



Gender Bias in Former and Current Kurdish Official Alphabet Textbooks Taught in KRI

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Leila Hameed Muhammad

English of Department - College of Basic Education / Salahaddin University-Erbil
leyla.hemidim@gmail.com

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Abstract

This paper aims at investigating the extent of linguistic gender bias in the textbooks of Kurdish language alphabet (Sorani dialect), which have been taught in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) since 1951. The first book, entitled the *New Alphabet* (henceforth NA), has been replaced by a two-volume *Kurdish Study* textbook (henceforth KS). The books were examined quantitatively and qualitatively in terms of seven categories: male/female visibility in text and illustrations, firstness, male/female oriented talk, masculine generic construction, occupational roles, distribution of household chores, and male/female children's personality traits. Meanwhile the two books were compared to find out to which extent the designers were aware of gender imbalance and endeavored to minimize it. A thorough analysis of the samples led to findings that expose stereotypical bias against females with reference to language, text and illustrations. The results also emphasized that in designing the current Kurdish alphabet textbook the issue of gender bias has not been accounted for by material developers. This is while the linguistic prejudice against females, who generally constitute half of the total population of any society, can adversely and unconsciously affect children's perception of the capacities and limitations of either sex. Therefore, the study draws on some pedagogical implications to help eliminate the negative implied messages in these books.

Keywords: gender-bias, linguistic sexism, gender stereotypes, discrimination, Kurdish alphabet textbooks.

1. Introduction

Women and females in general discriminate against themselves in the way they choose or restrict themselves to speak the language. At the same time, both genders discriminate against females through the way they refer to women (Lakoff, 1973, p.53). *Female judge, lady doctor* or *Mrs. Brown* are just a few examples which show females are described in terms of males or the men they relate to. Besides, there are some terms, as *divorcee*, which are used pejoratively to describe a woman while these terms do not have any equivalent for male. (Ibid, p.65; Wardhaugh, 1986, p.302)

One of the much debated topics in sociological and sociolinguistic studies since mid 1960s is sexism in language or the connection between gender and language as well as the way that an imbalanced depiction of one gender group can affect the status of the members of that group in the community. (Hall, 2014, p.253)

Bias against any gender group is "dangerous" as put by Bauer, Holmes and Warren (2006, p.157) who define a sexist language as one which contains linguistic categories that "exclude, marginalize or discriminate against people on the basis of their gender", or one which "creates or promotes an irrelevant or unfair distinction between women and men."

There are no languages that can be claimed as gender-fair where often the bias is against females. However, thanks to feminist movements and improved social awareness, some nations have already begun combating the phenomenon.



In English like the majority of world languages men are regarded as the prototype for the human genus. This is reflected in the generic uses of *man* and *he* which render females invisible. Lei (2006, pp.87-89) goes over many common instances of linguistic sexism in English including the presence of suffixes such as *-man*, *-ette*, *-ess*, *-trix* which usually form nouns for different occupations.

Lakoff (1973, p.73) highlights the importance of investigating linguistic bias as it zooms in on the “real-world imbalances and inequities”.

Due to sexism, languages have the potential of imposing norms such as the superiority or inferiority of men and women in their positions, abilities, and roles. Hence, developing school material should not be confined to only presenting information.

Amini and Birjandi (2012, p.135) reiterate that gendered language presented in the textbooks will lead the learners to take myths and stereotypes about both genders for granted. This in turn will push the members of the gender group who are discriminated against to limit themselves in their roles, language and behavior. Such limitation in Gharbavi and Mousavi's words (2012, p.42) leads to “feelings of exclusion, devaluation, alienation and lowered-expectations” among females because in plenty of textbooks females are discriminated against, usually by being depicted just as housewives.

Universities across the KRI have established several centers with the exclusive mission of carrying out gender studies and conscious raising campaigns to combat patriarchal ideology in the society. Despite that, as pointed out by Suleiman and Khidir (2017, p.298) gender representation in textbooks remains a not-much-investigated field in the KRI. This is while one of the main areas to start fighting discrimination against females is the educational institutions and their materials.

The textbooks for teaching alphabet are among the very few books that students deal with in the first stage of their education. At this juncture, children are just beginning to discover themselves, shape attitudes towards the other sex and develop their own identity. Therefore, they will instill the implied messages in the textbooks which will have life-long impacts on their character and mentality.

Several researchers have evaluated KS in terms of its content, design and methods of teaching. Aziz and Bajalani (2016, pp.109-110) generally deem the content and design of KS as inappropriate and after comparing it to NA recommend NA be restored. While other studies such as the one by Mahwi and Maaruf (2016, pp.115-133) and one by Mohammad and Rashid (2016, pp. 137-155) defend KS against all the critiques.

Not a single research has been carried out to address the issue of gender bias in these books. Nevertheless, a glance at the textbooks shows an imbalanced gender representation. NA, adopted in 1951, was in use for almost (63) years and was reprinted several times without any considerable changes. It was replaced in 2014 by KS which despite being reprinted five times, similarly displays favoritism towards males.

This study is an attempt to demonstrate the extent of gender imbalance in these textbooks and draw attention to the urgency of modifying the books more accurately so as to help students build up on healthy social and mental norms.

2. Methodology

2.1 Material Description

New Alphabet (NA) and the Sorani version of the *Kurdish Study* (KS) of the first year primary schools in the KRI are the textbooks which this study will examine for gender bias. The latter comprises two volumes but for the purpose of this study they will be regarded as a single textbook.

NA was written in 1949 by the Kurdish writer Ibrahim Ameen Baldar, nine years after being assigned to teach in schools of Erbil and Sulaimaniya provinces, the KRI. In the same year, the book was licensed by the then Ministry of Maarif to be studied at schools but due to



technical issues it took two years to be printed. After its adoption, some shortcomings of the book became evident. Meanwhile, the author was open to recommendations from Kurdish language professionals which led to publishing an edited version of the book in 1953, called the *New Kurdish Alphabet for Children*. The third version of the book, with a stronger content and this time illustrations linked to Kurdish culture, came in 1956. (Abubakir, 2018, pp.7-15). The book after several reprints was called NA. It was part of school curricula across the KRI for more than half a century, but in 2001 the educational directorate of Sulaimaniya adopted a new alphabet textbook, written by the Kurdish language professional Abdulla Hama-Amin. Nevertheless, teaching through NA continued in Erbil until 2014, when the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)'s Ministry of Education ordered adoption of KS across the region. (Mohammad and Rashid, 2016, p.137).

It is noteworthy that the illustrations of NA were drawn three times by three artists, a lady who had never seen Kurdistan and to whom everything had to be explained, a Kurdish "famous" painter and a German painter. (Aziz and Bajalani, 2016, pp.95-96; Abubakir, 2018, pp.15-18) This is while the Kurdish setting and the Kurdish culture dominate all the scenarios and conversations in the book.

One year prior to ordering the adoption of KS, a pilot experiment on a small scale was conducted to detect the pros and cons of the material. The first print of the textbooks was issued to schools in 2014 with no changes from the pilot study phase. Then the students received a teachers' book and an activity book. The following year, the two books were blended together but due to the size of the material, the subjects were divided into two volumes. In addition to Sorani dialect, KS is also written in Badini sub-dialect of Kurmanji, which is mainly spoken in Duhok province of the KRI.

Until 2019, the books were reprinted five times but with slight changes in the appearance of the characters such as the shape of their eyes or the size of their skirts or sleeves.

A comparison between the content and methodology of the former and the current Kurdish alphabet textbooks is crucial for this study. In both books the texts are illustrated with colorful pictures. However, there are some differences as each textbook follows an individual way of teaching alphabet. NA begins with very simple words and gradually moves towards sentences and then conversations, very short stories and poems. It does not include any introduction as how to teach the material. But throughout decades the common practice was to read out the texts in class and write it down as many times as the student could master dictation.

KS, on the other hand, which is designed and edited by 19 experts from the Ministry of Education, opens with an introduction whereby the strategies of teaching the book are demonstrated. Contrary to NA, it contains fewer texts and more words in isolation because the strategy of learning is basically "look and say". In other words, the students look at words and talk about them. The researcher conducted interviews with some of the designers of the book who explained the book targets students' verbal competence and speaking skills rather than their writing and dictation potentials.

2.2 Analysis Procedure

In this study the former and the current Kurdish alphabet textbooks were compared with respect to demonstrating gender bias. Seven categories of visibility of genders, firstness, male/female-oriented talk, masculine generic construction, occupational roles, distribution of household chores between parents, and male/female children's personality traits were analyzed.

The first three categories were subject to a qualitative analysis and the remaining categories were studied qualitatively.

The books were analyzed from cover to cover and for qualitative part the results were tabulated in percentages.

In visibility the number of occurrences of both females and males in the texts and illustrations was calculated. The amount of the dialogues or conversations initiated by both genders was also calculated for the male/female-oriented talk. For firstness, in occasions where words or names which referred to both genders came together, the order of mentioning of females and males were documented. The books were also monitored for masculine generic references. As with the generic use of *man* in English, there is a masculine generic word in Kurdish, *mirov*, with the same function.

The household works, activities and occupations assumed by both men and women were also studied. The aim was to find out if women were given any occupation or activities other than being housewives, who conduct daily household chores, or if they were promoted to the prestigious rank of their husbands by getting a job and becoming the breadwinner of the family.

The last part of the qualitative method was to study the different toys and activities of children from both genders in order to identify any stereotyping in toys or personality traits.

In each category the results of the analyzed data of both textbooks were compared against each other to point out which book exercised less bias against females.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 The Qualitative Analysis

3.1.1 Visibility

In counting the frequency of occurrence of male/female related words the proper names, such as *Zara* and *Dara*, and all the words that clearly segregate the two genders, such as the words for family roles as *mother*, *father*, etc (in all their various forms as abbreviation, vocatives and terms of address) are recorded. All the instances where a single word was repeated were counted.

In NA there is a story with animal characters in it, *Mam Bzn* (Uncle Goat) and *Mam Gurg* (Uncle Wolf). These have also added up to the total figure of male words.

There is only one single word in NA, *Naskole*, which can be translated as “the pretty” in English, which is used exclusively for describing and addressing girls. The word is counted along female-related terms.

In the tables of the qualitative investigation the frequencies (FQ) are offered with percentages which are rounded up and indicated in whole numbers.

Table (1) – Gender Visibility in Texts

Textbook	Female FQ (%)	Male FQ (%)	Total FQ
NA	95 (42%)	130 (58%)	225
KS	140 (47%)	160 (53%)	300

Based on table (1), in texts of both books males outnumber females. However, to some extent gender visibility in texts is more appropriate in KS (with 6% difference) than NA, where males outmatch females by a considerable difference of (16%).

Regarding the number of times where males and females appear in illustration all the instances were counted with maximum accuracy. The images or photos in which the gender of characters could not be established with certainty were disregarded.

Table (2) – Gender Visibility in Illustrations/Photos

Textbook	Female FQ (%)	Male FQ (%)	Total FQ
NA	85 (40%)	125 (60%)	210
KS	124 (41%)	180 (59%)	304

As it can be observed, in both books there is a significant difference of nearly (20%) in visibility of both genders in illustrations which renders females under-represented.



Siwayli (2018, p.72) states the author of NA fell in the path of the divine books by creating a patriarch world where females are created from males. He reasons that only after establishing the image of a male boy (the hero of the book) through seven mentions, the image of a girl is created whose name, *Zara*, also seems to be derived from the name of the hero, *Dara*.

3.1.2 Firstness

It was at the beginning of 16th century when mentioning males before females became the norm. This was justified under the pretext of maintaining the “natural order”, because ‘the masculine gender is more worthy than the feminine’ (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003, cited in Pillay and Maistry, 2018). Stockdale (2006, p.2) explains in expressions like *mother and father*, where two nouns, pronouns or proper names which clearly set the genders apart, occur as pair, the word that occupies the first place is said to have a “higher status”.

The frequencies of firstness for both genders in NA and KS are outlined in table (3).

Table (3): Gender-Firstness Frequency

Textbooks	Female-firstness FQ (%)	Male-firstness FQ (%)	Total FQ
NA	4 (50%)	4 (50%)	8
KS	5 (46%)	7 (54%)	13

It is clear that in NA females and males enjoy an equal share of first mentions while in KS males are upfront with a difference of (8%).

3.1.3 Female/Male-Oriented Talk

Apart from the amount and the topic of the conversation, who initiates the conversation is also important as, in one way or another, this may show the dominance of one gender over the other.

The two samples for this study were scanned for the conversations which were oriented by either gender as well as the stories whose accompanying illustration clearly indicated who is narrating them. The scenarios, stories, or conversations in which the speaker could not be identified were excluded.

Compared to NA, KS contains fewer conversation and stories. As explained in **Material Description** this is ascribed to the different teaching approaches the two books follow.

All the poems in KS, except one, had illustration of boys next to them. In those instances whenever the poems addressed the audience or an animal or insect, that case was counted as a male-oriented story or talk.

Another point of consideration in KS is a squirrel character that is meant to emerge as a lovely theme for children, in contrast to *Dara*, the male hero in NA. However, this squirrel character by appearance is male. The squirrel in one occasion is actually the initiator of a conversation with a girl. This case was also added to the total number of male-oriented dialogues.

Table (4) Frequency of Female/Male-Oriented Talk

Textbooks	Female-oriented conversation/stories FQ (%)	Male-orientated conversation/stories FQ (%)	Total FQ
NA	19(35%)	35(65%)	54
KS	8 (67%)	4(33%)	12

As the table indicates there is a sharp difference between the chances of both genders. In NA males enjoy approximately twice as often as women the chance to start a talk. But KS the opposite is true, with females preceding males by (34%) difference.



3.2 The Qualitative Analysis

3.2.1 Masculine Generic Construction

In English there are words as *man* and *he* which clearly refer to men or male gender. However, they can sometimes be used to refer to both sexes in the same way that *mankind* does. When they are used in this way they are called masculine generic references. According to Holmes (2013, pp.326-327), English speakers do not accept this generic use of *man* anymore due to its male-related connotation. In addition, sometimes the use of the word creates ambiguity as manifested in the sentence *Man loves to hunt* where no one can be certain if the speaker has meant to include both sexes. Besides, it has been proved by experiment that whenever the masculine generic references are used the male image is evoked in the mind. (Ibid)

Bauer, Holmes and Warren (2006, pp.157-159) stress the generic or “pseudo-generic” uses of the word *man* are attributed to the “conventional usage which has established the male term as norm.”

In Sorani both *piyaw* and *mirov* are used as generic reference. The first one means an adult male and the second depending on the context may denote mankind or an adult male. Haig and Öpengin (2014, p.19) point out the word *mirov*, which originally comes from Kurmanji, has replaced *piyaw* in most cases of generic use.

In both samples of the study, *mirov* has been used generically but the illustrations next to them reveal that even the writers of the books had the image of a male in their mind when they put the word in the text.

In NA the word appears four times in page (47) but the text and the illustration, with a man in Kurdish clothing and a boy stoning the birds, clears away all doubts over the exclusion of females in these instances. On page (61) again there is the image of a man above the word *mirov*, making it very hard to conceptualize females.

On three occasions in KS the masculine generic reference *mirov* is illustrated with the images of boys (pages (75), (76) and (99)). Yet, there are two sentences, on page (96) where *mirov* is used generically. The sentences are “*Mn mrovi rastgom*” and “*Mn yarmati mrovi pir dadam*” one can argue the word *mirov* has been used for both genders as there are no accompanying images and the statements do not generate any ambiguity.

3.2.2. Occupational Roles

Another manifestation of gender bias in textbooks arises when men and women are represented in conventional stereotypical jobs (Amini and Birjandi, 2011, 138). Students look at the occupational roles in their textbooks as their model and this will affect their “life aspirations” and limit their attitudes as to “who they are and what they can become” (Blumberg 2008, cited in Wu and Liu, 2015, pp.117-118)

According to *Final Report: Research on Content Analysis of Textbooks and Teaching Materials in Respect of Stereotypes*, (2001, p.57) there are two dimensions to the study of stereotypical sex-related roles: horizontal dimension which investigates the range of roles that males and females can take over and the vertical one that deals with the prestige and rank of the jobs. In many textbooks, women roles, which are affected by the harmful clichés that date back to thousands of years ago, do not exceed traditional roles such as mothers, housewives, tailors and nurses. (Gharbavi and Mousavi, 2012, 46)

In the text and illustrations of NA in total (9) professions and roles are assigned to men, namely, flutist, teacher, reed-player, jockey, carpenter, blacksmith, circus artist, shepherd, and raisin-seller. These are not necessarily prestigious occupations but horizontality establishes supremacy of men. This is because throughout the book there is not a single instance to attribute a job outside the house to women.

The book depicts women as housewives dedicated to taking care of children and house chores. What strengthens the discouraging image of women being confined to kitchen and



house is the portrayal of women in only Kurdish dress. Though in the KRI women can choose to wear Kurdish clothing for everyday work in office or workplace, they do so only on few occasions such the Kurdistan Flag Day or Newroz. Contrary to women, there are only a few occasions in the book, where men are seen in Kurdish costume. Men always appear in suit or sometimes casual clothing. They are the breadwinner and the source of joy for their families. In the text, it is the father who buys and brings the children food items as dates and melon as well as items to entertain them like a ball or birds. Like the father, the uncle also emerges as the source of joy by sending a gift, a doll, to his niece.

This unreasonable sharp discrimination may have roots in the patriarchy mentality which still prevails in Kurdish community. At the time when the author compiled his textbook, this mentality was to an extent that only a handful of families put their daughters in school because it was perceived that education is for boys to get a job since the females' workplace for eternity is home and kitchen. Thus, in a sense the author has tried to challenge this attitude by naming girls in the book and trying to attract them to educational institutions. (Sabir, 2018, p.137).

In contrast to NA, KS assigns (7) occupational roles to women. This horizontal progress could be a reflection of a change in the attitude of the society after more than half a century since NA was first adopted. In text and illustrations women are seen as assistant dentist, officers, teacher, poet, housewife, police officer, and writer. Nevertheless, vertically there is little change because some of these as housewife and teacher are again traditional stereotypical roles. A position like assistant dentist for females emerges in a photo where a man is the dentist. Besides, while a woman is assigned the role of a language or physical education or computer teacher, a man is seen next to the flag pole in front of the students, suggesting his role as a principal or vice-principal in school. Women are also assigned as police officers but men are depicted as soldier and Peshmerga as well as police officer, too. The name of the first female writer of the book comes only after the names of four of her male colleagues. These instances all confirm the secondary position of women in occupations. Men also appear as poet, teacher, baker, tailor, jokey and farmer, i.e. roles that do not entail a high prestige.

3.2.3. Distribution of Household Chores between Parents

Another area where one can trace the signs of constant bias against females is household chores and the distribution of labor between parents. The cliché has it that “a woman's place is in home”, implying a mother or a housewife's tasks at home are not optional; no matter how laborious and repetitive they are. By contrast, “stereotypically male tasks are intermittent, done occasionally, are more flexible, are less time consuming, and are often outsourced. These tasks include household repairs, car maintenance, and yard work”. (Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard, 2010, cited in Brown, 2014, p.11)

Women overload themselves by house chores because they regard them as an important foundation of their authority at home and an indicator of their gender identity. By contrast, men whose identity has been traditionally established as the breadwinner of the family, expect smaller share of household tasks. (Martínez and Paterna, 2009 cited in Cerrato and Cifre, 2018).

No matter what is the reasoning for such a division, in modern day life women are no longer the passive indoor characters as they are working outside their homes and striving to balance work and house labor.

Thanks to the plenty of stories/ scenarios in NA, there is a clear image of how the household duties are divided between parents and how they spent their free time. The activities are outlined in the table below.

Table (5) Household Chores Performed by Mother/Father

Activities	Father	Mother
Working outside home	√	



Playing football with children	√	
Taking children outdoors	√	√
Shopping	√	
Cooking		√
Serving food		√
Baking		√
Looking after children		√
Bringing water from well		√
Doing embroidery		√
Doing Laundry		√
Reading stories for children		√
Reading newspaper	√	

It is noted that out of (8) routine daily tasks, (7) are performed by women or mothers while only (2), shopping and taking children outside, are done by fathers. On page (66) there is a story about two daughters helping their mother in household works. One of its sentences, *They do all the household work*, entails the entire tasks of a house are carried out by mothers or more specifically by females as there are no males in the illustrating image.

Another conventional image in the book is of story or book reading for children which is supposed to be the task of mothers. Nonetheless, studies confirm nearly (55%) of fathers read books or stories to their toddlers on a weekly basis, whereas mothers do this more often than their husbands. (Duursma, 2014, p.283). The mother in NA offers to read a story to her child when she is done with household duties but the father is pictured with a newspaper in hand, suggesting that the world of stories, fancy and fiction is women specialty while men's world is characterized by information and facts that get updated every day.

Due to the limited number of stories and scenarios, there are only four occasions in KS which show household or outdoor activities: a somewhat blurred photo of a marketplace where men and women can be seen shopping, a man taking his daughter outdoors, a mother asking her son to clean chestnuts, and parents playing snowball games with children. Certainly these do not generate enough data to investigate the category in question.

3.2.4 Female/Male Children's Personality Traits

3.2.4.1 Activities

Clichés impose stereotypical personality traits such as caring for females and powerful and self-determining for males. Many textbooks reflect these gender-linked characteristics. Sovič and Husa (2000, p.498) state the textbooks describe female as a character who gives priority to the interest of the society not her own wish to an extent that she understands "all her actions are subconsciously directed towards those which are socially desired."

McNeil (2017, pp.1-2) draws attention to studies which reaffirm toys play a central role in indoctrinating what is socially acceptable for children of either sex because some toys have become exclusively boyish and some girlish. There are indirect messages for little children in this segregation with regards to their future careers that eventually serve gender inequality.

Even when they are not born, the boys and girls are assigned their sexist characteristics. People hope their sons become tough, brave, active and their daughters submissive, obedient, passive, smiling and sensible. (Darni and Abida, 2017, p.133)

In both textbooks under study there are instances of activities by girls and boys with their games and toys which suggest boys are assertive, intelligent, daring, and naughty but still in leading position while girls are submissive, obedient, kind, up to standards, passive and inferior to boys.

The activities conducted by boys and girls in NA and KS are summarized in the tables below.

Table (6) Girls/Boys activities in text and illustrations of NA

Activities	Boys	Girls
Planting and watering trees	√	√



Making and/or serving tea		√
Doing the dishes		√
Baking bread		√
Chopping dinosaur kale		√
Visiting friend's house		√
Buying raisins		√
Reaping fruit	√	√
Watering and feeding domestic animals	√	√
Hunting	√	
Painting		√
Studying	√	√
Going to circus	√	√

Table (7) Girls/Boys activities in text and illustrations of KS

Activities	Boys	Girls
Studying at home	√	√
Going to school	√	√
Arranging the bed in the morning	√	
Changing oneself for school	√	
Painting		√
Singing		√
Performing a play	√	√
Working on a computer		√
Planting and/or watering plants	√	√
Reaping fruit	√	√
Watching TV		√
Attending summer courses		√
Reading children's magazine		√
Cleaning school	√	√
Taking bath	√	
Going to the zoo	√	√

As illustrated in table (6), in NA there is a clear-cut division between boys and girls in the activities and household works they perform. It is only the girl who shoulders household chores, without any complaints, as if she is grooming herself to become a life-long housewife. The boy, on the other hand, is engaged in farming activities such as planting and reaping fruit. Though the girl also takes part in these activities but it's evident that the boy has the leading and powerful position. The boy carries a shovel while the girl a small gardening shovel and this clearly alludes to the physical superiority of the boy. In reaping fruit, though the girl is seen involved in the activity but her role is somewhat passive, since the boy takes the risks and climbs the trees whereas the girl asks him to drop the apples into her basket or she just sits in the vineyard and has grapes. The boy goes hunting to find food with his own effort while the girl is seen running after raisin-seller to buy raisin.

The image of female as a socially acceptable individual is reiterated in the girl's visiting the house of her friend. There is only one entertainment for her which is going to the circus, but accompanied by her brother.

In KS there are not but only two instances of household tasks. In one a mother asks her son to clean the chestnuts but it is not clear if the boy accepts or rejects the assigned task. In the opening pages of the book a boy is seen arranging his bed in the morning. This is of course a development as one can see males engaged in some household activities, no matter how simple they are. The mother's labor seems to have been reduced a little as the boy himself arranges his bed and takes care of his hygiene and clothes.

The lack of scenarios about the household labor in KA can be attributed to the method of teaching that the book applies, which is mainly presenting the words in isolation. Whether



this could also be sheer coincidence or the KS textbook writers' awareness of sexist depiction of children in NA, the book has relatively improved image of male and female children. As shown in table (7), the girl not only does not execute any household chores but is dynamically involved in education as well as enlightening and entertaining herself since she attends summer courses, works on a computer, watches TV, goes to the zoo, performs plays, paints and sings at home. Despite these, the image of boy as the smart and powerful guardian of his sister is still present in the book since among other things the boy takes the hand of her sister when crossing the road.

3.2.4.2 Toys/Games/Entertainment

One way that NA distances itself from the worldview of divine books and their patriarchal approaches towards human beings is that the source of evil is not the female anymore but the male. Although the hero of the book, *Dara*, is portrayed to be an example for humanity but his personality traits lead him to a "dangerous" fate (Siwayli, 2018, p.73).

The aggressive and harming characteristic of males can be traced down in both books where children are depicted in settings with animals, domestic or wild.

In NA the boy stones the birds and climbs trees to take away their chicks while a girl advises him to stop these cruel deeds. In another instance, the boy challenges a strong-headed bull by ordering it to keep away from his flowers or else he will bind it with a rope.

In addition, the boy, accompanied by dogs, goes hunting, an activity which involves violence against animals. He is also described as watching animals fighting each other or encouraging them to fight and exercise violence.

Yet there are also just two instances where the boy shows his sympathy by watering animals.

There is also difference in the association of animals and children of both genders. The girl appears almost always with calmer birds and animals like dove, partridge and cat while the boy is seen in setting with hunting dogs, bull, rooster and turkeys, among others, which could turn aggressive.

Regarding KS, the same image of a boy trying to harm birds in their nest is duplicated where again a caring girl rescues the little birds from the harm of the boy. In KS the boy instead of hunting goes to catch butterflies.

Similarly, in KS the boy in the zoo approaches aggressive and stronger animals as rooster (compared with hen) and lion where a caption on its image reads *I am the lion, the King of the Jungle*. Meanwhile the girl is close to animals symbolizing beauty and calmness as a deer and a dove whose slogan is *I'm the white dove, symbol of peace*.

Another sex-linked dividing line is manifested by toys and games. Throughout NA the boy plays with a toy airplane and flies a kite while the girl often has a baby doll or a rope in her hands or is seated near a doll cradle. The girl tells her mother she wished she also could fly a kite but her mother replies: "*There are many more enjoyable plays than kite-flying*", encouraging her daughter to suppress her wish.

The cliché here is that kite-flying, which involves running and climbing, and driving a car or flying an airplane might be dangerous. Thus, these activities, even in the form of games, are for males. (Darni and Abida, 2017, p.131)

In NA a group of boys play marble as the girls standby watching. The boys enjoy playing with spin and pinwheel. There is not a single occasion involving girls with such toys.

Yet, there are entertainments shared by both genders as dancing, going to the playground with see-saw, swings, playing hide and seek games, and going to circus together. Contrary to the common view that playing with the ball is for boys, the girl in NA can also play with it.

Both girls and boys play roles and perform on the stage. However, the boy has the stronger and leading position. He is the teacher in the classroom game. In the concert game, again he is the leader while the other boys play musical instruments as reed and tonbak. The girl plays



def as the boy is the orchestra leader. In two instances the children gather around Kurdistan flag and the boy, not the girl, holds the flag, suggesting his status as representing the people. The boy is naughty and somewhat ill-mannered as he spits on the ground in one story and in the other spills his mother's doogh (diluted yogurt). In spite of that, he is the one who often explains and clarifies things to girls, thus appearing as more intelligent.

In the same way that in NA playing marble is represented as a totally boyish game, playing football and handball is allocated to only males while the girls are left with the same usual rope to play with in physical education lesson. Both girls and boys play snowball, rejoice in playground games and perform on stage. In the same way that in NA a boy is portrayed as representing the nation by hoisting the flag, in KS it is again a boy who has been honored to raise the national symbol. His image as the patriotic representative of the nation is further highlighted as he sees the formation of the slogan "Long Live Kurdistan" in his dream.

4. Conclusions

The purpose of the current study was to examine whether the former and current Kurdish alphabet textbooks at the KRI exercised bias against females. The analysis showed that the books were almost parallel in over-representing males in texts and illustrations.

The results of quantitative part indicated that in both samples females suffered from low visibility. In NA, males outnumbered females in text by (16%) difference, while the difference in favor of males in KS (6%) was less sharp. As for visibility in illustrations and photos, both books displayed an equal significant disparity of (20%) in support of males.

Regarding firstness, NA was gender-fair as the representation was completely balanced. However, in KS the males were again upfront by (8%).

Investigating the category of male/female-oriented talk proved that females established their presence by initiating talks twice as often as male in KS. Yet, in NA the opposite was true, with males imposing themselves as initiator of (65%) of talks.

With respect to the qualitative study, although both samples again reiterated superiority of males, some slight diversions from the patriarchal society can be observed.

The masculine generic reference, *mirov*, was used in both samples where it was meant to signify both genders but the image of a boy or a man was next to the word which made it difficult to conceptualize females in those situations.

Stereotypical representation of women as housewives was retained in both textbooks while males enjoyed more diverse professions and occupations. In NA women were presented only as housewives. KS was more open by assigning other roles such as teacher to women. Despite that, these positions were also traditional and not compatible with the reality of positions of women in society.

Household chores in NA were exclusively carried out by females. In KS which lacks adequate stories, it could not be confirmed if the same gender-linked cliché persisted. Nevertheless, some very little improvements for distribution of household works between males and females surfaced as the boy himself arranged his bed and changed his clothes.

Personality traits of female and male children in NA reflected the gender-linked clichés prevailing in the patriarchal community. Toys, games and activities of children showed boys were assertive, brave, authoritative, intelligent and naughty but girls submissive, passive, caring, obedient and secondary to boys. In KS, however, the image of girls was somewhat improved as she appeared more engaged in school and outdoor activities. Nevertheless, the girl was still portrayed as an individual up to social standards.

5. Pedagogical Implication

Though it is practically impossible to find a completely gender-balanced textbook, the findings of this study point to considerable amount of linguistic sexism in Kurdish alphabet textbooks. The imbalance can negatively affect the attitudes of children towards the genders,



their life expectations and their own understanding of the world. Therefore, the syllabus designers at the Ministry of Education are urged to take such investigations seriously and modify the textbooks, so that they mirror a more realistic representation of both genders in the KRI, especially of females who are now actively engaged in almost all walks of life, business, leadership positions, government and parliament. Teachers also need to raise their awareness regarding gender inequities and without discrimination against either sex present and discuss the material inside class since respecting sex equality is the key for the success of any educational program.

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التحيز بين الجنسين في كتب الأبجدية الكردية السابقة والحالية التي يتم تدريسها في إقليم كردستان- العراق

ليلى حميد محمد

كلية التربية الاساس- قسم لغة الانجليزية / جامعة صلاح الدين- اربيل

ملخص

يهدف هذه البحث إلى التحقيق في التحيز اللغوي بين الجنسين في الكتب المدرسية الخاصة بالحروف الأبجدية الكردية اللهجة السورانية التي تُدرّس في إقليم كردستان العراق منذ عام 1951. الكتاب الأول بعنوان "الأبجدية الجديدة" من تأليف إبراهيم أمين بالدار، الذي درّس في المدارس أكثر من نصف قرن، استُبدل به كتاب "دراسة الكردية" الذي صمّمته وزارة التربية. فُحِص الكتابان من الناحية الكمية والنوعية من حيث تصنيفهما في سبع فئات: رؤية الذكور/ الإناث في النص والرسوم التوضيحية، الأولية، عدد المحادثات التي بدأها الذكور/ الإناث، البناء العام للذكور، الأدوار المهنية، توزيع الأعمال المنزلية، وخصائص شخصية الأطفال الذكور/ الإناث. في غضون ذلك، قورن الكتابان لمعرفة مدى إدراك المصممين لعدم التوازن بين الجنسين والسعي إلى تقليله. أدى تحليل دقيق للعينات إلى النتائج التي تكشف التحيز النمطيّ ضد الإناث مع الإشارة إلى اللغة والنصوص والرسوم التوضيحية. تؤكد النتائج أيضاً أنه عند تصميم الكتاب المدرسي الجديد للأبجدية الكردية، لم تُؤخذ مسألة التحيز بين الجنسين بنظر الاعتبار من قبل مطوري المواد، في حين أن التحيز اللغوي ضد الإناث، اللاتي يشكلن عموماً نصف إجمالي السكان في أي مجتمع، يمكن أن يؤثر سلباً ودون وعي في تصور الأطفال على القدرات والقيود المفروضة على أي من الجنسين في المراحل المبكرة من حياتهم ودراساتهم. لذلك، تعتمد الدراسة على بعض الآثار التربوية للمساعدة في إزالة الرسائل الضمنية السلبية في هذه الكتب.

الكلمات الدالة: التحيز بين الجنسين، التمييز الجنسي اللغوي، كليشيهات الجنسية، التمييز، كتب الأبجدية الكردية

جیاکاری جێندهری له کتێبه فهرمییهکانی ئێستا و پێشووی ئەلفووبی کوردی له هەریمی کوردستان- عێراق

لهیلاحه مەید مەمهەد

کۆلیژی پەروردهی بنه‌رته‌ی- به‌شی زمانی ئینگلیزی/ زانکۆی سه‌لاحه‌ددین-هه‌ولێر

پوخته

ئامانجی ئەم توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌ لێکۆڵینه‌وه‌یه‌ له جیاکاری جێندهری له‌سه‌ر ئاستی زمان له‌ هەر دوو کتێبی ئەلفووبی کوردی، (دیالێکتی سۆرانی) که‌ له‌ سالی ١٩٥١هه‌ له‌ هەریمی کوردستانی عێراق له‌ قوتابخانه‌کان سوودیانی ل‌ وه‌رگیراوه‌. کتێبی یه‌که‌مه‌ به‌ناوی "ئه‌لفووبی نوێ" له‌ نووسینی ئیبراهیم ئەمین بالداره‌ که‌ دوا‌ی زیاتر له‌ نیوسه‌ده‌ له‌م سالا‌نه‌ی دوا‌یدا کتێبی "خوێندنی کوردی" که‌ له‌لایه‌ن وه‌زاره‌ته‌وه‌ دانراوه‌، جێی گرت‌ه‌وه‌. هەر دوو کتێبه‌که‌ له‌رووی چه‌ندێتی و چه‌ونه‌تیی ده‌رخستنی جیاکاری جێندهری و به‌ گوێره‌ی چه‌وت پێوه‌ره‌وه‌ لێکۆڵینه‌وه‌یان له‌سه‌ر کراوه‌. پێوه‌ره‌کان بریتی‌نی‌بوون له‌ ئاستی پێشاندانی هەر دوو جێندهر له‌ناو ده‌ق و وێنه‌کاندا، ریزبه‌ندی م‌ و ئێر، ده‌ستپێکردنی گف‌ت‌گ‌ۆ له‌لایه‌ن کاره‌کته‌رکانی سه‌ر به‌ هەر دوو جێندهر، جێناوی گشتیی ئێر، پێشه‌کانی هەر دوو جێندهر، دا‌به‌شکردنی ئیشوکاری ناو ما‌ل و هه‌روه‌ها تابه‌تمه‌ندییه‌کانی که‌سایه‌تی مندا‌لانی سه‌ر به‌ هەر دوو جێندهر. له‌ هه‌مان کاتدا هەر دوو کتێبه‌که‌ به‌راورد کراون بۆته‌وه‌ی لایه‌نی لێکچوو و جیاوازی جیاکاری جێندهری له‌ناوایندا بدۆزێته‌وه‌. دوا‌ی لێکۆڵینه‌وه‌یه‌کی ورد ده‌رکه‌وت مێینه‌ له‌ناو هەر دوو کتێبه‌که‌دا رووبه‌رووی جیاکارییه‌کی به‌رچاو بووه‌ته‌وه‌. ده‌ره‌نجامه‌کان هه‌روه‌ها ئاماژه‌ به‌وه‌ ده‌ده‌ن له‌ دانانی کتێبی "خوێندنی کوردی" ئه‌وه‌نده‌ گرینگی به‌ با‌به‌تی ها‌وسه‌نگی جێندهری نه‌دراوه‌ له‌کاتێکدا هەر جو‌ره‌ جیاکارییه‌که‌ له‌دژی مێینه‌، که‌ به‌ گشتی نیوه‌ی ئه‌ندامانی هەر کۆمه‌لگه‌یه‌ک پێک دێنێت، ده‌شێت کاریه‌گریه‌کی زو‌ر نه‌رێتی هه‌بێت له‌سه‌ر جیهانی‌بینی مندا‌ل‌ و تیکه‌یشتیان له‌ تواناکان و پێگه‌ی هەر دوو جێندهر له‌ کۆمه‌لگه‌دا. هەر بۆیه‌، توێژینه‌وه‌که‌ چه‌ند راسپاردیه‌کی پەرورده‌ی پێشکه‌ش ده‌کات بۆته‌وه‌ی یارمه‌تیده‌ر بێت له‌ سپه‌نه‌وه‌ی ئه‌و په‌یامه‌ نه‌رێتییه‌ شاراوا‌نه‌ی که‌ له‌ناو کتێبه‌کاندا هه‌ن.

وشه‌ کلێبییه‌کان: جیاکاری جێندهری، سێکسیزمی زمانه‌وانی، کلێشه‌ی جێندهری، کتێبه‌کانی ئەلفووبی کوردی.