are played out. The texts also assist in embedding the specifics of gendered norms and their seeming naturalism through recurring reference to them.

### **5.2 Meeting Postcolonial Contexts**

The gendered discourses as presented should be contextualized in the context of Pakistan, which is post colonial. The education of English language is somehow of ambivalence: it is at the same time a vehicle of international participation and an indication of colonial heritage (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1994).

In the textbooks, what Bhabha (1994) refers to as hybridity in his gender

constructions are exposed. They draw upon:

And: colonial legacies, Victorian ideology of separate spheres.

- Nationalist reactions: Focus on Islamic values and culture, which can be viewed as female domesticity and male protection.
- Discourses of global development: The mention of gender equality and female education, however in very limited and instrumental ways.
- Neoliberal rationales: Individual success and competing, more accessible to the male characters.

This hybridity brings about complicated representations. As an instance, women are depicted in the process of seeking education (in compliance with global development agendas and national policy) but mainly with instrumental service (better mothering, helping husbands in their careers, teaching) (enforcing domestic orientation). To a great extent, postcolonial gender politics is described as this modernisation without transformation (Mohanty, 1988).

### **5.3 Implications to Gender Equity**

The implications of the findings to gender equity in Pakistani education are:

By repeatedly linking male and female to professional-technical and domestic-care occupations respectively, the textbooks are replicating the reproduction of labour market segregation. Women in education get minimal symbolic assets in envisioning themselves in non-conventional careers.

**Construction of Learner Identities Differently:** The textbooks place male and female learners differently. Males are made future actors in the public; females future caregivers in the private. This positioning difference can influence the aspiration formation, subject choice, as well as educational investment decision.

**Legitimisation of Gendered Violence:** Although it is not directly discussed in the textbooks, the creation of male power and subordination of women gives them cultural resources that may legitimize gender-based violence. When the establishment of male leadership and female compliance is made to seem normal, the challenge against the same can be made to appear deviant.

**Lacking Crisis of Transformation:** Textbooks are lack of crisis of gender critical learning. Instead of analysing gender as a construction of social relations, or discussing relations of power, they give us static, essentialised categories.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

There are a number of weaknesses of this study. To begin with, the text under analysis is oriented to the textual representation and not the incorporation by the reader. The ethnographic inquiry is needed to find out how these representations are actually perceived by Pakistani secondary learners. Second, the research looks at official textbook and not supplementary textbooks, teacher mediation, and classroom interaction, which could adjust, or dispute textual ideologies. Third, the cross-sectional design involves a snapshot of a point in time, longitudinal analysis would be able to show how the representations evolve over a period of time.

#### **6. Conclusion**

It is a Critical Discourse Study which has examined how gender identities are discursively constructed within Pakistani secondary English textbooks demonstrating systematic asymmetries in favouring the male agency, publicity and professional powers and limiting the female characters to domestic spaces, relationship identities and passive roles. The textbooks naturalize patriarchal gender ideologies through linguistic strategies of transitivity allocation, nominalisation, modality and visual conventions of positioning, gaze and setting, positioning learners as differentially gendered subjects. The results show that textbooks are not passive carriers of linguistic information but they are actively involved in constructing gender. These representations have a material impact on the self concept of learners, the formation of their aspiration, and social positioning in Pakistani context in which English proficiency is a source of great social capital.

Due to these findings, some recommendations are provided. In the development of textbooks, use gender-sensitive review of publications with feminist linguists and scholars of gender studies; make male and female characters equally visible, equally agency and occupational diversity; make a verbalised contribution of female labour done by verbalising women's active contributions; and incorporate critical approaches to gender as a social construction rather than a natural fact. In the case of teacher education, create critical literacy elements in teacher education that facilitates the training of teachers to perceive and address gendered representations; equip educators with mechanisms of discussing gender bias with students in ways that are culturally sensitive; and educate teachers to incorporate counter-hegemonic

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material in their teaching that replaces textbooks. To policy, include gender equity requirements in Single National Curriculum instructions; put in place gender representation in approved textbook monitoring systems; and promote studies on effects of textbook on students and gender attitudes. In future investigations, the reception researches on how students perceive textbook gendering; mediation of textbook contents in classroom by teachers; broaden the research to other subject areas and grade levels; and compare Pakistani textbooks with those in other postcolonial and Muslim majority settings.

The paper adds to the comprehension of how educational resources are engaged in the slow violence (Nixon, 2011) of gender inequality: violence is produced not through spectacular acts but rather through the aggregated, daily acts of representation that limit women in their possibilities and make natural the subordination. The research will contribute to the gender justice fight in Pakistani education and other areas by rendering these patterns visible. According to the analysis, textbook reform, as much as it is needed, is not enough without more widespread change of the gendered social relations, which textbooks represent. Critical discourse analysis offers the means of this required work, means of reading against the grain, questioning the taken-for-granted, and envisioning other possibilities of the future. Such critical reflection on learning resources in an environment where education of girls is still debated and gender-based violence continues is something more important than an intellectual practice but rather a political one.

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