



ISSN: 2957-3874 (Print)

Journal of Al-Farabi for Humanity Sciences (JFHS)

<https://iasj.rdd.edu.iq/journals/journal/view/95>

مجلة الفارابي للعلوم الإنسانية تصدرها جامعة الفارابي



Empowering Women through Self-Efficacy in Nadia Hashimi's *One Half from The East*: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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تمكين المرأة من خلال الكفاءة الذاتية في رواية "نصف من الشرق" للكاتبة نادية هاشمي: تحليل النقدي للخطاب

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Abstract

In Afghan patriarchal society, girls and women are subjugated and deprived of their rights, and their identity is culturally decided. Men are given the most preferences and described as the "backup fathers" of the family and a source of happiness and good luck. They have privileges, and their actions are rarely judged. This research investigates the themes of women's empowerment through self-efficacy in Nadia Hashimi's *One Half from the East* (2016). She argues that women should have the right to be traditionally valued, be autonomous and active agents, and believe in their abilities to make a drastic change through self-efficacy. The higher the self-efficacy, the easier it is for women and girls to deal with patriarchal norms. The research adopts Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis and its three levels: description, interpretation and explanation, and Albert Bandura's Social Theory and its four key components, namely observation, imitation, modeling, and self-efficacy. The analysis of the protagonist's self-development and her temporary journey as a bacha posh lead to the fact that through self-efficacy, girls and women can spiral back to being capable of freeing themselves, having a significant role in the Afghan society like their male counterparts. The novel discloses that self-efficacy could be learned through lived interactions and self-experiences rather than inherited. Thus, women and girls could empower themselves by observing and engaging with high self-efficacy, confidence and strength models, thereby resisting the traditional norms.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Empowerment, Afghan culture, Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, Bandura's social theory.

الخلاصة:

في المجتمع الأبوي الأفغاني، تُستعبد الفتيات والنساء، ويُحرمن من حقوقهن، وتُحدد هويتهن ثقافيًا ضمن أطر ضيقة تركز التبعية. يُمنح الرجال الامتياز الأكبر، ويُنظر إليهم باعتبارهم "الأباء الاحتياطيين" للأسرة، ومصدر الحظ والسعادة. أما أفعالهم، فنادرًا ما تخضع للحكم أو المساواة. يتناول هذا البحث موضوع تمكين المرأة من خلال تعزيز الكفاءة الذاتية، كما تتجلى في رواية نادية هاشمي "نصف من الشرق" (٢٠١٦). ويجادل بأن للمرأة الحق في أن تُقدّر ضمن الإطار الثقافي التقليدي، وأن تكون مستقلة، فاعلة، ومؤمنة بقدرتها على إحداث تحول جذري في واقعها. فكلما ازدادت كفاءة المرأة الذاتية، ازدادت قدرتها على مقاومة البنى الأبوية السائدة. ينطلق البحث من إطار التحليل الخطاب النقدي لنظرية فيركلوف والمراحل الثلاثة: الوصف التحليلي والتوضيح والنظرية الاجتماعية لألبرت باندورا، لا سيما مكوناتها الأساسية: الملاحظة، والتقليد، والنمذجة، والكفاءة

الذاتية. ويُبرز التحليل كيف أنّ تطور شخصية البطلة "عبدة"، وتجربتها المؤقتة كـ"باشا بوش" — أي فتاة تتقمص هيئة الفتى — يكشف عن أن الثقة بالنفس تُعدّ مدخلاً حاسماً لاستعادة النساء لأدوارهن الاجتماعية الفاعلة، والتحرر من القيود المفروضة عليهن. وتُبين الرواية أن هذه الثقة لا تُورث، بل تُكتسب من خلال التجربة الحياتية والتفاعل مع نماذج القوة والتمكين. كلمات مفتاحية : الكفاءة الذاتية، التمكين، الثقافة الافغانية، التحليل الخطاب النقدي لغيركلوف، النظرية الاجتماعية لاباندورا.

1.Introduction

The term "empowerment" has been used to describe various concepts and a proliferation of outcomes. It was first used in 1975 in academic literature and gained prominence in the late 1970s within the Civil Rights Movement. Women had played an essential role in stimulating the Civil Rights Movement and became its key dynamics. For instance, Seplima Poinstte Clark, an African American teacher, had designed an educational program to teach English, believing that this could help women gain their rights. By 1999, Naila Kabeer defined empowerment as the ability to make strategic and deliberate life choices that comprise confidence, control, and the ability to act independently (p. 436). Empowerment involves breaking societal barriers and creating opportunities for women to achieve their potential. One of the essential aspects of this concept is women's empowerment, which focuses on giving freedom to participate equally in society by changing the distribution of power between women and men (Tandon, 2016, p.8). The movement for women's empowerment was first introduced in the 1980s when feminists, particularly in the Third World, were discontent with the economist and political models such as Women in Development (WID) and Women and Development (WAD). According to Naz, A., et al. (2020), empowerment is one of the indispensable dimensions of a feminist perspective (p. 66). In patriarchal societies, women face gender discrimination that limits their opportunities and freedom. Kellera & Mbewe (1991) define women empowerment as the ability of women to organise and shape themselves to affirm their independence to make more choices and control their resources that support abolishing their subjection. Srilatha Batliwala (1994) further delineates that the main goal of empowering women is to drastically change the patriarchal ideology of the patriarchal society. Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a critical lens to examine how language and discourse shape the representation of social power and inequality. Fairclough (1989, p.5) emphasised the main aim of CDA is to "show up connections which may be hidden from people such as the connections between language and power". To put it differently, it aims to detect and uncover any kind of ideological deception and manipulation that are hidden in texts (Fairclough, 1992, p.6). Van Dijk (1995b, p.18) agrees that the essential aim of CDA is to reveal, uncover and disclose the hidden features, structures and manifestations of social power, in equality, discrimination, dominance, racism, injustice and the like that are exercised by the dominating groups over the dominated one. Moreover, Wodak and Meyer (2001, p.2) added that CDA aims at investigating the social inequality and discrimination among groups and people which results from language use. Therefore, CDA is a multidisciplinary approach that is concerned with explanation and interpretation of a text to reveal or discover hidden meanings such as social power, identities, gender discrimination, and other norms and attitudes that are loaded in a given text (Fairclough, 1995, p.132-3). CDA analyses texts according to the following levels:

1.Description (Textual) is concerned with the examination of the formal linguistics features of a text such as the use of pronouns, modality, metaphor, nominalization and agency. This stage is selective because the researcher has the freedom and flexibility of choosing whatever linguistics elements are suitable.

2.Interpretation (Discursive practice) deals with the exploration of situational context (time, setting and the speaker), and inter-textual context (how it will be interpreted, the background or ideologies of the listener and speaker).

3.Explanation (Social practice) tackles the relation between social context and interaction, the social determination of the process of production and interpretation and their effects on the participant and the process of interaction (1989, p.26). The last two levels (discursive and social practice) are interrelated and shaped each other because how the text is being said depends on how people use that text. Alongside with Fairclough's CDA, Albert Bandura's *Social Learning Theory* (1971) provided a psychological lens for understanding women's empowerment through his social theory, particularly the concept of self-efficacy. He argued that women's empowerment could be related to self-efficacy, i.e., when woman sees other women succeeding, they are more likely to believe in their abilities (p. 1). He defines self-efficacy as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of actions required to attain designated types of performances" (p.186). To put it differently, individuals' belief in their ability can be more influential than their actual skills. Self-efficacy has

been concerned with how an individual believes in her/his ability rather than what skills and abilities she/he possesses. Bandura emphasised that having the ability to do a task successfully will not be sufficient unless the individual believes in her/his ability to do that task. Thus, the functioning of skills depends upon self-efficacy and vice-versa (p.189). Bandura further argues that people learn through social interaction, particularly by observing and imitating others' behaviour (p. 187). Razieh Nabavi and Mohammed Bijandi (2012) claimed that learning how to behave freely and be strong is not done only by observing and imitating others' behaviour. However, it involves modelling, which includes attention, retention, reproduction and motivation. These key components demonstrate how effectively behaviours are learned and acquired, as shown in the following figure:

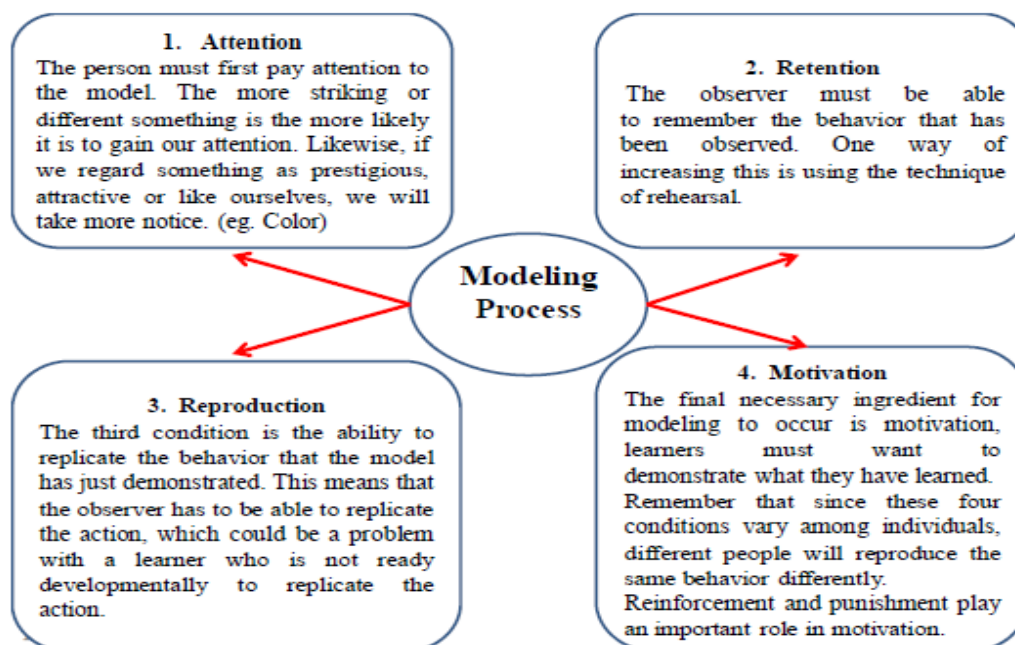


Figure1: *The needed conditions in modeling process (Razieh Tadayon Nabavi and Mohammad Sadegh Bijandi, 2012, p.10)* Bandura illustrates that individuals learn and imitate behaviours they have observed. He identifies three basic observational learning models: a live model, a verbal instructional model and a symbolic model. A live model involves an actual individual acting out a behaviour. The verbal instructional model involves explanations of behaviour. The last one involves real or fictional models. Social learning theory (SLT) has been considered the most used theory to address and enhance individuals' learning. It explains how individuals' behaviour and skills are shaped. It is based on the perception that people learn new skills and behaviours through observation, imitation, modelling and self-efficacy. Bandura's key concepts of social learning theory are considered a valuable framework for analysing personal transformation and gender identity. These key components are:

1. Observation: It is a process of observing others, specifically if it is positive, such as observing women overcome societal restrictions and learning from the outcomes.
2. Imitation: It is the practical part of what has been observed, i.e., it is the outcome of observing others' behaviour and actions. For instance, girls and women imitate other empowered and confident women in their society.
3. Modelling: People who are observers are called models, such as parents, friends or public individuals.
4. Self-efficacy: It is the individuals' belief in her/his ability to achieve a task, which in turn affects their behaviour and resilience against limitations or restrictions placed upon them. It has been defined as the influence of the outcome of what has been observed or imitated. Additionally, when people believe in their abilities, they can overcome the barriers that influence their lives (Razieh and Mohammed, 2012, p. 5-7) The last component (self-efficacy) is interrelated with Fairclough's concept of social practice as both tackles the relationship between individuals' self-efficacy and the cultural environment. In *One Half from the East*, Hashimi offers a compelling exploration of women's empowerment and self-efficacy in Afghan society through the tradition of bacha posh, a girl who changes her appearance and dresses up as a boy, and the discourses that sustain the limitations that been placed on girls and women. Girls disguise themselves as boys to gain the social privilege of which the society has deprived them. (Strochlic, N., 2021, p. 1). Hashimi highlights the restrictions and pressures of gender roles and the need for women's empowerment and self-efficacy through Obayda, a young girl who has been forced by society to live as Obayd. She reflects on how the cultural pressure helps Obayd develop a strong sense of

autonomy, freedom and self-belief. CDA reveals how gendered power is embedded in everyday language. For instance, “*backup father*”, “*rock and metal*”, “*flower petals*”, “*I should do it*” and “*Make Obayda a boy!*” do not only describe women and men but rather naturalise ideologies of feminine fragility and masculine strength. SLT is also relevant here as Obayd learns through observing boys, imitating their behaviours and developing self-efficacy. Hashimi writes about women’s empowerment and their self-efficacy as she wants to raise awareness towards gender equality and the resilience of women. Adopting these two models shows how women’s empowerment has been depicted as a process of learning boys’ behaviours and contesting the discursive structures that have socially marginalized girls and women.

2. The research hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been posed:

1. Self-efficacy could be learnt through social interaction and engaging with strength and confident models.
2. Fairclough’s CDA and Bandura’s theory could be applied to improve women’s empowerment and self-efficacy.
3. Girls’ and women empowerment could be enhanced through social learning and experiences.

3. Aims of the research

The research aims at:

1. Exploring how women’s self-efficacy and empowerment could be enhanced through interaction and lived experiences.
2. Demonstrating how Obayda develops self-efficacy and empowerment in patriarchal society.
3. Exploring how language reflects girls’ restrictions and resistance.

4. Data collection of the research

The research adopts extracts from Hashimi’s *One Half from the East* to examine the discursive use of the language and how resistance and self-empowerment has been embedded.

5. Women Self-efficacy in *One Half from the East*

Hashimi, the daughter of an Afghan immigrant raised in New York, writes about Afghan culture and the tradition of bacha posh to highlight women’s and girls’ suffering. She believes that women should have the right to live freely and resist the traditional cultural restrictions imposed upon them (2016, p. 259). The Afghan patriarchal society establishes that men hold primary power and authority (Amani, Z., Samar, R., & Salumahale, F. E., 2024, p. 2). In light of this notion, masculinity is equated with strength, leadership, and decision-making, while femininity is associated with submissiveness. In other words, men are viewed as the rightful heads of households, exercising authority over girls and women (Amani, Z., Samar, R., & Salumahale, F. E., 2024, p. 3-5). Unlike women and girls, men are seen as reliable, essential and good luck to their families. As a result, girls in Afghan society are disguised as boys by cutting their hair and swapping out clothing to gain boys’ privileges (Nordberg, J., 2014, p.15). Hashimi has highlighted this unfair tradition and girls’ and women’s suffering of losing their identity through the character Obayda, someone whose identity is chosen for her. She is a female “veiled” in male clothing. She is sanctioned by society to “act repetitively” like a boy (Lalthlamuanpuui, P., 2022, p.5). Her transformation into a bacha posh is not born of choice but has been traditionally chosen for her to cheer up her father and guarantee the birth of a son in the family: It’s very simple, dear. Make Obayda into a boy. With her as a son, she will bring good luck to your home. You’ll see your husband cheer up. Then, you plan for another baby in the family. Having a bacha posh at home brings boy energy into your household.¹ Through Fairclough’s textual level, this extract shows how everyday language and discourse naturalises gendered power in Afghanistan. The phrase “*make Obayda into a boy*” is an imperative command that indicates Obayda’s personality and identity is something could be shaped and identified by social norms and ideologies. At the discursive practice level, the phrase “*It’s very simple*” normalises the practice of bacha posh and the submissiveness of girls. At the level of social practices, the same above extract talks about boys’ privileges and priority. They have been described as a source of happiness, honor, power and strength. This has been indicated through the utterance of her aunt “*Good Luck*” which represents a powerful act of discourse that denies girls and women’s autonomy and reproduces the ideology of patriarchal. According to Bandura’s theory, the same extract “*It’s very simple, dear, make Obayda into a boy [....] Brings boy energy into your household*” reveals the deep-rooted social preference for men. Men have been seen as the source of happiness and luck. They are crucial for the family’s stability. They are taught to be superior and more valuable than women from an early age. They are considered the “*backup fathers*” of the family: “*The oldest boy in the family is the one who’s responsible for looking after everyone. He’s sort of like the backup father*” (OHFT, p. 6). The phrase “*backup father*” indicates men’s crucial and authoritative role as leaders and decision-makers. They are culturally considered the family’s protectors and the primary providers. The

absence of a son in Obayda's family is seen as a problem as there is no backup father, which causes instability and misguidance. This mindset further reinforces the idea that girls and women are marginalised depending on men's presence in society (Amani, Z., Samar, R., & Salumahale, F. E., 2024, p. 6). Men are more capable and have privileges than women. Obayda states: I never had to go home straight after school. I didn't do any of the chores around the house. It was fine if I went home with dirt on my pants. Nobody in the market cared where I was going (OHFTE, p. 243) At the Fairclough's textual level, the above quotation reflects the difference between girls' and boys' behavior. The phrase "*dirt on my pants. Nobody in the market cared*" reflects the social freedom and invisibility boys' have compared to girls behavior which has been socially defined. The phrases "*never had to do*", "*didn't do*" and "*was fine*" emphasise the cultural restrictions that been socially placed upon girls. At the level of discursive and social practice, it indicates that boys are active, independent and unconstrained. In other words, it reflects the patriarchal society of Afghanistan, in which girls' behaviours and appearance are judged by ideological norms and legitimised by boys' and men's presence. Moreover, the list of privileges that boys gain is indicators of the broad gender inequity that grants their social freedom while being denied to girls. According to Bandura's components, the same extract reflects the cultural pressure that has been placed on families whose children have gender discrimination being defined by their society. Therefore, when one gender is highly evaluated, and the other is devalued, individuals will wish to switch to the more desired side (Banerjee. R & Sharon. J, 2023, p. 75). Additionally, the quota "*backup father*" demonstrates the devaluing of women and girls in patriarchal societies. The belief that boys are more valuable indicates gender inequality and restricts girls' and women's autonomy. To achieve gender equality and self-efficacy, it is essential to break these barriers and challenge the belief that boys are more necessary than women (Amani, Z., Samar, R., & Salumahale, F. E., 2024, p. 6). Obayda's decision to act as a boy indicates her desire to be culturally seen and to help her family overcome their difficulties "*I should do it*". At the textual level of Fairclough's theory, the use of the pronoun "I" is an active form but it has a passive meaning i.e., Obayda does not act according to her desire but to others' expectations. She believes that she should accept being a boy as she owes it to her father: I remember Khala Aziza said about this making my father better. She doesn't seem like the most reliable authority, but if there's even a chance she's right, I should do it. I owe Padar-jan that much (OHFTE, p.23) Moreover, the modal verb "*should*" and "*if there's even a chance*" shows that Obayda's decision of being a boy is discursively an obligation to fulfill her father's need as someone to whom a debt must be repaid. At the discursive practice, it indicates how patriarchal ideologies have been maintained through direct command and internalised obligation. At level of social practice, it reflects a common social discourse in which girls and women scarify their comfort for the well-being of their family. Girls' choices and identities are subordinated to boys' emotional stability and honor. Through Bandura's components, Obayda's speech "*I remember Khala Aziza [...], I should do it. I owe Padar-jar that much*" indicates the participation of female in reproducing patriarchal norm. Even when Obayda questions her aunt reliability, she still bound act to her family. Deeply this could be considered as the beginning of Obayda's resistances against the restrictions. Boys' resilience, physical and emotional strength, and capability of overcoming any challenges that come their way reflect the deeply ingrained gender stereotypes and expectations that have been culturally placed on each gender: You're a boy, not a bacha posh, Obayd. If you get that, there is nothing else. You know your weakness now, don't you? Boys aren't supposed to have weakness. Boys are built of rock and metal. We eat meat and show our teeth. Girls are made of flower petals and paper bags. They eat berries and sip tea like something might jump out of the hot water and bite them. (OHFTE, p.72-3) At the textual level of Fairclough's theory, the words "*rock and metal*" in the above quotation symbolise the endurance and toughness of boys, i.e., they are the dominant gender and inherently superior. On the contrary, girls are linked to fragile and delicate objects such as flower petals and paper bags. Girls are weak and need constant care. They drink tea cautiously for fearing of being bitten (Amani, Z., Samar, R., & Salumahale, F. E., 2024, p. 7). At the level of discursive and social practice, the conversation above indicates Obayda's and Rahima's understanding of gender norms and the societal expectations that are culturally imposed on each gender. They believe that gender plays a substantial role in shaping their behaviours, attitudes and self-efficacy. According to Bandura's theory, Obayda's change into a bacha posh, on one side, has prevented her from behaving *naturally*: "*I haven't played with dolls in years either. They're off-limits now that I'm a boy, and that shouldn't bother me [as a girl], but it does*" (OHFTE, p. 31) and being governed and devalued by the society. On the other side, it allows her to enjoy the sense of being valued and free, offering her a chance to decide her future and gain boys' privileges that have been culturally deprived of: You should jump up and down and be loud when you want to be and eat all you can. You should tell people what you think and score goals and let your father look at you like you're the future president of Afghanistan

(OHFTE, p. 71) This transformation is a way to play a different identity, one that gives more confidence and freedom and one that requires being a passive and silent participant: *"You are the best of both worlds- one half from the east and one half from the west"* (OHFTE, p. 108). According to the discursive and social practical level of Fairclough's theory, the phrase *"That shouldn't bother me, and it does"* reflects Obayad's internal conflict between her true identity and the one that been culturally chosen for her. It exposes her confirmation to the societal scarify of her girlhood for the need of her family *"I haven't play with dolls in years"*. As a girl, Obayda should be culturally silent and invisible. At the textual level, she utilises the pronoun "we" to become a spokesperson for women in her community. She states: *"We try to move around outside like ghosts-keeping our voices low, our footsteps light, and our eyes to the ground"* (p.77). On the discursive and social practice level, she (as aboy) has the privilege of defending herself and being a participant in deciding her lifestyle. Moreover, her mother convinces her that being a boy is what all girls desire, and many would fight for that opportunity: You'll be able to do no other girl can do. You're lucky to have this chance. [...] Girls would kill to take your place, If I'd been a bacha posh like you, I'd be happy to talk about it (OHFTE, p.18-242) According to Bandura's theory, the above quotation reflects the idea that being a boy is something one should be proud of, while being a girl is traditionally undervalued. The phrases *"Girls would kill to take your place"* and *"You're lucky to have this chance"* construct boy's role as a privilege rather than as a deprivation of her identity. At the textual level of Fairclough's theory, the model verbs *"you'll"* and *"I'd"* indicates the societal limitations and silence that imposed upon girls, in contrast to what possible to boys. At the level of discursive and social interpretation, Boys are associated with freedom, opportunity, strength, and visibility. Gender discrimination and disparities have also been seen in sharing food. Obayd receives more food from a good chicken cut than his sisters because he needs meat to be *strong*: *"Obayd is a boy. He needs the meat if he's going to get stronger"* (p.34). Through Fairclough's textual level, the language use such as the declarative sentence and the clause naturalise boys' and men's privileges and superiority which in turn sustains gendered inequality. In Afghan society, girls and women have limited freedom and opportunities. They are marginalised, and their rights are undermined. Their decisions are traditionally dictated by other's desires and expectations. Rahima's marriage at a young age highlights the strict limitations imposed on girls and conformation to societal expectations of respectable girls (Amani, Z., Samar, R., & Salumahale, F. E., 2024, p. 8). Textually and socially interpreted, the phrase *"Respectable Girls"* implies the specific appearances and behaviours that girls must adhere to maintain their reputation and social standing by being submissive and conforming to patriarchal norms. Rahima's marriage, another bacha posh, reflects the unequal power between girls and boys, where men hold complete authority over the actions of girls and women. Another example is when Obayd has been forced by his mother to return to his life as a girl: The rest of the family will see you in a dress tomorrow and all of this will be behind us. You'll behave respectably and come home straight after school [...] God I wish there were a way to make your hair grow out this instant! [...] Forget this boy stuff. It's all over. By tomorrow, you'll be a new person. Or back to your old self. Whichever it is (OHFTE, p. 208-09) At the textual level of Fairclough's theory, the imperative and command sentences *"You'll behave respectably"* and *"Forget this boy stuff"* reinforce the societal limitations and expectations of girls' and women's behaviours and actions that are tied to obedience. The exclamatory sentence *"God I wish [...]!"* indicates the urgency of having physical markers of femininity such as long and covering hair which are symbols of social respectability. At the level of discursive and social practice, it reflects the traditional ideologies of Afghan society which tie honor to the visible appearance of traditional girlhood. The phrase *"back to your old self"* indicates the instability of Obayad's identity which is shaped to whatever role society assigned to him. Although Obayda has gained a boy's privileges, but it is no longer sanctioned once she returns to her old life. According to Bandura's theory, the same extract *"The rest of the family will see you in a dress tomorrow and all of this will be behind us [...] whatever it is"* highlights the societal expectations and traditional gender roles in Afghanistan. Disregarding Obayd's and Rahim's desires to stay as boys forever and determine their identities: *"We had to pass under the rainbow so the changed would be forever"* (OHFTE, p. 200), they have been culturally forced to return to their life as girls. Obayda states: *"Because my parents have decided to turn my world upside down for the second time"* (OHFTE, p. 210). This reinforces the idea that girls are not allowed to make choices or have a say in their lives. Further, it indicates the lack of autonomy that girls experience, where others make decisions about their lives. Becoming a bacha posh is a transformative process of Obayda's self-efficacy, shifting from passive and uncertain to autonomous and confident. Obayda starts his journey with confusion and emotional orientation. Although Obayda cuts her hair and wears boys' clothing, she does not feel strong and confident. Instead, she feels like a stranger in her body and disoriented by two different worlds: her true identity and her socially assigned gender role: *"I don't know what I*

am" (OHFTE, p. 211). According to Bandura, the struggle between being submissive and active shows her confusing situation. She has been culturally torn between two different worlds, whether she is acting as a boy to survive in the boys' world or to find out her true identity. She does not know how to navigate the boys' world and its governing rules, which are different from hers. She is uncertain how her actions will be perceived and how she will perceive herself: *"I am [Obayda] now in the weird place between two different worlds"* (OHFTE, p. 43). According to Fairclough socially and discursively interpretation, this quote reflects Obayda's emotional struggle between her looks and her feelings. It assures her sense of loss, particularly her true indent, routines and relation with her sisters: *"This bacha posh has put a big wall between us [...] the distance between us and my sisters widens"* (OHFTE, p.60-76). According to Bandura's self-efficacy components, this quotation reflects Obayda's uncertainty about her actions, what to say and how others will perceive her underscores the lack of belief in her ability to shape and control her destiny: *"I don't know how people will react to me. I'm not even sure how I'll react to me"* (OHFTE, p.18). Her lack of self-efficacy and discomfort highlights her struggle to navigate her new life and her inability to reconcile the societal limitations of girls' passivity. At this stage, her confusion about who she is and who she is supposed to be is entirely ambiguous. Furthermore, this could be considered the starting point of self-efficacy. In other words, the life of bacha posh has pushed her to understand her agency and capacity to shape her identity and future by changing the traditional limitations and being stronger and empowered: *"But then I realized I couldn't be a girl dressed in boy clothes. I had to be a boy wearing my clothes"* (OHFTE, p. 71) According to Bandura's theory, observing boys' actions and behaviour highlights Obayda's profound understanding of her ability to resist societal norms and be powered. This is shown when she starts imitating boys' actions: *"without thinking, I stick my leg out and trip him [...] I wait for him [Rahim] to stop laughing. When he doesn't, I kick his calf"* (OHFTE, p. 83-79). This spontaneous action reflects her feelings of confidence and belief in herself. As a boy, Obayda starts doing things that girls are not allowed to do, such as climbing trees, running, and playing ghurasi. According to Fairclough's theory, Obayda's words have been linguistically changed. She starts using language that echoes her feelings and the strength of her determination, such as *"making decisions for myself"*, *"defensively"*, *"no longer waiting"*, *"my heart beating faster"*, *"confident"*, *"could"*, *"run"* and so forth that mirror her growing belief in herself being a participant in the community and making decisions rather than being a passive individual: *"I walked differently now. More confident [...] I could run and climb trees"* (OHFTE, p. 72-3). At the textual level, the verb *"run"* has been used to affirm her identity, as this verb is restricted to boys' privileges. At the level of discursive and social practice, the phrase *"I walked differently now"* elucidates that once Obayda tastes the sense of freedom, she is no longer confined to the traditional limitations placed on her. She enjoys being a boy as she gains power and confidence: *"Being a bacha posh was the best thing could've happened to me"* (OHFTE, p. 243). This indicates the acceptance of her multifaceted identity. Six months ago, [Obayda's mother] made me [Obayda] into a bacha posh, but in that time, I've made myself into a boy. She [Her mother] won't have to worry about not having a son anymore. I [Obayda] can start doing the things my two-legged father used to do for us, like earning money or nailing a leg back onto a chair. All the things people say about our family not having a boy won't be true anymore (OHFTE, p.199) At the textual level, the declarative sentence *"All things people say about our family not having a boy won't be true"* indicates how discourse functions as a pressure on families who have no son which reinforces the practice of bacha posh. At the level of discursive and social practice, it illustrates the embedded patriarchal norms in Afghan culture where family honor is equated with boys' presence. To put it differently, girls and women can acquire empowerment and value by inhabiting boys' roles and functions which is socially assigned to them. According to Bandura's theory, the above extract *"Six months ago, made me into a bacha posh [...] our family not having a boy won't be true anymore"* demonstrates how Obayda moves from being passive to an active participant. Her resistance against societal norms leads to comprehending her capacity to make choices, i.e., approving her true identity. This could be a turning point towards her empowerment. Acting as a boy leads to the idea that being powerful and worthy comes from within, no matter if it is a boy or a girl: I don't need my sister telling me what to do [...] I was no longer waiting for someone else to tell me what I could or couldn't do. I was making decisions for myself [...] Neela is always ready for anything, I think as I watch her back. And she's strong enough that, if she really needs to, she could carry Alia or me. I think Neela would have been a great bacha posh [...] Alia runs up ahead of us. Her sandals kick up high behind her, and the hem of her skirt ruffles with her momentum. If she wants, she would be uncatchable- fast as any boy in our village (OHFTE, p. 185-254) According to the three components of Bandura's theory, the transformation from being passive, confused, and restricted into strong and self-aware girls indicates that one's self-efficacy shaped by observing and imitating a positive model. Bandura argues that self-efficacy

results from innate ability and observed and learned behaviours (p. 3). Rahim, the role model of Obayda, provides her with emotional reinforcement and encouragement to continue resisting societal norms and limitations. Rahim shows Obayda how to act like a real boy and be confident regardless of the expectations that have been given to her. Rahim has gained these privileges and freedom and passed them to Obayda: Stand tall. Stick your chin out like you're daring me to hit it. Set your feet apart. You've got boy parts, don't forget. Keep your palms open, and let your arms swing while you walk. If you hear something behind you, turn around and look for it. When you run, slap your whole foot on the ground, not just your toes. (OHFTE, p. 72) The above extract reinforces Bandura's idea of self-efficacy. Obayda starts adopting Rahim's behaviours, mirroring the confidence and empowerment she experiences. She starts behaving differently, using more confident body language, which indicating her self-efficacy growth: "Everything, I reply with confidence. I draw the word out and raise my eyebrows for effect" (OHFTE, p. 245). According to Fairclough's social explanation and interpretation, her ability to act and behave differently is not only an indication of a physical change but also a control over her future. Rahim's confidence and strength assist her in understanding that she has the power to change her destiny, shaping her true identity since the community believes that: "being a boy is not all in your pants. It's in your head" (OHFTE, p. 71) Obayda has finally realised that true identity is not determined by external acts but by internal beliefs. Her worth and strength are not determined by culture, but come from within: "I thought being a boy would make me strong. But maybe I've been strong all along" (OHFTE, p. 86). This quote simplifies the idea that Obayda's journey as a boy is about adapting boys' role and understanding her self-efficacy and inner strength. The empowerment and dependency that have been gained through her journey as a boy lead her to think about the affection that she could have for girls who have been subjugated. At the start, Obayda's role as a boy was for personal survival. Then, she realised she could help other girls to have freedom and self-confidence. At the stage of Bandura's modeling, the idea of being powered could be practically learned rather than being inherited. Accordingly, Obayda acts as a role model for other girls. She starts encouraging her sisters and friends to think about their potential. She demonstrates that they can take part in deciding their life and not being subjugated. Obayda inspires other girls to resist cultural limitations, have self-efficacy, and that their gender should neither define their worth nor their destinies. Women should believe in themselves to reimagine and shape their lives. Obayda states that: **The circle around me is buzzing with excitement. I'm trying not to gloat that I've made them all jealous with my experience, but how can I not, when I think about my adventures with Rahima, my games with Abdullah and Ashraf [Rahim's friends], the way I tricked the warlord's guards, and the crutch I made that got my father out of the house?** (OHFTE, p. 244) Obayda's memories of independence and empowerment contrast with the passive role that is culturally expected of girls. Her journey as a bacha posh proves that self-efficacy can be acquired through lived experiences and exposure to confident and empowered models like Rahim. It further shows that empowered and self-efficacy individuals can highly influence others. At the level of Fairclough's discursive and social practice, the phrase "circle around me" in the above quotation represents the focal point of curiosity of Obayda's peers, i.e., other girls who have not experienced the role of bacha posh as she has. The "buzzing with excitement" represents a sense of inspiration and reflects that she has become a symbol of possibility and agency. The words "adventures", "games", "tricked the warlord" reflects her growth of confidence and autonomy. These actions were boys' behaviours that she has embodied them fully. Furthermore, the above extracts prove Bandura's theory of self-efficacy- when individuals observing someone succeeding, they are more likely believing that success is possible for them too. Thus, the girls around Obayda are not just excited, they are inspired: "Don't look down," I [Obayda] coach. Keep your eyes in the direction you want to go and don't stop moving. Your back has to stay straight" (OHFTE, p. 249). She moved from being a receiver of self-efficacy and empowerment to a transmitter of them.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study of self-efficacy and empowerment in Hashimi's *One Half from the East* has shed light on the effectiveness of social interaction and lived experiences in shaping one's identity and confidence. The data analysis reveals that self-efficacy could be learned and developed through modeling strength and confident characters which in turn enhances girls' empowerment and resistance against the societal norms and limitations and being able to decide for their own future. Moreover, this study underscores the essential role of Fairclough's and Bandura's theory in shaping girls' empowerment and self-efficacy. On the linguistic level, discourse has a vital role in shaping individuals' identity and strength. For instance, at first Obayda uses simple and passive language and words, but as she imitates boys' behavior and actions, her language has been drastically changed as it becomes more self-assured and reflecting her sense of empowered. At the social level, Obayda's new identity

elucidates how Bandura's components could be applied to foster girls' and women's empowerment within patriarchal society. Thus, Obayda's character represents empowerment as a linguistic resistance against the patriarchal norms and as a psychological awakening of confidence and strength.

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هوامش البحث

¹ Nadia Hashimi, *One Half from the East*. (2016), 15, New York: Haper Colins. Subsequent references to this text are to this edition and will be cited by short title *OHFTE* and page number parenthetically.