

Gender Faces in the Textbook of Al-Arabiyyah Li Al-Nasyi'in (Critical Discourse Analysis Study)

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article information	Abstract
Submitted: 2024-03-30 Revised: 2024-04-16 Published: 2024-06-30	The polemic of gender equality and justice in its status and role in society is one of the studies that is often echoed to this day. Polemics over gender equality can be found in various fields, one of which is in the field of education, especially in the learning media, namely textbooks. The purpose of this study is to describe how the discourse or text in the book al-Arabiyyah li al-Nasyi'in Volume 2 by Mahmud Ismail Shini reflects the construction and division of gender roles performed by women and men, as well as the impact on readers' understanding of gender roles based on the subject-object position and the position of the author-reader of Sara Mills' theory in the textbook. The data of this research are texts that contain gender perspectives from the textbook al-Arabiyyah li al-Nasyi'in Volume 2. The method used in this research is library research. These findings indicate that al-Arabiyyah li al-Nasyi'in Vol. 2 reinforces gender bias by portraying women in domestic roles and men in public roles, reflecting patriarchal norms. Such representations shape young readers' perceptions, highlighting the need for more inclusive and equitable educational materials. This study contributes to revealing how gender representation in textbooks shapes the social construction of young readers, while also encouraging the development of more equitable, fair, and stereotype-free educational materials.
Keywords: Gender, Textbook of Al-Arabiyyah Li Al-Nasyi'in Critical Discourse Analysis.	

Introduction

The polemic of gender equality and justice in its status and role in society is one of the studies that is often echoed to this day. Polemics over gender equality can be found in various fields, one of which is in the field of education, especially in the learning media, namely textbooks (Verdugo-Castro et al., 2022; Cumming-Potvin, 2023). Textbooks are a form of written discourse. In addition, textbooks are also a medium as well as a very significant source of learning in the educational process itself, both inside and outside the classroom (Weinberg et al., 2012; Royani, 2020; Haleem et al., 2022). Books are not only a source of information, but also a medium of interaction between learners and learners (Nisa, 2023). If the content of a textbook has a deviant message, then learners and learners will have a deviant ideology as well. Arabic textbooks have experienced rapid development from time to time, along with the development of linguistic, psycholinguistic, and sociolinguistic theories (Saiegh-Haddad, 2022). One form of discourse analysis that is appropriate in this study is critical discourse analysis developed by Sara Mills (Anwar et al., 2020; Nur & Riyadi, 2023). Critical discourse analysis allows us to further explore the role of language in psychosociolinguistic aspects (Rogers et al., 2016; Mullet, 2018).

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Several studies support this research. Roviin analyzed a textbook by Mahmud Ismail Shini, applying documentation and content analysis methods. The book emphasizes Arabic language learning comprehensively, including maharah lughawiyah and various linguistic exercises, while also presenting key competencies (Roviin, 2018). Ulfah and colleagues investigated gender bias in Indonesian high school textbooks, identifying subordination and stereotypes of women, particularly through indirect communication and cultural codes (Ulfah, 2019). Lintang Citra also found that textbooks often depict women in domestic roles and men in public ones, reinforcing damaging gender norms (Christiani, 2015). Chisholm (2018) reviewed literature on how race, class, and gender are represented in textbooks across different countries and subjects. The study highlighted diverse theoretical frameworks, with feminist and critical race theories informing the analysis. Izuddin et al (2021) revealed that Arabic textbooks often portray women as subordinate and underrepresented, though some parts show progress in equal rights depiction. Lastly, Muassomah examined the Al-'Arabiyyatu Baina Yadaika textbook and found persistent gender imbalances in both text and images, calling for textbooks that better support gender equity (Muassomah et al., 2023).

The purpose of this study is to explain how the texts in the textbook reflect the construction and division of dominant gender roles performed by women and men, and their impact on the understanding of gender roles. Equality between men and women has been regulated by the State. Especially for textbooks, it is regulated in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 8 of 2016 which contains that books used by educational units must not contain gender bias. However, in reality there are still many textbooks from various subjects that contain gender bias, especially in Arabic lessons. In this study, the author uses Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis theory on texts from the book al-Arabiyyah Li al-Nasyi'in Volume 2 by Mahmud Ismail Shini. Critical discourse analysis will highlight key elements such as the way actor positions (actors/persons who are the subject and object of the storytelling) are displayed and the author-reader position that will determine the structure of the text and the meaning treated in the text as a whole. The author will also focus on the sociological factors of the role of women and men in Arab society. Thus this research is a collaboration between the disciplines of critical discourse analysis and sociolinguistics. In addition, this critical discourse analysis is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how language reflects and shapes gender roles in society.

This study hypothesizes that the texts in al-'Arabiyyah Li al-Nasyi'in Volume 2 by Mahmud Ismail Shini reflect the construction of dominant gender roles within Arab society, with a tendency to portray women in subordinate positions and men in dominant roles. The positioning of actors in the narrative, as well as the relationship between the author and the reader, are presumed to reinforce a structure of meaning that socially and culturally limits the roles of women. Furthermore, this hypothesis suggests that the language used in the textbook is not entirely gender-neutral, but rather reflects the prevailing social norms in Arab society, which may influence how students understand and reproduce gender roles. By applying Sara Mills' theory of critical discourse analysis in combination with a sociolinguistic approach, this study examines how language in the textbook functions as a subtle yet systematic tool in perpetuating gender inequality.

Method

This research adopts a qualitative approach through library research, which focuses on collecting data from various written sources such as books, journal articles, and other academic publications (Sutton & Austin, 2015; Cheong et al., 2023). In this study, the main data source is the Arabic textbook al-'Arabiyyah Li al-Nasyi'in Volume 2 by Mahmud Ismail Shini, which serves as the primary material for analysis. The researcher examines the textual content of this book to explore how gender roles are presented. In addition to the primary text, the study also relies on secondary

sources, including scholarly literature that discusses gender roles and gender bias in educational contexts (Bowen, 2009; Korstjens & Moser, 2017). These secondary references—comprising books, articles, and academic papers—are used to support the interpretation and provide a broader theoretical foundation. This combination of primary and secondary data helps in critically analyzing how gender representations are constructed within the textbook and how they might influence students' perceptions of gender norms, particularly in the context of Arabic language learning at the high school level.

The researcher chose this specific textbook because it remains a common teaching resource among Arabic language instructors at the high school or 'aliyah level, especially within Islamic boarding schools (Jaafar et al., 2023). The textbook contains various themes related to gender roles, and several of these themes suggest the presence of gender bias. Such representations are crucial to analyze, as they may contribute to shaping students' views on gender in a way that reinforces stereotypes or imbalanced role perceptions (Llorens et al., 2021). By examining these elements, the study aims to uncover implicit messages that could affect how learners understand gender dynamics. Recognizing and challenging these biased portrayals is an important step in ensuring that educational resources promote fairness and inclusivity. Ultimately, this research contributes to efforts to create more gender-sensitive learning materials that encourage students to develop a balanced and just perspective on gender roles, in line with broader goals of gender equality in education (Charlesworth & Banaji, 2019; Zabaniotou, 2020).

The research employs content analysis combined with Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis to examine the data (Popping, 2015; Agung & Suroso, 2023). The data consists of vocabulary, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs that reflect gender perspectives within the reading texts. The analysis process involves several stages. First, data findings are identified based on gender perspectives, and the data is classified according to two main research questions using work tables. Next, a coding system is applied to organize the data for easier analysis (Hassani et al., 2020; Uyuni et al., 2023). For instance, in the first research question regarding subject-object positions within gender stereotypes, data coding includes a label such as PSO-St01/h24. This code indicates that the data refers to the subject-object position category, within the stereotype subcategory, as the first instance found on page 24. This method ensures a systematic approach to categorizing and analyzing the gender-related content within the text, facilitating a deeper understanding of how gender roles are represented and structured.

Result and Discussion

Result

Based on a review of various literature sources, this study identifies several forms of gender bias. In terms of the subject-object relationship, the biases found include: (1) subordination and stereotypes that place women as more responsible for domestic affairs, and (2) in terms of the writer-reader relationship, bias appears in the form of indirect references, specifically through the use of third-person singular pronouns. The presentation of the research findings is outlined as follows:

Subordination

The subordination of women in the domestic sphere is also found in the *tadribat* text with the theme 'fi al-bait' which can be seen in the first data, as follows (Mahmud Ismail Shini, p. 24):

وهذه والدته في المطبخ تعد طعام الغداء، وهذه أخته في غرفة الطعام وهي تنظف المائدة وهذه جدته في الحمام وهي تغسل الملابس (PSO-Sb01/h.24)

Subordination or the assumption that a role performed by one sex is inferior to another. Social and cultural values constructed by society have compartmentalized the roles of men and women. Women are considered responsible and have a role in domestic affairs, while men do not.

Based on data (1) women are often shown with domestic tasks. Domestic tasks are related to housewife duties such as cooking, cleaning the house, washing clothes, and so on. When traced, this obligation in the domestic sphere seems to have become something biological for women. It is indirectly constructed in society that women are obliged to do domestic work. So there is an assumption that leading work, earning a living, and activities outside the home are the responsibility of men who have the capacity to do this. It is clear that there is gender bias in the text, namely the subordination of women. In the discourse "في البيت", the reader will be brought to the meaning of the text that there are differences in the gender roles of male family members (father, grandfather, and Ahmad) and female family members (mother, grandmother, and Ahmad's sister) at home. Female family members play more social production and reproduction roles in the domestic sphere. An example of the domestic role shown in the (female) members of Ahmad's family in the sentence :

Table 1. The Domestic Role Shown in the (Female) Members of Ahmad's Family

No.	Meaning	Text
1.	"and this is his sister (Ahmad's brother or sister) in the dining room, she is cleaning the dining table."	وهذه أخته في غرفة الطعام وهي تنظف المائدة
2.	"and this is Ahmad in the library, he is reading."	وهذا أحمد في غرفة المكتبة وهو يقرأ
3.	"and this is his grandmother (Ahmad) in the bathroom, she is washing clothes."	وهذه جدته في الحمام وهي تغسل الملابس
4.	"and this is his grandfather (Ahmad) in the living room, he is sitting behind the table listening to the radio."	وهذا جده في غرفة الجلوس وهو يجلس خلف الطاولة يستمع إلى الراديو
5.	"and this is his mother (Ahmad) in the kitchen, she is preparing lunch."	وهذه والدته في المطبخ تعد طعام الغداء
6.	"and this is his father (Ahmad) in the garden, he is washing the car."	هذا والد أحمد في الحديقة يغسل السيارة

In the first example sentence, Ahmad's sister's role is to clean the dining table. The word (المائدة) has the plural (ومائدات موائد) which means a table that has food on it (al-Ma'louf, 2008). It is inversely proportional to Ahmad's activities at home, namely reading books in the library. Then in the second sentence which shows the role of Ahmad's grandmother and grandfather. Again, the inequality of women's roles in this text is found, namely Ahmad's grandmother's role in the domestic sphere is shown by her role washing clothes in the bathroom, while Ahmad's grandfather sits in the living room while listening to the radio. The word (الطاولة) means a table made of Italian wood. Likewise, the third sentence shows the roles of Ahmad's mother and father. Ahmad's mother's role is to prepare lunch in the kitchen, while Ahmad's father washes the car in the garden. Readers are led to normalize the role of women who play more roles in the domestic sphere than men. In fact, equality between men and women is regulated by the state. Especially for textbooks, it is regulated in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No.8 of 2016 article 2 paragraph 2 which contains that books used by educational units must not contain gender bias. When viewed from the linguistic aspect, the sentences that are often found in this text are nominal sentences or jumlah ismiyyah that show connotations, namely dawamu istomror or fixed and forever. The noun in the number of ismiyyah is also definite, so that it will not change at any time.

Stereotypes

Stereotype refers to the negative labeling of women based on false assumptions (Maulida, 2022). One form of this stereotype can be seen in the portrayal of women's roles, which are limited to reproductive and domestic spheres. This is reflected in data (1), an excerpt from the al-hiwar (dialogue) text with the theme fi al-bait by Mahmud Ismail Shini (p. 24). In the text, women are

depicted performing household tasks such as cooking and cleaning, representing traditional female roles. This representation highlights a social construct that reinforces an unequal division of gender roles within family life.

Table 2. Dialogue on the Theme of Fi al-Bait in Arabic Language Learning

Fi al-Bait		
No.	Meaning	Text
1.	Umar: "Good Evening." Ahmad: "Good evening."	عمر: مساء الخير. أحمد: مساء النور.
2.	Umar: "Whose picture is this?" Ahmad: "This picture is mine."	عمر: لمن هذه الصورة؟ أحمد: هذه الصورة لعائلتي.
3.	Umar: "Who is he?" Ahmad: "He is my father."	عمر: من هذا؟ أحمد: هذا والدي.
4.	Umar: "What is he doing?" Ahmad: "He is washing the car."	عمر: ماذا يفعل؟ أحمد: هو يغسل السيارة.
5.	Umar: "And who is she?" Ahmad: "She is my mother."	عمر: ومن هذه؟ أحمد: هذه والدتي.
6.	Umar: "What is she doing?" Ahmad: "She is cleaning the garden."	عمر: ماذا تفعل؟ أحمد: هي تنظف الحديقة.

(PSO-St01/h.20)

Stereotypes on women in the excerpt of the text al-hiwar (dialog) with the theme 'fi al bait' are found in the sentence "هي تنظف الحديقة". In the sentence "تنظف الحديقة" which means "cleaning the garden" is attached or labeled to the character Ahmad's mother. Stereotypes that afflict women (Ahmad's mother) give the assumption that women are attached to feminine things, namely in the text is a garden that is believed to be more painstaking in caring for the plantation (cleaning the garden) than men. While the male stereotype in the hiwar quote is found in the sentence "هو يغسل السيارة" which is attached to the character Ahmad's father. In the sentence "يغسل السيارة" which means "washing cars" gives the assumption that men are considered manly and masculine, therefore men are always associated with automotive symbols (cars).

Subject-Object Position

This study uses the subject-object position to identify who acts as the subject and who is portrayed as the object within the narrative of the text. Through this approach, two prominent forms of gender bias were identified: subordination and stereotyping of women. Subordination refers to the perception that one gender's role is less important than the other's, while stereotyping involves assigning generalized characteristics or roles to individuals based on inaccurate assumptions. Both forms contribute to social injustice. Subordination appears in the text through unequal role distribution, where women are seen as primarily responsible for domestic tasks. Similarly, stereotypes link women to traditionally feminine attributes, such as being meticulous in gardening, while men are associated with masculine symbols like cars. These biases stem from the perspective of the textbook author, which is influenced by the surrounding social and cultural context. Mahmud Ismail Shini, the author, reflects the Arab cultural belief that women's success lies in household responsibilities. This cultural backdrop, rooted in patriarchy, shapes the author's portrayal of gender roles, reinforcing gender inequality by normalizing women's confinement to domestic spheres and elevating male authority.

Table 3. gender roles between female and male in textbook al-Arabiyyah li al-Nasyi'in Vol. 2

No.	Female	Male
1.	The majority of female characters are described as carrying out duties in the domestic sphere.	The majority of male characters are not described as having duties in the domestic sphere.
2.	The mother character is preparing food in the kitchen.	The father character is washing the car in the yard.

3.	The sister character is cleaning the dining table	The character Ahmad is reading in the study room
4.	The grandmother character is washing clothes in the bathroom.	The grandfather character is sitting on a bench listening to the radio.
5.	Female characters are attached to feminine things, such as work in the garden.	Male characters are attached to masculine things, such as automobiles.

This table shows a clear division of gender roles in the textbook al-Arabiyyah li al-Nasyi'in Vol. 2, where women are more often depicted as being involved in domestic tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, and washing clothes. Meanwhile, men are more often depicted doing activities outside the home that are more related to public or masculine activities, such as washing cars or reading in the study room. Women are also associated with things that are considered feminine, such as taking care of the garden, while men are associated with symbols of masculinity such as cars. This division of roles shows the existence of gender stereotypes that reinforce the differences in roles between men and women in the context of household and social life. This can form a limited understanding of the roles that can be carried out based on gender and has the potential to perpetuate gender inequality in society.

Discussion

Female Subordination in the Arabic Language Learning Text

The findings from the tadribat text with the theme "في البيت" ("At Home") reveal an implicit form of female subordination through the depiction of gendered roles within the domestic sphere. In the excerpt taken from the text (Mahmud Ismail Shini, p. 24), all female characters — the mother, sister, and grandmother — are shown performing household chores, such as cooking, cleaning the dining table, and washing clothes. In contrast, male characters are not depicted engaging in domestic activities.

Using Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, we can examine how these gendered portrayals reflect underlying power dynamics. Mills argues that discourse not only reflects but also constructs social reality, particularly regarding power and gender (Mills, 2004). The language used in the text reinforces a stereotype that associates women exclusively with domestic roles, framing these activities as their natural domain. This aligns with Michel Foucault's notion of power as something that is dispersed throughout society and operates subtly through everyday practices, including language (Singer, 1979; Willis, 2008). In this case, the everyday language of the text perpetuates the belief that domestic work is biologically and culturally assigned to women, while men are portrayed as having more public, authoritative roles.

This type of subordination does more than reflect gender inequality—it actively reinforces it by presenting gendered divisions of labor as natural and inevitable (Figueroa et al., 2023). The underlying implication is that women inherently belong in the domestic and caregiving sphere, whereas men are suited for the public and productive realm (Sultana, 2012; Padavic et al., 2019). Such portrayals are not neutral; they function to normalize and legitimize unequal power dynamics between genders. According to Mills (2004), discourse plays a central role in making these roles seem fixed and unquestionable. By embedding these norms in everyday language and texts, the discourse subtly upholds patriarchal systems, making gender-based hierarchies appear common-sense and resistant to change. In effect, this perpetuates systemic inequality across generations.

Moreover, the lack of male involvement in domestic tasks, coupled with the exclusive association of women with caregiving and household responsibilities, fosters a binary opposition between private (feminine) and public (masculine) roles (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018). This not only marginalizes women's contributions outside of the domestic sphere but also perpetuates a limited understanding of what roles men and women can perform in society. Judith Butler (2006) in her theory of gender performativity argues that gender roles are socially constructed through repeated

behaviors and performances. In this case, the text's reinforcement of gendered roles through language contributes to the performance of traditional gender identities that limit both women's and men's roles in society (McIntosh, 1991; Stoetzler, 2005).

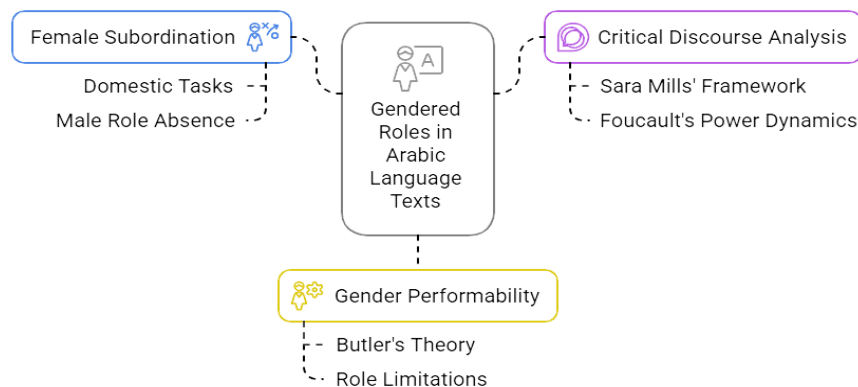


Figure 1. Gendered Roles in Arabic Language Texts

In conclusion, the subordination of women depicted in this educational text reflects broader socio-cultural structures that limit women's roles to the domestic sphere and exclude them from public participation. This kind of discourse perpetuates gender inequality by reinforcing stereotypes and limiting both women's and men's agency in shaping their roles. As such, it is essential to critically evaluate educational materials to ensure they do not unintentionally perpetuate gender-biased perspectives. By applying critical discourse analysis, we can reveal how language not only reflects but also actively constructs and maintains gendered power dynamics.

Representation of Gender Stereotypes in Al-Hiwar Texts Arabic Language Learning

The al-hiwar text with the theme "في البيت" (At Home) in Mahmud Ismail Shini's Arabic language textbook reveals a clear representation of gender stereotypes, emphasizing traditional gender roles between men and women. The text demonstrates these roles through the sentence "هي تنظف الحديقة" (She is cleaning the garden), which is attributed to Ahmad's mother. The act of cleaning the garden is a domestic chore traditionally associated with women, reinforcing the stereotype that women are naturally inclined to perform household tasks. This gendered division of labor reflects a social construct that positions women as meticulous, clean, and responsible for the home environment.

This depiction reflects Grimwood (2008) feminist theory, which asserts that women have traditionally been viewed as "the Other," defined in contrast to men and assigned roles within the private, domestic realm. Within this framework, the act of cleaning the garden symbolizes how women's roles in household tasks are not only expected but internalized as part of their identity (Reddy & Butler, 2004; Mitchell, 2017). It reinforces the idea that such responsibilities are naturally suited to women, rooted in gender rather than choice or capability. By linking domestic labor to femininity, the text sustains social norms that marginalize women from public or authoritative spaces, framing their primary value within the confines of the home and maintaining unequal gender dynamics through cultural narratives (Bettin & Mills, 2018; Granacki, 2023).

On the other hand, the sentence "هو يغسل السيارة" (He is washing the car), attributed to Ahmad's father, perpetuates stereotypes of masculinity. The act of washing the car, which is closely linked to the world of automobiles and physical labor, is associated with masculinity. This representation resonates with R.W. Connell's (2005) concept of hegemonic masculinity, where men are constructed as strong, rational, and dominant in technical and public spheres. The washing of the car becomes a symbolic act reinforcing these traits of power and dominance, further entrenching the public/private divide.

Furthermore, Bem's (1993) Gender Schema Theory suggests that children form their understanding of gender roles based on societal influences, including educational texts. If textbooks continue to present biased representations of gender roles, students are likely to absorb and reproduce these views in their own lives, reinforcing stereotypes about what is considered appropriate for men and women (Starr & Zurbriggen, 2017). The gender roles represented in this text reflect symbolic and normative gender divisions. Women are depicted as engaged in reproductive and domestic roles, while men are associated with activities that symbolize power, strength, and public authority (Sani, 2014; Hussain et al., 2015). If left unchallenged, such narratives can reinforce gender inequality, limiting women's roles to the private sphere and marginalizing their potential in the public domain.

By applying Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), we can see how these representations are not neutral but are imbued with power dynamics that reflect and sustain patriarchal norms (Lazar, 2005; Tamrin, 2018). Mills emphasizes that discourse is not merely a reflection of social reality but plays a central role in constructing and reinforcing it (Lee, 2020). The text, through its linguistic choices, subtly reinforces traditional gender roles, portraying women as domestic and men as public and authoritative figures (Lang & Rybnikova, 2016). This reflects broader cultural assumptions about gender that are transmitted through educational materials, often without conscious consideration of their implications.

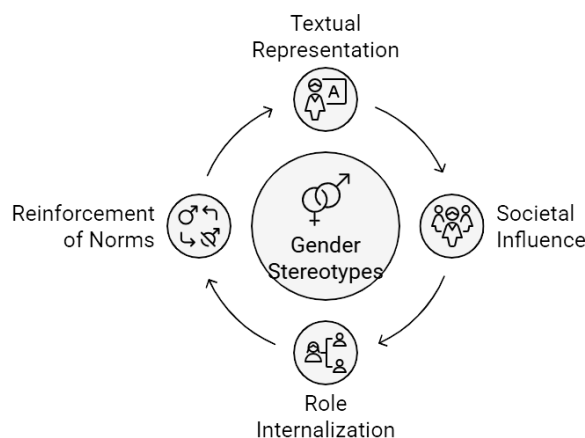


Figure 2. Cycle of Gender Stereotype Reinforcement

Therefore, it is essential for curriculum designers and textbook writers to thoroughly assess how gender is portrayed in educational content. Applying a critical discourse analysis allows educators and stakeholders to identify and challenge subtle forms of gender bias embedded in learning materials. This approach is vital for fostering inclusive and equitable educational spaces that do not reinforce traditional gender roles. By presenting more balanced representations of both men and women, textbooks can help dismantle stereotypes and promote gender equality. Such conscious efforts in material development ensure that students are exposed to diverse role models and encouraged to view gender roles as flexible rather than fixed, ultimately supporting a more just and progressive learning environment for all learners.

Gender Bias Analysis in the Division of Female and Male Roles in Textbooks

Based on the textual analysis of al-Arabiyyah li al-Nasyi'in Vol. 2, two dominant forms of gender bias were identified: subordination and stereotypes. Subordination refers to the notion that roles performed by one gender are considered inferior to those performed by another. Stereotyping, on the other hand, involves constructing images or labels for individuals or groups based on inaccurate or unfounded assumptions. In the context of this text, women are often portrayed engaging in domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and doing laundry, which builds

the perception that women are more suited for such work. Meanwhile, men are more frequently depicted engaging in outdoor activities associated with masculinity, such as washing the car or reading in an office, reinforcing the idea that men are more connected to the public sphere.

To examine gender representation in the textbook, this study draws on several key theoretical frameworks (Rifkin, 1998). One is Judith Butler's (2006) Social Construction of Gender Theory, which argues that gender is not an innate biological attribute but a product of repeated social behaviors. In this light, the portrayal of women performing domestic duties and men involved in public or technical roles reflects the reinforcement of Arab cultural norms through educational texts. Butler views gender as performative, shaped through continuous enactment of socially sanctioned roles. The text thus perpetuates culturally constructed expectations that assign women to private spaces and men to public ones. Sandra Bem's Gender Schema Theory (1993) is also applicable here. Bem proposes that people learn gender roles through internalized societal frameworks. The association of women with caregiving and household tasks, and men with more public, authoritative actions in the text, supports these gender schemas, influencing how young readers perceive which behaviors and roles are appropriate based on their gender.

Furthermore, R.W. Connell's concept of Hegemonic Masculinity (2005) highlights how dominant norms associate men with symbols of masculinity—such as cars and public spaces—while women remain confined to the domestic sphere. In this text, the representation of men with cars and public spaces illustrates how hegemonic masculinity dominates male portrayals, positioning them as stronger, more rational, and technically or publicly competent. In contrast, women depicted in domestic tasks are positioned as weaker and responsible only for household matters.

This analysis applies Sara Mills' (2004) Critical Discourse Analysis technique, which emphasizes that discourse not only reflects social reality but also plays a role in shaping and maintaining power structures. Mills highlights how language and discourse in educational texts reflect certain socio-cultural dominance. In this case, the textbook reinforces rigid and traditional gender roles, obscuring the possibility of change or flexibility in the division of labor between men and women. Mills (1995) argues that gender representation in such texts contributes to the production and reinforcement of existing gender inequalities.

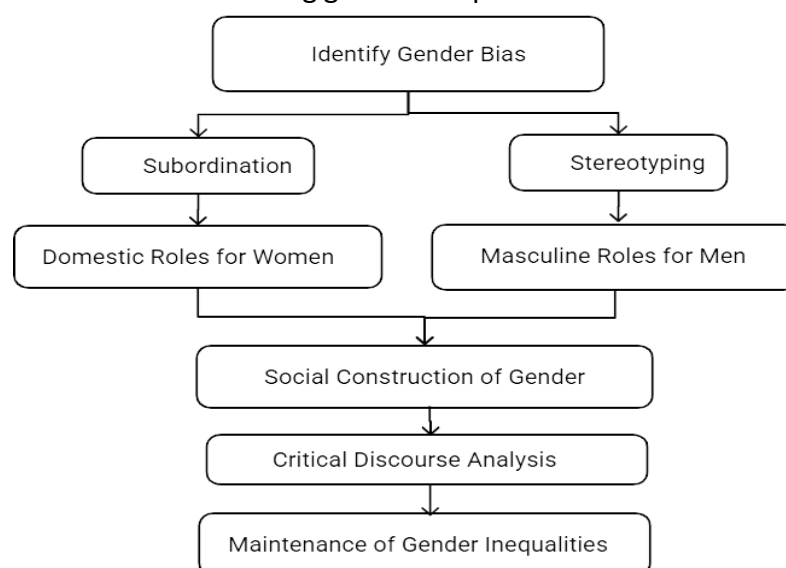


Figure 3. Gender Bias in Textbook Analysis

The clear division of roles between women and men in this textbook creates the understanding that women are inherently connected to domestic work, while men belong in public and masculine domains. This representation reflects deeply rooted gender inequality in the text, likely influenced by the cultural background of the author, Mahmud Ismail Shini, who comes from

an Arab society that is heavily shaped by patriarchal systems. In traditional Arab communities, women are often deemed more successful if they excel in domestic duties, while men are considered successful when they dominate public spheres and serve as economic providers.

The influence of biased gender portrayals in textbooks is profound, particularly in shaping how children and young readers perceive gender roles. When educational materials repeatedly depict men and women in rigid, stereotypical roles, they contribute to the normalization of gender inequality and limit the imagination of young minds about what they can achieve regardless of gender. This repeated exposure can reinforce outdated social expectations and hinder efforts toward achieving gender equity. To counter this, it is essential to design learning resources that are inclusive and balanced—materials that go beyond traditional representations and provide space for learners to envision themselves in a variety of roles. Educational content should encourage both boys and girls to develop skills and interests without being confined by conventional gender norms, fostering an environment that supports equal opportunities and challenges systemic bias from an early age.

Conclusion

The analysis of *al-Arabiyyah li al-Nasyi'in* Vol. 2 reveals persistent gender bias through portrayals of female subordination and stereotypes. Women are consistently depicted in domestic roles—cooking, cleaning, and caregiving—while men engage in public or technical activities, reinforcing traditional gender divisions. Using theories by Butler, Bem, Connell, and Mills, these portrayals are understood as socially constructed and performative, normalizing patriarchal norms. The discourse in the text subtly reinforces power imbalances by presenting gender roles as natural and fixed, influencing how young readers internalize social expectations. Such representations marginalize women's contributions in public spheres while elevating masculine roles, potentially perpetuating inequality across generations. Therefore, educational materials must be critically reviewed to ensure they promote gender equity, offering diverse and balanced role models that allow learners to envision broader possibilities beyond stereotypical gender roles.

These findings have important practical and theoretical implications. Practically, it is necessary to revise the curriculum and textbooks to be more gender inclusive, provide teacher training on gender literacy, and develop guidelines for evaluating gender representation in teaching materials. Theoretically, this analysis strengthens Butler's theory of social construction of gender, which states that gender is formed through repeated social practices, and supports Bem's theory of gender schema, that children form perceptions of gender roles through social influence. In addition, Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach has proven relevant in revealing how language in educational texts can reproduce patriarchal power structures. Therefore, it is important for education to adopt a critical approach so as not to perpetuate gender inequality through narratives that are considered "natural".

Based on these findings, further research is recommended to explore gender representation in other editions of Arabic textbooks or in foreign language curricula in general, in order to determine the extent to which gender bias is pervasive across educational levels and cultural contexts. In addition, comparative studies across countries or regions can provide greater insight into the influence of cultural values on the construction of gender roles in teaching materials. Qualitative research involving students' and teachers' perspectives is also important to understand how gender representation in textbooks influences their understanding and attitudes toward gender roles. Furthermore, multimodal discourse analysis that includes visual elements such as illustrations or pictures is also recommended to gain a more comprehensive picture of the gender narratives constructed in textbooks.

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