



Gender Ideology and Inequality in Pakistani English Textbooks: A Critical Discourse Analysis within the South Asian Educational Context

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ABSTRACT

The paper is a critical case study of a lesson that was chosen, Gender Inequality and Implications, contained in one of the Grade 12 English textbooks published by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Federal Board. The lesson is discussed as a critical case since it offers a strategic position in studying how patriarchal ideologies are discursively constructed, even in the material that is allegedly discussing inequality. The work examines language, images, and narrative patterns in the work through the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), or rather the model of Critical Language Studies formulated by Fairclough. According to the findings, women, as opposed to men, are largely depicted as emotional, submissive, and morally obligated. Institutionalized gender inequality recreates these representations and normalizes patriarchs of power relations in education. This paper states that the concepts of patriarchy are still perpetuated by the Pakistani education systems and needs to be changed to gender-sensitive curriculums that would encourage equal representation and social consciousness.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Pakistani Textbooks, Gender Inequality, Patriarchal ideology*

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INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are the most effective sources of teaching and socializing and are very important in forming perceptions of the students on gender roles and social hierarchy (Richards, 2009). In Pakistan, like in other South Asian societies, English language textbooks are used as a means of education and a means of ideology and tend to spread cultural standards that reinforce conventional gender roles. Although educational policies have promoted gender balance, a large amount of available literature suggests that Pakistani textbooks continue to support masculine models and propagate patriarchal ideals (Ali & Hussain, 2019, Daghigh, Kaur, & Mahmood, 2021; Skelton & Ullah, 2013).

Nevertheless, there is a serious gap in this literature. Although the prevalence of gender bias has been well captured in past research, only a few have utilized a strong critical infrastructure to investigate the manner in which linguistic and visual discourses find their way into the creation of this ideology altogether. In addition, the research literature on Pakistani textbook discourse is already limited on the grounds of the systematic contextualization of this ideology in the wider context of South Asia, where the same patterns of gendered representations are employed.

To fill this gap, this paper uses the three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (1989), combined with the semiotic analysis of visual items in Chandler (2014). This methodological approach is selected due to its ability to relate micro-level textual and visual characteristics to macro-level social ideologies, therefore, revealing the under-researched processes under which gender inequality is naturalized in the educational resources.

There are more developmental concerns with the reinforcement of gender bias in textbooks. By denying girls equal access to education content, it may limit the development of human capital, decrease the rate of women participation in the labor market, and social inequality. This paper will show how educational discourse coincides with social, economic and development aspects and will justify the need of interdisciplinary curriculum reforms in Pakistan and other similar developing nations.

The analysis is applied to a focused corpus: a critical case study of a lesson on "Gender Inequality and Its Implications". This approach reveals major findings. The analysis shows how women are repeatedly linguistically portrayed as helpless, emotional, and ethically constrained, while men are depicted as reasoning and domineering. These images are physically supported with visual imagery that spatially alienates women, and symbolically, is used to emphasize male dominance. Notably, in many cases, even those lessons that specifically discuss gender inequality consider it to be a descriptive, unquestionable fact, thus becoming subliminal reinforcers of the hierarchies they are meant to be discussing.

The initial input of the present paper is threefold. To begin with, it provides a new methodological framework since it inculcates CDA and semiotics to analyze gender in educational texts in a holistic manner. Second, it offers a more critical and in-depth insight into the ideological reproduction of patriarchy that is not based on quantitative measures of representation. Third, it puts the Pakistani case into a regional South Asian setting and how education talk within the region keeps gender inequality alive, as it shares cultural and religious and colonial narratives. This paper concludes by suggesting that curricula should be overhauled to enhance real gender equity in

education.

Rationale of the study

The justification of the research arises due to the necessity to unearth gender ideologies in educational discourse in Pakistan. As a state-approved resource, textbooks are rather crucial in creating a perception of social order and gender identity in learners. Although Pakistan has tried to achieve gender equality by redefining its education system, prior research (Ali & Hussain, 2019, Daghigh, Kaur, & Mahmood, 2021; Skelton & Ullah, 2013) shows that a female character in the film is usually restricted to either domestic or emotional or a dependent role, whereas a male character is represented as an authoritative, rational, and visible character. This research problem involves English language textbooks that are assigned to first and second-year classes in the English language at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Textbook Board. The study, through qualitative analysis using CDA and a three-dimensional model of Fairclough (1989), considers the role of language and images as ideological representational tools. The research seeks to reveal the continuation of the discourse of patriarchy in the educational system by examining both the text and the visuals. In a wider sense, the study places Pakistani textbook discourse in the context of South Asia, as such trends of gendered representation have been found elsewhere in India, Bangladesh, and other neighboring states (Lee & Collins, 2009; Visser, 2002). Using this comparative approach, the paper brings to light the role of the textbook narratives in the socialization of students into gender hierarchies that are culturally defined. The results will be appropriate in advancing a higher comprehension of discourse, ideology, and education interaction in influencing gender perceptions among South Asian societies.

Research Questions

1. How are gender roles and identities represented linguistically and visually in the lesson Gender Inequality from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa English Textbook?
2. In what ways do these representations produce or challenge dominant gender ideologies and power relations in Pakistani society?
3. How does the portrayal of gender in these textbooks reflect broader South Asian sociocultural and ideological patterns?

Research Objectives

1. To review the language and visual expression of gender in English textbooks that are recommended by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Textbook Board critically.
2. To determine the nature in which language, imagery, and discourse in these textbooks reinforce or subvert patriarchal ideologies in Pakistan.
3. To place the analysis in the greater context of South Asia, to know how the discourse of education perpetuates or opposes gender inequality in the region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of gender in educational materials has been one of the major points in sociolinguistic and academic studies (Kenetova et al., 2022). The analysis of the textbooks as cultural artefacts is done by scholars in various disciplines; it demonstrates how textbooks are socially stratified and ideologically oriented. It is becoming clear among scholars that textbooks are not a priori stores of knowledge but ideologically mediating artefacts that are socially constructed. Instead of

transmitting information unilaterally, they reproduce cultural setups that have privileged some worldviews to the periphery of others (MacDonald, 2012; Sulaimani, 2017).

Global perspective on gender representation in Textbooks

In global literature, it is emphasized that educational discourse not only conveys knowledge but also stabilizes the social norms and power interactions (Pakuta, Pawelczyk & Sunderland, 2014; Tahriri and Pouran, 2014). The feminized contents of curriculum programs have been constantly reported in the sociological and educational literature on feminism (Fox, 1993; Kohl, 1995; Skelton, 2013, Ullah & Skelton, 1997;), where women are frequently depicted as reliant, emotional, and domesticized, whereas men are independent, strong, and rational. These depictions, entrenched in the textbooks, are influential tools in influencing the perception of gender identity and social expectations in students (Aksar, 2024).

Textbooks are quite powerful sources of ideology as they not only play the pedagogic but also the cultural and political roles. Sulaimani (2017) points out that textbooks affect the psychological and social development of children, as the authors introduce the values of society into their contents. Most learners in developing environments have textbooks as the main or only source of printed knowledge (Heyneman et al., 1981). They are vital in the processes of creating reading literacy and creating worldviews, attitudes, and moral values (Lee & Collins, 2009). They do so through such influence, and thus Thun (2001) describes this as the socialization of gender in which the learners internalize the cultural expectations of masculinity and femininity. Thus, textbooks are not mere knowledge of language and facts but the worldview of authors and institutions (Mineshima, 2008).

Gender Representation in Pakistani and South Asian Textbooks

In Pakistan, studies have always indicated that gender bias is still prevalent in texts. According to Skelton & Ullah (2013), male characters in the public-school textbooks are predominant in terms of the narratives as well as the visual representation, whereas the female characters in these texts are confined to supporting, domestic, or passive roles. Similar findings were made by Daghigh, Kaur & Mahmood (2021), who discovered through English textbooks that women were marginalized in their professional and intellectual agency, which reinforced patriarchal expectations in the premise of morality or religious appropriateness. As Ali and Hussain (2019) observed, even in the primary level, gender segregation is promoted through illustrations and dialogues that provide women with housework as the only task. Even though education reforms have been implemented in Pakistan by the government to facilitate gender equality, the ideological patterns are still firmly established, so the gap exists between the policy intention and textual realities.

Nevertheless, these studies mainly record gender imbalance in forms of counts or thematic summaries and do not pay much attention to the role of language structure and imagery in reinforcing gendered ideologies. As a result, the more profound discursive processes, which justify patriarchy in Pakistani education, are under-theorized.

Similar trends can be observed in South Asia, which indicates that gendered discourse in education is not a Pakistani phenomenon but a regional phenomenon. Mukhopadhyay (2012) and Nayar (2016) have conducted studies in India that reveal women are often portrayed as caregivers or

morally stable people and not citizens. Likewise, gender stereotyping in Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan textbooks still shows colonial and religious dominance by glorifying the patriarchal powers. These transnational conclusions highlight that the issue of gender representation in South Asian textbooks is a measure of overriding ideological traditions that are due to patriarchy, religion, and postcolonial nationalism. The discursive practices of education throughout the region can therefore be seen as a space of reproduction of ideologies in a way that perpetuates gender relations in the name of cultural authenticity and moral education (MacDonald, 2012).

This transnational data implies that gender discrimination in textbooks is a local tendency that is based on the same postcolonial and religious background. However, little comparative research has combined the linguistic and semiotic views to show how these ideologies are replicated in the South Asian situations.

The concepts of gender, culture, and power are so interconnected in what McLaren (1989) defines as the systems of knowledge that are reproduced using the curricula. School textbooks represent the explicit and the implicit ideological frameworks that justify current power relations. According to Wharton (2005), gender representation in children's literature and in learning content has a philosophical importance in that it not only reflects reality, but it also forms it. Texts become a reflection of cultures that legitimize the dominant identities and marginalize other people. This is in line with Chandler's (1997) concept that gender roles are not natural but rather constructed socially by discursive practices that are repeated. Such practices within the South Asian context tend to be based on religious, cultural, and colonial heritage that entails the dominance of masculinity. According to Hussain et al. (2015), the linguistic aspect of the Pakistani society perpetuates societal ideas of gender, with men being viewed as strong and rational and women as sensitive and dependent.

This process revolves around language itself. Linguistic structures are not neutral and are instead imbued with the traces of male dominance, as argued by Spender (1980) in *Man Made Language*. Her dominance approach shows how the use of lexical and syntax patterns provides support to asymmetrical gender-based power relations. This viewpoint is related to the argument made by Fairclough (1989) that discourse is a social practice and ideology functions in it. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a strong methodology to identify such ideologies of concealment in language. CDA looks at how language, power, and society relate and how discourse supports or disrupts the dominance arrangements (Wodak, 1999). In the three-dimensional model created by Fairclough, text, discursive practice, and social practice, the levels can be viewed as a way of how aspects of the text are intertwined with social worlds in reproduction or challenging power dynamics.

In addition to CDA, semiotic analysis would give us some understanding of non-verbal components of textbooks, such as images, gestures, and symbols, which are used to create meaning (Purwaningtyas, 2020). According to Chandler (2014), semiotics interprets how the visual representations generate ideology, which usually supports textual stories. Coupled together, CDA and semiotics enable a researcher to examine both the linguistic and visual aspects of discourse, using a wholesome picture of the working of gender ideology in the educational texts. This dotted line strategy is specifically applicable to the study of South Asian textbooks, in which images often

have cultural and moral implications in line with patriarchal values. Combined, semiotic analysis and CDA form a powerful theoretical framework to analyze the hidden reproduction of gender ideology in educational resources, which is why they turn out to be well adapted to the goals of this study.

The ideological aspect of education discourse may also be perceived in the concept of Althusser (1969), which is Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA), which defines the institutions like education, media, and religion that reproduce the domineering ideologies. Textbooks act as a very important ISA, since they instil social values in the object of neutral education. Van Dijk (1995) builds on this argument and points out that the linguistic and semiotic clues in discourse make the power relationship seem natural and indisputable. Such ideological reproduction is especially powerful in South Asian societies, where education, religion, and institutions of the family are closely intertwined (Farmer, 2025).

Although other studies, such as those by Skelton & Ullah (2013) and Mahmood et al. (2021), have successfully measured the rates of gender bias, they usually end by identifying the existing representations. This paper goes beyond the quantification to apply CDA and semiotics to reveal the process of constructing and naturalizing such representations in the discursive practices of linguistic and visual representations. Moreover, the paper, in contrast to the earlier studies, points to the Pakistani case, explicitly placing it in the comparative ideological framework of South Asia, and the discursive mechanisms used are based on a regional trend.

This paper fills these gaps in theories and findings by using CDA and semiotic analysis to determine how English textbooks issued by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board reproduce and authorize gender inequality with reference to the bigger South Asian ideological system.

Theoretical Foundation

The current research was based on various interconnected theoretical views which reveal how gender ideologies are created, reproduced and legitimized using educational discourse. The main model that is used in the current research is the three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (2005), which views discourse as a social practice. CDA allows the analysis of linguistic structures (text), institutional forces of textbook creation (discursive practice) and social and cultural ideologies, including patriarchy, nationalism and religion (social practice). This model is especially applicable in the analysis of Pakistani textbooks, during which the power relations and gender hierarchies can be frequently reflected in the ordinary language.

Besides CDA, other theoretical concepts used in the study, such as the semiotic theory, particularly the study by Chandler (2014), are applied in the analysis of visual representations and symbolic meanings of textbook images. Semiotics offers a level of analysis of the way the messages of gendering are supported in the text through composition, framing, gaze and the spatial positioning as visual means.

Ideological viewpoints are also introduced in the study, and the researchers use the concept of the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) by Althusser (1969), which perceives education as an important institution promulgating dominant social ideologies. It can also be corroborated by Van Dijk's (1993) socio-cognitive approach that describes the way discourse structures reproduce power relations in a subtle manner and render inequality as a natural or inevitable outcome. These

frameworks imply the role played by language and imagery in textbooks in promoting patriarchal values in South Asian societies.

All these theories together make it possible to construct an analytical framework to understand how English textbooks in Pakistan constitute gender identities, normalize gender roles, and uphold more general sociocultural ideologies. By combining CDA, semiotics, and ideological theory, the study will have a comprehensive approach to the mechanisms of linguistic and visual discourses supporting or questioning patriarchal standards in the educational setting.

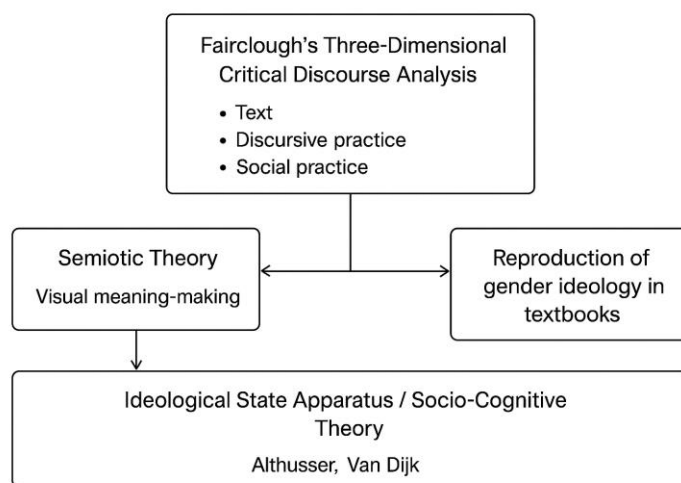


Figure 1 Integrating Framework: Combining CDA Semiotics and Socio-cognitive theory to explain how textbooks reproduce gender Ideology (Source: Fairclough (2005), Chandler (2014), Althusser (1969), Van Dijk (1993)).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this paper, a qualitative CDA-based research design was used to examine the linguistic and visual construction of gender in English textbooks published by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Textbook Board. The qualitative method is appropriate because it gives a possibility to analyse the themes of discourse on ideology and power in educational texts. Fairclough (1989) believes that CDA approaches language as a social activity that creates and maintains power relations. In this way, one can comprehend how gender inequality is ingrained and naturalized in the Pakistani discourse of education.

Theoretical Framework

The paper utilizes the three-dimensional CDA model proposed by Fairclough, which comprises textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice.

1. The text level deals with vocabulary, grammar, and language structures to show us the portrayals of gender identities.
2. The level of discursive practice considers the process of textbook production and interpretation in terms of their institutional and cultural contexts.

3. The level of social practice will put these representations in the context of larger social ideologies in South Asia like patriarchy, religion, and nationalism (Fairclough, 2005; Van Dijk, 1995).

This three-tiered approach relates textual decisions on the micro-level to macro-level practices, revealing the way discourse determines gender inequalities in the education system.

Data Source and Sampling: A Critical Case Study of a Focused Corpus

This study was based on a critical case study. The main data to be used in this research was a focused corpus: the full text and graphic materials of the lesson titled Gender Inequality and Its Implications published in the 12th-grade English textbook by the Federal Board of the KPK Textbook Board.

The explicit thematic nature of gender inequality in this corpus made it a strategic place to analyse the subject matter, as it is a critical case (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Such an explicit approach to the subject matter by the lesson, in contrast to the implicit reinforcement of gender roles as found in other lessons, provides an inimitable chance to explore how language and images are used to formulate and normalize the ideologies of patriarchy even in a lesson that supposedly criticizes it. The case study method makes it easier to study discursive processes at a small scale in this specific corpus, which would be missed in a larger and more generalized survey.

The entire corpus, such as all the narratives, exercises and the two illustrative figures (Figures 2 and 3), was analyzed to offer the comprehensive application of the three-dimensional model suggested by Fairclough.

Analytical Procedure

Corpus analysis was performed in three phases, which were in line with Fairclough's model and had some conceptions of Van Dijk (1995) and Althusser (1969):

1. Description (Text Analysis): The step was a systematic textual and lexical coding of the corpus to find out the gendered representations in both language and imagery.
2. Interpretation (Discursive Practice): At this point, the emphasis was placed on the understanding of the relationship between the identified linguistic and visual uses of the corpus that allow creating meaning and ideology with references to the institutional context of the lesson.
3. Explanation (Social Practice): This stage tied the discursive results of the corpus with other larger systems of the society, how the text replicates patriarchal power relations and as an Ideological State Apparatus (Althusser, 1969) in the particular social setting of Pakistan and South Asia.

Such a systematic process guaranteed a strict study of the reproduction of cultural and gendered ideologies through the discursive means of the chosen corpus.

Ethical Implications and Credibility

As this study analyzed a corpus of the study publicly available educational materials, there was no risk of any ethical harm or any human subjects, and there was no necessity for formal approval of ethical considerations. Transparency, reference of sources correctly, and following the academic standards were the principles of ethical integrity upheld. Systematic coding and triangulation of the text and visual data within the corpus were employed to guarantee credibility in that the

meanings were well-founded based on evidence (Wodak, 1999).

Results and Findings

The lesson of the intermediate English textbook titled Gender Inequality and Its Implications is based on the discourse, which is very much connected with the social aspects of Pakistani society. The language used in the text is simple in nature and conveys the concept of gender inequality in the simplest way possible, making the students find it easy to see what challenges women go through. This simplicity works ideologically, though: using an informal, explanatory tone, the writer makes gender difference commonplace, instead of bringing it up and questioning it.

The repetition of terms like women's problems and gender inequality creates an association of victimhood in women repeatedly. The lesson continuously reflects women as the victims of oppression, economically, emotionally, and socially, and men as physically powerful and dominant. These binary differentiation processes between strong men and weak women reflect the ancient patriarchal narrative of Pakistani society.

Besides, the allusions to religion and morals, even the status of women in Islam, have a dual role. On the one hand, they are trying to justify the rights of women on Islamic grounds; on the other hand, they perpetuate the myth about the superiority of women as being morally pure and obedient. Reports published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the Ministry of Women's Development are also called upon to confer authority that legitimises claims of inequality. But these inclusions are not critical; they are descriptive, and it would be implied that the lesson is not intended to change but rather to make people aware.

The text concludes with dramatic examples of social injustice, like *honour killings*, *forced marriages*, *Karokari*, and *Swara*, to highlight systemic gender-based violence. While these examples expose serious social issues, their framing often positions them as passive sufferers rather than active agents of change.

LEXICAL ANALYSIS

Fairclough (1989) points out that vocabulary has experiential, relational, and expressive values which indicate power and ideology. The words used in this lesson give very strong signals of the lexical patterns that show an experiential value that is connected with the marginalization of women. Terms such as violence, weak, dependent, victim, and others portray women as helpless objects in a patriarchal society. It is also encouraging the third-person narrative, which is used throughout, women are treated as, which depersonalizes the reader to the origin of the message and reduces the sense of responsibility.

Relational value of language is reflected in the utilization of the declarative sentences that introduce gender inequality as a given and unquestionable truth, but not a socially constructed one. In such a way, statements such as Women are discriminated against in education and employment are statements that reflect social problems as fixed realities. The lack of modal verbs (e.g., should, could, must) makes social change seem less urgent, as this way the text takes a passive position on the issue of empowerment.

Emotional appeals to sympathy in the sufferings of women are also evidenced by the expressive value of language, and by words which could be identified as belonging to the domain of honour, purity, and morality. This is because these decisions connect the social status of women to the

social honour (*izzat*), which supports the perception that female bodies and behaviours are an expression of male honour. The ideological implication is also evident; women are socially constructed as having their identity based on moral expectations by men.

Interpretation

The language structures in the lesson of Gender Inequality and Its Implications show the way the discourse is used to reproduce dominant gender ideologies present in the Pakistani society. The use of terms like women's problems and gender inequality places women as the main victims, and femininity is created by being vulnerable and dependent. This is in line with the idea of Fairclough (1989), who believed that language is a social action, and it reproduces the same power distribution.

The inability to use modal expressions and the declarative sentence structure introduces inequality as a stable social reality and not a disputable state. The text promotes binary gender identities that are also subject to cultural patriarchal expectations by describing men as physically strong and women as emotionally sensitive. Gender hierarchy is also justified based on moral virtue through religious and moral allusions, especially those that associate the worth of women with *izzat* (honour). These linguistic decisions can be viewed, in terms of CDA, as the way in which the discourse of education can be seen as an Ideological State Apparatus (Althusser, 1969), in which patriarchal values are quietly embedded into the learning process. This is how inequality has been naturalised in the text and made to appear as part of the social order instead of being manifested as a structural injustice. The lesson, therefore, fosters gender awareness and does not enable the learner to oppose or alter the unequal systems presented by the lesson.

SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS

The chosen photos in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) English textbook physically support gender inequality using symbolic composition and placement. There are three men and one woman in the first picture, with the woman on the outskirts, and the rest of the men are pointing towards her as though to indicate their non-relevance. According to Chandler (2014), semiotic interpretation implies that the denotative meaning describes a normal social situation, whereas the connotative meaning includes a more radical message: women are deprived of professional and other public domains. The hand of the male is a symbolic reference to power to strengthen the patriarchal domination of the social movement and the employment opportunities of women.



Figure 2 Source: KPK English textbook

The second picture, also a part of the lesson, *Gender Inequality and Its Implications*, is a metaphoric ladder of success. Male figures are on the ladder with no problem, and the unique female figure seems to be strained, which suggests few opportunities and social challenges. The unequal power balance between the genders is semiotically represented by the spatial arrangement of the characters and their body posture. This is in line with Fairclough (1989), who sees discourses, both textual and visual, as mirrors of larger social hierarchies.



Figure 3 Gender Inequality and Its Implications

These images, therefore, make gender-based exclusion natural in the textbook and put forward the attitude that women have an even bigger task to get to the same level as men. The imagery, thus, plays the role of a visual argument of inequality, which strengthens the ideology of patriarchy, which is within the textual narrative.

Discussion

The results of the textual, lexical, and semiotic analyses indicate how the English textbooks released by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board reproduce and justify the ideologies of patriarchy using words and images. The paper shows that gender inequality is both a social phenomenon and a discursive definition, which is supported and propagated by the educational system. The textual level also shows women as always being passive, dependent, and vulnerable, whereas men are strong, rational, and capable. This binary opposition is what Fairclough (1989) calls the experiential value of language, in that texts create social experience with the help of specific word usage. Declarative sentence structures put inequality as an unchallenged situation and not a social injustice that can be challenged, thereby making students spectators and not participants in change. The lexical analysis also demonstrates that terms like honour, obedience, weakness, and victim are predetermined with ideology, which strengthens gender stereotypes, which the South Asian culture is deeply embedded. Reiterating the association of the social status of women with *izzat* (honour), the text normalizes the perception that the value of a woman is determined by the moral limits that are regulated by men. This goes along with the meaning of the Ideological State Apparatus as described by Althusser (1969), through which institutions such as education recreate dominant ideologies in a subtle manner as they make them appear as the common sense. Similarly, the semiotic analysis shows that the visual representations collaborate with textual discourse to continue gender bias. Photographs that depict men occupying the places of authority and women in the peripheral or marginal areas are symbolic in terms of unequal access

to social mobility and independence. These visual signs, as Chandler (2014) describes, have levels that are connotative and position ideology behind seemingly neutral presentations. The textbook in this instance literally performs patriarchy by visually composing, hierarchizing the space, and visually performing.

Taken together, these results indicate that the purpose of educational discourse in Pakistan is twofold: it propagates the moral and civic virtues, but it also supports a gendered social hierarchy. It is a manifestation of larger South Asian trends in gender representation, in which religion, culture, and tradition rub together to justify inequality (Haque & Ullah, 2016). Such representations are revealed using CDA in that they develop an idea of gender roles as part of social hegemony and as something natural and inevitable in the minds of young learners.

Therefore, the research demonstrates that it is necessary to critically review educational resources and make sure that the textbooks are not based on outdated standards but should be inclusive, empowering, and gender-equity. According to Fairclough (2005), discourse transformation is a vital process of transformation in society.

Scope and Limitations

This research provides a critical case study analysis of a single lesson on Gender Inequality from a grade 12th Federal English textbook. As a focused qualitative study, its strength lies in the depth of analysis rather than generalizability. The findings are indicative of the ideological tendencies within this pedagogical unit. Moreover, the analysis is narrowed down to the content of the textbooks (the production and text dimension of the Fairclough model) and does not venture into the actual reception and interpretation of these representations by teachers and students in the classroom- the consumption dimension. This is a critical field to be examined in the future, as the interpretation of the audience may be very different. Such a narrow range entails a close discursive and semiotic examination but inevitably leaves the lived effect of such texts as a topic of inquiry.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the concept of gender inequality displayed and reinforced in Pakistani English textbooks in both linguistic and visual symbols. The results prove that even though the materials used in education seem to be neutral or objective on the surface, they are delicate means of ideological control. They further reproduce the visions of the Pakistani society that uphold the principles of patriarchy by building and naturalizing gender power structures. The examination indicates that male characters, often, are presented as rational, assertive, and dominant with associations of leadership, authority, and professionalism, whereas the female characters are limited to conservative roles that focus on morality, domesticity, and emotionality. This segregation not only discriminates against women but also creates unequal social structures that make men the natural rulers and women the subordinates.

Through the three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model by Fairclough, the research was effective in attributing the micro-level linguistic features, i.e., lexical patterns, syntactic structures, and transitivity, to macro-level social practices and ideologies. The CDA model unveiled the presence of everyday textual practices in the education sphere that reproduce societal norms, which eventually dictate the interpretation of gender roles by learners. These findings were further reinforced by the introduction of semiotic analysis, which demonstrated that visual imagery is a type of discourse; it is quiet, yet it is strong. The arrangement of males and

females, their costumes, gestures, and the spatial arrangement of the textbook images leave an implied story of the imbalance of genders. The visual items, therefore, serve as an appendix to the linguistic text to strengthen exclusion and inequality using the representational strategies.

Combined, these linguistic and visual conclusions prove that Pakistani textbooks are not only educational materials, but also the engine of socialization. They justify gender hierarchies by making biased gender roles appear natural, moral, and desirable. It is this normalization that turns more insidious yet more deeply entrenched because these representations are absorbed by students when they are young. The paper therefore points out that the education system, rather than playing the role of a social transformer, tends to be a tool of perpetuating the old patriarchal systems in the pretext of moral education.

More broadly, this study will contribute to the current debate on the interaction of language, power, and ideology in South Asian education. It highlights the importance of a critical review of the curriculum to reveal the gendered assumptions that have been concealed in learning resources. More gender sensitivity and inclusivity of curriculum design is a start to social equity. Curriculum developers, policymakers, and textbook writers should understand that they have a role to play when it comes to the conceptualization of gender in society. The textbooks need to portray a balanced representation that promotes the equal involvement of both men and women in any aspect of life; they need to be more critical of the text instead of accepting the stereotypes.

Finally, there is a need to adopt a transformative approach to education in this study, which is empowering and not limiting. Learning material can be used as an empowerment tool through conscious discursive reform and gendered educational policies that lead to equality and justice instead of replicating the societal inequities. In Pakistan, the only way to achieve true educational development is to break these linguistic and visual biases to develop a curriculum that appreciates diversity, equity, and inclusivity.

To change these results into policy, the education authorities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa must carry out gender sensitive reforms in the curriculum, train teachers to break the classroom gender stereotypes as well as to periodically review the content of the textbooks to ensure equal representation of boys and girls. These interventions would lead to social inclusion, higher female enrollment in education and the labor market and equitable human capital development in Pakistan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the results, the following recommendations are suggested to improve gender equity in the Pakistani English textbooks:

1. *Curriculum Reform*. Provide equal representation of women and men: depict women in various professional, educational, and social settings not on domestic or emotional ones.
2. *Gender-Sensitive Review*. Have a special committee of sociolinguists and education experts as well as gender specialists to go through the text as well as visual materials before it is published, empowering stories, and positive female role models.
3. *Training of teachers*. Educate teachers about gender-sensitive learning to discover prejudices and to make critical discussions on gender roles, gender social norms, and gender equality.

4. *Cooperation with Advocacy Groups*. Co-operate with national and international institutions to make textbook development in the global line, such as SDG 4.7 and SDG 5.
5. *Surveillance and Policy Review*. Review textbooks regularly and revise national curriculum policy by adherence to the existing gender equity concepts.
6. *Student Response*. Include student feedback in reviews of textbooks to realize the existence of subtle biases that adults cannot notice.

These steps are directed towards the creation of an inclusive, equitable system of education in Pakistan, the social consciousness, critical thinking and gender equality.

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