

Voicing Sexism: Reflections from the Primary Level English Textbooks of Government Schools in Punjab

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Abstract

Sexist language degrades and belittles the dignity of an individual or group of individuals, generally females. Such careless use of language yields standardized social and cultural codes. The researches during the last four decades reflect occurrences of sexism in the curricula. The present study examines sexism imbued in the contents of the primary level English textbooks. Five textbooks being used from grades 1 to 5 have been analyzed in the light of gender theory employing Mixed Methods research. The study comes up that despite serious commitments of the Government of Pakistan to eliminate gender bias from the education setups the contents of the study material contain the discourses which reinforce the sexist construction and contribute to the transformation and naturalization of gender inequality and stereotypes. The findings imply that practical and serious efforts are required to translate the commitments of the government into reality.

Keywords: Language, sexism, curricula, discourse, gender bias, social and cultural codes, stereotypes.

1. Introduction

Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan realized the implications of equal educational opportunities for all. Articles 25, 26 (1), 34 and 37 (b) of the Constitution of Pakistan (1973) provided a gender-egalitarian view. Article 25 declared that “there should be no discrimination based on sex”. Further, Articles 34 and 38 (d) determined equal opportunities for women in all spheres of life ensuring equal participation. However, despite such strong constitutional assurances, different governments could not take adequate measures to achieve the goal.

After ratifying the international agenda of *Education for All* (UNESCO, 2000) in 1996, Pakistan launched different programs. Among them, according to the Ministry of Education (1999, 2003a & 2003b), are *National Education Policy 1998–2010*, *National Education for All Plan 2000–2015*, *Education Sector Reform 2001–2005* and *National Plan of Action 2001-2015*. Further, The National Textbooks Review Committee revised the curriculum up to the intermediate level in 2007 (Ministry of Education, 2009). But the intended goal of elimination of sexism could not be achieved so far. Essentially, gender disparity still dominates the contents of the textbooks (Ullah, 2014; Jabeen, Chaudhary & Omar, 2014; Ullah & Skelton, 2013).

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1.2 The Context of the Study

The second wave of feminism undertook the issue of sexist representations in the curricula during the 1960s (Sunderland, 2004; Litosseliti, 2006; Blumberg, 2008). The feminists declared textbooks an “. . . important contributor to the formation of gender identities . . . gender discrimination and the dominant social structures of society” (Ullah & Skeleton, 2013, p. 3). Their claims come to the forefront (Sunderland, 2000; Yasin et al., 2012; Ullah & Skeleton, 2013) as gender representation across the world have been stereotypical (Ullah & Haque, 2016; Skelton, 2011; Bazzul & Sykes, 2011). They revealed that the sexist constructions of genders in the textbooks socialize and legitimize the gendered social notions (Ullah & Haque, 2016; Siddiqui, 2014; Ullah, 2013; Francis, 2010). Further, they pointed out the prospective implication of such normative constructions (Treichler & Frank, 1989) as 1) students tend to associate themselves with the characters of their respective sex: 2) 80 % time of classroom activities depends on the contents of textbooks (Campbell, 2010): 3) all the teaching activities mostly coincide with them (Sadker, Sadker & Zittleman, 2009): 4) the intended textbooks’ knowledge is always ideological (Pinar, 2012) and contains, according to (McLaren, 1989), the issues of gender and power: 5) educational setups “play a central role” in gender socialization (Siddiqui, 2014, p. 117).

1.3 The objective of the Study

This study uncovers the latent sexism portrayed in English textbooks. Though gender bias and stereotypical representations of gender have been identified in Pakistani textbooks of different levels in different studies over the years (for example, Ullah & Haque, 2016; Jabeen, Chaudhary & Omar, 2014; Ullah & Skelton, 2013; Shah, 2012; Jabeen & Ilyas, 2012), the present study is significant as it conducts quantitative and qualitative analyses to explore sexism represented in the curricula. As sexism is a tacit phenomenon (Michel, 1986; Sunderland, 2004), this research design digs deeper into the issue.

1.4 Research Questions

The denominators formulated to achieve the objectives of the study are:

1. What is the proportion of female and male representations in the textbooks?
2. To what extent are the activities represented in the textbooks sexist?
3. What type of language has been used to portray genders?

1.5 Sex, Gender and Sexism

Sex is a biological aspect of human beings (Siddiqui, 2014; Sunderland, 2011) and fundamental heteronomy of bodies whereas gender is a learned behavior, and thus a social construct; cultural, social and psychological aspects of the values and roles associated with sex (Mikkola, 2016; Gidden, 2006). Thus, gender, as perceived by (Naz & Asif, 2016, p. 59), is “. . . a socially constructed system”. The term ‘Sexism’ refers to the practices, norms and social ideals where one sex is prioritized over the other. It is a biased process of attributing a specific behavior to particular sex; one sex, mostly male, is considered a ‘norm’ and standard while the other a deviant. In short, sexism is a mental picture and a “simplified opinion, attitude or judgement” (Michel, 1986, p. 15) held in common by individual/s or group/s of individuals.

2. Literature Review

Gender-based studies on the textbooks have been recently conducted throughout the world (McCabe, Fairchild, Grauerholz, Pescosolido & Tope, 2011) which indicate that females are underrepresented despite some progressive transitions occurring in different countries (Brotman & Moore, 2008). To have a deeper insight into the nature of the issue, it seems appropriate to include a brief overview of global trendsetting studies as well as those conducted in Pakistan. Therefore, this section includes a brief review of some of the trendsetting studies related to the issue conducted in Pakistan and across the world as it would help in pinpointing the nature and implications of sexist portrayals in the school material.

Among the earliest studies, Hartman and Judd (1978) on German TESOL textbooks observed that male images dominated the illustrations. The roles associated with them were gendered and stereotyped. Porreca (1984) found that males' representation was more than double than of females in ESL textbooks. Michel (1986) examined that the textbooks in France abound with gender stereotypes.

Ansary and Babaii (2003) explored sexist attitudes and values through qualitative and quantitative analyses of ESL/EFL textbooks of Iran. They found that “women suffered most obviously from low visibility” (p. 69) as compared with the male with a ratio of 1:1.6. McCabe et al. (2011) analyzed 5618 children's books used in the USA from 1900 to 2000. They observed that the contents “reinforce, legitimate and reproduce a patriarchal gender system” (p. 198). The studies of Mohamad et al. (2012) in Malaysia, Amini and Birjandi (2012) and Chanzanagh et al. (2011) in Iran identified similar results; male characters dominated the texts and illustrations of the English language textbooks. Song's (2013) study on the Korean curriculum of EFL determined that white American males dominated texts.

The study of Mustapha (2013) and Bahiyah et al. (2008) found sexist representations in favor of males in Nigerian and Malaysian textbooks respectively. Tang et al. (2010) also determined the phenomenon of female underrepresentation in the curricula of science and mathematics of China. The studies of Zakka and Zanzali (2015), and Zakka, Oluyemi, and Twaki (2015) in Nigeria also reflect the same findings, that is, gender disparity in mathematics textbooks of grade 5 and 6.

Yasin et al. (2012) examined Qatari primary level mathematics textbooks and explored sexism. The researchers observed that male-gendered terms dominated the counterpart. Moreover, males were represented as standard and females as deviant. Males were portrayed in social and occupational activities. They infer that “the female occupational roles are stereotyped while males are portrayed in a wider range of occupations” (p. 63). Demir and Yavuz (2017) examined gender discrimination in ELT textbooks of Turkey. Females were underrepresented. Males were portrayed in occupational activities more than double as compared with females and the “careers such as soldier, manager, president, driver” (p. 109) were associated only with males. However, one positive aspect of encouraging females was their portrayal in non-conventional jobs.

However, the studies of Yang (2014) asserted that the primary English textbooks in Hong Kong contained balanced gender representations. Parham's study (2013) on Iranian English textbooks examined that, in the dialogues, females initiated 62% conversation. Though females were underrepresented in the visuals, the difference was not much high.

In Pakistan, Mirza (2004), Mirza and Rana'a (1999), Shah (2012), Ullah (2013), Ullah and Skeleton (2013) found disproportions and bias in the representations of gender. Shah (2012) examined the overrepresentation of males in English language textbooks. No female of historical or religious importance was included in the contents of Social Studies whereas males from the religious, historical and political backgrounds were represented.

Mirza (2004) identified that male personnel dominated the curricula development process. Likewise, females were excluded from the stories. They were represented exclusively in the domestic vicinity and in the role of 'mother' which is considered "central and all encompassing" role of women's lives (p. 103). She concludes that the curriculum socializes gender stereotypes. The findings of Naseem (2010) also indicated the overrepresentation of males. Males were portrayed in a variety of occupations in the public domain. Mattu and Hussain (2003; p. 94) found that textbooks of Sindh were "the straightjacket of narrow stereotypes based on rigidly defined gender roles". Essentially, the review of the studies discussed above reflected unequal, sexist and biased gender representations in the curricula of Pakistan. It also implied that the claim of ". . . a society that practices and believes in equality of rights for men and women" has not been achieved yet (Jabeen & Ilyas, 2012, p. 77).

3. Data and Methodology

In this study, primary level English textbooks published by the Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board have been selected for analysis. Punjab is the biggest province of Pakistan. More than 52% population of Pakistan inhabits it, and 1979608 boys and 2053142 girls of the government schools (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017) are studying it as a compulsory subject.

Mixed-Method research has been opted to determine the extent of sexist representations. It suggests the integration of qualitative and quantitative analyses. The quantitative aspect involves descriptive statistical analysis of data (Babbie, 2012), that is, specific themes, representations and words. For understanding the phenomena, the frequencies of certain lexical and visual items used for males and females have been calculated. The qualitative analysis focuses on the "subjective interpretation of the content of text data" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278), that is, underlying meanings and implication of the existing relationships and themes. By conducting qualitative analysis, the extent of biased language has been determined.

As the objective of the study is to identify the nature of the construction of gender in the curricula, the study draws on gender theory instead of mere feminism. This distinction at the theoretical level is essential as gender theory has a broader scope and can overcome the limitations of the political stance taken by feminist theorists on the role of women in society (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1994; Spender, 1998; Crawford, 2012). Nevertheless, this has also been extensively discussed that gender is a discursively constructed

phenomenon. Therefore, to put a comprehensive critique of gender construction, it is imperative to explicate how the language of the targeted textbooks, in a given socio-cultural context of Pakistan, shapes the gender identities of males and females. To achieve this primary research objective, the representation of males and females in the textbooks has been explored at the first stage of data analysis. Consequently, quantitative techniques have been used to unearth the frequency of the occurrences of the verbal and semiotic signs that mark the gender of the characters represented in the textbooks. To calculate the gendered-verbal expressions, a corpus analysis tool, Antconc (Version 3.4.4w) has been used as it shows occurrences of 'node words' in terms of 'token' and 'type' (Yang, 2014; Evison, 2010; Murphy, 2010). Moreover, the semiotic representations of male and female characters have been manually calculated. Following sections elaborate the gendered representations of male and female characters in terms of verbal and semiotic analysis.

Proportional and p-value test has been calculated to determine the difference and significance of appearances of females and males. A p-value less than 0.05 ($\alpha = 0.05$) determines that the difference in the representations is significant.

4. Results

The overall findings are:

- Male characters have been overrepresented.
- The activities assigned to genders are stereotyped.
- The language used is gender-biased.

4.1 Verbal representations of female and male characters

Table 4.1 reveals that out of 1936 node words, 1210 male and 726 female hits have been identified. The masculine pronoun 'He/he' appears with the highest frequency (331 hits) as compared with the feminine pronoun 'She/he' (192 hits). Considering gendered terms used in 'pairs', the frequency of every male term is higher than that of female equivalent except the pairs 'grandmother(s)/grandfather(s)' and 'daughter(s)/ son(s)'.

The proportion test reveals that female and male characters (206 vs 307) occur with a proportion of 0.37 and 0.63 respectively. The p-value indicates the significant dominance of males. The results are in line with Jabeen, Chaudry and Omar (2014), Ullah and Skeleton (2013), Lee and Collins (2008) and Mkuchu (2004).

Table 4.1 Results of female and male Gender-related verbal items

Female Terms	Frequency	Proportion	Male Terms	Frequency	Proportion
Proper nouns	206	0.40	Proper nouns	307	0.60
She	192	0.37	He	331	0.63
Her	112	0.29	His	268	0.71
Her	36	0.37	Him	61	0.63
Herself	Nil	0.00	Himself	02	100
Woman/women	06	0.14	Man/men	38	0.86
Grandmother(s)	08	0.89	Grandfather(s)	01	0.11
Mother(s)	66	0.50	Father(s)	67	0.50
Aunt	Nil	Nil	Uncle(s)	14	1.00
Daughter(s)	04	0.57	Son(s)	03	0.43

Sister(s)	23	0.46	Brothers/s	27	0.54
Girl/s	33	0.42	Boy/s	45	0.58
Queen	02	0.33	King	04	0.67
Wife	17	0.30	Mr.	40	0.70
Madam/Miss/Mrs.	20	0.91	Sir	02	0.09
Fairy	06	0.73	Giant	16	0.73
Total	726	0.37	Total	1210	0.63
P-value	0.0				

4.2 Representations of female and male characters in the visuals

This section analyzes representation of gender illustrated in the visuals of the textbooks.

In the visuals, 384 male and 261 female images have been identified. Table 4.2 indicates that the proportion of females to males is 0.40 and 0.60 respectively. Female images have been underrepresented. The p-value indicates that the difference between the portrayal of genders is significant.

Table 4.2 Results of the illustrated representations of gender

Male	Female	Total	Proportion	P-value
384	264	648	0.60 vs 0.40	0.000

Sexism has also been examined in the illustrated sports visuals as, out of 52, 30 males and 22 females have been engaged in games. Proportion and p-value refer to a significant overrepresentation of males. The numerical discrepancies imply sexism. Moreover, only female kids compared with male adults and kids have been represented. No image of an adult female playing a game has been included. Such representations are stereotypical because the socio-cultural norms do not encourage females to partake in sports programs though some females of the elite class show interest in games and participate in various international tournaments.

Table 4.3 Results of appearances of gender in the illustrated sports

Books Tiles	Gender	Sport and Games Activities	Total
English 1	Male	taking exercise (p. 23), Ice sliding (p. 85), jumping (p. 85), cricket (p. 88)	4
	Female	playing shatapu (p. 74), playing kikli (p. 74), sliding (p. 74), taking exercise (cover page), running (p. 85), running (p. 86).	6
English 2	Male	running (p. 48), playing football (p. 48), jumping, doing karate (p. 49), playing with a ball (p. 50), cycling (p. 50), playing football (p. 50), running (p. 50).	7
	Female	Running homeward (p. 61), skipping (p. 66), skipping (p. 68), jumping (p. 66), jumping (p. 68),	4
English 3	Male	Running (p. 7), running (p. 7), running (p. 7), running (p. 7), jumping (p. 25), running (p. 25), badminton (p. 26), playing with ball (p. 47), playing with ball (p. 48), boating (p. 50), playing cricket (p. 76), swimming (p. 77), playing cricket (p. 118), running (p. 143), running (p. 143), running (148)	16
	Female	Badminton (p. 26), jumping (p. 27), boating (p. 50), jumping (p.	6

		87), skipping (p. 94), skipping (p. 143)	
English 4	Male	Playing cricket (p. 11), playing football (p. 11), playing in park (p. 21), sliding (p. 21), boating (p. 21)	1
	Female	Skipping (p. 9), skipping (p. 11), playing with ball (p. 12), playing in the park (p. 21), sliding (p. 21), boating (p. 21)	6
Total		Male = 28, Female = 22, proportion = 0.58 vs 0.42, p-value = 0.000	

The similar results have been examined in terms of illustrated occupations; 15 and 32 visuals contain females and males respectively. The proportion (0.32 vs 0.68) and p-value reflect the significant underrepresentation of females.

Table 4.4 Results of appearances of gender in the illustrated occupations

Books	Gender	Occupations with page numbers	Freq
English 1	Male	Vendor (p. 40), shopkeeper (garments) (p. 40), shopkeeper(toys) (p. 40), Woodcutter (p. 95)	4
	Female	Baby-caring (p. 2), teacher (p. 5), teacher (p. 75)	2
English 2	Male	Mason (p. 49), teacher (p. 49), driver (p. 50), Shopkeeper (p. 50), teacher (p. 77), farmer (p. 81), Vendor (p. 87), woodcutter (p. 115), doctor (p. 124)	9
	Female	Cooking (p. 97), teacher (p. 106), cleaning (p. 110), Nurse (p. 124)	4
English 3	Male	Cleaner (p. 28), gardener (p. 29), Librarian (p. 40), Shopkeeper (p. 41), boatman (p. 58), shopkeeper (p. 72), Booking-clerk (p. 72), farmer (78), cleaning (78) gardening, sweeping, cleaning 103),	10
	Female	Domestic gardening, sweeper, cooking (p. 29) cooking (p. 46), teacher (p. 50), Washing (p. 103)	6
English 4	Male	Shopkeeper (p. 30), fire brigade (p. 32), doctor (p. 44), farmer (p. 58), pilot (p. 82), lab-experiments (p. 102)	6
	Female	Baby-caring (p. 37)	01
English 5	Male	Woodcutter (p. 9), Microsoft CEO (p. 17), coach (hockey) (p. 51)	3
	Female	Teacher (cover page), I.T. Professional (p. 17)	2
Total	Male	32	Proportion
	Female	15	P-value

The current findings coincide with the international studies (Skelton, 2011; Ullah & Skelton, 2013) who have found underrepresentation of females in the textbooks as compared with males.

4.3 Gender Biased Language

For determining sexism, gender-biased language is a crucial factor (Michel, 1986). It reflects negative images and messages about a particular group/s - ethnic or gender group/s (Yang, 2014). It promotes social ideals of the superiority of one sex and marginalizes the other (Mkuchu, 2004). Using male-gendered terms to refer to all human beings with fixed expressions is a sexist phenomenon as it usually excludes females and includes males. Moreover, sexism is represented in the structure of sentences (Yule, 1998). The use of masculine generic constructions or terms and named or unnamed characters are also significant aspects of a biased language (Mkuchu, 2004). Therefore, the language has been analyzed in terms of 'use of masculine generics', 'use of adjectives', and 'named/unnamed representations'.

4.3.1 Use of generics

Generics are the use of nouns when the sex of the referent is not specified; instead, it refers to “people in general” (Lee & Collins, 2008, p. 128). Several instances have been identified. The following examples show the generics:

1. “Environment is the natural world around us. The environment helps man to live a good and healthy life.” (English 4, p. 100)
2. “A cleaner cleans the drains. He keeps our streets clean. He takes the place of the noun, cleaner.” (English 3, p. 28)
3. “When a student does not have a book, he can share with his class fellows.” (English 3, p. 37)
4. “Write a letter to your friend. Thank him for the gift he gave you on your last birthday.” (English 4, p. 92)

In the preceding instances, ‘*he*’, ‘*his*’, and ‘*man*’ encompass all human beings. The intended messages might not be so, but the use of masculine generics like a ‘*man*’ who is affected by the environment refers to males only. Further, only a male can be a ‘*fellow*’ a ‘*student*’ and a ‘*cleaner*’. The young learners would consider that such public domains are specifically for males. Consequently, they would develop their perceptions accordingly.

However, an instance of gender-neutral language was examined in English 4 (p. 68): “*Form groups of five students each. Each student in his turn will tell what his or her little sister or brother does when he or she notices him or her in some activity*”. However, the sentence begins with a generic pronoun ‘*his*’ used for ‘*each student*’ and it becomes inclusive. It may be an attempt to neutralize the language in use (Lee & Collins, 2008; Mkuchu, 2004).

The findings are in concordance with Amini and Birjandi (2012), Ullah and Skelton (2013), and Mkuchu (2004) who found masculine generics in their respective studies. However, they are contrary to Yang’s study (2014) that did not identify any generics in the English storybooks of Hong Kong.

4.3.2 Gender description through adjectives

The description of gender through attributes is also a sexist phenomenon. Attributes tend to explain the characteristics or qualities (Parrott, 2000) and also give information about the object of description and define “. . . something in a way conventionally thought of as good or bad in a person, globally with reference to context” (Yang, 2014, p. 154). Contextual connotation determines the negativity or positivity (Yang, 2014) of an adjective. Two instances given below indicate how the attribute of ‘goodness’ has been pronounced. ‘*Ali*’ is good because of unconventional activities whereas ‘*Asma*’ is good for stereotypical and feminine activities.

Instance 1:

- | | |
|--|---|
| “1. Asma goes to market. | “1. Ali is eleven years old. |
| 2. She buys apple. | 2. Ali is in class five. |
| 3. Asma brings the fruit home. | 3. He helps his mother at home. |
| 4. She cleans the table. | 4. Ali likes to play with his sister. |
| 5. Asma is a good girl. | 5. He is good boy.” (English 3, p. 31) |
| 6. She helps her mother.” (English 3, P. 28) | |

Instance 2: “Mr Wasif had been a **good** friend during those first difficult days. . . Jan's skill in sports and his **good** grades soon won him the respect of his classmates” (English 5, p. 52).

The following instances indicate the association of adjectives:

1. “Irfa Karim . . . received a certificate for being the **youngest** Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP) in the world.” (English 5, p. 17)
2. “Jaleel realizes that he has been **rude** with Sara and feels **bad** about his behaviour.” (English, p. 87)
3. “This girl seems to be **proud**. She never comes out to join us . . .” (English 4, p. 11)
4. “. . . a woodcutter was returning home. . . He was **tired**, but **proud** that he had completed a full day's work.” (English 5, p. 9)
5. “A **Naughty** Little Sister.” (English 4, p. 69)
6. “The boy who is sitting next to me is very **naughty**.” (English 5, p. 87)

The data reveal that ‘Busy’, ‘Generous’, ‘Wise’, ‘Caring’, ‘Smart’, ‘Rich’, ‘Big’, ‘Strong’, ‘Free’, ‘Tall’, ‘Forgiving’, ‘Loving’, ‘Lucky’, ‘Brave’, ‘Glad’ and ‘Honest’ are the positive adjectives which have been used for males exclusively whereas the negative adjectives associated with them are ‘Worried’, ‘Rude’, ‘Wrong’, ‘Puzzled’, ‘Cunning’ and ‘Bad’. The adjectives ‘Little’, ‘Blind’, ‘Deaf’ and ‘Proud’ have been associated with females exclusively. ‘Kind’, ‘Good’, ‘Genius’ and ‘Affectionate’ are positive connotations associated with both genders. The common negative adjectives associated are ‘Naughty’, ‘Sad’, ‘Careless’, ‘Old’ and ‘Alone’ with varying frequencies for females and males; for example, an adjective ‘Old’ appears 4 times for females but only one time for males.

The findings imply stereotypical representations of gender in the use of adjectives. It is sexist phenomenon. Males have been represented positively more than females. The findings coincide with that of Pearce (2008) who found more negative adjectives associated with females.

4.3.3 Nomination of gender

Naming persons or objects of description is a process of ‘nomination’ (Leeuwen, 2008). A name or title refers to the “unique identity” (Leeuwen, 2008, p. 40). Anonymous characterization means the person is not worth mentioning (Leeuwen, 2008). Unnamed representations tend to be degrading and omission (Mkuchu, 2004; Michel, 1986) and, hence, indicate sexism as a name “signifies a person’s existence, position in society and power relations” (Mkuchu, 2004, p. 134). Exclusion or inclusion of gender may have a significant role in developing students’ perception. According to Kabira and Masinjila

(1997), a learner identifies herself/himself easily with a named character than otherwise. Hellinger (1980) and Pearce (2008) have observed a common trend of representing female characters anonymous.

Females are not mentioned in a public domain in Pakistan as it causes indignity. The kinship or physical quality is the way of representing a female character; for example, Kinza's mother (English 4, p. 9). Therefore, the inclusion of this phenomenon in the textbooks reflects sexism.

Table 5: Results of the nomination of gender

Textbooks	Unnamed Female Characters	Freq	Unnamed Male Characters	Freq
English 1	mother (p. 93), Grandmother (p. 95)	2	a woodcutter (p. 95)	1
English 2	Nil		Ali's father (p. 59), Ali's friends (p. 79), Ahmed's father	3
English 4	Kinza's mother (p. 9), Kinza's friend (p. 12), My mother (p. 37), Mother of Zara and Zain (p. 70), Grandmother of Zaid and Meena (p. 70),	5	A pilot (p. 82),	1
English 5	An old woman (p. 2), woodcutter's wife (p. 10),	2	enemy of Hazrat Mohammad (PBUH) (p. 3), a woodcutter (p. 3), chief executive (p. 17), a man (p. 41), Jane's teacher (p. 51)	5
Total		9		10

Table 5 shows that almost equal markers of nomination have been used for females and males whereas, overall, females have been underrepresented in the verbal texts. 'Type' Kinship markers for females and males are 03 and 01 whereas 'token' markers are 08 and 02 respectively. Female representation occurs in terms of 'Mother' (4 bits), 'Grandmother' (2 bits), 'Wife' (1 bit) and 'Woman' (1 bit) whereas males have been portrayed in the kinship of a father (2 bits) only. Four occupational markers for males (woodcutter, pilot, teacher and chief executive) have been identified. No female has been portrayed in any occupation which represents a specific professional ability of a character. It implies that only males are entitled to be a 'pilot', 'woodcutter', 'chief executive' and 'teacher'.

Leeuwen (2008) claims that nomination can be through kinship terms. Females have been mostly nominated this way; seven females as compared with two males have been represented through kinship. In English 4, the female nominations are '*Kinza's mother*' (p. 9), '*Grandmother of Zaid and Meena*' (p. 17), '*My mother*' (p. 37) and '*Mother of Zara and Zain*' (p. 70). Therefore, it implies that female characters' representations are sexist as motherhood is their all-encompassing identity. The findings are in line with Mkuchu (2004), Koza (1994) and Michel (1986) who identified dominant anonymous representations of females.

5. Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to explore sexism imbued in the textbooks. It has been found that the texts carry sexist language and messages. In the vocabulary and illustrations, a significantly dominant occurrence of masculine representation has been identified. The grammatical analysis reveals the excessive use of masculine generic terms to represent all human beings. All-encompassing themes have been explained or referred by employing male terms like 'he/his/him' and 'man'.

In terms of 'nomination', there are almost equal male and female anonymous characters. It is also a conventional attitude on the part of the author/s as mentioning of the names of females in public is not common. Females have mostly been represented through kinship terms, mostly male kinship. In short, dominant male representation, stereotyped essentialist roles sexes, and gender-biased language have been identified which refer to sexism portrayed in the text.

6. Recommendations

The textual representations of female and male characters reflect the rampant essentialist social constructions of gender which may restrict the perception of students about themselves as well as the opposite sex. The girls may underestimate their talent if they are ignored or real representations of gender do not find space in the curricula. The study implies the insouciant attitude of the authorities involved in the process of developing textbooks towards the elimination of gender stereotypes from the textbooks. The concerns of the Curriculum Wing and the serious assurance of the government have been disregarded.

The findings lead to the recommendation that English textbooks, along with teaching the English language, should reflect the real social scenario, a balanced portrayal of gender and play a role in the rectification of gendered-stereotypes and social ideals. They, being a source of socialization, should lead to establishing a socially just society through inculcating positive messages. All human beings are essential parts of society and equally vital for the smooth continuation of social life. They should be made a companion in the campaign of elimination of sexism and providing equal opportunity to women, an inevitable aspect of educational fairness.

Gender researchers and activists must be consulted or included in the process of textbooks preparation. The policy makers and the teachers should realize that they are to have a critical role in the endeavor of elimination of sexism and hence, gender stereotypes. Another possible solution is the training of the writers so that they may include varied and real aspects of the existing females' lives to avoid reinforcement of stereotypes in the tender minds. Precisely, serious efforts are required to establish equitable scholastic setups that may prepare human beings, not gendered beings, and to create gender parity.

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