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Gender Discourse of ‘Equal Opportunity’ for Male and Female in Pakistani English Textbooks: A Critical Discourse Analysis Study

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Abstract

The aim of the present article is to investigate the representation of male and female within the gender discourse of ‘equal opportunity’ in Pakistani English textbooks. The present study has focused on if the gender discourse of ‘equal opportunity’ resisted or supported in Pakistani English textbooks at varied educational levels and in what ways such discourse manifests gender notions in Pakistani society. The paradigm of this research is descriptive and qualitative. The corpus of the study is collected from the English textbooks of 5th, 6th and 8th classes of the Punjab Textbook Board Lahore through purposive sampling. The theoretical framework of the research is based on Critical Discourse Analysis approach. Within the paradigm of CDA, Van Leeuwen’s (2008) “Social Actor Network” model has been applied to analyze the gender representation in the text and the visuals. The results have shown that the discourse of ‘equal opportunity’ has been resisted in these textbooks as females have not been given the equal and fair representation. The findings are a vital source for the policy makers and the textbooks designers to improve the mistreated areas in future and keep in accordance with the policy of Education for All in real sense. This research is limited to the school textbooks of three levels only so further research can be done on other textbooks in future.

Keywords: biasness, Critical Discourse Analysis, equal opportunity, gender, textbooks

Introduction

The objective of the present study is to examine whether the gender discourse of ‘equal opportunity’ resisted or supported in Pakistani English textbooks at varied educational levels and in what ways this discourse reflects gender notions in Pakistani society.

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One pillar of Education for All is built on the discourse of “equal opportunity”. This kind of discourse has been emphasized in the legal documents of many educational systems across the world. One of the objectives of Education for All policy 2015 of Pakistan is to promote equity in education with a goal to remove social elimination and provision of increased and multiple opportunities to marginalized groups, specifically females.

Considering the importance of school textbooks in almost every educational settings (Blumberg, [2008](#)), the goal of this study is to analyze the discourse of equal opportunity for male and female present in the Pakistani English textbooks of primary and middle levels. In Pakistan, English is taught as a compulsory subject and it starts from the first day of school. Pakistani students have limited or almost no contact with the native speakers of English so they have to rely upon the textbooks as one of the learning and reference tools inside and outside the class room as a guide to proper language use. During the school life, mostly students will learn English language from the textbooks and from their teachers. For this reason, it is important to consider gender bias and sociolinguistics appropriateness when designing and selecting a textbook. According to Lakoff ([1973](#)), a society and its values are reflected in the language. He was concerned with the ways how females are portrayed in writing and speaking of English language and what values are being unknowingly communicated.

Gender biasness in a society often directs to the ways of unequal social status of females while males usually get the benefits of higher social status in occupations. Nevertheless, people generally take these social inequalities for granted in many societies, which not only mask the gender in equality in the textbooks, but also limits the students’ perceptions of their identity in present and future (Blumberg, [2008](#)). Besides, the gender inequality in textbooks can create gender biased views among students. This can bring disagreements between males and females in future (Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, [2008](#)).

According to Taxel ([1989](#)), textbooks are vital instruments in education system and they are designed according to the ideologies of the people who have the position of socio-economic supremacy in a society. Crawford ([2004](#)) says that textbooks introduce to the students with the dominant beliefs existing in a society. In the past few decades, the research on the relationships among language, education, power and ideology has become

one of the most significant subjects in the areas of critical linguistics and language education (Baik, [1994](#)).

Taking into account the significance of the textbooks and the role of ideologies embedded in them, the current study investigates the gender representation in three English textbooks of primary and middle levels prescribed by the Punjab Textbook Board Lahore. These textbooks are taught in all public schools of Punjab. The present study is limited to the investigation of the English textbooks of 5th, 6th and 8th classes of the Punjab Textbook Board Lahore.

The theoretical framework for the present research is established on the Critical Discourse Analysis approach. According to the scholars of CDA (Fairclough & Wodak, [1997](#)), language is a form of social practice and the circumstances in which the language is used have important function in CDA (Wodak & Weiss, [2003](#)). The matters of major interests to CDA are related to ideology and power and gender is thought to be one of the problems that CDA can investigate (Wodak, [1997](#), [2001](#)). As gender biasness is one of the social issues, so CDA can theoretically be a suitable instrument to examine the gender discourse which is the main focus of the present research.

For this purpose, the following objectives are designed to investigate the discourse of 'equal opportunity' for male and female in Pakistani English textbooks.

1.1. Delimitations of the Study

The present study has taken into considerations only the analysis of the English textbooks of 5th, 6th and 8th classes of the Punjab Textbook Board Lahore.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

- To identify the representation of females in the Pakistani English textbooks of varied educational levels
- To identify the representation of males in the Pakistani English textbooks of varied educational levels
- To identify the gender beliefs of Pakistani society presented in the Pakistani English textbooks of varied educational levels.

1.3. Research Questions

The given research questions have been designed to get the answer of

the problem:

1. How is the discourse of ‘equal opportunity’ resisted or supported in Pakistani textbooks at varied educational levels?
2. How does this discourse manifest gender notions in Pakistani society?

The findings of the study would be an essential source for the policy makers and textbooks’ developers to keep in mind the neglected areas of the prescribed textbooks so that in future these areas can be improved and have harmony with the discourse of Education for All.

2. Literature Review

This section contains the reviews of the related studies. These studies give useful information about the work done on many textbooks regarding the depiction of gender roles in varied educational contexts.

Hamdan (2010) conducted her study on the discourse of grades 1 to 9 textbooks used in English language school in Jordan by using content analysis method. The purpose of the study was to probe the job categories assigned to the male and female characters in the textbooks. The results showed that the trend regarding the gender asymmetry in Jordanian EFL texts was more as compared to the gender asymmetry in Jordanian culture and society altogether. The findings of the study showed that the role of male character was dominant in the labor market. She deduced that the textbooks highlighted the gender prejudice which was culturally established and females were shown doing traditional jobs such as nurses and teachers.

A comparative study was done by Lee and Collins (2010) which investigates if the phenomenon of recognition of gender prejudice in Hong Kong in comparison with Australia is manifested in the examples of gender depiction in the English language textbooks published in both countries. When ten latest-used Australian books were compared with ten Hong Kong books, it was discovered that such kind of understanding and awareness has influenced the gender-inclusive terms and symmetrical phrases in these areas. The Australian authors were inclined to utilize generic ‘they’ whereas in Hong Kong the authors chose either the coordination ‘he’ or ‘she’ or generic ‘he’. Both the authors kept the tradition of male-first presentation, represented females in a more restricted variety of social functions, and depicted stereotyped illustrations of females more passive and weaker than males, and as working mainly within the spheres of household. The visual

illustrations also strengthened conventional gendered roles. However, Hong Kong authors gave more attention to the inclusion of women visually. It is still controversial if the textbook authors should manifest truth or they should suggest social change for gender impartiality. The study done by Hamdan (2010) used content analysis method which was established on the basis of a checklist developed to compute the number and types of jobs for both males and females and the research by Lee and Collins (2010) has used quantitative method by analyzing the content in terms of illustration, format, coverage, language, exercise, content and sequence. Both the researches have used quantitative methods for data analysis.

Baghdadi (2012) also conducted a comparative study on Iranian AFL (Arabic as a Foreign Language) and EFL (English as Foreign Language) textbooks in order to explore the gender roles presented in the textbooks. The researcher used mixed method of Social Prominence that is established on Halliday's Systemic Functional Syntax and a criterion presented by Rifkinwich employed in Critical Discourse Analysis approach. According to the results, the male social actors were depicted considerably more than the female social actors. Males were given more space in sentences in both EFL and ESL textbooks and their actions were dominant in figures and pictures also. She recorded notable differences in both sets of textbooks. She claimed that both sets of the textbooks were very conventional to present stereotypical gender roles and activities. The results showed the point of views of the writers and the small sector of the Iranian society and specifically the beliefs of the government at that time.

Mustapha (2014) used content analysis method in order to probe the role of males and females in English Language textbooks for Junior Secondary School students in Nigeria, The findings of the study showed that women were presented in traditional roles such as house hold activities, child caring, while men were presented more in the roles of public circle in vastly professional expertise. He concluded that the analyzed textbooks were not gender balanced especially in the case where the males were depicted in private life and female in public life.

Tahriri and Moradpour (2014) analyzed the Top Notch Series in terms of gender representation by applying Critical Discourse Analysis model. They examined the Series regarding three major aspects of gender such as relations, positions, and content. Their theoretical framework was based on Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model. They found that both the

genders were represented almost equally.

Esmaeili and Arabmofrad (2015) adopted Critical Discourse Analysis approach to examine the linguistic representation of male and female social actors in textbooks ‘Family and Friends’ for four, fifth and sixth grades. They applied van Leeuwen’s (1996) representational framework and Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2004) Transitivity Theory Model to identify the beliefs behind the texts. The results showed favorable attitude towards male social actors and they were depicted more than females. It was also uncovered that in most parts of the textbooks, it was tried to avert conventional stereotypes of females. They were not shown at home working household tasks and busy in activities of child care. Nevertheless, it can be asserted that their visibility was kept low throughout the material.

A study was conducted by Gebregeorgis (2016) which explores the gender portrayal in the English for Ethiopia Student’s Book for grade 4. This was the case study with the purpose of investigating the representations, identifications and discursive actions which were employed through discourse, style and genre respectively and Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis was used. The results showed that the texts are a reflection of the struggle of discourse that not only attempts to sustain the existing social order on gender depiction but also tries to change the status quo. On one hand, the discursive actions and identifications of characters promote equal gender construction, the activity and attribute-based depictions of characters reproduce the existing stereotypical gender constructions of the society.

The studies reviewed have shown that most of the textbooks utilized in different context portray gender biased viewpoints. It indicates that the world has a long way to go to eliminate gender bias in the teaching materials and it is needed to implement the educational policies of gender equality.

The studies mentioned above have used Content Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis approaches to analyze the texts which have been used and favored by many other researchers as authentic tools for research. Content analysis has been used for gender-related studies because ‘the historical trajectory of content analysis as a research methodology has co-occurred with the historical trajectory of scholarly interest in gender equality’ (Neuendorf, 2002; Rudy, Popova & Linz, 2010). The purpose of using the Content Analysis as a research methodology is to quantify the

recurrence of themes and subsequently determining patterns in the text (Waite, [2010](#)).

However, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) 'offers a sophisticated theorization of the relationship between social practices and discourse structures' (Lazar, [2005](#), p. 4). Rogers, Malancharuvil, Mosley, Hui and Joseph ([2014](#)) also claims that 'critical theories are usually involved with the issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy, race, class, gender, religion, education, and sexual orientation construct, reproduce or transform social systems'. According to Fairclough, discourse is a part of social practice. It both shapes and is shaped by other social practices. Considering text as a social event, the approach helps to explore the role of discursive practice in either maintaining or changing existing social order. That is why in order to investigate the gender construction in connection with discourse structures and social practices in the context of specific texts in the target textbooks, the Van Leeuwen's ([2008](#)) "Social Actor Network" model of CDA has been employed as the analytical framework of the present study.

3. Methodology

The present study is descriptive and qualitative in nature. According to Creswell ([2001](#)), qualitative research is descriptive where the researcher is involved in the process, meaning and understanding which are gained through words or pictures.

3.1. Sample

The corpus of the present study is collected from the English textbooks of the Punjab Textbook Board Lahore of different educational levels. The sampling of the research is purposive. It is a non-probability sampling which focuses on sampling techniques where the units that are investigated are based on the judgments of the researcher. This study examines the English textbooks of 5th, 6th and 8th classes of the Punjab Textbook Board Lahore. The reason for selecting these textbooks is that they are taught at school level when students' young minds can be easily molded and conditioned according to the ideological viewpoint of those people who have the position of socio-economic supremacy in society. Moreover, textbooks are important material used in schools as schools are the institutions where students learn to socialize and know about their social identity. (Freeman & McElhinny, [1996](#), p. 261). Following are the details

about the textbooks under investigation.

The English textbook of 5th class has thirteen units. Each unit teaches vocabulary, reading comprehension, grammar, writing skills and oral communication skills. There are total 122 pages including glossary in the book. This book has been selected and distributed by the Government of Punjab for Academic year 2015-2016 as a sole textbook for all government schools in Punjab. This book is published by Apple Educational Press, Lahore in March 2015. It is being published in accordance with National Curriculum 2006 and National Textbook and Learning Materials policy 2007 as per international standards.

The English textbook of 6th class contains thirteen units. Each unit teaches vocabulary, reading and thinking skills, grammar and structure, writing skills and oral communication skills. It has 153 pages. This book has been selected and distributed by the Government of Punjab for academic year 2012-2013 as a textbook for all the government schools in Punjab. It has been printed in March 2012 by Ch. Ghulam Rasul & Sons Lahore. This is the first edition and is approved by the Cabinet Seretariat, Capital Administration and Development Division (Curriculum and Textbook Wing), Islamabad according to the National Curriculum 2006 under the National Textbook and Learning Materials Policy 2007.

The English textbook for class 8th has fourteen chapters. Each chapter teaches reading and thinking skills, formal and lexical aspects of language, writing skills and oral communication skills. This book has total 90 pages. This is the first edition printed in March 2016 for the year 2016-2017 by Qari Publishers Lahore. This book is designed by the Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Lahore.

3.2. Theoretical Underpinning

Within the field of Critical Discourse Analysis, Van Leeuwen's ([1996](#), [2008](#)) "Social Actor Network" model has been applied to the text and visuals in this study. This model proposes the ways in which social actors can be represented in discourse verbally or visually is shown in *figure 1*.

The "Social Actor Network" model introduced by Van Leeuwen ([2008](#)) has three types of transformation. They are deletion, rearrangement and substitution. It means the 'network' shows whether the social actors are included or excluded; whether through rearrangements different roles are assigned to different social actors; and if any substitutions are used in their

representation. For this research, only certain features of the model have been used to analyze the portrayal of male and female social actors in the textbooks because the discourse of these textbooks does not contain all the categories of social actor representations described by Van Leeuwen (2008). Following strategies have been applied to probe the textual and visual discourse of the textbooks.

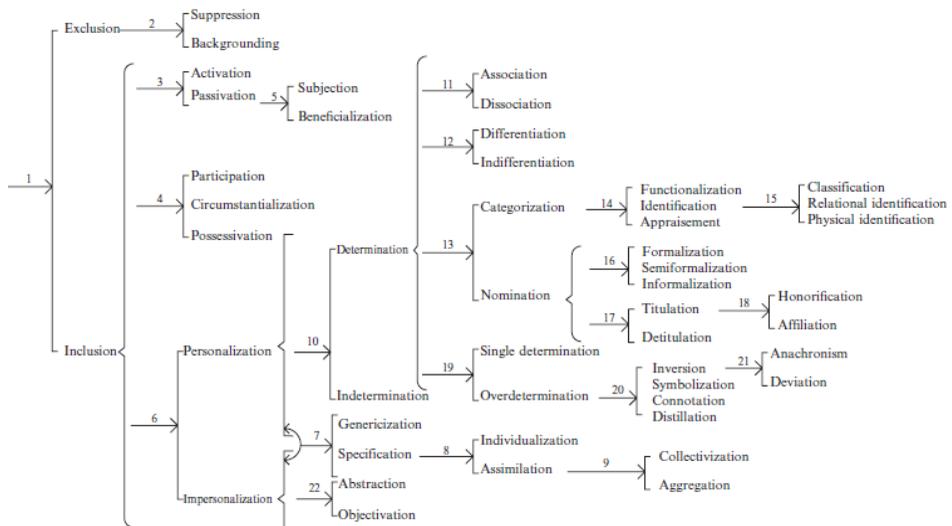


Figure 1. Social actor network (Van Leeuwen, 2008)

In case of ‘deletion’ representations exclude or include social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended (Van Leeuwen, 2008). In the case of exclusion, the present research investigates suppression and backgrounding. Suppression is a kind of exclusion where social actors are completely omitted from the text. There is no reference to them anywhere in the text and they leave no traces. Thus, this is called radical exclusion. Whereas in the case of backgrounding, the exclusion is less radical and the excluded social actors may not be mentioned in relation to a given action but they are mentioned elsewhere in the text.

While in the case of inclusion and role allocation, the strategies of individualization, nomination and functionalisation are applied to examine the gender phenomena. Individualization occurs when social actors are referred to as individuals. Nomination is realized by proper nouns which can be formalized (surname only, with or without honorifics), semi-

formalization (given name and surname), or informalization (given name only). Functionalization occurs when social actors are referred to in terms of an activity, in terms of something they do, for example, an occupation or role. In addition to that, feminine pronouns and masculine pronouns will be included as a sub-category of individualisation and substitution in the investigation of the textbooks.

4. Data Analysis & Discussion

This section presents the textual and visual analysis and discussion related to the depiction of male and female as social actors in different professions.

4.1. Textual Analysis

For the textual analysis regarding the discourse of ‘equal opportunity’, following examples have been taken from the textbooks.

1. Qasim: I have decided to go in for medicine if I get a good position. If however, I don't get good marks, I may go into business and agriculture. (English 8, p. 8).

In example 1, a male social actor is nominalised through informalisation with a common Pakistani male name Qasim. This male social actor is activated through talk where he is planning about his future plans to join one of the professions such as medicine, business and agriculture. This social actor has been included through nomination and functionalisation. As far as the professions of business and agriculture are concerned, the representation of female social actors has been excluded radically as no female can be seen to have these professions in these textbooks. These professions are thought to be male dominated in Pakistani society so this discourse reflects gender beliefs prevailing in society. It can be said that the female social actors are suppressed in the discourse of ‘equal opportunity’ in the text. As far as the medical profession is concerned, female social actors have been given representation in these textbooks although it is inadequate (English 6, p.81).

2. The doctor found out the disease and he wanted to give him a bitter powder but the elephant would not swallow the powder (English 6, p. 116).

In example 2, a male social actor has been individualised with a masculine pronoun ‘he’. He has been signified as a veterinary doctor through functionalisation. No female social actor can be seen as a veterinary

doctor in the textbooks under study. Therefore, it can be said that the representation of female social actor has been radically excluded and suppressed. According to Pringle (1998), many gender biases prevail in different societies related to female doctors and it is not appropriate for them to be in this profession.

3. Danial: Sir, I saw a doctor. He bandaged my ankle and asked me to stay in bed (English 6, p.134).

In example 3, three male social actors can be seen. One male social actor has been nominalised through the process of informalisation with a common Pakistani male name Danial. There is another social actor who has been included through formalization as an honorific 'sir' which students use to call their teachers in educational settings in Pakistan. He has been represented as a teacher through functionalisation process. The third male social actor present in this sample has been functionalized through the profession of a doctor. He has been individualized and substituted with masculine pronoun 'he'.

4. Sana will become a doctor (English 6, p. 81).

In example 4, a female social actor has been nominalised through informalisation with a common Pakistani female name Sana. She has been represented as a future doctor through the process of functionalisation. It can be said that female social actors has been given a representation in the textbooks of being a doctor in Pakistani society. Actually, this profession is not limited to the males only as many lady doctors are working in almost every hospital of Pakistan. This example supports the discourse of 'equal opportunity' and it also reflects the ideologies present in society.

5. Fatima will work in a hospital as a nurse (English 6, p. 81).

In example 5, a female social actor is nominalised through informalisation with a common Pakistani name Fatima. This female social actor has been presented to become a nurse in future through functionalisation. It can be said that male nurses are excluded and suppressed in this representation. This example opposes the discourse of 'equal opportunity' for male and female. In many societies, nursing is thought to be a inferior occupation in comparison with other medical professions. This asserts that women have low status than men (Adams, 2000) and endorses the conventional discourses of femininity and

masculinity (Coates, [2003](#)), masculine hegemony and emphasized femininity (Connell, [2005](#)).

6. *Teacher: Hello, Ali. My name's Furrukh Shafique. I'm your English teacher (English 6, p.11).*

In example 6, there are two male social actors. According to the context, one male social actor has been nominalised through semiformalisation with a male Pakistani name Furrukh Shafique. He has been functionalized through the profession of English teacher. He is introducing himself to another male social actor who has been nominalised through informalisation with a male name Ali which is commonly used in Pakistan. Teaching is supposed to be a feminine job in Pakistan traditionally and presenting a male social actor as a teacher endorses the discourse of 'equal opportunity' for male and female. Female social actors can also be seen as teachers in the text and the accompanying image in the textbook (English 5, p 49). It can also be observed that male teachers can teach to the male students only, so the aspect of sex segregation is prominent. This highlights the religious and cultural ideologies in Pakistani society.

7. *Kaleem was the goalkeeper. He got the hockey in his hands (English 6, p. 80).*

In example 7, a male social actor has been included by nominalising him through informalisation with a male Pakistani name Kaleem. He has been functionalized by the profession of a goalkeeper. This social actor has been individualized and substituted with masculine pronoun 'he'. The objectivation process of getting hockey in his hand shows his role in the sport. Female social actor has also been represented in hockey profession in the text and accompanying image in the textbook (English 8, p. 48). It can be concluded that it supports the discourse of equal opportunity for male and female.

8. *Ali will be a pilot (English 6, p. 81).*

In example 8, a male social actor has been nominalised by informalising him through a Pakistani male name Ali. He has been included as a future pilot through functionalisation. No female social actor can be seen in the textbooks as being a pilot so their representation has been radically excluded and suppressed. In Pakistani society, this is thought to be a male dominated profession therefore it reveals gender beliefs in society that females cannot

become pilots. Although, in reality now females have been working in this profession since the Pakistan came into being. For example, ShukriaKhanum, MalihaShami, Mariam Mukhtar, etc However, their representation has been suppressed in these textbooks.

9. *Hamid will become a policeman (English 6, p. 81).*

In example 9, a male social actor has been included in the text. He has been nominalised through informalisation with a common Pakistani male name Hamid. He has been represented as a future policeman through the process of functionalisation. This social actor is categorized through classification with the masculine lexis of 'man'. The jobs which are related to security are specific to males in Pakistan. As according to Brown and Heidensohn (2000), to become a police officer is a male-dominated profession. The representation of a male social actor through the lexical item of 'man' excludes women who are working in this profession. It shows that woman can not join this profession but in reality female are working as police officers in Pakistan. This sample opposes the discourse of 'equal opportunity' for male and female and shows suppression for female gender representation.

10. *Saqib will work as an accountant (English 6, p. 81).*

In example 10, a male social actor has been included through nominalization by informalising him with a male Pakistani name Saqib. He has been represented as a future accountant by functionalisation. No female social actor can be seen in the text of these textbooks that does the job of an accountant. Therefore, it can be said that female social actors have been radically excluded and suppressed in these textbooks. It depicts the Pakistani society in a wrong way because females are accounts in many business firms in Pakistan. This sample resists the discourse of 'equal opportunity' for male and female in these textbooks.

11. *Fawad will become a lawyer (English 6, p. 81).*

In example 11, a male social actor has been presented as a future lawyer through functionalisation. He has been nominalised through informalisation with a Pakistani male name Fawad. Through the analysis of the textbooks, it can be said that no female social actor has been included as a lawyer in any text or image. Thus, their representation has been radically excluded and suppressed. This sample resists the discourse of 'equal opportunity' for male and female. In addition to that, it does not portray the Pakistani society

in a true way as females are working as lawyers in society. For example, a famous name is Asma Jilani Jahangir who is a Pakistani human rights lawyer and has co-founded and chaired the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

12. *Thomas Alva Edison was an American scientist. He was also a businessman..... when he was thirty.... (English 5, p. 110).*

In example 12, a male social actor has been given representation through the process of nomination. He has been semiformalised with a male name Thomas Alva Edison. Further he has been individualized and replaced with a masculine pronoun ‘he’. This social actor has been functionalized through the professions of a scientist and a business. According to Van Leeuwen (2003) theoretical framework, this representation leaves out female being an inventor. Within the analyzed textbooks in this study, no female social actor has been made active with a process of inventing something. So it can be said that female representation has been suppressed in the discourse.

4.2. Visual Analysis

In order to analyze the discourse of ‘equal opportunity’, following visuals have been taken from the textbooks.

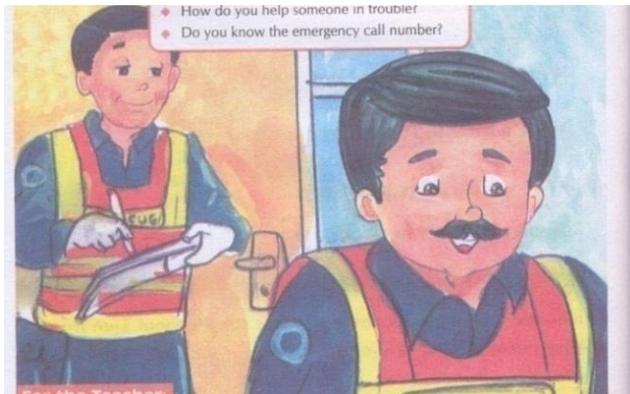


Figure 2. (English 5, p.102)

In figure 2, two male social actors have been included through the role allocation of rescue workers. They have been functionalized through the profession of rescuers and have been activated as agents of doing task. As far as the female social actors are concerned, they have been radically excluded and cannot be seen anywhere in the text or visuals present in the textbooks. Thus, this sample resists the discourse of equal opportunity and

suppresses the depiction of female social actors. It shows that females cannot be rescue workers. It also reveals the ideologies in society where this profession is not suitable for females.

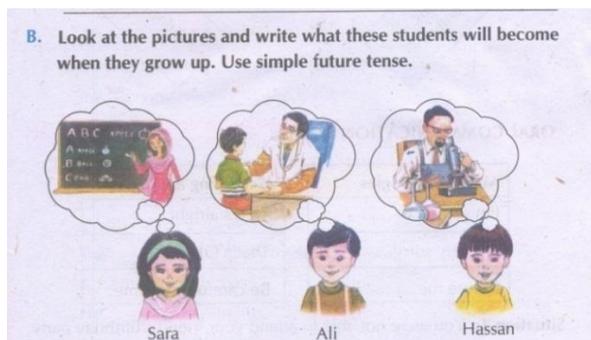


Figure 3. (English 5, p.115)

In figure 3, five male social actors and two female social actors have been individualized. Two male social actors have been activated by involving in some actions. They have been included through functionalization of being a doctor and a scientist whereas female social actors have been radically excluded from these professions. It is depicted that they cannot even think to join these professions in future as they are male specific fields. In this way, they have been suppressed. A female social actor been activated as an agent of doing teaching. It shows that female social actors should think only about to become a teacher as it is thought to be a feminine job traditionally whereas male social actors can be doctors and scientists. Firestone (2000) emphasizes that textbooks are the medium used to shape the mental models of people the way these people think, act, or feel about gender.



Figure4. (English 8, p. 48)

In *figure4*, a female social actor has been included and shown as an agent as she is involved in an action. She has been functionalized through the profession of hockey. This figure supports the discourse of equal opportunity for male and female social actors in these textbooks as male social actor has also been shown as a hockey player in the text and the accompanying visual (English 6, p. 80).

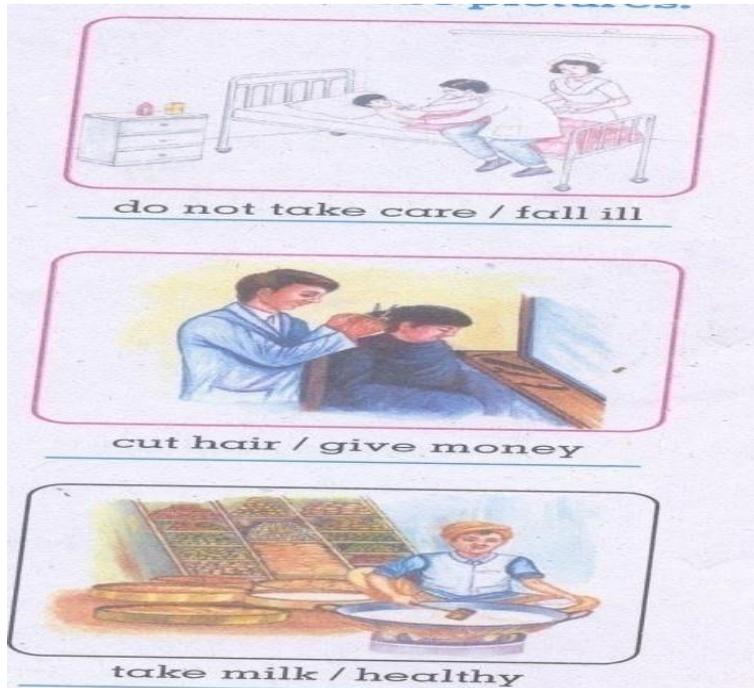


Figure 5. (English 6, p.133)

In figure 5, three male social actors have been activated as agents of doing some actions. They have been functionalized through the professions of a doctor, hairdresser and a business man. In addition to that, a female social actor has been included through functionalization of being a nurse and is backgrounded in the image. Nursing is considered to be a subordinated profession and suitable only for females in Pakistani society. These images resist the discourse of equal opportunity for male and female because female social actors have been suppressed as being doctor, hair dresser and a business-woman while male social actors have been suppressed of being nurse. In reality, lots of females are working as doctors, hair dressers and business woman in Pakistani society. Thus, it blurs the reality around us.

Table 1
The Summary of Data Analysis

Gender	Professions
Female	doctor, nurse, teacher, hockey player
Male	businessman, agriculture, veterinary doctor, physician, teacher, hockey player, pilot, policeman, accountant, lawyer, scientist, inventor, rescue worker, hair dresser

5. Conclusion

In the present study, three Pakistani English textbooks of 5th, 6th and 8th classes have been analyzed to investigate the representation of male and female social actors within the gender discourse of 'equal opportunity' which is an important part of the policy of Education for All. A detailed analysis of the gender discourse has been done by applying Van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor Network model. The findings of the study show that the representation of male and female social actors was not equal with regard to the discourse of equal opportunity as shown in Table 1.

Although females have been shown as teachers, doctors, nurses and hockey players in the analyzed examples but they have not been represented in other high status variety of occupations. Exclusion of females from a wide range of professions reveals that many females in these occupations are discriminated. On the other hand, males have been assigned the occupations of businessmen, agriculture, veterinary doctors, physicians, teachers, players, pilots, policeman, accountants, lawyers, scientists, inventors, rescue workers and hair dressers.

The defiance against the discourse of 'equal opportunity' reproduces the religious and cultural ideologies in Pakistan that females' responsibilities are only taking care of their children and doing indoor domestic chores. In addition to that, the central gender notion is that females should depend on their male family members even if they are employed. Although this trend is now changing rapidly and females are working in a variety of professions but still they are not highlighted and given space in these textbooks. The lack of female representation in these textbooks presents biasness that needs to be addressed if students are to be socially prepared for interaction with

other half majority members of the society which is consisted of females. No country can make a progress if their females are deprived of their rights and true representation in society. This research can be useful information and guidance for the policy makers who are working specially on the projects of Education for All themes. The concerned textbook developers should take into account this issue seriously for the better future of our young generation.

6. Future Research

A topic for future researchers which has not been investigated in the present research, but which is worth exploring as a complement to the examination of gender prejudice in textbooks, is the investigation of teachers' behavior with regard to textbooks. It will be an interesting area for future research to know in what ways teachers in Pakistan handle the gendered content of textbooks, and to what extent they endorse, subvert or ignore gender biased ways of thinking.

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