



(UNDER)REPRESENTING WOMEN IN CURRICULA: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF URDU AND ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL IN PAKISTAN

Faiza Saleem
Department of English,
Baha-ud-Din Zakariya University
&
Shirin Zubair
Department of English,
Baha-ud-Din Zakariya University

Abstract The present study was carried out to investigate and explore how language used in school textbooks represents and promotes gender biases although the issue of gender disparity has long been recognized and addressed in various governmental policies and education planning. Applying the feminist theoretical frameworks of language use (Cameron, 1998; Christie, 2000; Litosseliti, 2006), the textbooks of Urdu and English of class 5, prescribed by the Punjab Textbook Board (PTB) were selected for the purpose of content analysis. The results show that the present curriculum is not gender sensitive; it is heavily biased, promoting stereotypical gender roles and societal expectations. Although a set of guidelines for eliminating gender stereotyping in educational materials have been devised, however, not much seems to have changed. The researchers hope that the findings of this research will be used by policy makers, textbook authors, editors, publishers, and practitioners to reduce gender bias from textbooks. It may also be used by educators in eliminating such biases by, a) incorporating a gender-neutral approach in pedagogical practices; b) sensitizing the learners to these issues.

Keywords: Gender, Representation, Language, Education, Stereotypes, Content Analysis, Textbooks