GENDER CONSTRUCTION, DISCRIMINATION, AND IDENTITY: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF *THE PEARL THAT BROKE ITS SHELL*

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ABSTRACT

This study is an effort to create awareness related to gender construction, discrimination, and identity in literary discourse structures. Gender is usually built and enacted through implicit ideological propositions to sustain and maintain existing social structures by using language. The study attempts to examine and analyze Nadia Hashmi's *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell from* the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis. It is an analytical exploration to investigate ideologically constructed gender identity and gender discrimination through linguistic structures in the discourses of the selected novel. To analyze extracts from the selected novels, the researcher has applied Norman Fairclough's Tri-dimensional approach to CDA. This approach analyses the text from three dimensions, textual analysis, process analysis, and social analysis. Hashmi's novels revealed the socially and culturally moulded discourse structures in the novels. The discourse structures of novels are deeply rooted in Afghan social structures to sustain power relations and social order. It was explored that language is used to control, dominate, and suppress the less powerful and weak groups of society. The existing patriarchal structures were implied in the discourse structures, which are the product of social and cultural norms.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the interest of researchers in the field of CDA has increasingly gained attention to investigate how language as a tool is used to achieve certain hidden goals and agenda. The struggle to control less powerful groups by those who are more powerful through discourse is one of the classic problems to be identified by CDA practitioners. The possibility of investigating the relationship between language and ideology, on the one hand, and power *in* and *behind* discourse, on the other hand, has generated a lot of interest among CDA analysts. Fairclough (2001) asserts that it is power in discourse when a (more) powerful participant controls and constrains the contribution of (none) less powerful participants in discourse. The theory of CDA has led to the hope to solve unequal relations of power, gender discrimination, gender identity, racism, hegemonic influences, and power abuse and broaden social and political issues through the application of CDA to ideologically structured discourse.

Many researchers are active in analyzing written and spoken discourse in serval fields, such as media, politics, textbooks, education, advertisements, social media, interviews, or any other form of literary discourse. They tend to explore and investigate the transparent structural relationship between language

and other social elements, such as power, ideology, identity, racism, and gender discrimination. However, by applying the tools of critical discourse analysis, gender identity, gender discrimination, and social inequalities in literary discourse have rarely been explored. One of the central notions in CDA is to seek the relationship between discourse, gender identity, and gender discrimination. The current study aims to explore the power, ideology, and gender identity in The Pearl That Broke Its Shell. The researcher will explore and analyze the lexical, phraseological, and syntactical items in the discourses of both novels to reveal the ideologically and socially constructed gender identity, and gender discrimination, of socially and culturally powerful groups in society. The current research will follow Fairclough's (2001, 2015) dialectical relational and dialectical reasoning approach as the primary method of analysis.

Summary of *The Pearl That Broke its Shell*

The story of the novel unfolds in a small village outside of Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan. The central character, Rahima, becomes Bacha Posh, an old custom in Afghanistan. Her identity is transformed by changing her appearance, name, and social role in society. She becomes Rahim from Rahima. It is not only her name that is changed, but her entire identity is changed. She behaves like a boy. She wears boys' clothes. She goes out of the home to go to the market. She plays football. She rides a bicycle and enjoys all that boys are blessed with. After getting puberty, as other Bacha pushes, she is asked to change back and have the role of a girl. It is a very hard and panicky moment for her to behave like a girl after spending a long time in the world of boys. She tries hard to remain a Bacha Posh for her entire life, but all in vain. She is married to an aged warlord, Abdul Khaliq, who is in his fifties. Rahima becomes the fourth wife of warlord Abdul Khaliq. The novel's author, Hashmi (2014), depicted the social convention and traditions practiced in modern Afghanistan. Abdul Khaliq being a warlord, controls his wives by force. His wives are restrained to four walls, and the only duties assigned to his wives are to produce baby boys.

Objectives

1. To find out ideologically loaded lexical, phraseological, and syntactical structures in the pearl that broke its shell.

2. To explore gender identity, discrimination, and gender construction in the discourse structures of the pearl that broke its shell.

3. To find implicit ideological propositions regarding gender identity, discrimination, and gender construction.

Research Questions

1. What are the ideologically loaded lexical, phraseological, and syntactical structures regarding gender construction, discrimination, and identity in *The Pearl That Broke its Shell?*

2. What ideological assumptions work behind the representation of gender in the discourse structures of the selected novel?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Critical discourse analysis (henceforth, CDA) is an analytical approach to analyzing text and talk in a social and political context. According to Wodak & Meyer (2001), CDA is mainly concerned with analyzing transparent and opaque structures of power, dominance, and control as practiced in language. Similarly, Richardson views CDA functions both as a theory and method to analyze institutes and individuals' language in different contexts. According to Fairclough (2012), Critical discourse analysis takes the critical tradition of social analysis into language, and it mainly focuses on the discourse and its relationship with other social elements, i.e., power relations, institutions, ideologies, social identities, and so on. Van Dijk (2015) defines CDA as a kind of discourse analytical research that is mainly concerned with how social power abuse, inequality, and dominance are exercised, reproduced, and refrained by text and talk in a

political and social context. Similarly, Baker & Ellece (2011) see CDA as an approach to analyze discourse, and discourse is considered a form of social practice. The main interest of CDA is to explore ideologies and power relations, which are exercised and practiced through language. They further explain that critical discourse analysts are fundamentally interested in issues such as inequalities, discrimination, and social injustices; often, they question in the process of analysis, Who benefits? It means ideologies and power in discourse are mostly opaque and implied. CDA analysts endeavor to dig out ideologies and social inequalities which are exercised through the use of language. Richardson (2007) says that CDA is used both as mythology and theory primarily to analyze the use of language in institutions and how individuals use language in a particular situation. He further adds that" CDA investigates and aims at illustrating a relationship between the text and its social conditions, ideologies, and power relations" (Richardson, 2007; Afaq et al., 2023).

Fairclough (2013) describes three fundamental properties of CDA. First, CDA is relational. Second, it is dialectical, and the third is transdisciplinary. By relational, he means that the primary focus of CDA is not merely on individuals or entities but on social relationships. He thinks this aspect of CDA is very complex in terms of social relations. This relationship can be between two individuals who interact or communicate with each other. This relationship can also be between discourse and other objects in the physical world, power, and person or institutions, interlinked with each other.

Coming upon the second property of CDA, he says these relations between individuals and entries are dialectical. He says that dialectical relations between objects that are different from one another but are discreet or entirely separate from one another, in other words, exclude the other object completely. For example, suppose we talk about language and the power of language and ideology. In that case, even though they are different entities from one another, one cannot exclude power or ideology from language when analyzing the text. We observe that power is interwoven in discourse by those who posse power in controlling them. Even all legitimate power is achieved through discourse. He says that power is partly discourse and discourse, in turn, partly power. He claims that CDA is not the analysis of discourse but the analysis of that relationship that is didactically in nature between discourse and other objects. He is of the opinion that the analysis is between discourse and other social elements. The third property of CDA emerges, which cuts the traditional boundaries between disciplines, such as linguistics, politics, sociology, psychology, etc. Thus, it is clear that CDA is an interdisciplinary form of analysis, or it can be referred to as a transdisciplinary form. It means there is a dialogue between disciplines, frameworks, and theories that take place during the analysis, and this research becomes the source of methodological and theoretical development within a specific discipline, framework, and theories in dialogue, including CDA itself.

Gender has been referred to as the elucidation of all linguistic variations involving innovation of vocabulary, pronunciation, communication style, and grammar (Weatherall, 2002). She states that the relationship between language and women's social status can be traced back to 19th-century works of "the women's movement" (Weatherall, 2002). Feminists launched the campaign regarding personal names. (ibid). She asserts that issues related to language and gender have a long history; however, as a research field, language, and gender developed parallel to "the second wave of feminism in the 60s and 70s" (Weatherall, 2002). She further adds that in that time, many articles and books were written which have two important questions and research is still carried out on those two voices; " the nature and significance of gender-biased language and gender difference in language use" (Weatherall, 2002; Ishtiaq et al., 2021).

According to Sunderland (2004), the notion of gender and language can be identified before the second wave of the feminist movement 1960s and 70s. She asserts that even the concept of gender and language existed for centuries before language and gender became an area of research for scholars. Researchers studying the feminist language found that men's supremacy was expressed in different complicated ways

(ibid). Spender (1980) and Gul et al. (2022a) comment one of the ways in which men's power has been demonstrated in the control of men over language (as a grammarian, politicians, linguistics, orators, philosophers, and so forth), so sexism was encoded by men into the language to merge their claim of men's supremacy.

According to Beauvoir (2010), "One is not born, but rather, becomes woman". She asserts that no biological, economic, or psychic destiny defines the figure which the human female adopts in society. Beauvoir very beautifully expands how society and civilization as a whole define and create a new creature that we refer to as feminine. A woman is the product of society, not nature. In other words, she is not born a woman but becomes a woman by social and cultural norms. For the first time, she creates a distinction between sex and gender, and she also differentiates gender from sex. She sees gender as a social construction while sex is biological.

Gender is used in two different ways. One use of gender is referred to as a particular grammatical feature of the language, while the other is concerned with a human. The focus of the current study is to explore gender inequality in discourse; therefore, we will take into consideration the other use of gender, i.e., Sunderland (2004) views that gender-related to humans entails any differences between men and women. This difference can be socially or culturally learned or constructed. Therefore, gender is contrasted essentially with the term sex, which is biological. She points out that when men and women, girls and boys, are expected or represented to behave in specifically gendered ways, CDA practitioners identify gendered discourses positioning men and women in distinct ways as constitutive. She believes that gender can be performed, represented, constructed as well as indexed in text and talk when our focus is on gender and discourse. She agrees that it is reasonable to talk about that gender is usually constructed by and in discourse. Gender construction usually takes place in written text or talk.

Weatherall (2002) and Afaq et al. (2022) claim that language that treats men and women differently is not entirely new. Feminists have had concerns for a long the way they are represented in language. She points out that feminists have tried to create awareness of gender-related issues in language. There are several ways in which language can be sexiest. One of the ways is to make women invisible in language. For example, women are mostly found invisible, as absent from the subjects or topics of stories.

Similarly, women are being ignored in language by using masculine forms in English. For instance, we use mankind, fireman, and guys when generally talking about people or when gender is not specified or unknown. Mills (1998) argues that the world we perceive is influenced by language. Similarly, the English language has many sexiest expressions and lexis that are inherent and used by English speakers because of linguistics determinism. A well-known and typical example of sexist language is the generic pronoun "he", referred to as He language. The traditional argument is made that the generic pronoun "he" is not only referred to males but it is referred to both males as well as females generically. But this argument is baseless as many researchers witnessed that when the children were asked to complete the story by giving them the generic pronoun", most often the children referred to the pronoun "he" as a sex-specific male category, and in some cases, children produced make characters for the pronoun "he". Similarly, there are many generic nouns that are used in discourse to make it sexist. For example, the generic noun "mankind" is mostly used to refer to both genders. However, humankind is available, which may be used to make language nonsexist.

Mills (1998) argues that the long debate among feminist literary critics is evident if the language used by women writers in their text is probably different than the language used by men. This debate had its origin in the work of Virginia Woolf. She stated that there was a sentence that had been developed by women waiters of the time, and it was termed as a female sentence or, in other words, a sentence of feminine gender. Woolf noted that the female winters of her time used and crafted particular types of sentences that

were loose and accretive compared to male sentences. This proves that women's language is fundamentally different from men's. Along with the French writer Irigaray, Woolf asserted that there is a difference between male and female writing.

Gender-biased expressions are found almost everywhere, i.e., in everyday life interactions, media discourse, political discourses, TV talk shows, textbooks children's books, poetry, drama, novels, and all other forms of vocal and non-vocal communications. Moglen (2001) and Gul et al. (2022b) claim that the psychological and social meaning of gender can be vividly and most often identified in novels rather than any other expressive forms. She thinks these gender-biased expressions are highly negotiated and exposed in the written text of novels.

METHODOLOGY

The current study is qualitative in nature. It mainly follows Fairclough's (Tri-Dimensional (dialectical relational approach) to analyze the discourse structures and discourse as a social and cultural construction. This approach consists of three levels (stages), i.e., description, interpretation, and explanation. It means that the researcher has to analyze discourse at three levels. At the first level (textual analysis), formal linguistic properties used in the discourse were labeled and identified. Here the research identifies and analyses ideologically laden items and relational, experiential, and expressive values of vocabulary and grammatical features. The second level of analysis consists of discourse practice, which is concerned with the sociocognitive aspect of how text is produced and interpreted. The interpretation here means understanding the meaning embodied in the text. According to Fairclough (2001) and (Hassan et al., 2023), the interpretation involves two things first, what is in the text, and second, what is in the interpreter member resources (MR). Fairclough considers these member resources (MR) as the interpretative procedures drawn upon in the discourse production and interpretation process. At the third and final level of analysis (explanation), which Fairclough names discourse practice, the researcher explored the broader dimension of discourse by explaining the effects of discourse on social structures. The linguistic properties, which are labeled and identified at the first level, and their meanings are explained here. At this level, the researcher explains his position as a critical discourse analyst, takes the side of the oppressed, speaks against the oppressor, and suggests how to transform society by eliminating social wrongs.

To explore ideologically loaded structures, i.e., lexical items, in the discourse structures, the researcher followed Gul et al. (2022a) and Fairclough's analytical tools (Fairclough, 2001, 2015) to analyze ideologically laden vocabulary, phrases, and sentences in the discourse structures of the two selected novels. In order to explore the socially constructed gender identity and gender discrimination, the research used the analytical tools provided by Fairclough in his landmark publication, Language and Power (Fairclough, 2001, 2015). According to the provided tools, the research investigated the discourse structures' vocabulary, grammar, and textual features and discovered what experiential, relational, and expressive values the vocabulary, grammar, and textual structures had. Furthermore, the researcher aimed to analyze the selected data by applying the tools to investigate the ideological construction of gender identity and gender discrimination in the discourse structures of the two novels.

DISCUSSION

The below extracts have been taken from the novel *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell.* These lines were uttered by Raisa, Khala Shaima, Rahima, Arif Jan, and Bobo Shah Gul. Raisa is the mother of Rahima and the wife of Arif Jan. Similarly, other major characters involved in the dialogues were Khala Shaima, who is the sister of Raisa, and Arif Jan, who is the husband of Raisa.

> *"If I had a son, this would not be happening! Goddamn it! Why do we have a house full of girls! (Chapter 1).*

My older sisters were quarantined since they were older and noticeable. I was, thus far, invisible to boys and not a risk (Chapter 1).

Madar-jan was barely eighteen when they were wed. I imagine she must have been as five terrified of her wedding night as I was on mine. Sometimes I wonder why she did not warn me, but I suppose those are not things women should speak of (chapter3).

"Shola face, Babaloo," or monster (Chapter 6).

"Sit up straight and watch your legs. Although you may not know it, you are a girl, and you should sit like one (Chapter 6).   *10*

"Get up, you insolent girl! Enough of your nonsense. (Chapter 6)

"Arif, what are you going to do? The girls are so young!

"It's none of your business what I'm going to do! They're my daughters and I'll do what's right for them.

"Arif, please, Rahim's only thirteen!"   *15*

"You think you can come up with a better plan for this family? There is no money, Raisa!   You're thinking of nothing but yourself. Furthermore, you've seen what happens to girls who stay in their fathers' homes for too long. There is talk about them. There is a scandal. Or worse! What will you do if some bandits come and take your daughters by force? This man, this family, they can provide for your daughters!   *20*

They can give your daughters a respectable life! (Chapter 16).

Textual Analysis

The text/passages above have several experiential and relation values in terms of vocabulary and grammar, as discussed in Fairclough's (2015) and Gul et al. (2022c) descriptive stage of textual analysis. There are several ideologically contested lexical items (Question 1 of Fairclough textual analysis procedure: *Are there words which are ideologically contested?*), for example*, Shola face, Babaloo, or monster*, which is used for the character Shekiba by her cousins and grandmother, Bobo Shah Gul. The word *quarantined that* Rahima used for her sister since they grew up. The lexical item *daughter-son* has ideological characteristics used by Shekiba's father (Ismail) for her daughter, who was strong enough to help him in the field. The phrase *invisible to boys* shows how hard it is for a girl to survive in a male's dominant society. The phrase is used by Rahima when she was merely a girl child and was not noticeable in young boys. Similarly, to threaten or warn family members or young children, the sentence *your face will turn just as hideous as hers!* It would be repeated*.* The phrase is *very useful instrument* is used for Shekiba to impose discipline in the home. Some words are metaphorically used as *Shola face, Babaloo, and monster* for one of the main characters Shekiba from her grandmother, which also has ideological characteristics (Question 4 of the framework).

What are you going to do? The mode which is used is an information question to seek information from the discourse producer (question 6 of the framework). The definite article with girls is used, which refers back to the daughters of Arif (question 8 of the framework). Similarly, *the girls are so young,* and *they are my daughters;* both sentences are declarative, and both are in the simple present tense. The verb *is* and *are* show a terminal point of expressive modality (Question 7 of the framework). In sentence second of the passage, *it's none of your business,* Arif replies and uses the sentence which has an expressive value with a negative terminal point of truth (Question 7 of the framework). The relational adjective *my* and the

pronoun *I* am used to describe the possession and authority over someone or something. (Question 2 of the framework). Likewise, the pronoun *you're* and *you have* relational values in terms of grammar (question 6 of the framework). The pronoun *they* and *them* as cohesive devices are used to refer back to Arif's daughters (question 8 of the framework).

The inclusive and exclusive use of the pronoun *you* in lines 4, 5 is an example of over wording (Question 1 of the framework). The use of modal auxiliary *can* and *will* in line 4 has expressive values to evaluate the truth of discourse producer (Question 6 of the framework). The use of the verb *is*, and *are* in line 4 has an expressive modality (question 6 of the framework). The pronoun *they* in line 5 is used as a cohesive device to refer to Abdul Khaliq and his men. Similarly, the demonstrative pronoun *this* refers to Abdul Khaliq and his family sequentially (question 8 of the framework). Several passages consist of experiential and relational values which belong to grammar, as shown in Fairclough framework (Fairclough, 2001, 2015). They are outlined as: The imperative sentence used by Bobo Shah Gul for her granddaughter projects her power to command her *"Get up, you insolent girl."* Another imperative sentence used by Bobo Shah Gul is significant due to its ideological character, *"Sit up straight and watch your legs* (Question 6).

Interpretation and Explanation

At the interpretation level, the focus of the study is on discursive practices. It is apparent from the discourse structures used by discourse producers in the above passage that there are underlying conventions. Under the existing social structures, women are considered inferior and suppressed and discriminated against with unequal social statuses, as cited in Gul et al. (2023). Several ideologically laden lexical items portray gender discrimination. For example, in sentence 1, Raisa regrets having so many girls at home and wishes her house was not full of girls. She says, *Goddamn Why do we have a house full of girls.* This happens when her daughters are chased by boys outside of the home when they come back home from school. She expresses her wish for a son. It means that a home full of girls can only be saved if it has a boy, and she believes a boy can bring happiness to her home. These discursive practices result from the social conventions that Raisa is a part of. In the same sentence, Raisa expresses her anger by saying, *God damn it to have so many girls at home.* In the society where she lives, so many girls at home are not acceptable and appreciated and are considered a bad omen and a burden. That is why she is not happy with so many girls at home. If Raisa had been born and lived in America, she would not have expressed her feeling and this discrimination between having a boy or girl at home. Raisa utters the phrase, and she, the discourse producer, dislikes girls in dominant male society, and we can infer from this structure that every family welcomes boys and has pride in having boys and giving birth to more boys than girls. Similarly, in sentence 2, the literal meaning of the word *quarantine* is to keep away an animal or person from others in a time of disease, but here, the word may mean to put someone in confinement. The word quarantine, which Rahima uses for her adult sisters, implies that girls need to be confined at home when they get into puberty as they are different creatures and cannot move anywhere alone, even to schools, in a dominant male society. Their parents put them in confinement to save them from the brutality of males. In the same sentence, it is inferred from the word *noticeable* that when you get an adult, you are confined to your home because you are noticed by boys outside, which is considered wrong in a society where girls are restricted to the four sides of the walls. The lexical items such as *Shola face, Babaloo, or monster* are constantly used for the character Shekiba by her cousins and her grandmother to make fun of her. Shekiba is called *Shola face* because, in her early childhood, she had burnt half of her face. Similarly, she is called a monster because of her burnt face and looks. Shekiba is being insulted for what she is not responsible for. She is merely a spectator of her insult and keeps silent when she is called by such names. This happens because of her low social status and less powerful position in her family. The phrase *very useful instrument is* uttered by Azizullah when he was interacting with his brother Hafizullah about the strength of Shekiba. The intensifier (adverb) very before (adjective) *useful* has been used very carefully to depict the character of Shekiba. As

a human being, she has been degraded by the discourse producer. The description of Shekiba as a useful instrument unveils gender objectification. She has been shown as a machine that can only be used for work, nothing else. The lexical items used in the interpretation and explanation level have ideological characters. Likewise, metaphorically used lexical items are used to resemble the character Shekiba with a monster. (Ideological characters and metaphorical words explained by Fairclough (1989, 2001, 2015).

Several grammatical features depict gender inequality and discrimination, which women take for granted and accept as they occur naturally. Rahima describes her status and seems helpless to ask about her early wedding. She thinks these are not the matter that women should speak of. Thus we can infer from her discourse that women's destiny is in the hand of males and what they want they can do with their women. Women have no voice even in some very crucial issues, such as when and with whom to get married. The unequal status of women is not only identified in the discourse of male characters, but it is also evident in the discourse of female characters. It appears that they take this discrimination for granted and are verified by social conventions. For example, the interaction between Bobo Shah Gul and Shekiba portrays inequalities in women who have been depicted as inferior to men and of lower cadres.

> *"Sit up straight and watch your legs. Although you may not know it, you are a girl and you should sit like one.*

> *"Get up, you insolent girl! Enough of your nonsense. You have been asleep for over a week.*

Both in sentences 5 and 6, Bobo Shah Gul (the grandmother of Shekiba) used imperative sentences (Fairclough, 2015). In these imperative sentences, we have two social actors, Bobo Shah and Bibi Shekiba. The former uses power to control the action and minds of the latter by giving orders—one of the social actors (Bobo Shah Gul) seems dominant over the other (Shekiba). In contrast, the other is merely a compliant actor who is following what is being ordered. Here the complaint social actor, Shekiba, has no choice but to agree with the discourse producer, i.e., Bobo Shah Gul (Van Dijk 2008) .The structures of the discourse producer unfold that it is only the boys who can sit with open legs or in whatever positions they like to sit. Girls cannot sit if their legs are not straight or according to the established norms of society. The discourse producer realises that she is a girl and girls should behave and act with certain settled norms and traditions.

The discursive power through the discourse structure can be seen in the proposition of discourse producer Bobo Shah Gul when she addresses Shekiba. The character, Shekiba, faces double marginalization and discrimination through discourse practice. The use of imperative structure used by Bobo Shah Gul seems based on established matriarchal practice in Afghan society, where girls are not only subjugated by powerful males of the society but also by powerful women of the social order. Bobo Shah Gul has used two imperatives in a compound sentence separated by a conjunction *and.* In the next sentence, the discourse producer uses complex sentences with logical connectors, *although, and* to connect the main clause with the subordinate one. The essential and necessary information regarding the established gender status has been given in the main clause where the discourse producer asserts. In contrast, the subordinate clause contains no assertion but the presupposition about girls that they may not know how to sit being a girl. The pronoun *you*, which is used two times in the sentence in exclusive one, but one can assume this pronoun as an inclusive one when referring to girls in general. The use of modality *may* indicate the probability of knowing something. The discourse producer assumes that being a girl, she might have no idea how to sit in a particular posture. She reminds Shekiba of her identity that girls are not supposed to sit with open legs. This gives us the presupposition that boys can sit in any style and posture while girls should be careful when they sit because of social and cultural constraints.

The lack of women's liberty and masculine authority is clearly depicted when it is said that "*Sit up straight and watch your legs".* The discourse structure s a rigid attitude towards females, and it seems that women

have no freedom to sit in their desired posture, which is up to their ease. The sufferers (women) are not considered human beings, as the animalistic dealing of masculinity makes them inferior to animals because the animal can sit, stand, lay, and adopt any of the positions they feel comfortable. However, there is no tolerance for women, and if they feel like human beings, they are made conscious with the utterance, *"Although you may not know it, you are a girl and you should sit like one."* Consequently, such notions chain them (women) from every angle, and they are being caged with an utterance *you are a girl* who might be enough for a girl to make herself aware of her status in the world of men because this short statement has an extreme level of burden over the frail shoulders of the surviving gender (women) and *"You should sit like one"* noticeably displays their (women) suppression and lowliness that even a girl is not allowed to sit freely.

Similarly, another imperative is used by the discourse producer to ask a complaint actor to do what Bobo Shah Gul wants her to do. She gets angry at Shekiba and asks her, *"Get up, you insolent girl! Enough of your nonsense. You have been asleep for over a week.* The second sentence is declarative, in which the speaker only transfers information while addresses receive that information. The declarative sentence here is not for conveying information. However, it is used to carry order, and action is required from the addressee to fulfil the demand in the form of action from the speaker (discourse producer). If somehow, we change the social condition or social context that these two actors are part of, for example, we are in England or America and ask a girl not to sit with open or crossed legs and sit like girls, not boys. Indeed, you would encounter a strong reaction from the girl side because they have occupied equal gender status in society, and they can sit the way they want. It appears that the social context and social conditions determine who we are and what we are supposed to do and what not to do.

The conversation between Arif and his wife Raisa in lines 7, 8, 9, and 10 exposes the unequal status of gender, gender identity, and gender as a socially constructed phenomenon. The very question raised by Raisa regarding the early marriages of their daughters illustrates the authority and dominancy of a male section in society because Raisa is asking Arif are what his plans for the daughters. It means mothers have no say when it comes to marrying their daughters. It is the only father who will decide to whom his daughter will get married. The expressive modality in *the girls are so young* unveils a categorical truth regarding girls' age. The intensifier *so* before the adjective *young* uncovers that the girls are not just young to be married, but they are very young right now to be married. In other words, they are not at the right age to be married. Her husband Arif stops her from arguing with him. He considers it his insult to consult or take advice from his wife. He clearly says that it is not her business to talk about such matters. The reply of Arif uncovers male dominance and authority over wives. He claims that the daughters only belong to him, not to her. The relational pronoun *my* exhibits Arif's supremacy. By saying this, he excludes Raisa from the decision-making process.

In line 9, Raisa requests Arif not to marry at least Rahima because she is only thirteen. From the discourse structure of Arif, it appears that women are excluded from the decision-making process. Arif imposes his own view and decision on Raisa and has no respect for Raisa's concerns. Arif blames Raisa for being selfish, while he thinks he is much more considerate. It appears from the discourse of Arif that girls should be married as soon as possible because they remain a burden on parents' shoulders. Girls are not supposed to stay for long at their father's home. Otherwise, she becomes a symbol of a bad omen, and they are scandalized by staying at their father's home. Arif's utterance about *what happens to girls who stay* reveals the social attitude of males in Afghan culture. Most often, identities are constructed and conveyed through linguistic means (De Fina, 2011; Nasir et al., 2023; Sajjad et al., 2023). It is presumed from Arif's utterance that girls are only born to be married and produce children. They have no other social role in society. It is inferred from the discourse that girls are not safe in any condition if they stay for long at home after they get adults. Bandits may attack them if they see young girls at home, or they may be married to powerful

older men and hold a position in society, i.e., warlords. Arif's remarks about a warlord, Abdul Khaliq, expose his insecurity. He thinks his daughters would be in safe hands. No matter if his daughter is so young while Abdul Khaliq is so old. It seems Abdul Khaliq is following existing social order and social conventions. He cannot ignore social and cultural norms. Therefore, he is in search of men for his daughters who can pay him a considerable amount of money in return.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was an attempt to enquire about gender construction, discrimination gender identity in the discourse structures of the novel, *The Pearl That Broke its Shell* . After Applying Fairclough', the researcher explored some major findings which are presented below.

 It is revealed that women are represented socially and culturally weak and solely dependable on men. They have no say in their own lives and cannot decide their life pattern. The unequal status of women is also revealed in the language used by men and women. Rahima, who is originally a girl, has been transformed into a boy. The journey from girlhood to boyhood has been shown through an Afghan tradition known as *Bacha Posh*. This transformation of Rahima shows the importance of boys in the Afghan social structure. Another important character in the novel, *The Pearl That Broke its Shell*, is Shekiba, living a hundred years apart from today's character Rahima, demonstrates the unequal social status of girls. They are born as girls but are transformed into boys. Their transformations from girls to boys reveal the social injustices against girls. The discrimination between boys and girls has been depicted in their language. They have been shown ideologically weak and unfit for many activities in society. For example, when one of the female characters, Zamarud, was seeking a place in parliament, she faced threats and severe hurdles from the males who were present in parliament. The abusive language used by the men in parliament shows their dominance and control over women. They hold only men to run the parliament and affairs of the state, while women are excluded from such participation.

There were several lexical items in the discourse structures which had implicit ideological propositions. For example, to sustain and maintain patriarchal structures and the dominance of males the discourse producers used dialogically linguistic structures. The inferior social status and power relations have been built through linguistic structures. Different gender identities and gender representation are the results of socially and culturally rooted norms in the social structure of Afghan society. Women in the form of wives, daughters, or sisters are not allowed to ask questions in the important matters of their lives. They have been controlled to resist or challenge males' dominant position. Raisa, the mother of Rahima, was controlled by Arif and said, *"it's none of your business"* When Risa just said the girls are so young to be married. It was discovered that women are excluded from important decisions and only men can decide the destiny of women. The focus of the current study was to explore gender identity, discrimination, and gender construction in the discourse structures of the pearl the broke its shell. Further research should be carried out to investigate and analyze patriarchal structures and polygamy in discourse structures in *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell.*

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