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An Analysis of Gender Representation in Primary-Level Textbooks Published by the Punjab Text Book Board: A Corpus-Based Critical Discourse Study

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Abstract

This paper is based on a critical discourse analysis of gender discrimination in Punjab Text Board's 3rd and 4th-grade ESL textbooks. All public schools and some private institutions teach these texts. For this purpose, a content analysis technique was used to check for gender discrimination in the given materials, utilizing various elements such as tokens, insertions, extractions, titles, nouns, and pronouns. Using AntConc 3.2.4, the content was examined. According to the findings, the material portrayed men as having supremacy over women. These results lead to the conclusion that the provided materials include gender prejudice, which is manifesting in the actual world. This research suggests that men and women should be equally represented.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis; ESL textbooks; Content analysis; Gender discrimination



Introduction

Critical discourse analysis mainly focuses on social and political discriminations, which are embedded in power relations and also maintain their essence in that particular discourse. It also observes how these social and political inequalities or discriminations are formed, repeated, and changed through discourse within certain social structures Wooffitt (2005). It is an attitude that considers language a social practice. It shows the social dominance in our texts and talks. Different disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, such as critical linguistics, gave birth to this approach. CDA implicates different types of approaches at the social level for discourse analysis, which tells the researchers about different types of research problems, theories, and methodologies to which they give more priority at that certain level Wodak and Meyer (2001), Pêcheux, 1982), Fairclough and Wodak (1997).

The most important aim of CDA is to reveal the hidden ideologies in written and spoken text and to make the blurry ideas more apparent. CDA is progressively exceeding in the field of language studies. It considers discourse a social exercise Fairclough & Wodak (1997), p. 258, and it also believes that contextual use of language is very important Wodak (2001). The most resilient bond between the exercise of power and the use of a language is built with the help of CDA Thompson (2002). The basic purpose of CDA is to make linguists aware of different social issues that are made by different ideologies and power relations, and these are shown in our written texts, professional settings, and daily lives Habermas (1973).

Critical Discourse Analysis's basic job is to analyse the extensive variation of texts, from a textbook to an advertisement, politics, crime, fashion, and sexism. Such topics may lead the analysts of critical discourse analysis towards political and social motivation. Critical discourse analysis mostly emphasizes the text and content so that it can analyse the text critically. CDA also helps the students understand and examine the stance of the writer. Students can recognize the writer's point of view, whether he or she is generating discourse from a capitalist, socialist, or gender perspective. Although discourse is not taken lightly as it is represented in the text, it is evaluated critically. With the help of CDA to find out the hideous meaning that is generated



through discourse practices Gee (2001). Gender is another term used in CDA to build social qualities and behaviours that are perfectly linked with a particular sex (man or woman). Coates (1993) p. 3. Tenenbaum and Aldrich say about gender that girls are more expressive than boys and they discuss their feelings more with their parents in comparison with boys (2006), p. 776. According to Holm, boys used to act out their feelings, whereas girls are taught to express their feelings through facial expressions or words (2001), p. 385. West and Zimmerman (1987) opine about gender that it is something we have or something we are born with. Women and men are not born as men and women; it is a society that sanctions them with these names and social roles. These names and social roles are given based on their sexuality. So it can be said that the term "gender" is conceived or perceived through human sexuality, while "sex" is a biological element Butler (1990). According to, Herring, (1993), Biber et al., (1998); Danner et al., (2001), Mehl & Pennebaker (2003), Mulac et al., (2001), Thomas & Murachver (2001) that can find the different genders in language through the structure of men's and women's narratives, which is based on some specified words and phrases. Gender bias in educational texts or the curriculum is a major part of our society. This gender bias creates our students' perceptions about the world they are viewing, which develops gender disparities or inequality among these two sexes, and it is also affecting the cognition of our students who are reading such curricula or educational texts. A gender-balanced curriculum builds gender-neutral and gender-balanced thoughts in society. The Dakar Framework of Action UNESCO (2002), has taken a step to minimize these gender disparities and inequality. Its main focus is to bring gender-balanced approaches to textbooks for this purpose. Pakistan is one of the signatory countries that want to bring gender-balanced textbooks into its curriculum, but still, we are teaching or studying that type of curriculum, which shows male dominance and patriarchal aspects of our society. However, this is a study of PTB Textbooks that shows the gender difference through CDA and also tells us how these gender-based linguistic features are used in a textbook.

Research Question

- Is there an equal representation of men and women in Pakistan's Punjab Government's Grade 3 and 4 English-Language Textbooks?



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Educational text, as a part of our textbooks, has a major role in our curriculum. The curriculum provides broad lines to meet the educational objectives. One of the main features that are highly neglected in our (Pakistani) curriculum is natural gender representation in textbooks. Even though Pakistan is a signatory member of the Dakar Framework of Action (2000), In this regard, Pakistan has been trying since 2015 to make its books gender balanced or "natural," but has not yet succeeded. Here is a brief review of research conducted on textbooks from a gender perspective at the local level.

According to Zeenat-un-Nisa (1989), the textbooks at the school level represent male dominance. The study reveals the fact that only 16.87% of women are represented in textbooks. Similarly, professional roles are also allocated based on gender bias. Men are always presented in the role of earning bread for a family, whereas, on the other hand, women are always portrayed in their typical role as a housewife who is taking care of a family and doing domestic chores. Attributes of knowledge, intellect, and wit are allocated to men, and women are assigned the attributes of nurturing and homemaking. So basically, our textbooks are favoring the patriarchal side of our society by showing less neutrality toward the female gender.

Najma, Mohyniddin, and Alia (1992) find out gender bias in 1to3 textbooks of social studies and Urdu. The study tells us the great difference between men and women, and it also reveals that the textbooks that are selected for our school curricula are totally based on gender bias. For example, the most important professions in society, like doctor, engineer, and farmer, are given to men, while on the other side, women are allotted the roles of sister and mother, who only perform all the housework. Similarly, Anwar (1982) analyses the textbooks of our schools and colleges, which show a clear representation of gender bias. He examines 105 textbooks, in which he finds that the ratio of male authors and writers is 78%, and on the other side, the ratio of female authors and writers is 6%, with the rest of the 16% being shared by both men and women writers. It shows that the writing of textbooks is also male-dominating. Husain and Afsar (2010) find out the difference between genders through their research on HESC English Textbooks, in which they



found out that male characters are more numerous than female characters. Similarly, women are presented in stereotypical roles of mother, sister, and wife, who are just doing their household work, while at the same time, men are shown as the breadwinners, self-sufficient, and decision-makers.

Mirza and Rana (1999) have studied all the primary level Punjab text boards, Lahore, and they examined the numbers of male and female characters and writers, which tells us that the ratio of female writers at primary level textbooks is 18.6%, and equivalently, the male characters outshine the female characters: female characters are 26%, whereas the male characters' representation is 74%, which identifies the gender difference and inequality of our society. In addition, Saira's (2009), research on SSC-level textbooks shows that only 2 lessons out of 22 are women-centric, which means that in total, 4.76% of our 9th and 10th-grade textbooks are written about women. According to the above literature review, it is clear that the topic of gender representation has been allured or increased research attention over the last couple of years. The aim of this study is to provide the current understanding of unequal gender representation in Pakistani textbooks.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study's major objective is to examine gender inequality in ESL textbooks at the primary level in Punjab, Pakistan. The following parameters are used to evaluate the key terms associated with the representation of gender in textbooks by using content analysis techniques. 1) Gender-neutral design elements 2) gender-neutral tokens 3) gender insertion and extraction 4) gender-neutral titles and 5) gender-neutral nouns and pronouns. This study employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In this respect, distinct keywords were identified in terms of representation in textbooks for both male and female genders. Counting the frequencies of keywords employs a quantitative technique. While determining the amount of output requires a qualitative method. This whole study falls under the purview of sociolinguistics.



Theoretical Framework

The content for this study was derived from English-language textbooks used with third-grade students in public sector schools in Punjab, Pakistan. PTB oversee the publication of these textbooks. These books are extremely important in terms of education, socialization, and moral development. This study examined how gender is depicted in primary-level textbooks by using Fairclough's (1989, 2001) three-dimensional model, which describes the underlying ideologies. According to Fairclough (2001), model the powerful can impose three different restraints on the weak. These restrictions include 1) content restrictions, 2) relationship restrictions, and 3) subject restrictions. He elaborates on these constraints, which he identifies as either highly concentrated and immediate or relatively structural and long-term. The focus of this study, however, is on long-term structural effects. Fairclough (2001), continues by stating that there are three forms of discourse mechanisms, which are necessary for beliefs, knowledge, social identities, and connections and this study focuses on the third mechanism of imposing power in a covert manner and compares it to the first two, inclusion and communication Fairclough (2001, P. 62).

Corporal Formation

The formation of the corpus is retrieved from English-language textbooks for grades 3 and 4. These books are accessible online in PDF format, which is then converted to Word format. Both English textbooks (grades 3 and 4) have a diverse set of modules. The grade 3 book had 24 units and 160 pages, whereas the grade 4 book had 27 units and 169 pages. This corpus-based study focused on the text of the main chapters as well as the exercises given at the end of the unit. The images in the units are not part of this research, which are contained in the textbooks. The dispersion and the length of the corpora are given in table 1.

There were several steps to this corporeal development process. First, an electronic version was used to obtain the information. Secondly, these books were converted into Microsoft Word, and thirdly, distinct files for each book were created and then merged into a single file. After that, these corpus files were also analyzed using the AntConc 3.2.4 tool, and CLAWS tags were used to



extract grammatical components such as proper and reflexive nouns and personal pronouns. The last step is to count the frequencies manually and figure out what they mean in the finding section.

Table 1

Length and dispersion of the corporal

Textbooks	Word tokens	Word types
English 3	9687	1932
English 4	9723	1985

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Gender-neutral Design Elements

After the analysis of both books, it is seen that both genders are part of these books, but the gender that is dominant in the text is male gender, whereas, on the other hand, female representation in both textbooks for grades 3 and 4 is less. The analysis of Book 3 in English shows that 18 male and 8 female characters are featured. Similarly, Book 4 in English features 16 male and 13 female characters. As a whole, both texts represent the male and female genders, but clearly, the difference between the genders is shown through their characters.

A Gender-neutral token in English 3

The male gender in English 3 is represented by 12 cluster types and 207 tokens, including he, his, man, him, men, brother, boy, father, boys, son, mr and uncle. The female gender in English 3 is represented by 9 cluster types and 126 cluster

tokens, including she, her, woman, women, sister, daughter, female, mother, and girls. Among these grade 3 male and female cluster tokens, it has been noted that he and his have the highest



frequency of 55; on the other hand, in female cluster tokens, her has the highest frequency of 31. Men and women are the words with the fewest occurrences. This result clearly shows the dominance of the male gender in PTB textbooks. The specifics of these frequency distributions are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Male vs female cluster and token frequencies in English 3.

Male	frequency	Female	Frequency
He	55	She	31
His	55	Her	45
Man	02	Women	01
Him	14	Sister	15
Brother	08	Woman	08
Men	01	Girl	10
Boys	13	Female	01
Boy	10	Mother	01
Father	26	Girls	05
Uncle	02		
Son	03		
Mr.	17		

A Gender-neutral token in English 4



In English 4, the male gender is represented by 14 cluster types and 253 tokens, including he, his, man, him, men, brother, boy, father, boys, son, himself, his husband, mr. and uncle. In English 4, the female gender is represented by 10 cluster types and 248 cluster tokens, including she, woman, sister, herself, daughter, her, aunt, female, mother, and miss. Among these grade 4 male and female cluster tokens, he has the greatest frequency of 101; on the contrary, in female cluster tokens, she has the highest frequency of 98, while my son and my aunt have the least amount of frequency. This is demonstrating the male gender's dominance in PTB textbooks. Table 3 shows the details of these frequency distributions.

Table 3

Male vs female cluster and token frequencies in English 4.

Male	frequency	Female	Frequency
He	101	She	98
His	66	Her	96
Man	09	Woman	02
Him	22	Miss	16
Brother	04	Woman	02
Men	02	Girl	03
Boys	11	aunt	01
Boy	02	Mother	25
Father	12	herself	03
Uncle	17	Daughter	04
Son	02		
Himself	01		
Husband	01		
Mr.	03		

Difference between Gender-neutral Titles



As far as titles of both genders are concerned, it has been observed that "Mr". titles predominate in the English textbooks of grades 3 and 4, as shown above in tables 2 and 3, but the frequency of female titles is 17 and is only found in book 4. In fact, "Mrs." and "Miss" titles are missing from book 3.

Difference between Gender-neutral Nouns and Pronouns

The research in both textbooks reveals that gender-neutral nouns such as man, uncle, father, brother, boy, and son occur more than 125 times in total. In comparison, there are 78 feminine nouns, including girl, mother, sister, daughter, aunt, and woman. In some cases, female nouns predominate over male nouns; for example, in Book 3, sister predominates over brother; however, male nouns predominate overall. Similarly, pronouns demonstrate the predominance of the male gender in this study, as "he" as a personal pronoun is used collectively 156 times while "she" is used collectively 129 times. Possessive pronouns like "him" and "his" are collectively used 156 times and "her" 141 times, respectively; however, reflexive pronouns like himself are used 3 times in book 4 and 1 time in book 3; these two pronouns do not appear in English book 3. The overall assessment of nouns and pronouns reveals a clear male dominance over females.

Gender Insertion and Extraction

According to Amerian and Esmaili (2015), the insertion of one gender and the exclusion of the other suggests that the excluded gender is unworthy. This kind of discriminatory treatment has a detrimental effect on behaviour. Through the study of both books, it has been discovered that the female gender is excluded from the content since the term "Mrs." is not found in either book, although "Miss." is found in Book 4. Similarly, the words daughter, wife, and aunt appear less often in English books 3 and 4. In conclusion, masculine features are utilized more than female features when compared to both genders.



DISCUSSION

Gender Discrimination in Pakistani Textbooks

Analysis of 3rd and 4th-grade ESL textbooks demonstrates that these publications are founded on gender inequality. Unequal representations of men and women exist. Inequality has been detected across all observable indicators, including gender-neutral design features, gender-neutral tokens, gender insertion and extraction, gender-neutral titles, and gender-neutral nouns and pronouns. According to Amerian and Esmaili (2015), the fact that women in these depictions are cooking or doing housework instead of going to work or labouring on a farm demonstrates that women are inferior to males. Similarly, Masud (2017) asserts that Pakistani textbooks do not portray women as equal to males; rather, the content of these textbooks is based on the ideology of male superiority and female inferiority. This circumstance validates Bahman and Rahimi's (2010) assertion that educational materials in Pakistan portray women in a terrible light and males in an elevated manner. Durrani (2008) asserts that a survey of 194 textbooks from the Pakistani curriculum was conducted for the purpose of research, revealing that women are represented at a rate of 7.7% in the following textbooks, with the majority of women being shown in Islamic history. In the majority of Pakistani textbooks, women are portrayed as fragile, submissive, forgiving, religious, and kind individuals who nurture their children and spouse.

Causes of Gender Discrimination and its Effects on Students

There are several factors that are behind this discrimination.

1) As Islam and Asadullah (2018) point out, Pakistani textbooks perpetuate the gender-based belief that men are superior to women. This is due to the fact that males are traditionally expected to provide for their wives financially and socially. The perception of male superiority over female inferiority in Pakistani culture lends credence to this study.

2) A patriarchal attitude is another aspect that might contribute to the unfair portrayal of women in educational materials. This mentality has affected pro-women policies in several nations, such



as the honor killings in Pakistan, the fact that Malaysian women are deemed second-class citizens under Malaysian family law, and Bangladesh's support for child marriage. The patriarchal attitude has restricted women's involvement in the political and economic spheres, causing males to be portrayed as more powerful than women in educational materials.

3) Unawareness of women's capacity for success is one of the most major drivers of gender discrimination. In Pakistan, current cultural and societal beliefs that women should be submissive to males often contribute to this lack of understanding. This resulted in a lack of female representation in educational materials.

All of the aforementioned factors affect the education of Pakistani pupils. According to Britton and Lumpkin (1977), learning materials not only provide learners with knowledge but also implant negative and positive attitudes about many facets of life, such as life choices, life expectations, careers, religion, race, and sex, in the minds of children. According to Rahimi and Sahragard (2006), p. 29, gender bias is rampant in the ideological manipulations of the texts. In addition, educational materials contain linguistic terms like mistress, lady and spinster which show women inferior and on the other side terms like man, boy and mankind show men supremacy over women. Ullah and Haque (2016) say that this kind of writing with skewed gender projections may have a harmful impact on students' minds. According to Kereszty (2009), textbooks are particularly important because they portray themselves as embodying a realistic account of the subjects that are assumed to be important for children to learn. Such unequal and discriminatory representation of both genders can cause gender stereotypes in young minds. According to the research of Durrani (2008), which is on children in the same context, when she says the boys should draw the image of "us," all of them have drawn the image of a boy, and none of them draw a female image. On the other hand, the female participants of the school drew only female images, and none of them drew an image of a male figure. Similarly, when she instructs them to choose an icon for themselves, the male participants choose male icons, while the female participants choose female icons. When she asked why they chose these icons, they simply stated that they wanted great wives, mothers, and sisters. Male participants, on the other hand, choose to be cricketers, doctors, and laborers



because that is what these books teach children. Durrani (2008) states that women are half our population and they are represented unequally and unfairly in our textbooks; however, this type of content affects the personalities of male and female students negatively.

CONCLUSION

All public and some private schools use the same 3rd and 4th grade PTB textbooks, which depict males as superior and women as inferior. A thorough examination of the textbooks' use of gender-neutral design elements, tokens, insertions, extractions, titles, nouns, and pronouns reveals a bias towards male authors. This demonstrates the bias that exists in textbooks against men, whether intentional or not. Therefore, in order to build a society in which both sexes are treated equally, it is crucial that textbooks be revised to remove any vestiges of gender prejudice. It is possible to do this by removing prejudices from ESL materials and providing women with career-oriented positions. By eliminating the usage of the terms "men" and "women" in favour of "human" and "person," we may likewise eliminate gender prejudice in the classroom. If the number of female writers is to rise, awareness must be raised amongst students and educators about the issue of gender prejudice.

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