


Critical discourse analysis of gender representation in the textbook al-'Arabiyah li al-Nasyi'in

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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-Arabiyah 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-Arabiyah li al-Nasyi'in Volume 2. The method used in this research is library research. These findings indicate that al-Arabiyah 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-Arabiyah Li Al-Nasyi'in Critical Discourse Analysis.	

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INTRODUCTION

The discourse on gender equality and justice in social roles continues to be a central academic concern. Verdugo-Castro et al. (2022) and Cumming-Potvin (2023) argue that such polemics extend into education, particularly in textbooks, which function as both learning media and written discourse. Weinberg et al. (2012), Royani (2020), and Haleem et al. (2022) emphasize that textbooks are not only repositories of knowledge but also interactive tools shaping the learning process inside and outside the classroom. Nisa (2023) reinforces this view by suggesting that if textbooks contain biased messages, they risk instilling deviant ideologies in learners. In the context of Arabic textbooks, Saiegh-Haddad (2022) highlights their rapid evolution alongside linguistic, psycholinguistic, and sociolinguistic theories. For analyzing these dynamics, scholars such as Anwar et al. (2020) and Nur and Riyadi (2023) point to Sara Mills' model of critical discourse analysis, while Rogers et al. (2016) and Mullet (2018) underline its value in revealing the psychosociolinguistic dimensions of language use.

Several previous studies provide valuable support for this research. Roviin (2018) argued that Mahmud Ismail Shini's textbook systematically emphasizes Arabic language learning, integrating *maharah lughawiyah* with linguistic exercises and key competencies. In contrast, Ulfah (2019) identified strong gender bias in Indonesian high school textbooks, showing subordination and stereotypes of women through indirect communication and cultural codes. Christiani (2015) similarly observed that textbooks often assign women to domestic roles and men to public ones, reinforcing harmful gender norms. From a broader perspective, Chisholm (2018) reviewed global literature and highlighted how race, class, and gender are represented in textbooks, often analyzed through feminist and critical race theories. Izuddin et al. (2021) found that Arabic textbooks continue to portray women as subordinate and underrepresented, although some improvements exist. Likewise, Muassomah et al. (2023) emphasized that *Al-'Arabiyyatu Baina Yadaika* still contains gender imbalances in text and images, underscoring the need for more equitable representations.

Previous studies on textbooks have highlighted various issues of representation, such as linguistic aspects, competency development, and the presence of gender stereotypes. Some analyses have shown women being portrayed in domestic roles and men in public roles, reinforcing traditional norms. Others noted the underrepresentation of women in both texts and images, yet many of these discussions remain descriptive, focusing mainly on surface-level presence rather than deeper constructions of meaning. In addition, comparative studies across contexts often address broader intersections of race, class, and gender but rarely emphasize how gender roles are specifically constructed in Arabic learning materials. Consequently, there is still a lack of research that not only identifies gender bias but also explains how the construction and division of dominant gender roles in textbooks affect learners' understanding of gender roles.

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-Arabiyah 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-'Arabiyah 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 study adopts a qualitative approach through library research, which is considered effective for analyzing written data sources. Sutton and Austin (2015) emphasize that qualitative research provides depth in understanding meanings embedded in texts, while Cheong et al. (2023) highlight its usefulness in interpreting broader contexts through document analysis. The primary source of data in this research is the Arabic textbook *al-'Arabiyah Li al-Nasyi'in* Volume 2 by Mahmud Ismail Shini, which is examined to explore how gender roles are presented. Complementing this, secondary data are also incorporated to provide theoretical and analytical support. Bowen (2009) argues that documents can serve as powerful sources for understanding social realities, and Korstjens and Moser (2017) stress the importance of methodological rigor in qualitative inquiry. Drawing on these perspectives, this study critically examines the textbook to reveal how gender representations are constructed and how they may influence students' perceptions of gender norms in Arabic language learning at the high school level.

The researcher selected this textbook because it continues to be widely used by Arabic language instructors at the high school or 'aliyah level, particularly in Islamic boarding schools. Jaafar et al. (2023) argue that the persistence of such materials highlights their strong influence in shaping students' learning experiences. The book presents various themes related to gender roles, and several of these themes suggest the presence of gender bias. According to Llorens et al. (2021), biased portrayals in educational resources are not neutral but play an active role in constructing learners' perceptions of gender, often reinforcing stereotypes and unequal divisions of roles. Such insights underline the importance of analyzing textbooks to reveal implicit messages that may influence students' views. Charlesworth and Banaji (2019) further emphasize that challenging biased content is essential for ensuring fairness and inclusivity, while Zabaniotou (2020) highlights the role of gender-sensitive resources in fostering balanced and just perspectives. This study aligns with these scholarly interpretations by contributing to efforts that promote equity in Arabic language education.

This research employs content analysis combined with Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis to examine gender perspectives within the textbook. Popping (2015) argues that content analysis is effective for identifying patterns in written discourse, while Agung and Suroso (2023) emphasize its relevance when combined with critical discourse frameworks to reveal hidden ideologies. The data under study includes vocabulary, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs that reflect gender roles in the reading texts. The analysis proceeds in several stages. First, data findings are identified based on gender perspectives and classified according to the two central research questions, using structured work tables. Hassani et al. (2020) note that systematic coding is essential for managing

large textual data, while Uyuni et al. (2023) highlight how coding facilitates consistency in interpretation. For example, in analyzing subject object positions within gender stereotypes, data coding such as PSO-St01/h24 indicates the category, subcategory, and location of the finding. This structured coding system allows for a deeper exploration of how gender roles are represented and constructed in the text.

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 لعائلي.
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 والدي.
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

" يغسيل 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-Arabiyah 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-Arabiyah 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. Mean while, 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, the gendered portrayals in the textbook can be understood as reflections of underlying power dynamics. Mills (2004) argues that discourse does not merely describe reality but actively constructs it, particularly in shaping power and gender relations. In this context, the depiction of women as confined to domestic roles illustrates how language naturalizes gendered divisions of labor. Michel Foucault's perspective further enriches this interpretation. As Foucault, cited by Singer (1979) and Willis (2008), emphasizes, power is not only concentrated in formal structures but is dispersed throughout society, operating subtly through everyday practices such as language. When examined together, these perspectives highlight how the text reinforces cultural assumptions that domestic work is inherently women's responsibility, while men are positioned in more public and authoritative roles. Thus, language in the textbook functions as a mechanism that reproduces gender hierarchies under the guise of cultural and biological inevitability.

This type of subordination does not merely mirror existing gender inequality but actively reinforces it by framing gendered divisions of labor as natural and inevitable. Figueroa et al. (2023) interpret such representations as mechanisms that sustain unequal structures, rather than simply reflecting them. Similarly, Sultana (2012) points out that discourses often situate women within the domestic and caregiving sphere, while positioning men in the public and productive domain, thus legitimizing a dichotomy that privileges male authority. Padavic et al. (2019) further analyze this process, arguing that these portrayals function as cultural tools that normalize unequal power dynamics, making hierarchy appear reasonable and self-evident. In line with this, Mills (2004) emphasizes that discourse plays a central role in presenting such roles as fixed and unquestionable, embedding them in everyday language and texts. Taken together, these perspectives highlight how educational materials, through subtle linguistic practices, perpetuate patriarchal systems and ensure the continuity of gender-based hierarchies across generations.

Moreover, the lack of male involvement in domestic tasks, combined with the exclusive association of women with caregiving and household responsibilities, illustrates what Morgenroth and Ryan (2018) interpret as a binary opposition between private (feminine) and public (masculine) roles. This framing not only limits women's contributions beyond the household but also restricts men's participation in caregiving, reinforcing rigid divisions of labor. Butler (2006), through her theory of gender performativity, offers a critical perspective by emphasizing that such roles are not biologically determined but are socially constructed through repeated practices. Within this lens, the language in the text operates as a performative act that reaffirms traditional gender identities. McIntosh (1991) and Stoetzler (2005) further argue that discourse functions as a cultural mechanism that sustains inequalities by naturalizing restrictive expectations. Together, these perspectives highlight how the text both reflects and reproduces gendered hierarchies, making inequality appear normative and enduring.

In conclusion, the subordination of women represented in this educational text illustrates how socio-cultural structures confine women to the domestic sphere while excluding them from public participation. Such discourse does not merely reflect inequality but actively reproduces it by normalizing stereotypes and restricting agency for both women and men. These portrayals sustain binary divisions of labor that reinforce unequal power relations across generations. Therefore, it becomes crucial to critically examine educational materials so they do not unintentionally sustain gender bias. Through critical discourse analysis, it is possible to uncover how language functions not only as a mirror of social realities but also as a tool that constructs, legitimizes, and maintains gendered power dynamics within educational contexts.

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 can be understood through Grimwood's (2008) feminist perspective, which explains that women have historically been constructed as "the Other," defined in contrast to men and confined to private and domestic roles. In this context, the act of cleaning the garden illustrates how women's association with household labor becomes normalized and internalized as part of their identity. Reddy and Butler (2004) emphasize that such roles are framed as natural attributes of femininity rather than as matters of choice or ability, while Mitchell (2017) shows how these expectations restrict women's agency. Similarly, Bettin and Mills (2018) argue that tying domestic labor to femininity sustains social norms that marginalize women from public spaces, a view echoed by Granacki (2023), who highlights how cultural narratives continue to reinforce unequal gender relations across generations.

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.

Bem's (1993) Gender Schema Theory explains that children construct their understanding of gender roles through cultural and social cues, including textbooks. From this perspective, when texts consistently present women in domestic roles and men in public or authoritative ones, students are more likely to internalize and reproduce these patterns. Starr and Zurbriggen (2017) highlight how such early exposure shapes children's beliefs about what is deemed appropriate for each gender, making stereotypes appear natural. This resonates with Sani (2014), who argues that symbolic associations of women with reproduction and men with authority strengthen hierarchical divisions. Hussain et al. (2015) further note that these portrayals normalize men's dominance in public life while confining women's contributions to private domains. Taken together, these interpretations suggest that the text not only mirrors existing social norms but also plays an active role in sustaining unequal gendered power relations across generations.

By applying Sara Mills' framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), it becomes clear that the representations in the text are not neutral but embedded with power dynamics that sustain patriarchal norms. Lazar (2005) emphasizes that discourse operates as a site for reproducing gender inequality in subtle and systematic ways, a view that resonates with Tamrin (2018), who argues that educational texts often serve as instruments for normalizing traditional gender roles. Lee (2020) further explains that discourse does not merely reflect social reality but actively constructs and maintains it, making language within the text an ideological tool for reinforcing gendered divisions. Similarly, Lang and Rybnikova (2016) highlight how portrayals of women as confined to domestic roles and men as public and authoritative figures reconstruct entrenched cultural assumptions. Thus, the text not only reflects gender bias but also plays a role in reinforcing unequal social structures.

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 employs several theoretical perspectives. Butler (2006) emphasizes that gender is not a fixed biological attribute but is socially constructed through repeated practices, which she terms performativity. From this perspective, the depiction of women in domestic roles and men in public or technical domains illustrates how educational texts reproduce and legitimize cultural norms, making these divisions appear natural. In line with this, Butler's view highlights how the text sustains expectations that restrict women to private spaces while privileging men in public spheres. Complementing this, Bem Gender Schema Theory (1993) explains how individuals internalize gendered frameworks that shape their understanding of appropriate roles. The portrayal of women as caregivers and men as figures of authority within the text reflects such schemas, influencing students' perceptions of gendered behavior. Together, these frameworks reveal how the textbook reinforces socially constructed hierarchies of gender.

R.W. Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity (2005) provides a useful lens to interpret the way gender is represented in the text. Connell argues that cultural norms often position men as embodying strength, rationality, and technical or public competence, while women are confined to domestic roles. In this context, the depiction of men alongside cars and public spaces reflects the dominance of masculine ideals that associate male identity with authority and mobility. By contrast, the representation of women as responsible only for household tasks illustrates how femininity is constructed as subordinate and limited to the private domain. This comparison demonstrates how the text reproduces unequal power relations by reinforcing a binary opposition between masculine and feminine spheres. Connell's framework thus reveals that such portrayals are not neutral but function to legitimize and sustain patriarchal structures through everyday educational discourse.

This analysis applies Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which views discourse as more than a reflection of social reality, but also as an active mechanism in constructing and sustaining power relations. Mills (2004) underscores that the language embedded in educational texts often carries socio-cultural dominance, subtly legitimizing existing hierarchies. In the context of the examined textbook, the portrayal of women in domestic roles and men in public roles illustrates how discourse can naturalize rigid gender divisions and obscure the possibility of

alternative or more flexible arrangements. Mills (1995) further argues that such gender representations are not merely descriptive but function to reproduce systemic inequalities, positioning them as normalized and unquestionable. By situating these findings within Mills' framework, the analysis shows how the text reinforces dominant patriarchal structures and limits the reimagining of gender roles in more equitable terms.

The division of roles between women and men in this textbook conveys the assumption that women are inherently tied to domestic work, while men belong to public and masculine domains. Such representation reflects entrenched gender inequality, likely influenced by the author's cultural background within patriarchal Arab society. In traditional contexts, women are valued when excelling in domestic duties, whereas men gain recognition through public roles and economic dominance. These biased portrayals in educational texts are highly influential in shaping how children and young readers internalize gender roles. Repeated exposure to rigid stereotypes normalizes inequality and restricts young learners' imagination of what they can achieve regardless of gender. To counter this, educational resources must be inclusive and balanced, offering diverse role models and encouraging both boys and girls to explore skills and aspirations beyond conventional norms, thereby fostering equity and challenging systemic bias.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of *al-Arabiyah 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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