

Linguistic Analysis of Gender Representation in School Curriculum and Textbooks

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Abstract

The study, ‘Linguistic analysis of gender representation in school curriculum and text book’ significantly describes and explains impact of the school curriculum moldings the gender roles. Text books grant as a foundational tool for both education and society. It also shaping how knowledge works and persons understand their roles, societal values and issues. The content and the presentation of the text books can influence each student’s perceptions of different age groups. Research studies have revealed that text books often represent men in leading roles and women in more limited. In this framework the present study critically examines the language used in the teaching aids especially text books. The linguistic analysis of data for the present study is collected from the English text books of primary schools of Kerala region.

Keywords: Gender, curriculum, textbooks, language use, linguistic analysis

Introduction

Family is the first and most important setting where children learn about gender awareness. Parent’s representation on gendered actions, division of labor, method of handling sons and daughters will impact on children attitudes and expectations. Some parents may entertain sons and daughters in a different way. For example Sons got more freedom and independence than daughters. This type of actions will negatively register in their mind and bad impact on gender roles. School is the next institution in the gender socialization procedure

influencing how children learn and internalize gender roles and stereotypes. Warsi and mehvis mohsin stated that school is the place where children learn what is exactly meant by male or female Warsi and mehvis mohsin (2022). According to Skolnic, at the age of 11 boys start viewing science as masculine subject while the viewpoint of the girls remains neutral and by the age of 14 girls also start looking it as an area of male Skolnic (1982). Teacher's interactions, attitudes and expectations also reinforce gendered behaviors of students. Peer groups within the schools, textbooks, and curricula activities can help students to understand gender equality and challenge harmful stereotypes. Curriculum is one of the important aspects to transform the society in terms of values, cultures and beliefs. Gender stereotypes exist in our society and the child starts to understand about gender stereotypical roles through school curriculum as a form of pictures UNESCO (2004). The school and the teachers are institutions that can and should govern and possess the gender education in all meanings Molla (2016). There are two main factors affect the child in gender socialization process are family and school environment i.e. the gender education should play a very essential role in education system. Brill & Paper (2008), Mahmood (2022) examine that if students are regularly exposed to materials that present gender stereotypes through pictures practices lexicons characters and role models etc, they are likely to internalize the idea as their default perspective.

Methodology

The descriptive and explanatory approach is used in this study. The collected data is analyzed, categorized, and the gender elements are identified with observation method followed by the Leipzig Glossing Rules. It is to be mentioned that the present study is restricted to the primary SCERT language textbooks in Kerala, especially the data limited through the content of English textbooks and pictures only.

Linguistic Analysis of the Data

The language use and content of the textbooks should be able to initiate a transform in current systems in the society, to get better the condition and status of girls and women. The analysis of the data of the present study came up with the following examples and findings:

Male dominated narratives

Textbooks may mark less female characters, mainly in leadership of professional roles like mothers or home keepers, while men are exposed in more various and influential position. Dealing with different teaching aids it was noticed that there is gender segregation in the job associated to men and women. The uneven distribution of men and women in occupation in Indian history has changes overtime.

There is a unit in the seventh class about a social worker Padma Shri Usha Chaumar, the chapter titled 'A beacon of hope', convey a message to the society is women are not meant for staying at home, clean-up dirt and take care of children. Women should be self-sufficient through dignified jobs. It will help to build a better society and free of untouchability.

Stereotypical portrayals

In the exercise part there is a note on community helpers and importance of their role in the society. The pictorial representation related to the exercise shows the gender segregation in the job associated to men and women. Professions like doctor, police etc. represented by masculine character whereas nurses, teachers are exclusively represented by feminine.

In earlier times women may face barriers to accessing better education and training which can affect to get them job. Compared to the earlier textbooks younger and more educated women figure can see in the textbooks. There was a short story by Ruskin bond in class seven titled 'Renji's magic bat' discusses the value of self confidence. In the doorway of this unit highlighted

with a picture of dominant performance of Indian team against England in ICCU 19 women's T20 world cup. The picture shows gender equality in sports ensuring that both men and women have equal opportunities to participate, compete, and celebrate their performance be recognized in sports ,regardless of gender. Illustrating stories and images of varied female athletes from various sports, backgrounds, and abilities can inspire girls and challenge constricted definitions of what a 'sports girl' looks like or does. In the exercise part, sports make a powerful tool for social change and activities related pictures, shown a message of self-confidence and gender equality.

'Language use'

There is story in class four titled 'The lost child' by Mulk Raj Anand presenting child's behavior towards their parents influencing their emotions. The parents openly expressing their emotions and thoughts using facial expression lead negative impact. The role of the father who has significant control and authority to his family. His strict rule and expectations and the parenting style can have impacts on child. Usage of 'red eyed' shows the father's eyes grew red with anger and emotional distress. 'Without waiting for an answer' shows the listener's expectation from the speaker and hoping for a response. Again the boy begged to father, and lost his hope. The poet used the word 'Without waiting for an answer' instead of 'NO'.

- (a) His father looked at him red-eyed

He-GEN V-PST PREP he-ACC ADJ

- (b) Without waiting for an answer

ADV V-PRES PREP ART N

- (c) 'My father, dear father'

I -DAT N, AFF-N

- (d) Bring me sweet toys.

V 1PSG ADJ N-PL

In the above examples (a to d) examine that the father is often perceived as the primary provider and financial decision maker, exerting a dominant influence on family. Here we get the separation of domains where the male figure is always seen to be concerned in the public domain and female figure is in the private domain. Lack of ensuring gender equality in household system is clearly understood in the above activity.

The units five in class six, 'helping hand' written by Girija Rani Astana tells a story about a young small town girl. She is interested swimming but the cousin brothers don't include her with them to go the swimming club. At the end of the story her swimming skills make her extraordinary to others. Traditional gender roles often describe boys as naturally more athletic and leading them to view girls in sports as not as much of competent or deserving. Renjith, one of the characters of the story is dominant and his negative attitudes and behaviors' towards Radha is leading issues in sports of gender equality.

(e) 'You can just float and crawl, Not swim properly,'

2PSG MODV ADV V CONJ V, NEG V ADV

The speaker in the example (e) is making an assumption or a stereotype, The language tells about someone is making a comment about another person's swimming skill, signifying they aren't a strong swimmer. There's a possibility in that statement itself is that inherently contain information about gender. The speaker is masculine person tell to female person and discourage her ability. His thought is fewer women report being able to swim than men. Cultural norms often play a significant role here that, there may be restrictions or discouragement for women participating in swimming due to clothing norms.

(f) She can swim, and swim very well

3PSG-F MODV V, CONJ V ADV

The statement in the example (f) **itself is gender-neutral, its significance and interpretation can be influenced by prevailing gender roles and stereotypes.** It can be seen as subtly challenging traditional gender roles, especially in contexts where there might be a stereotype that women are less athletic or less capable in physical activities like swimming. A woman who swims ‘very well’ can hand out as a positive role model, challenging stereotypes and inspiring other girls and women to participate in sports and physical activities. A woman excelling in swimming can be seen as a commanding statement in such a context.

(g) She leant swimming even before she could walk

3PSG-F V-PST V PRES EMPH time 3PSG-F V-PST V

The usage of ‘leant’ in example (g) creates a slightly unusual and more figurative or informal tone. It might even subtly imply a natural inclination or ease in acquiring the skill, as if she almost ‘leaned into’ swimming. **The** Temporal Adverb Clause ‘even before she could walk’ representing the timing of learning to swim connects to learning to walk. "Even before" emphasizes the surprising earliness of learning to swim. It suggests a significant extend beyond or even a precedence of swimming over a fundamental developmental like walking.

‘Hey champ. You’re great,,,! You swim like a fish

CLI champion. 2PSG- CLI great-CLI- EXCLMARK 2PSG V like ART N

In the example (d) the phrase ‘Hey champ’ is a direct talk to an informal, encouraging vocative and creates a friendly tone.’ You’re great’ is positive adjective followed the exclamation mark emphasizes the genuineness and enthusiasm. ‘Swim like a fish’ is a simile highlight a shared quality is the central part of the statement in terms of describing swimming ability.

Through the content of this unit helps normalize girl’s involvement in all types of physical activities, breaking down traditional ‘gendered’ categories. Primary class textbooks could showcase girls and boys participating in a wide variety of sports equally, both in images

and text. The narrative could draw attention to girl's skills, strategies and achievements, rather than focusing on their traditional feminine personality.

Conclusion

Compare to the earlier, textbooks contain more diverse and positive portrayals of women and girls in various roles, profession and historical events. Historically major figures in textbooks are frequently proportionate to male and female contribution. Usage of gender-neutral words and pronouns can help to reduce the strengthening of stereotypes and make a more comprehensive reading experience. Parental involvement will help to encourage students to shape their understanding of gender. Support the development of gender inclusive textbook and curriculum. Teachers and parents should be mindful of text book portrayals, and positive language use of both genders. The study concluded that the current education system aims to encourage the gender equalities from the primary level.

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