

The Gendered Nature of Language in English Textbooks in Pakistan

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Abstract

Gender bias manifests in a number of ways in textbooks, both linguistic and non-linguistic. Linguistic prejudice is more subtle and ingrained in the language, hence difficult to discover. Moreover, such bias can have a negative impact, especially on female learners. Against this backdrop, the researcher analyzed linguistic bias in English textbooks in Pakistan. Specifically, the textbooks used in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at college level (grades XI & XII) were investigated to determine how gender is portrayed in them. Based on the framework employed by Porreca, the categories of analysis used were order of mention (firstness), masculine generic constructions, and the nouns and adjectives used for male and female genders. Content analysis was used as a methodological framework of analysis. The results revealed that regarding order of mention, in most cases the male gender was mentioned first and the female second. In the category of generic male expressions, it was found that almost all the instances of generic expressions were male-referenced. The nouns for males such as “father,” “man,” and “grandfather” were used in greater numbers than their female counterparts, such as “mother,” “woman,” and “grandmother.” With reference to the use of adjectives, whereas males were variously described, females were often described as physically attractive and emotional. The study concludes by recommending inclusive language for both genders to overcome linguistic bias in English textbooks.

Key words

gender, textbooks, bias, male, female

Introduction

Bias against one gender in the contents and language of textbooks has been the focus of researchers for years. As discrimination in the material and contents of books are relatively easy to discover and point out, efforts have been made to rep-

resent both genders equitably. Such measures include equitable representation of female and male characters as well as delineation of both men and women in a wide variety of occupations. In other words, visibility and non-stereotypical portrayal are two of the most important variables of non-linguistic bias in the textbooks. On the other hand, linguistic bias is gender-based discrimination which is represented through the language used in the textbooks. According to Porreca (1984), it is often ingrained in the language and is difficult to recognize and pinpoint. As a result, such linguistic features are learned and internalized by learners consciously and unconsciously and, through their use, gender bias is reproduced and perpetuated. Language and gender researchers and practitioners (Harashima, 2005; Sunderland, 2006) believe that biased contents and language of textbooks can have a negative influence on learners, especially female learners, as they tend to accept the attitudes textbooks convey. Islam and Asadullah (2018) are of the view that learners think of textbook contents as practical. In their study Mahmood and Kausar (2019) found that teachers considered textbooks biased and that such bias has a bad impact upon learners.

As gender equality is increasingly becoming an important global goal, efforts are undertaken from time to time by governments and international organizations to include it in their policies. Education is believed to be crucial for transmitting social and gender norms to learners. It is because of this that gender equality and the elimination of gender bias is at the heart of global education initiatives. The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2002–2015 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015–2030 emphasize the education of both males and females and the removal of gender disparities from curricula and textbooks. But researchers such as Stockdale (2006), Lee and Collins (2006), Amini and Birjandi (2012), Biemmi (2015), Ebadi and Shahbazian (2015), Islam and Asadullah (2018), and Mahmood and Kausar (2018) point out that gender inequalities are still found in textbooks. As most of these studies are conducted at the school level, the present work attempts to analyze the language used in English textbooks at Intermediate level in Pakistan.

Statement of the Problem

The most noteworthy means through which gender equality or inequality is conveyed are the curricula and textbooks. Gender disparities in textbooks manifest in a number of ways. The focus has often been on non-linguistic categories of measuring gender bias, such as the relative percentage of female/male characters and

the depiction of men and women in stereotypical roles, which are believed to have more influence on readers and learners. Due to this attention, the linguistic aspect of gender bias has been less emphasized. In the researcher's view, equal, or even greater focus needs to be placed on this as linguistic bias is unconsciously internalized and may become a permanent part of the language structure of learners, which is very difficult to change. Order of mention and generic masculine expressions are just two examples of such bias, where the males are often mentioned first and generically used words are not general but male specific. This study, therefore, aims at highlighting gender bias embedded in the language of Intermediate level English textbooks, so that the attention of curriculum designers and textbook authors are drawn to this issue and measures are taken to minimize and remove it from the contents.

Research Questions

This study aims at finding answers to the following questions;

1. How are the female and male genders portrayed in terms of order of mention and generic masculine expressions in the language of the textbooks?
2. What kind of adjectives and nouns are used for the female and male genders?
3. What is the frequency/ratio of nouns used for males and females?
4. Which gender (male/female) is most frequently mentioned first?

Literature Review

Theoretical Background

Robin Lakoff's seminal 1975 work initiated the debate regarding the difference in the language used by men and women. Entitled *Language and Women's Place*, it asserted that women's language is trivial, weak, and insignificant as compared to that of men. Based on her own observations, Lakoff's work suggested that there is something wrong inherently with the language of women. Their speech is characterized by empty adjectives, hedges, question tags, and many other features which make it a weaker version of the "norm" which, according to her, was that of men's language. Lakoff's work was criticized for its lack of empirical evidence and its basis in personal observations and reflections. Although controversial, *Language and Woman's Place* started the debate regarding women's position in society and in particular, their language.

The deficit approach was followed by what is now known as the "dominance"

school of thought. The chief proponents of the theory were Dale Spender (1985), West and Zimmerman (1987), and Maltz and Broker (1982). According to this theory, the reason for the weaker version of women's language is the male-dominated and patriarchal structure of the world. Women are left disadvantaged in almost all fields of life because of the division of the world into men and women to serve men's interests. One study by West and Zimmerman (1987) found that in mixed sex talk, 90 percent of interruptions were made by men. This was attributed to the dominance that men also enjoy in other spheres of life. Spender's *Man Made Language* (1985) further strengthened this approach by stating that men control language by compiling dictionaries and defining the structures of language. According to Spender (1993), language is made by men to serve their own interests. As a result, women are silenced, alienated, and oppressed because they do not have access to the linguistic resources that determine reality (Sanauddin, 2015). One, very obvious strength of the dominance theory is that it concedes that male dominance is produced, reproduced, and perpetuated through linguistic practices, that language in itself is not only gendered but a place for "doing gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987). This approach is still valid and in vogue as it is based on empirical research and also explains the reason for the triviality of women's language as asserted by the deficit theory. However, it places too much emphasis on the gender of the participants in determining their power position in the use of language and downplays other important factors like race, ethnicity, age, and education.

The advocates of the "difference" approach contend that it is neither the "lack" (or deficiency) nor the "dominance" that is responsible for characterizing the language of women, but that men and women speak differently because they are the product of two different sub-cultures. Proponents of this theory, like Tannen (1990), opine that the different socialization and acculturation processes of the two sexes lead to their different patterns of speech. Right from childhood, boys and girls are brought up and "gendered" differently on styles and behaviors appropriate to their respective sex only. Thus boys are told to be tough and brave and girls are directed to be lady-like. According to Tannen;

Women and men have different experiences [...]. Boys and girls grow up in different worlds...and as adults they travel in different world, reinforcing patterns established in childhood. These cultural differences include different expectations about the role of talk in relationships and how it fulfils that role (1987, p. 125).

It is because of this process that boys and girls grow up to be different in their likes and dislikes, behaviors, approaches, and their use of language. Maltz and Broker (1982) assert that because of different acculturation processes, women's talk is characterized by interaction and they engage the other during conversation. Men's speech, on the other hand, tends to be based on arguments, verbal posturing and storytelling. It was in such contexts that women began to assert that they had a "different voice, a different physiology and a different experience of love, work and the family from men" (Humm, 1989, p. 51). Although criticized on some grounds, the difference theory is still very much relevant today. It encompasses elements of dominance to some degree in that this difference is created by dominance. Otherwise, why is socializing the two genders differently necessary? The roots are still to be found in patriarchy and male dominance.

The three approaches discussed above view gender as something fixed, essential, and static. Language and gender research has moved on from this view and theorists like Butler (1990) and West and Zimmerman (1987) contend that gender is "performative" and that people "do gender" rather than "being" a particular gender. This "constructionist approach argues that gender is better seen as a system of culturally constructed relations of power, produced and reproduced in interaction between and among men and women" (Sanauddin, 2015, p. 47). Thus, instead of looking at men and women as belonging to a given, static category, this approach views them as "doing gender" during social and linguistic interactions.

The dominance approach seems more relevant in terms of informing the present research. The society of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is based on a severe form of patriarchy where women are considered subordinate to men (Jamal, 2014). It is therefore necessary to examine whether the textbooks also convey such male dominance or not. Next, one of the variables to be investigated in this research is the use of generic construction in nouns and pronouns. Porreca (1984) believes that it is very much "rooted in the grammar of English language itself" (1984, p. 708). Nouns like "man," and "mankind" are used to refer to human beings in general (both men and women), but research shows that people hardly think of the female when they use or hear such generic expressions. In addition, the linguistic context can help reveal whether the construction is generic or male referenced. Thus, this aspect of the dominance approach is also very relevant to the present research.

Review of Relevant Literature

Porreca (1984) is the work often cited where investigation of gender in textbooks is concerned. She selected 15 ESL textbooks from a range of 27 different ESL centers in an attempt to carry out a systematic, quantitative analysis of the different aspects of sexism. In the content analysis of the material, she focused on the number of male/female occurrences, both textual and in illustrations. The number of occasions in which male or female were mentioned first was counted. Next, occupational roles were counted, both in terms of the number of occasions mentioned for male/female as well as the total number of occupations for both genders. Then, the frequency of nouns referring to male and female were tabulated. Masculine generic expressions were also noted. Finally, in order to analyze the stereotypical portrayal of men and women, adjectives employed for male and female were recorded with their frequencies.

The results revealed that women were mentioned only half as often as men despite the fact that there are slightly more women than men in the United States. As regards occupational role, women suffered from far less visibility than men. Both in text and illustrations, men outnumbered women in the ratio of 5:1. Further, women were portrayed in traditional stereotypical roles (such as waitress, nurse, or doctor). Finally, adjectives used for women were limited to emotions, beauty, and marriage, whereas those for men focused on renown, intellect, and education.

According to Stockdale (2006), in the books he analyzed, men were mentioned first 72 times and women 28 times. Lee and Collins (2006) believe that outwardly, there seems to be a balance in gender portrayal in the contents of new books, but closer inspection reveals that disparities are still there in numbers in terms of the nature of male/female characters as well as the activities portrayed. Amini and Birjandi (2012) find women outnumbered by men in Iranian textbooks despite the fact that women actually constitute a slight majority of the population. In addition, women are portrayed as emotional. Biemmi (2015) suggests that while adjectives are used that portray women as emotional, men are depicted as rational and wise in the textbooks. Ebadi and Shahbazian (2015) consider textbooks biased against women as men are portrayed in a variety of occupations but women are stereotyped as busy with household affairs. Islam and Asadullah (2018) also find significant amount of bias against women in the books they examined.

As a part of the international community and owing to its commitments to global policies, Pakistan has also included gender as a vital element in its educational reforms. The government is a signatory to the MDGs and SDGs but studies

reveal that progress regarding gender equality in education is very slow, particularly regarding bias in the curricula and textbooks. Mirza (2004) finds that textbooks are prejudiced against the female gender. In addition, very few female experts participate in the process of textbook development. The students are also influenced by biased depictions as they view textbooks' personalities as role models for them. Hussain (2009) is of the view that English textbooks at the HSSC level are conveying bias, while Hameed (2012) reveals that in comparison to the textbooks which are published by the Punjab Textbook Board, the books by the Oxford University Press are less biased and traditional in gender portrayal. Blumberg (2015) thinks that, despite the inclusion of gender in state policies, bias is still visible in Pakistan's curricula and textbooks. According to him, content developers and curriculum designers seem to be in favor of the present gendered policies. In another study, Ullah and Haque (2016) highlight the fact that different textbooks still portray bias against women even when published after educational reforms aiming at removing gender bias. Mahmood and Kausar (2018) also find gender-biased depictions in English textbooks at the secondary school level. In their analysis, they discovered that both linguistic and non-linguistic bias are present in the textbook materials.

In a recent study, Mahmood and Kausar (2019) analyzed the perceptions of female teachers regarding gender bias in Pakistan's secondary-level English textbooks. After examining the opinions of teachers through questionnaires and interviews, they found that according to them, the English textbooks are biased against the female gender. According to the teachers, the discrimination against women is evident in both the content and the language of the textbooks. They recommended revision of textbooks for equal representation of both genders.

It is against this backdrop that the researcher aims to analyze Intermediate-level English textbooks in order to examine linguistic bias. The rationale for selecting Intermediate level is that while school textbooks at more junior levels have been amply researched (Hameed, 2012; Mahmood & Kausar, 2018; Mirza, 2004), there has been little exploration of those used at college and intermediate level in terms of gender. As pointed out above, non-linguistic bias is relatively easy to identify and researchers have succeeded in unveiling it in a number of studies. Bias conveyed through language, on the other hand, is not only harder to find but has not been the focus of inquiry, especially at higher levels of education. The significance of this work is therefore two-fold. First, the researcher aims at highlighting gender bias in English textbooks, so that the attention of curriculum and textbook designers is drawn to it. Second, and most important, it is the researcher's belief that lin-

guistic bias is more detrimental for the future development of learners as it unconsciously becomes a part of their language structure and use. The aim in focusing on linguistic bias is that it needs to be recognized by policy makers as a potential obstacle in the way of eliminating prejudiced depiction of (any one) gender from textbooks.

Methodology

A mixed-method (quantitative-qualitative) design is used in this study. For the analysis of textbooks, content analysis is used. Content analysis is the technique most often employed by researchers in the analysis of textbooks. It involves examining the contents of the books for the analysis of particular aspects. It is often used quantitatively, to count and measure certain recurring words, expression, and patterns. According to Kerlinger (1986), content analysis involves the study and analysis of communication systematically, objectively, and quantitatively in order to measure certain variables, examining a given message, whether written or oral, for certain recurring patterns of words, phrases, or numeric or other values. Krippendorff (1980) defines content analysis as a tool for drawing valid and replicable inferences from data to their context.

If quantitative content analysis is about identifying recurrent patterns of words, phrases, structures, and themes in a numerical and quantifiable manner, qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words but focuses on the understanding of social reality in a subjective yet scientific manner. In other words, it is a method of subjective interpretation of content through the process of coding leading to the identification of dominant patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This method of analysis mainly relies on the description, explanation, and interpretation of material, whether written, oral, or graphic, by the researcher in accordance with rules and step-by-step models. According to Patton (2002, p. 453), it is a process of data reduction and making sense of a volume of qualitative data to identify core meaning and consistencies within it.

Content analysis is used both quantitatively as well as qualitatively in the current work. While nouns and order of mention are numerically analyzed, generic expressions and adjectives are qualitatively examined.

As this study was carried out at Intermediate level, the English textbooks used at this level in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province were analyzed. The book for 1st year students is *English Class-XI* (Rahman, 2016–2017a), and for 2nd year is *Intermediate English For Class-XII* (Rahman, 2016–2017b). These books are ap-

proved by the Ministry of Education, published by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board, and are used in all colleges (private or public) throughout the province. They contain a number of essays, short stories, and poems and also include plays in shortened forms. English Class-XI has eight units. The first five units contain three reading passages (a short story, an essay, and a poem) on a similar theme. The next two units are related to oral and written communication and the last unit consists of a one-act play. All the units are followed by exercises, testing students in comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar. Intermediate English For Class-XII has seven units. The first six units follow the pattern of the first book with short stories, essays, and poems and the last unit contains two plays in abridged form.

The textbooks are compiled by the head of the English Department in the University of Peshawar. Once the contents have been approved by the Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education (DCET) in accordance with the requirements of the 2006 National Curriculum, and have been reviewed and edited by an editorial and reviewing board, they are published by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board. The content analysis included only the chapters and units of the textbooks; the exercises given at the end of each chapter were excluded.

The categories of linguistic bias employed by Porreca (1984) in her work are used in the present study. These include “firstness” or order of mention of paired nouns and pronouns, masculine generic expressions, and adjectives and nouns employed for male and female genders. Order of mention means that if a pair of nouns like “woman/man” or pronouns like “she/he” are used in a sentence, the one occurring first assumes importance. Researchers have observed that pronouns and nouns used for the male gender are often assigned the first position in this regard, which points to male dominance conveyed through language. Porreca (1984) believes that the repeated second mention of females highlights the second-place status of women. Generic masculine expressions are words such as “baby,” “student,” and “man” which are used in a generic sense and believed to denote both genders. But according to researchers like Porreca (1984), writers and readers hardly think about females while using such constructions. Further, the immediate context that follows in which these words are used often determines whether they are being used generically or specifically for one gender (male).

The next category of analysis in this study is the use of adjectives and nouns for female and male genders. This includes analysis of nouns such as “man/woman,” “boy/girl,” and “wife/husband” in order to determine their relative ratio and hence their respective importance. According to Porreca, nouns for males such as

“man” are more frequently used than their female counterparts, such as “woman.” Such mentions also convey bias against females. In the category of adjectives used for both genders, the nature of the qualities and attributes through which females and males are described are analyzed. It is often observed that while men are portrayed as strong and rational, women are often shown as attractive and emotional. According to Porreca, the adjectives used for males convey the idea of strength and those for females are often limited to physical charm only.

Results and Discussion

Order of Mention

In the English textbooks analyzed, there are more examples of male-firstness than female-firstness. The following table presents the frequency of male/female order of mention in the two books.

Table 1
Order of Mention in the Two Books

English Class-XI		Intermediate English For Class-XII	
Order of Expression	Number	Order of Expression	Number
Male First	10	Male First	7
Female First	0	Female First	2

The above table shows that while males are mentioned first 10 times in the first book, females are never mentioned first. In the second book, females are given the first place twice only as males are mentioned first 7 times. What is more crucial is that there are many instances of male-first mentions in one unit with no examples of female first-mentions. The repetition of such instances of male-firstness close together create a male-dominant narrative and may knowingly and unknowingly instill in the minds of learners that as males are consistently mentioned first, they are more important and as females are assigned the second place, they are less important. Most of the examples in English Class-XI are from unit 1.1 (His First Flight) where a seagull is afraid of flying and his parents are trying to teach him. The following are some examples of male-firstness;

1. His two brothers and his sister had already flown away the day before.
(English Class-XI, p. 12)

2. His father and mother had come around calling to him.
(English Class-XI, p. 12)
3. He had watched his parents flying about with his brothers and sister.
(English Class-XI, p. 12)

In the second book (Intermediate English For Class-XII), there are also numerous examples of male-first mention. Starting from the first of men and women, Adam is mentioned before Eve, boys are mentioned before girls, heroes before heroines, and men before women as shown in the following examples;

4. All mankind is from **Adam and Eve**.
(Intermediate English For Class-XII, p. 4)
5. Little **black boys and black girls**.
(Intermediate English For Class-XII, p. 43)
6. White **boys and white girls**.
(Intermediate English For Class-XII, p. 43)
7. We dedicate this day to all the **heroes and heroines** in this country.
(Intermediate English For Class-XII, p. 58)
8. Along the roads, you meet hearty **men and women, boys and girls** who understand laughter.
(Intermediate English For Class-XII, p. 150)

There are only a few examples where the female gender is mentioned first. One instance is that of the only structure in the English language itself where women are mentioned in first place: the expression “ladies and gentlemen” (Intermediate English For Class-XII, p. 21). The other occurrence is that of “sisters and brothers” on page 43. Such expressions of female firstness need to be consistently incorporated in the texts in order to provide balance to the otherwise male-first narrative.

The results of this study in relation to order of mention are consistent with some of the other research studies in other contexts. These include Stockdale (2006), who observed that men were mentioned first 72 times and women 28 times. Lee and Collins (2006), Amini and Birjandi (2012) and Hameed (2012) also found that males are repeatedly mentioned first. Mahmood and Kausar’s (2018) recent research in the context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Pakistan at the secondary school level found that most of the first mentions were male. The findings of the current work demonstrate that this aspect of gender bias is present not only at school level but is prevalent at the college level as well. The only study in which females are mentioned first more often than males is that of Mineshima (2008).

This shows that while even twelve years ago the content of textbooks in Japan were more equitable, the Intermediate English textbooks of Pakistan still portray biased depictions of the female gender even today.

Masculine Generic Expressions

According to Porreca (1984), writers and readers hardly think about females while writing and reading about generic expressions. She believes that not only are the frequency and number of generic expressions in themselves instances of gender bias against females, but the subsequent context of the sentence in which the expression is used clarifies whether it is actually being used for both genders or only for the male gender.

This aspect of linguistic bias is also found in the analysis of the English textbooks under review. While there are five occurrences of generic expressions in Book 1, Book 2 has as many as 27 instances. As mentioned above, the frequency of such expressions determine that the language used in these textbooks is biased. Secondly, the nature of these constructions (the context) also determine that these are male-specific only and not generic. In *Intermediate English For Class-XII*, the word “man” is used a number of times (pp. 97, 169, 172) but later in the sentences the pronoun “he” is used, indicating that by “man” here only “male” is meant and not the “female.” In the first book (*English Class-XI*, p. 33), a person takes his “child” to school but then the pronoun “he” is used to signify that it is referring to a male, not a female, child. Similarly, a “principal” calls a student into “his” office, highlighting that “principal” is referring to a male principal only. These instances clearly show that such expressions are not general but are used for males only. The following are some of the examples;

9. A **man** should never leave **his** post.
(Intermediate English For Class-XII, p. 97)
10. **Man** is not at the mercy of **his** environment.
(Intermediate English For Class-XII, p. 169)
11. **Man** has changed **his** environment.
(Intermediate English For Class-XII, p. 172)
12. And which is more, you will be a **man**, my **son**.
(Intermediate English For Class-XII, p. 109)
13. My **child** and I hold hands on the way to school, and when I leave **him**...
(English Class-XI, p. 33)

14. The **principal** called me into **his** office.

(English Class-XI, p. 87)

Porreca (1984) found in her study that generic expressions like “Mexican,” “student,” and “baby” are all used to refer to males only and females are not included. According to Lee and Collins (2006), writers are using “man” in a generic sense in the new books and also replacing it with neutral words like “persons” and “people.” Further, in order to neutralize the effect of masculine generic expressions, paired pronouns are used. These include “she/he,” “her/his,” “s/he,” and the plural pronoun “they.” But the analyzed textbooks have none of these pairs of pronouns, hence the generic constructions convey a purely masculine perspective. As Mahmood and Kausar (2018) have shown in their study at school level, these expressions are used at the college level as well to favor men and discriminate against women.

Nouns

In this aspect of gender bias, the nouns for males (man, husband, father, grandfather, son, brother) and those for females (woman, wife, mother, grandmother, daughter, sister) are counted and analyzed. These are shown in the following table:

Table 2

Total Number of Nouns Used for Male and Female Genders

Man	82	Woman	34
Husband	28	Wife	26
Father	86	Mother	19
Grandfather	27	Grandmother	06
Son	05	Daughter	43
Brother	20	Sister	42

A look at Table 2 above shows that there are more nouns used for men than women. Precisely, there are more than twice as many mentions of men than women, as many as four times more mentions of fathers than mothers, and grandfathers are also mentioned four times more often than grandmothers. These greater number of mentions of nouns for the male gender signify that they are more important than their female counterparts. The almost equal number of the nouns “husband” and “wife” illustrate the essential role of a female as a wife. Many researchers like Porreca (1984), Hameed (2012), and Mahmood and Kausar (2018)

have shown that the only role assigned to a woman is that of a (house) wife. It is because of this stereotypical concept that the noun “wife” is mentioned almost equally to the noun “husband.”

A look at the noun pairs “son and daughter” and “brother and sister” shows that there is an opposite pattern here. It might be thought at first glance that more nouns for daughters and sisters point to their relative importance over sons and brothers. But a closer analysis reveals that most of the nouns for daughters and sisters are used in one unit of Intermediate English For Class-XII (King Lear). As it is the story of how a king divides his kingdom among his three daughters (included in the textbook in abridged form), daughters and sisters are mentioned in greater numbers. If this had not been the case, there would have been more nouns for brothers and sons than sisters and daughters. Porreca (1984) also points to this in her work that in one unit there are more nouns for one gender category than the other. So, in this aspect of gender bias also, it is clear that as the male gender is given prominence due to frequency, the female gender is made less visible due to fewer mentions. It would have been worthwhile to analyze the units of the books from the perspective of central figures, but that was not the focus of the study and also not covered in the framework adopted. In addition, it would have made the study more time-consuming.

Adjectives

As the traditional and male-dominant descriptions of textbook content promote gender stereotypes, males are often shown as “brave,” “rational,” and “physically strong.” On the other hand, females are depicted as “attractive,” “sweet,” and “emotional.” The analysis in the present study involved studying the kinds of adjectives used for each gender. Both the Intermediate English textbooks are studied to determine the nature of the adjectives employed for each gender: the results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3 above demonstrates that in the analyzed books the portrayal of males is varied, ranging from physical strength (stronger, stout, brave, and fierce) to mental qualities (creative, sharp, learned, and wise). At the same time, the male gender is generally presented with good and positive character qualities (generous, upright, pleasant, honest, faithful, hospitable, and dignified), though men are also depicted with some negative qualities (shrewd, bad, and wicked). Contrary to this, the portrayal of the female gender is limited and traditional. Most of the adjectives used refer to attraction and beauty (sweet, pretty, fair, and loving) as well as qualities de-

Table 3
Adjectives Used for Male/Female Genders in the Textbooks

Adjectives for Males	Adjectives for Females
Bad brave creative delightful dignified disciplined faithful fierce generous honest hospitable kind learned sharp shrewd stout stronger upright wicked wise	Cheerful dear fair fine fragile generous gentle honorable innocent loving obedient old patient pretty respectful sweet tender virtuous young

noting delicacy (fragile, gentle, tender, and innocent). As regards positive character attributes, females are described in the most conventional fashion (patient, obedient, honorable, and virtuous). In all these categories, whether attraction, delicacy, or honor and virtue, the description of females conforms to the values associated with a very traditional society. These results show that while on the one hand, the portrayal of women is biased and discriminatory, that of men is also stereotypical as they are shown in the age-old, dominant role.

These findings are confirmed by other researchers as well. Porreca (1984) found that in the books she analyzed, while men are shown to be “intelligent,” women are depicted as “pretty” and “beautiful.” Islam and Asadullah (2018) revealed that the male gender is presented as “disciplined” and “visionary.” As opposed to this the females are portrayed as “depressed” and “kind.” In Biemmi (2015), men are described as “wise” and “cultured” in the textbooks whereas women are “weepy” and “sweet.” What is striking and noteworthy here is that in the Pakistani context, some additional adjectives (virtuous, patient, and obedient) are also used as these are believed to be most sought-after attributes in the female gender.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In this paper, the researcher analyzed the English textbooks used in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan at Intermediate level. Content analysis was employed as a method for the examination of linguistic bias in the books. The categories of analysis were order of mention, masculine generic expressions, and the adjectives and nouns used for male and female genders. The findings show that in most cases, men are mentioned first through nouns and pronouns and there are very few occasions in the two books where females are assigned the first place. Almost all the generic expressions are male-referenced, denoting males only and excluding females. In addition, hardly anywhere in the two textbooks are pairs of pronouns like “him/her,” “he/she” or “they” used after generics to neutralize the effect. In the category of nouns, nouns referring to males like “father,” “man,” and “grandfather” are used in considerably greater number than those referring to females, like “woman,” “mother,” and “grandmother.” In the use of adjectives too, while men are drawn in a wide variety of attributes, the portrayal of women is limited to delicacy, obedience, and physical appearance. On the whole, it can be concluded that in comparison to the textbooks of other nations and societies, Pakistani textbooks still demonstrate a traditional and conventional depiction of men and women, even in the modern world of today. This is even truer in the case of the biased and discriminatory portrayal of the female gender.

As discussed earlier, the non-linguistic aspect of gender bias in textbooks has been identified and researchers have emphasized that a greater visibility of female characters and their non-stereotypical representation may, to a great extent, solve the problem of gender inequity. But this is hardly the case. Instead of the “add women and stir” method (Cornwall, 2003), a holistic approach is required to take linguistic bias into account as well. It is crucial on two accounts. First, as already explained by the researcher, bias entrenched in the language of textbooks is often so delicate that it is hard to recognize and thus can unconsciously and unknowingly be internalized by learners as true and essential, and may thereby become a permanent aspect of their language use. Secondly, such bias can be easily removed with a little effort and will on the part of the writers and compilers of textbooks. For example, in the case of masculine generic expressions, if pairs of pronouns like *she/he*, *him/her*, *s/he*, or the plural pronoun *they* are used after such expressions, it would neutralize the male-referring perspective without altering the meaning of the sentence. Similarly, in order of mention, instead of the all-male-first mentions, if the order is reversed (*woman/man*, *she/he*, *sister/brother*), it

would also balance the narrative without changing the meaning. The same can be accomplished regarding nouns and adjectives by including representative, if not necessarily identical, numbers of nouns for men and women and by using adjectives that portray women in a variety of attributes and qualities. So, curricula and textbooks designers therefore need to pay attention to the language of the textbooks as well as the content; a little conscious effort on their part could eliminate a great deal of linguistic bias, provided they have the will to do so.

Research on gender and language is becoming a focus of attention in recent years. Although studies are being conducted on textbooks to highlight gender disparities, hardly any noticeable change is yet visible in their contents and language. In the researcher's view, it is now time for proper attention to be paid to the discrepancies found in the curriculum and the textbooks based on it. Further, it also remains to be investigated why, despite numerous studies identifying gender bias and the resolve of government to remove gender-based discrimination, textbooks still portray women in a biased way.

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