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THE REPRESENTATION OF GENDER IN CHILDREN' FANTASY FICTION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STORY BOOKS

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ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on children's fantasy fictions to explore gender representations through selected primary school story books. The current research reveals gender ideology that how gender stereotypes are represented through linguistic and semiotic means. Children's story books shape gender ideology. School children read stories in which characters are portrayed and reinforce stereotypical perceptions. Stories are constructed in cultural context. Children are the products of this particular cultural context and they tend to behave according to these gendered ideologies that are embedded in cultural discourse. Fantasy fictions are historical documents. The current study being qualitative in nature focuses on story books to examine gender representations. The study considers fifteen story books from children's fantasy fiction. The data has been selected through the technique of purposive sampling. For the Critical Discourse Analysis of stories, qualitative approach has been adopted and the research applies the frameworks of Fairclough (1995), Barthes (1974) and Kruger (2000) for critical and semi logical analysis. The findings reveal that 21st Century children fantasy fiction highlight phenomenon of gender representations. It has been observed that men are powerful in patriarchal societies. They are free to exercise their free will in every situation just because they have power whereas women are considered important for domestic purposes. But sometimes gender roles are reversed as men have been shown dependent on women and women

have been portrayed as witches in some stories. The study also reveals role of traditions and customs deciding women fates. The study enriches knowledge on the phenomenon of gender representations through the analysis of story books and invokes future researchers to carry out further academic research on gender representations in other pedagogical sources like novels, dramas, morning shows, newspapers, magazines and talk shows etc.

INTRODUCTION

The present study focuses on children's fantasy fictions to explore gender representations through selected primary school story books. The current research reveals gender ideology that how gender stereotypes are represented through linguistic and semiotic means. Children's story books shape gender ideology. School children read stories in which characters are portrayed and reinforce stereotypical perceptions. Stories are constructed in cultural context. Children are the products of this particular cultural context and they tend to behave according to these gendered ideologies that are embedded in cultural discourse. Fantasy fictions are historical documents. They evolve over time according to the changing values of society. Fairy tales are cultural artifacts. Story books, at primary level in schools, persuade young children to behave in certain ways.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The current study focuses on critical discourse analysis of selected story books to portray gender representations. The present research considers the specific uses of linguistic items used in the discourses of story books to access and interpret the ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings. The current study also considers gender representations by various ideological constructions presented through story books' language. The research proves beneficial to enhance awareness about the significant use of linguistic items in children fantasy fiction i.e. story books. According to Pillay (2008), female characters are still portrayed as submissive human beings in children fantasy fiction. Gender stereotypes are practiced and highlight traditional vs. modern roles. The present research critically analyzes the story books' discourses to analyze gender representations through children fantasy fiction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1.   To analyze linguistic and semiotic discourse to analyze representation of gender stereotypes.
2.   To analyze males and females characters are represented.
3.   To highlight the projected portrayal of significant characters with special reference to language gender and ideology.
4.   To compare and contrast the gender representation in the stories.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research questions of this study are posed as follows.

Q.1:   How gender stereotypes are propagated linguistically and semantically in childrens' fantasy books taught at primary level in Army Public School Multan in 2019?

Q.2:   What are the ways in which gender portrayed in picture story books written for children at primary level?

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study analyzes gender representation in children's fantasy fiction through the discourses of selected primary school story books. This research analyzes story books' verbal and visual discourse qualitatively to uncover the constructed gender ideologies, exhibiting female subjugation under patriarchy and power relations, through the choices of specific linguistic items. For analyzing gender representations, the critical discourse analysis of verbal discourses of story books reveals men as superior and women as inferior human beings. The researcher interprets gender representation through embedded layers of story books' language and analyzes the organizational linguistic and semiotic settings of story books. The current study highlights the following thematic categories to highlight gender representations that are as follows:

1.   Reversed Gender Roles in Hansel and Gretel
2.   Animals called by Gender Pronouns
3.   Female Subjugation and Domestication
4.   Concept of Patriarchy
5.   Male as Powerful and Dominant
6.   The Element of Materialism in both genders
7.   Women portrayed as witches

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Cuthew (1998), Children's literature regarding Fantasy Fiction emerged in the late eighteenth century but reached its peak point in 19th Century. Fantasy Fictions for children were designed on moralistic grounds and children's story books proved as a valuable source.

Hunt (1999) described children's fantasy fictions as an important genre of literature to educate children in a specific context. Different types of pictures and story books influence the children's development of understanding gender roles and socialization. Crew (2002) defined the term 'Fantasy' in literature as a way to describe fictions that are usually of novel's length but entail supernatural and imaginative elements. He further described the two sub-genres of fantasy fictions: Low Fantasy and High Fantasy. In 'Low Fantasy Fiction', Fake things happen in real world and the irrational elements work rationally while in 'High Fantasy Fiction,' reality is exposed through different literary devices such as symbols, images etc.

Linda (2004) studied Children's story books and declared them as a great source of entertainment. These story books also show gender ideology and represent cultural norms and values of society. Thus gender stereotypes are also transferred to children by story writers to make them understand of their culture, ideology and gender stereotypical ideas etc.

Jabeen and Mehmood (2014) showed in their research that children's literature is a great learning tool but it also shapes minds and imprints gender identities. Children read story books and understand that everyone has gender specific

roles. In traditional children's stories, the distinctive stereotypical characters have been shaped. Women are portrayed as weak, delicate princesses who suffer from an obstacle whereas men are shown as princes with strong body features who fight battles to rescue their princesses. Thus gender representation through fantasy fiction unconsciously prepares children to adopt stereotypical gendered ideology of behaving like male or female members of society. Fantasy Fictions develop children's personalities. Socializing of children is done in this way.

According to Ashton (1983), gender Ideological interpretations are determined through reading of stories. Ideologies are shaped by social practices in specific context. In this way, masculine and feminine roles operate according to shared beliefs of society. The linguistic Items used in children's fantasy fiction highlight gender stereotypical ideologies which influence the perceptions of school children. The Children's story books have male and female characters that are associated specific gender roles to perform and thus change children's behavior in the society.

Stephen (1992) asserted that both linguistic and ideological representations are interrelated. The process of narrating stories highlights gender representations. So, literature shapes the Ideology and beliefs of its readers. Van Dijk (1993) defined Ideology as shared beliefs associated with different traits such as identity, aims, objectives and Interests etc. Gender Ideology shows a framework that includes opposite terminology such as good vs. bad, real vs. fake and beautiful vs. ugly. These terms appear in the text of story books and thus show significant effect on children's behavior. The story books show great impact on children's conduct inside and outside of homes in different settings.

Khursheed et al. (2004) considered female portrayal in story books at the secondary level that are being taught in Pakistani schools. This study expected distinct behaviors from male and female characters in their social settings such as education, career etc. The researcher divided the sample study into four categories and the main focus was to examine stories, plays, essays and bibliographies from textbooks excluding poems. They found that female characters are less portrayed than male characters and women have less regard when contrasted with men in different social setups. In addition, they found that in English medium story books, females are frequently highlighted as domestic ladies and their circle of life is restricted to their homes. This result shows that even now a day, especially in textbooks of schools, women are treated as inferior creatures and male characters have prestigious status. Fairytales carry certain ideologies and influencing messages for children.

RESEARCH GAP AND NOVELTY
All the writings described above have focused on phenomenon of gender representations whereas, the present study is not similar to all of the above as it employs both linguistic and semiotic models of analyses to investigate how gender is portrayed in children's fantasy fiction i.e., story books. For this reason, linguistic and semiotic investigations underlie the model of Fairclough (1995) with Barthes' SDA (1974) and Kruger's (2000) Focus Group Discussion (FGD) by concentrating on gender portrayal in primary school story books.

DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter of research study, the researcher has focused on the selected data i.e. Children's Fantasy Fictions: fifteen story books to analyze phenomenon of gender representations. The selected fifteen story books most significantly suit the target objectives of this research study. The story books have been analyzed under the frameworks of Fairclough (1995), Barthes (1974) & Kruger (2000). There are lots of story books worth discussing as they are full of ideological content, but the researcher has only selected fifteen story books.

Introduction of Story The Three Little Pigs

The Three Little Pigs is a great children story book. It has been composed by Steve Smallman. The story introduces three little pigs who live with their mother but with the passage of time, they grow up and one day, their mother asks them to move from home to earn and build their own houses for comfortable life. She also advises them to protect themselves from wolf so that he might not eat them. The three little pigs start off their journey to build their houses. They saw a man carrying straws so the first little pig asked him to give some straw so that he might be able to build his own house. The man gave him straws and he constructed his house and became happy because wolf now will not be able to eat him. The remaining two little pigs started their journey. They saw a man carrying some sticks. The second little pig requested him for some sticks to build his house. The man gave him and he constructed his house to save his life from wolf. The third little pig now started his journey alone and soon he saw a man carrying bricks. He requested him for some bricks and was given. He built his house of bricks and stayed happily there.

 One day, a wolf went to house of straw and asked little pig to let him in the house. Pig didn't allow him to come in so he huffed and puffed his house. He ran from the place and went to the second pig's house and informed him about the wolf. The wolf soon reached to the second little pig's house and uttered the same wording. Second pig also rejected his request so he huffed and puffed his house too. Now both pigs ran towards the home of third little pig and asked him the whole situation. The wolf reached and tried to convince the third little pig to let him in but failed. Then he huffed and puffed but the house of bricks didn't break then he pretended to be happy and tempted him towards tasty turnips, apples and swings. The three little pigs enjoyed by themselves and wolf became furious. The little pigs prepared a huge pot of boiling water. The wolf clambered down the chimney and fell into the boiling water and died. The three little pigs lived happily.

Thematic Analysis of Story The Three Little Pigs

The storybook highlights an important theme regarding gender representations that is as follows:

Animals Called By Gender Pronouns

The Three Little Pigs story shows an important theme of gender lexicalization. The story includes animal characters that have been represented by gender pronouns. The head of pigs family is mother who has been represented by pronoun 'she' to highlight motherhood. Animals such as pigs and wolf have been called by pronoun 'he' to show their masculine traits. As the story indicates:

"Little pig, little pig, let me come in," he cried. (Smallman, 2019, p.8)

Through wolf and pigs, the story declares male members of society as powerful and strong. As the wolf says in story:
"Then I'll huff and puff and I'll blow your house down!" (Smallman, 2019, p.8)

Critical Analysis of The Three Little Pigs

For critical discourse analysis of story, Fairclough's three-dimensional models have been adopted that shows the following three dimensions:

Textual Analysis - Description of Text

The text of story shows narration in past tense. (e.g "once upon a time, there were three little pigs who lived with their mother." etc). (Smallman, 2019, p.7) The present tense highlights actions of wolf and little pigs through declarative sentence structures (e.g.; "I want to build a house for myself." etc). (Smallman, 2019, p.8) The following lexical items have been highlighted to focus on phenomenon of gender representations:

Generic Pronouns	Verbs
He	Build
She	Catch
I	Eat

Interpretation (Discourse Practice)

The story of little pigs' highlights gender representations as the wolf has been shown as strong and clever male character and does efforts to eat three little pigs but the pigs are also clever enough to save their lives from his cunning behaviors.

Explanation (Social Practice)

Children's fantasy fictions represent gender differences such as the selected storybook has emphasized the masculine gender through actions. The power circulates between wolf and pigs that show only male characters can exercise it. They have been shown as independent and active. This behavior inculcates the

idea in male children that they should be strong and independent because they only can exercise power in society.

Semiological Discourse Analysis of The Three Little Pigs

For semiological discourse analysis of story, Barthes's model has been applied that shows the following three dimensions:

Linguistic Level

This is the first level of semiological discourse analysis that focuses on semiotic texts. As the following picture tells us about three little pigs who build their separate homes to live happily and independently. There has been shown no female character only the male gender has been given importance.

The picture shows struggle of three bears to build their separate homes and wolf's appearance to eat all of them. The picture highlights male gender.

Iconic Level

The second level of semiological discourse analysis focuses on the role of sign system in society. The following picture from story indicates the gender representations. The picture of wolf shows strong character that is blowing hard to exercise his powers in society. He has been shown as strong, active and powerful.

The picture shows wolf as powerful character who wants to exercise his power to eat bears. The picture highlights power in hands of male gender.

Level of Signification

The third level of Barthes's model shows sign in terms of signifier and signified. As the following pictures indicates:

The picture highlights wolf's power to destroy bear's house.

| The picture shows power play between wolf and bears. Bears prove themselves more powerful and ultimately succeeds in killing wolf. | |

In the pictures, level of signification shows the role of signifier and signified. The signifiers are wolf and pigs and signified highlights power. Power play exercises between masculine genders.

Signifier	Signified
Wolf	Powerful
Pig	Powerless

Signifier	Signified
Pig	Powerful
Wolf	Powerless

Focused Group Discussions

For the focused group discussions about this story, Kruger (2000) model has been applied. The researcher introduced story between two groups for discussions and found the following results:

Linguist Group	Non-Linguist Group
Words: Gender differences, power, Power, Politics, Motherhood	**Words:** Male Characters, Clever, Independent, Mother as domestic lady.
Themes: Animals called by gender pronouns Male as superior and independent	**Themes:** Male as clever and intelligent characters Female characters show domesticity

The focused group discussion proved effective as the responses from two groups dominated the idea of gender representations.

Introduction of Story Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Goldilocks and the three Bears is a great storybook for children and it has been illustrated by Chris Russell. The story introduces a girl named 'Goldilocks' just because of her golden hairs and a family of bears comprising Father Bear, Mother Bear and Baby Bear. The story opens with the Bear family discussions about porridge and walk. Mother Bear has prepared porridge for eating but it is too hot and they all decide to go for a morning walk. When they disappear from

their home, then Goldilocks enters into their house as she is a naughty girl. She eats baby bear's porridge and finishes it then she sits on chairs but likes baby bear's chair too much but ultimately breaks it. Then she goes to bedroom and sleeps on baby bear's bed. When three bears return to their home then they get surprised by the situation of porridge and chair. They come to know the reality when they enter into bedroom and see a girl sleeping on baby bear's bed. Through their voices, the girl suddenly wakes up and runs from their house.

Thematic Analysis of Story Goldilocks and the Three Bears

The storybook highlights an important theme regarding gender representations that is as follows:

Animals Called By Gender Pronouns

Goldilocks and the Three Bears story shows an important theme that portrays gender representations. The story determines female gender through the characters of a girl known as 'Goldilocks' and 'Mother Bear.' The story shows family structure as animals have been assigned different roles such as mother, father and child. As the following line indicates:

"There was great big Father Bear, and medium-sized Mother Bear, and little tiny Baby Bear." (Russel, 2019, p.16)

Thus, animals have been called by gender pronouns such as 'he' and 'she.' The text shows: "She was called Goldilocks because she had long, golden hairs." (Russell, 2019, p.16)

Critical Analysis of Goldilocks and the Three Bears

For critical discourse analysis of story, Fairclough's three-dimensional models have been adopted that shows the following three dimensions:

Textual Analysis - Description of Text

The text of story shows narration (e.g.; "Once upon a time, there were three bears who lived in a little house right in the middle of the forest." etc). (Russell, 2019, p.15) The present tense highlights actions of girl known as 'Goldilocks' and Bear family through declarations (e.g; "it was just right, so she ate every spoonful!" etc). (Russell, 2019, p.17) The following lexical items highlight gender representations:

Generic Pronouns	Verbs
They	Walk
She	Eat
I	Lie

Interpretation (Discourse Practice)

The story *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* highlights gender representations as the Father Bear has been shown as strong and aggressive male character that shows his anger to Goldilocks as a result, she runs from his house. The story introduces family structure represented through triangle.

Father Child Mother
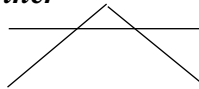
Explanation (Social Practice)

Children's fantasy fictions portray gender representations such as the selected storybook has emphasized the masculine gender through power relations. Father Bear has been shown as aggressive character whose burning eyes compelled Goldilocks to run from his house. This behavior strengthens the idea in children that female characters such as Mother Bear maintains households and male members maintain law and order inside and outside of homes.

Semiological Discourse Analysis of Goldilocks and the Three Bears

For semiological discourse analysis of story, Barthes (1974)'s model has been applied that shows the following three dimensions:

Linguistic Level

The first level of semiological discourse analysis focuses on semiotic texts in the given storybook. The following image shows family of bears comprising of mother, father and one child. The picture shows that mother prepares food for family. So the picture shows gender differences as female member of family is busy in domestic work and male members are ready to eat food. This image shows that females are destined to be at home for domestic work and male members consider it their rights.

| The image indicates family system consisting of father bear, mother bear and baby bear. | |

Iconic Level

This is the second level of semiological discourse analysis. It focuses on sign system, as the story indicates the phenomenon of gender representations. The following picture shows male as aggressive character who wants to make Goldilocks fearful enough to leave his home. The picture shows female as fearful gender and male as strong and powerful.

| The picture shows that father bear is very angry due to girl's presence at his home. This shows rage of male gender over female gender. | |

Level of Signification

The third level shows sign system in terms of signifier and signified.

The picture shows running girl that indicates power of father bear that made this girl running from his home.	

The picture shows the role of signifier and signified. The signifiers Bear family members and Goldilocks and signified highlights power play between male and female gender.

Signifier	Signified
Father Bear	Power
Goldilocks	Powerless

Focused Group Discussions

For the focused group discussions about *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, Kruger (2000) model has been applied. The researcher introduced story between two groups for discussions and found the following results:

The focused group discussion proved effective as the responses from two

Linguist Group	Non-Linguist Group
Words: Gender representations, male as strong, female as weak, Power, Politics, Aggressive, Motherhood	**Words:** Male Characters as powerful, Angry mood, Mother as domestic lady.
Themes: Animals called by gender pronouns Female subjugation	**Themes:** Male as powerful and aggressive characters Female characters show domesticity

groups' highlighted idea of gender representations.

Introduction of Story Thumbelina

Thumbelina is one of the best story books for children. It has been illustrated by Petula Stone. The story introduces a beautiful, tiny girl named 'Thumbelina.' She is called Thumbelina just because of her very small size. She belongs to flower family. The story opens with an introduction of kind-hearted woman who had no children. She wished of a child that was fulfilled by a wise lady who gave her a plant having beautiful flowers. Soon tiny girl emerged from yellow flower and lady kept her as her own daughter at home. The tiny girl was named

Thumbelina because her size was small than the lady's thumbed. One day, a big toad listened Thumbelina's singing voice and came through window into the home. She carried tiny girl to stream to make her marry with her son. Thumbelina got worried and tried to escape from toad's living place. She was rescued by butterflies that brought her to their home but as the winter season appeared all butterflies disappeared and Thumbelina was left alone. One day, she met a field mouse and asked him for help. Mouse brought her to his home and gave something to eat but he warned her that she cannot stay anymore and she has to marry mole for saving her life. Thumbelina went underground to live with mole but saw a weak swallow that was near to die. Thumbelina looked after him and he got recovered and flew away but she was very sad as she was compelled to marry mole to survive in cold weather. But as the summer season ended, she saw swallow coming towards him to save her life and she went to warm land with him. There she met with flower people and ultimately found her land. She married a beautiful prince and lived happily.

Thematic Analysis of Story Thumbelina

The current storybook highlights important themes regarding gender representations that are as follows:

Animals Called By Gender Pronouns

The story portrays the phenomenon of gender representations through the theme of animals called by gender pronouns. The present story includes female characters such as of lady and tiny girl but also determines female gender through the characters of female big toad and butterflies. The story highlights masculine gender through animal characters such as mouse, mole and swallow. As the following line indicates female gender:

"The toad left the tiny girl all alone on a lily pad and went off to find her son." (Stone, 2019, p.21)

Animals have been called by gender pronouns. As the text shows animals such as mouse and mole called by gender pronoun 'he':

"He has a much bigger house than mine. And he will take care of you next winter." (Stone, 2019, p.22)

Concept of Patriarchy

The story shows patriarchal society where women cannot survive without men. Thumbelina is a little girl who wants to enjoy life but she is compelled to suffer from patriarchal pressures. The story shows masculine animal characters such as field mouse and mole who want to trap her for achieving their own objectives. As the field mouse says to her:

"He has a much bigger house than mine. And he will take care of you next winter." (Stone, 2019, p.22)

Critical Analysis of Thumbelina

Fairclough's three-dimensional models have been applied to do critical discourse analysis of the story. It shows the following three dimensions:

Textual Analysis - Description of Text

The text of story shows narration in past tense (e.g.; "Once upon a time there was a woman who longed to have a little girl of her own to love and care for." etc.). (Stone, 2019, p.19) The present tense highlights actions of Thumbelina and animal characters through declarations (e.g.; "She sang songs in her soft voice as she played on the kitchen table." etc.). (Stone, 2019, p.20) The following lexical items highlight gender representations:

Nouns	Verbs
Thumbelina	Escape
Toad	Keep
Mole	Escape

Interpretation (Discourse Practice)

The story *Thumbelina* highlights gender representations as the tiny girl wants to escape from male dominant society where all men want to use her for their own purposes. The big toad wants to marry her son with Thumbelina. The mouse keeps her at his home but asks her to marry his friend mole for surviving in world. Some female animal characters have been portrayed in positive manner such as fish feel sorry for trapped Thumbelina whereas butterflies help her to run from trickery of toad.

Explanation (Social Practice)

Children's fantasy fictions include story books which highlight gender representations through different characters. The selected storybook has emphasized the masculine gender as the dominant gender who wants to exercise power over tiny girl Thumbelina. No one is ready to help Thumbelina without any purpose. This difference in behaviors strengthens the idea in children that female characters such as Thumbelina are powerless characters who are considered fit for domestic work. Male members want to exercise power over female members. Thumbelina is tired of such patriarchal pressures and she therefore wants to escape from such terrible circumstances and ultimately succeeds in her efforts.

Semiological Discourse Analysis of Thumbelina

For semiological discourse analysis of story, Barthes (1974)'s model has been applied that includes the following three dimensions:

Linguistic Level

The first level of semiological discourse analysis focuses on semiotic texts that are present in the given storybook. The following picture has been taken from Thumbelina storybook where a kind hearted woman has been shown who becomes happy when she sees Thumbelina. Through this, gender representation has been highlighted and female gender has been depicted as polite and noble person. So, a little family exists consisting of a good woman and tiny girl Thumbelina. It is a happy family as can be depicted through the following picture:

The image shows tiny eautiful girl named Thumbelina emerging from flower.

Iconic Level

The second level of semiological discourse analysis focuses on sign system and highlights gender representations. As the story indicates the phenomenon of gender representations by portraying male gender as powerful and female gender as submissive beings. The following picture portrays men as dominant characters who try their best to make use of Thumbelina for their own purposes. Thumbelina wants residence but no one is there to help her instead they want to achieve their goals through her presence such as big toad wants to marry her son with her. The following picture shows this condition:

The picture shows worried Thumbelina who has been trapped by powerful male gender who want to use her for their own purposes.

Level of Signification

The third level of Barthes's model includes level of signification that includes signifier and signified.

The picture shows male as powerful gender as Thumbelina begs for residence but mouse tells her terms and conditions.

The picture shows the role of signifier and signified and highlights power relations through interaction of fearful Thumbelina and Powerful field mouse. Thumbelina is a passive signifier who signifies fear, passive conditions and no

existence on earth without support of men. Field mouse and mole signify powerful images of authority and independent nature.

Signifier	Signified
Girl	Fear
Mouse	Power

Focused Group Discussions

The focused group discussion proved effective as the responses from two groups highlighted different ideas regarding gender representations:

Linguist Group	Non-Linguist Group
Words: Gender representations, male as powerful and dominant, female as weak, submissive beings, Power, Escapism, Slavery, Hegemonic behaviors, Aggression.	**Words:** Male Characters are powerful, Angry mood, possessive nature of men, dominant role of male gender
Themes: Animals called by gender pronouns Female subjugation Role of Patriarchy	**Themes:** Male as powerful characters Female characters dependency over men.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS
This section describes findings of present research study to make conclusions more comprehensible and effective.

Pakistan as a patriarchal society highlight gender differences which are practiced both inside and outside of homes. Men are treated as superior, active, independent and dominant characters whereas women are considered inferior, passive and dependent characters. Women are often subjugated and marginalized in different social setups. Children's fantasy fictions portray both men and women either as subjugated beings or bold characters. The present study critically analyzes children story books and reveals important considerations about gender representations. The story books include specific linguistic items that highlight the phenomenon of gender representations. Through story books' discourses, it has been observed that men are portrayed as saviors.

They are active and independent whereas women are portrayed as weak, passive and submissive human beings. They highlight domesticity. Women are considered to be ready to cope with every difficult situation and in this manner they are asked to maintain family honor, reputation and blood relationships.

They never lose courage and are always active to compromise or sacrifice in hard circumstances which show that they are not passive characters. The present study acknowledges women strength and appreciates them as they are strong enough to compromise in different circumstances with firm determination in God. So reversed gender roles have been highlighted through gender representations. A gender stereotype is a summed up view or bias about certain traits of both male and female associated by people in patriarchal societies. Gender stereotypes are negative in their nature when they confine men and women capabilities by adversely affecting their lives. Destructive generalizations about gender stereotypes reveal negativity such as women are silly or women are nurturing. The present study focuses on gender representations through extensive study of story books' discourses. To carry out effective research study, language items have been analyzed through linguistic and semiotic means to explore gender representations. The present study includes critical analysis of fifteen story books. All the fifteen stories exhibit linguistic and semantic features that show representations of both men and women. These linguistic features are as follows:

Use of Gender Specific Pronouns

A pronoun is defined as a word used instead of a noun. Pronouns have various kinds. The present research study focuses on 'Personal Pronouns.' The selected stories include gender specific pronouns such as 'he', 'she', 'you', 'I' etc. In the analysis of stories, it has been observed that men mostly talk in pronouns 'I, me, mine' whereas women talk in 'we, us, our' etc.

First Person Pronoun	Second Person Pronoun	Third Person Pronoun
I	You	He, his, him, himself
Me	Your	She, her, herself
My	Yourself	It, its etc.

Use of Verbs

Verbs denote actions and are important parts of speech that describe actions of both men and women in patriarchal societies. The present study analyzes different types of verbs that highlight mostly independent actions of men in order to oppress women. Through the study of verbs used in stories, men and women lives have been analyzed that how they treat one another in patriarchal societies. Women have been seen mostly as domestic ladies, passive and dependent. Verbs reveal identity of both men and women. For example, the following verbs have been used in stories:

Verbs
Lived, left, make, decided, heard, jumped, wept, cried, laughed, walked, found, roared, run, like, asked, go, fell, came, eat, put, believe, gave, die etc.

Use of Declarative Sentences

Declarative sentences are important sentences in English language. These are also termed as assertive sentences. These sentences assert common facts. Through the frameworks of Fairclough (1989), Barthes (1974) and Kruger (2000), the present study explores declarative sentence structures that describe the idea of gender representations. Each story's discourse has been structured with declarative sentences that show men and women representation. Here declarative sentences from one story have been mentioned which beautifully throws light on the phenomenon of gender representations:

Declarative Sentences
The old woman made a gingerbread man.
The gingerbread man jumped out and ran.
Finally, they reached the other side of river.

Reversed Gender Roles

The current study fundamentally interprets various characters and feature linguistic and semiotic changes with the passage of time. The selected children story books has demonstrated the portrayal of strong vs. weak, elite vs poor, oppressors vs. abused and oppressed so on. Through discourse structures, individuals practice power and control on each other. Through the critical analysis of selected stories, it has been observed that in many conditions, men are incredible in patriarchal social setups. They exercise power on subjugated women. Men are allowed to practice their power on powerless women. They avail freedom in different circumstances just because they are active and independent human beings. They are powerful while women are viewed as domestic ladies. In some situations, men are demonstrated as saviors whereas women are depicted as witches. The close study of stories reveals role of traditions and customs deciding women fates. It has been observed that men are free to make decisions about their lives. They have no compulsion to follow strict family customs. It is the woman who is sacrificed on behalf of customs and strict family traditions.

Semiological Representation of Gender

The present research has also focused on the semiotic texts that highlight gender representations. The examples from one story are as follows:

The following picture tells us about three little pigs who build their separate homes to live happily and independently. There has been shown no female character only the male gender has been given importance.

The following picture from story indicates the gender representations. The picture of wolf shows strong character that is blowing hard to exercise his powers in society. He has been shown as strong, active and powerful.

The following pictures indicate level of signification that shows the role of signifier and signified. The signifiers are wolf and pigs and signified highlights power. Power play exercises between masculine genders.

Signifier	Signified	Signifier	Signified
Wolf	Powerful	Pig	Powerful
Pig	Powerless	Wolf	Powerless

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