Exploring Discourse Markers while Analyzing Gender Discrimination in Pakistani Drama Serials: A Corpus-Based Study

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Abstract

This research examines gender-related language patterns and discourse markers in Pakistani drama serials, focusing on the lexical choices made by male and female authors. Drawing on Lakoff's model, we conduct qualitative content analysis on the selected episodes to uncover gender dynamics and power imbalances. Results show that men use words like "absolutely", "decide", "go", "listen", and "stop" along with self-referential pronouns "I" and "he" more frequently. Women employ words like "doubt", "maybe", "very", "excuse me", "wonder", "we", and "might", as well as pronouns "she", and "we" more often. These findings reveal gender stereotypes in Pakistani drama serials, underscoring the need for more diverse and inclusive narratives challenging traditional roles. This research impacts the broader media landscape, emphasizing media's role in shaping societal perceptions and the importance of promoting gender equality in representations. Moreover, by analyzing the corpus of Pakistani drama serials authored by both genders, our methodology employs qualitative content analysis, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive media environment by dissecting gender-related language patterns and discourse markers in these serials.

Keywords: discourse markers; gender discrimination; gender-related language patterns; Pakistani drama serials

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Introduction

The discussion of gender, differentiating between gender identity and biological sex, has gained prominence in both academic discourse and popular discussions since the 1950s. The work for our understanding of gender is based on Money's (1985) seminal work wherein gender is discussed as the linguistic and behavioural manifestations employed by individuals to show their affiliation with the social constructs of masculinity or femininity. This concept of gender has evolved significantly over the years after transitioning from essentialism which posits that gender is primarily a classification based on biological sex, to social constructionism which further asserts that gender is complex shaped by the interplay of social and cultural discourses. This complexity of the gender concept has led to extensive debates regarding its classification as either a biological or a social construct.

Discourse, as defined by Olshtain and Celce-Murcia (2005), is a substantially meaningful unit conveying complete thoughts and messages through words. It serves as a critical bridge between language and reality, actively shaping, creating, and reflecting our understanding of the world. Discourse analysis is a versatile tool used to examine oral, written, and sign language, encompassing a wide range of analytical approaches (Fairclough, Mulderrig, & Wodak, 2011). This analytical method goes beyond mere textual analysis to unveil the socio-psychological qualities of individuals.

The application of discourse analysis spans various professions, including education, psychology, sociology, linguistics, and notably, social work. By scrutinizing the empirical evidence for persistent gender disparities across diverse text types and contexts, we can begin to explore potential causal relationships between social or biological gender and our tendency to utilize the discourse markers.

To delve into gender-related language and conversation, this article adopts Lakoff's model, as outlined by Cameron (1997). Lakoff's model sheds light on how language reinforces gendered stereotypes and societal norms. It illustrates how gender expectations influence language usage, encompassing speaking styles, vocabulary choices, and discourse patterns found within the drama serials. These linguistic nuances, in turn, have a profound impact on communication dynamics and social interactions.

Literature Review

Chapetón Castro's (2009) study investigates the functions of discourse markers in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom interactions, aiming to understand their communicative functions and how they affect discourse organization and comprehension. This involves examining how EFL students and teachers employ these markers during the classroom interactions. Data collection includes audio and video recordings of teacher-student and student-student interactions, which are later transcribed and qualitatively analyzed. The study highlights the significance of discourse markers in fostering coherence and interactive communication in the EFL classroom, informing language teaching practices and teacher training. Limitations include potential context-specific results and subjectivity in marker recognition. This research enhances our understanding of effective communication techniques in the EFL classroom.

Saki's (2009) study explores how gender is depicted in an American film screenplay, aiming to investigate underlying beliefs and discourses related to gender, as well as the construction of gender identities, roles, and relationships within the screenplay. The methodology involves qualitative examination of the screenplay, focusing on language use, character outlines, and narrative elements influencing gender portrayal. The analysis follows a framework for critical discourse analysis, emphasizing language, power relations, and social contexts within the screenplay. Limitations include the single screenplay focus, potential interpretation subjectivity, and limitation to the written representation. Implications include advancing our understanding

of gender representation in the American film and guiding scriptwriting for more inclusive portrayals.

Decker's (2010) study conducts a content analysis of gender in Pixar's films, examining movie storylines, characters, and themes for gender biases, stereotypes, and progressive depictions. The approach involves analyzing a sample of Pixar Animation Studios' feature-length films, including storylines, characters, language, and narrative arcs. Qualitative analysis identifies gender portrayal patterns, themes, and variations. Feminist cinema theory and gender studies literature informs the analysis. Limitations include the film selection, exclusive focus on Pixar animation studios, and subjective content assessment. The study sheds light on how gender is portrayed in animated films, contributing to discussions about media influence on gender socialization.

Vanda and Péter (2011) explored gender differences in the use of the discourse markers "you know" and "I mean". It aims to examine gender disparities in the frequency, functions, and practical effects of these markers. Data collection involves quantitative and qualitative analysis of conversational data, revealing gendered communication patterns and the expression of social dynamics through discourse indicators. Cultural and social factors may influence the use of the said markers. The findings have implications for gendered communication comprehension, language instruction, and collaboration.

Ottosson and Cheng's (2012) study investigates gender roles in "Sex and the City" movies using discourse analysis. The research examines gender production and representation in the film series through characters, language, and concepts. Data collection includes dialogue transcriptions and visual cues from the series. Qualitative discourse analysis uncovers power relations, gender ideologies, and discursive strategies. Feminist media, gender, and cultural studies inform the analysis. Limitations include focus on a single media franchise and discourse interpretation subjectivity. The study enhances our understanding of gender representation in the media and sparks discussions about media's impact on gender norms.

Yeganeh and Ghoreyshi's(2015) study explores gender differences in the use of discourse markers in Iranian academic research articles. It investigates potential variations across genders in the utilization of discourse markers, specifically focusing on frequency, type, and purpose. Data collection involves creating a corpus of academic research articles from Iranian universities, followed by quantitative and qualitative analyses. The findings contribute to gender and language research, inform language teaching practices, and raise awareness of gender inequalities in academic writing.

In another study (Yeganeh & Ghoreyshi, 2015) a corpus-based comparative analysis contrasts gender description of discourse markers in Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" with Paulo Coelho's "The Alchemist." The study aims to identify the linguistic strategies employed by the authors to depict male and female characters. It involves rigorous identification and categorization of discourse markers within the complete texts of both novels. Quantitative and qualitative techniques are employed to study their usage. The study provides insights into authors' perspectives on gender and the linguistic techniques used to portray gender in literature, with implications for gender and language studies in literature and a deeper understanding of the social context and effects of gender discourse in these books.

The study by Albesher, Farid and Raja (2017) examined how Saudi EFL teachers utilize discourse markers to assist adult learners improve their writing. The examination of the efficacy of discourse markers in enhancing the writing proficiencies of adult learners in Saudi Arabia is being undertaken by EFL instructors. Surveys and interviews are used to gather EFL instructors' perspectives on discourse markers in writing instruction. A socio-constructivist paradigm focuses on how instructors, students, and the socio-cultural context influence perceptions and instructional practices. Themes, patterns, and instructor impressions are identified via thematic analysis. Limitations include teachers' subjectivity and outcomes transferability. This study

illuminates effective discourse marker education in writing instruction for EFL methodology and teacher training in order to improve Saudi EFL adult learners' writing.

Nasir (2017) examined gender in Pakistani TV advertising to evaluate the extent to which these commercials interrogate or endorse gender stereotypes, one must ascertain whether they undermine or perpetuate established gender norms. A qualitative content research of a sample of Pakistani TV advertising focuses on male and female characters, their roles, and the messages conveyed via their interactions and tales. A social constructivist model that considers socio-cultural factors and media influence on gender identity leads the investigation. TV ads are transcribed and recorded. Limitations include sample size and advertisement interpretation subjectivity. This study promotes gender equality and empowerment by raising awareness of how advertising affects gender perceptions, dispelling harmful stereotypes, and advocates for more diverse and inclusive Pakistani TV commercials.

Pasaribu (2017) examined how men and women write academic essays. This research investigates how gender influences academic writing's textual discourse indicators. The system collects scholarly publications by male and female students from a given educational institution. A quantitative and qualitative comparison is employed to identify the textual discourse markers and their usage trends. The sociolinguistic model is used to analyze socio-cultural factors that impact gendered language. Data is taken from academic writings and analyzed manually as well as automatically. The sample size, marker identification subjectivity, and focus on textual discourse markers are limitations. This work illuminates gender-specific language usage patterns in academic writing, improves writing pedagogy, and promotes gender equality in learning environments.

The study of Purwadina and Huda (2017) investigates the diversity and application to the utilization of discourse markers within the context of written assignments of college sophomores. This study seeks to examine the variety and frequency of discourse markers in the writing of college students. As part of the process, a corpus of written assignments from a group of college sophomores in various subjects is compiled. A qualitative analysis is conducted to identify the discourse markers used, classify them according to their functions, and search for any patterns or shifts in their usage. The study also employs a descriptive model to summarize the discourse indicators found in the corpus and their distribution. The written assignments serve as the data that is manually coded and analyzed. The size of the sample, and the possibility of subjectivity in marker identification are potential limitations. This study's findings have important implications because they can improve language instruction by encouraging the effective use of discourse markers in academic writing, advanced writing pedagogy by addressing the unique needs of sophomores, and increase our understanding of the linguistic diversity of college students' writing.

Ahmad and Shah (2019) analyzed gender representations in a 5th grade English language textbook. This research examines the textbook's gender-related ideas, prejudices, and power relations. The textbook's pronouns, gendered roles, and images are analyzed qualitatively. Critical discourse analysis is used to investigate how social and cultural contexts determine language use. Gendered language and images in textbook are thoroughly analyzed. Negatives include a single textbook and subjectivity in interpretation. The research's implications are significant because they can reveal potential biases and inequalities reinforced by educational materials, guide curriculum development and educational practices to support gender equality and inclusivity, and raise awareness of the importance of critically evaluating textbook content to promote an equitable and empowering learning environment for learners.

The investigation by Yi (2019) concentrated on gender issues discussed on the American television program "The Big Bang Theory." Examining how male and female characters are portrayed, and how they interact help us analyze how gender is portrayed in the program and the associated discourses. The procedure involves a qualitative analysis of the show's episodes, with a focus on speech, nonverbal indicators, and character development. A social

constructivist approach is used to comprehend how gender identities and stereotypes are created and perpetuated throughout the series. The data consists of selected episodes and relevant transcripts. Among other limitations, the emphasis on a particular television program may limit generalizability, and the interpretation of gender discourse may be subjective. This study's findings have implications for comprehending how gender is portrayed in popular culture, promoting critical thought about how gender is portrayed in the media, and providing media creators with ideas for more inclusive and diverse narratives.

Ahmad, Mahmood, Siddique and Asghar (2021) investigated the representation of female and male genders in English as a Second Language teaching materials designed for the students of Grades 9 and 10 studying in private, and public schools in Punjab, Pakistan. The researchers employed content analysis approach to study gender discrimination through different features like exclusion, inclusion, nouns, pronouns, and tokens. The results obtained through corpus analysis revealed unequal representation of the female and male genders in the said materials which further appeared to have been prepared to uphold male dominance. On the basis of these results the researchers reached the conclusion that gender discrimination in teaching materials may lead to the gender discrimination-related problems in the real life. That is why the researchers suggested the equal representation of both genders in the language teaching materials.

Alsaawi (2022) investigated the use of discourse markers by senior university students. The present investigation endeavors to examine frequency, types, as well as functions of discourse markers employed by this particular group of students. The procedure involves collecting data from a sample of senior university students via questionnaires, interviews, or written assignments. The data are quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed to identify trends, patterns, and differences in discourse marker usage. Existing models or frameworks for discourse markers may be utilized to classify and interpret the study's findings. The sample size, the representativeness of the chosen university or program, and the inherent subjectivity of data interpretation are just a few examples of limitations. This study's findings have significant implications because they cast light on how senior university students use language, influence language teaching methodologies and curriculum development, and advance our understanding of discourse markers in academic contexts.

Fu and Ho (2022) examine the usage of discourse markers in TV interviews by comparing Chinese and Western media conventions. This study seeks to compare and contrast how these two cultural contexts employ discourse markers, which are essential for conversational organization and meaning transmission. Creating a corpus of Chinese and Western television interview transcripts is part of the process. The discourse indicators used in the interviews are identified and analyzed through a corpus-based comparison analysis. To analyze the functions and pragmatic implications of the detected discourse markers, the study employs a functional linguistic model or frameworks for discourse analysis. The data consists of transcriptions of television interviews that have been thoroughly analyzed for the presence and distribution of discourse markers. Limitations pertain to the corpus' representativeness, potential biases in the data selection procedure, and the generalizability of research results beyond the unique TV interview genre. The research has significant implications because it can cast light on how conversational styles vary across cultures, enhance our understanding of how discourse markers affect communication, and advance the disciplines of media studies and intercultural communication.

Mushtaq, Shah and Akram (2022) examined visual images in Pakistani English language textbooks using multimodal discourse analysis. This study examines the effects of visual imagery in Pakistani English-language textbooks. A sample of Pakistani English-language textbooks was collected, and their visual visuals were analyzed using multimodal discourse analysis. Photographs' visual semiotics, meaning-making tools, and ideologies are examined. A social semiotic model that considers socio-cultural context and power dynamics in visual image

generation and perception guide the investigation. Data comprise textbook pictures and related text. Limitations include the subjective perception of visual images and the application of the findings to different educational settings. This study is helpful in understanding the function and significance of visual images in English language textbooks, identify any biases or stereotypes they may reinforce, and guide curriculum development and educational practices to create more inclusive and culturally aware materials for English language instruction in Pakistan.

Ratih and Abidah (2022) examined English speech markers across genders. This study examines gender-related discourse marker use discrepancies between men and women. The approach compiles a corpus of English texts from academic papers, interviews, and social media. The corpus is statistically and qualitatively analyzed to determine men's and women's speech marker kinds, frequencies, and purposes. The sociolinguistic model considers gendered social and cultural impacts on language usage. Language analysis software and human coding are used to analyze the data. Limitations include data selection biases, corpus representativeness, and generalizability. This study improves our understanding of gender-related linguistic differences, advance sociolinguistic study, and influences language teaching by encouraging gender-inclusive communication and addressing discourse marker gender biases.

The purpose of another study (Shah, Tahir & Batool, 2022) is to compare the linguistic characteristics and discourse structures of medical association texts and research articles to find how these two medical genres differ and overlap in terms of organizational structures, rhetorical devices, and argumentation strategies. The procedure involves amassing a corpus of documents from reputable sources regarding medical associations and research publications. A qualitative analysis of the texts is performed using Van Dijk's Microstructure Model. This model examines both the micro- and macro-level linguistic features of language, including discourse markers, cohesive devices, and rhetorical devices, as well as the macro-level discourse structure, which includes topic introduction, argumentation, and conclusion. The data is analyzed to determine similarities and differences between the discourse structures and linguistic elements of the two genres. Possible limitations include the corpus's representativeness, the inherent biases in data collection, and the applicability of Van Dijk's model to the specific context of medical discourse. The implications of this study are significant because they can enhance our understanding of the discursive norms and communication practices in the medical field, guide scientific writing instruction, and make medical association texts and research articles more comprehensible and effective.

The study by Indriyani and Kurniawan (2023)examines the gender stereotypes exhibited by rabbit characters in "Peter Rabbit" (2018), "Zootopia" (2016), and "Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway" (2021) to see how gender stereotypes are portrayed in these films and how rabbits are portrayed as the main protagonists. The strategy involves comparing the films and analyzing the dialogue, personality traits, and actions of the rabbit characters. A qualitative method is used to identify and analyze gender stereotype markers, such as conventional gender roles, appearance, and behavior. The data for the study consists of the films themselves, specifically the scenes featuring the rabbit characters. The unique characteristics of these films prevent generalizations and subjective interpretations of gender stereotypes. Implications of the research include expanding our understanding of how gender is portrayed in animated films, raising awareness of gender stereotypes in the media, and encouraging the creation of narratives that are more diverse and inclusive in children's films.

Sultonova (2023)examined how men and women employed discourse markers in essays. The study examines gender variations in discourse marker usage in writing. The method involves collecting writings from male and female participants from various academic fields. Quantitative investigation compares gender-specific speech marker frequency, distribution, and uses. The sociolinguistic model considers gendered social and cultural impacts on language usage. Human coding or linguistic techniques analyze data from written essays. Limitations

include sample size, marker identification subjectivity, and textual discourse focus. This study highlights gender-based discourse marker use discrepancies, advances gendered language patterns, and encourages inclusive writing training that accounts for these variances. The review of all these studies makes it clear that study of discourse makers can be made on different genres particularly on the texts of Pakistani drama serials. Therefore, this study is aimed to answer the following questions.

1. What is the linguistic evidence of gender in Pakistani drama serials, specifically in terms of language patterns and discourse markers, and how do these linguistic elements contribute to reinforcing and perpetuating gender stereotypes and biases within media portrayals?

2. What is the influence exerted by discourse markers and language patterns employed by male and female authors within the context of Pakistani drama serials on the construction and depiction of gender?

Methodology

Theoretical Background

Research data is collected through various methods and comes in diverse formats. The "how" of research is defined as the research technique. Research data encompasses all information collected, processed, and saved to establish study goals and a conceptual framework. This theoretical foundation draws from linguistics, discourse analysis, and gender studies.

Linguistics and Discourse Analysis

Linguistics and discourse analysis theories elucidate the language role in social interactions (Wooffitt, 2005). These theories explore discourse markers, which signify conversational order, coherence, and interactivity. Grice cooperative principle and implicature theories can explain the functions and pragmatics of discourse markers.

Gender Studies Frameworks

Theoretical frameworks in gender studies examine how language impacts gender identities and societal norms (Higgins, 2010). Gender influences language, particularly discourse markers. These frameworks delve into gendered language, stereotypes, and power dynamics, shedding light on gender disparities in communication styles, language techniques, and gender identities. Such studies illuminate the social and cultural implications of gender inequalities in Pakistani drama serials.

Integration of Theoretical Frameworks

This study harmoniously integrates principles from linguistics, discourse analysis, and gender studies to elucidate gender-based disparities in discourse marker usage within Pakistani drama serials. This theoretical framework underpins the research questions, methodology, and interpretation of findings, facilitating a comprehensive exploration of gender-related discourse marker use in this context.

Definitional Background

The article commences by defining essential concepts and terms to clarify the research scope i.e.

Discourse Markers

Discourse markers are linguistic tools used to structure speech, signal connections between ideas, and convey interpersonal meanings (Maschler & Schiffrin, 2015). Examples of discourse markers include "however", "moreover", "you know", and "I mean." The article provides definitions and explanations of discourse markers.

Gender

Gender refers to culturally defined roles, attitudes, and expectations associated with males and females, extending beyond biological distinctions. It encompasses societal and cultural expectations related to the gender identity.

Gender Differences

The definitional background also addresses gender differences, encompassing variations in behavior, language use, and communication styles influenced by biological, psychological, and societal factors.

Pakistani Drama Serials

We define "Pakistani drama serials" by describing this prevalent form of entertainment in Pakistan, known for portraying societal ideals, cultural norms, and interpersonal interactions.

Clarity

Lastly, we define key terms, and concepts to ensure reader comprehension and facilitate the understanding of gender variations in discourse markers use in Pakistani drama serials.

To accomplish the research objective, a qualitative content analysis is conducted on the episodes of selected Pakistani drama serials "Qurban," "Dunk," "Sinf e Aahan," and "Cheekh" written by men and women authors. The episodes are transcribed with an emphasis on the dialogue. The analysis consists of identifying, and categorizing discourse markers, specifically investigating the presence of dominant and subordinate language according to Lakoff's model(Cameron, 1997).

For the objective of this study, four Pakistani drama serials written by men and women were analyzed. Out of the four drama serials in question, it is noteworthy that two were authored by male individuals, whereas a significant majority of the twenty was penned by female authors. In the analysis of discourse markers for gender discrimination in Pakistani drama serials, the utilization of Lakoff's model is employed. This framework and its associated concepts serve as a lens through which the discourse patterns and linguistic cues present in the episodes of "Qurban" and "Dunk" authored by male writers, as well as "Sinf e Ahan" and "Cheekh" authored by female writers, are examined.

Moreover, Lakoff's model contributes to the existing corpus of knowledge on gender and language by advancing our understanding of how language is used to communicate and reinforce gendered meanings and roles. By analyzing the influence of language on social perceptions and interactions, we aim to shed light on the complexities of gender discourse.

The following sections of this article present the findings, and discuss the study's implications. Analyzing language usage through the lens of Lakoff's model contributes to a more nuanced understanding of gender-related language patterns and their future implications. The application of qualitative content analysis is employed on a specific set of Pakistani drama serials, which have been authored by both female and male writers. The episodes have been transcribed with an emphasis on the dialogue. The study consists of defining and categorizing discourse markers used by female and male authors, focusing on the presence of particular lexical items. This analysis will provide valuable insight into the language patterns and linguistic signals used by women and men authors in Pakistani drama serials.

Results

The main objective of this analysis is to identify instances where male and female authors exhibit linguistic dominance through assertive and direct communication, as well as the use of authoritative vocabulary. Additionally, the research explores instances where male and female characters employ the language that conveys feelings of uncertainty, hesitation, or deference. Through the examination of discourse markers, it was observed (as shown in Tables 1 and 2)

that male and female authors employed gender-specific language patterns in the selected dramas.

These patterns have the potential to either reinforce or challenge the existing gender stereotypes and discrimination. In the contemporary era, audiences have been captivated by the captivating storylines and profound cultural significance of Pakistani television dramas. However, these series often mirror societal norms and biases, including gender discrimination. Exploring the discourse markers used by male and female authors in these dramas provides a unique opportunity to shed light on the intricate dynamics and subtle nuances that contribute to gender inequality. This study aims to investigate the specific lexical items (Tables 1 and 2) employed by female authors in Pakistani drama serials, conducting a comprehensive analysis of the underlying gendered language patterns prevalent in these narratives.

Table 1. Results of the use of Discourse Markers across Males

Discourse markers	Frequency	Percentage
I	5455	59.48%
Your	1697	18.50%
Go	796	8.68%
Listen	144	1.57%
Stop	126	1.37%
Absolutely	41	0.44%
Trust me	30	0.32%
Do	846	9.22%
Decide	35	0.38%
Total	**9170**	**100%**

Source: Authors

Table 2. Results of the use of Discourse Markers across Females

Discourse markers	Frequency	Percentage
Doubt	32	1%
So	789	22.65%
Very	217	6.23%
Excuse me	17	0.48%
Think	227	6.52%
Might	124	3.56%
She	1173	33.69%
We	849	24.38%
Dear	53	1.52%
Total	**3481**	**100%**

Source: Authors

Discussion

Pakistani drama serials have garnered significant attention in recent years due to their engaging storylines and cultural significance. However, these popular narratives often mirror societal norms and biases, including gender discrimination. Exploring the discourse markers used in these dramas offers an excellent opportunity to shed light on the complex dynamics and subtle nuances that perpetuate gender inequality. The purpose of this research is to delve into the discourse markers used in Pakistani drama serials, providing a comprehensive analysis to uncover the underlying gender inequality prevalent in these narratives.

In addition, a corpus can be defined as a collection or compilation of linguistic data, comprising written and/or spoken texts (McCarthy & O'Keeffe, 2004). Researchers have recently employed a corpus-based technique to evaluate language in written or spoken form by utilizing software and significant electronic collections gathered in a vast general database (Biber & Reppen, 2015).

The phrase "Women are from Venus, men are from Mars" is a widely recognized expression used to illustrate noticeable differences in the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral tendencies exhibited by individuals of the female and male genders. The statement suggests inherent divergence by implying that women and men originated from planets that are polar opposites of each other. It also implies that males and females are as biologically distinct as if they were separate species (Ellemers, 2018).

To begin with, several sociolinguistic and cultural factors contribute to men's disproportionate use of specific phrases. Words like "absolutely" and "decide" are often employed when someone wishes to convey confidence and assertiveness. Men may be more inclined to use these expressions to confidently express their thoughts or assert their choices.

Furthermore, according to Lakoff's paradigm, words such as "go," "stop," and "listen" are frequently associated with giving orders or initiating actions. Men may use these terms more frequently because their communication patterns tend to be more directive and assertive. Additionally, the use of pronouns such as "I" suggests a higher degree of self-reference. As men frequently prioritize self-expression and self-representation in discourse, they may utilize these pronouns more frequently than women. Men may be more likely to use phrases like "trust me" to establish credibility, expertise, or persuade others to rely on their judgment. This language may be used by males to convey confidence and authority in their statements.

In a nation where women make up more than half of the population, having a skewed representation of both genders and gender-specific roles is unjustifiable (Benschop & Brouns, 2003) and negatively impacts female personalities. Multiple factors influence language usage, including societal norms, cultural expectations, and individual preferences. Moreover, gender distinctions in language usage can vary between cultures and communities. To investigate gender differences, below are examples derived from male-authored Pakistani drama serials.

1. The pronoun "I" in the question "What is my status? Am *I* a useless thing?" reveals the masculine author's self-referential perspective and personal reflection. In this context, it suggests that the author is addressing males and expressing their own emotions or thoughts. It suggests an emphasis on the author's unique identity and experiences. According to Lakoff's model, the use of "I" can convey self-awareness and introspection, suggesting that the author is challenging his worth or value. It indicates that the author is struggling with feelings of inadequacy or doubting their significance.

2. "You can't tell me the reason then there is no need to give justification for *your* actions." This sentence uses the possessive word "your" to indicate that the addressee owns their efforts. Lakoff's theoretical framework states that possessive pronouns, such as "your" have gendered meanings. The construction expresses ownership. This construction can be used by any gender to refer to a personal entity. Lakoff's paradigm examines gender-related speech, lexicon, and discourse aspects. Possessive pronouns are linked to gendered language.

3. In the statement "What will you do, it is clear, I will *go* ahead from here." Lakoff's model states that the use of the word "go" is a sign of assertiveness, action-oriented communication, and independence, all of which are often linked with masculine speech. By using the word "go," the male author shows that he is determined and ready to move forward on his own. This choice of words reveals a proactive and decisive attitude often linked with how men talk. Lakoff says that men start conversations more often than women do.

4. In the statement, "I won't be able to forgive myself, so *listen* to me and go back from here". According to Lakoff's model, the use of the word "listen" also reflects a language pattern typically associated with assertiveness, authority, and a desire for compliance in the male speech. By using the term "listen", the author emphasizes the significance of the message and urges the listener to pay close attention and adhere to their instructions. This linguistic

choice conveys a sense of authority and the expectation that the listener will respect the speaker's advice or request.

5. Lakoff's model says that the use of the word "stop" in the sentence "Zubaida, **stop** being superstitious, I don't believe in any all this!" shows a language pattern linked with directness, assertiveness, and a desire to be in charge, which is usually found in male speech. This choice of words shows that the author feels to have power and wants to change Zubaida's behavior or views.

6. "People will not change **absolutely** not if somebody had to change, then it's you; you have to change your surroundings you've to change every other thing that is attached to your past." "Absolutely" means "strongly" in this context. Lakoff's language-gender model associates forceful discourse with male speech patterns. It exudes confidence. "Absolutely" underscores the speaker's certainty that people won't change. Assertiveness fits masculinity's straightforward, confident talking style.

7. "It would be better for you to **decide** being my father that what am I capable of!" Lakoff's model says that the word "decide" in the sentence also shows a pattern of language that goes along with assertiveness and a sense of power, which are usually traits of masculine speech. By using the word "decide," the speaker makes it clear that the father is the most important person and has the power to decide what the speaker can do. This shows a traditional gender role belief that men should be in charge and make decisions in the family.

8. "I'm saying all of this being so emotional but **trust m**e I came here after thinking a lot Haider has become completely changed after being with you for a few days." According to Lakoff's paradigm, masculine communication uses "trust me" to assert credibility, reliability, and trust. By saying "trust me," the speaker emphasizes their sincerity and asks the listener to trust their words and judgment. This language shows confidence and a desire to be trusted.

However, it is important to note that Lakoff's model is a concept that may not be applied universally or to all situations. Various factors, including personal preferences, local influences, and individual identities, can influence how people use language. Dominance language is characterized by its forcefulness and directness, employing words that assert authority. Those using this style aim to demonstrate their control over the conversation. However, the utilization of lexical units is influenced by cultural, societal, and contextual factors. While Lakoff's model provides general trends, it does not imply that all men exclusively use "dominant" language or that all women exclusively use "submissive" language. Therefore, this study investigates variations in how individuals of different genders use language.

This research also explores language and gender in Pakistani drama serials authored by women. We analyze the discourse markers employed by women authors (Table 2) to identify language patterns that may reinforce gender stereotypes and power imbalances. This study aims to enhance our understanding of how women authors employ language to perpetuate gender-related meanings and roles.

1. "Are you doing **doubt** on me? You are feeling **doubt** I asked where you were at that time?" Lakoff's methodology assigns gender, specifically women to "doubt" in this phrase. Women often use "doubt" to signify uncertainty, reluctance, or skepticism. It is used to question or challenge someone else's claim. "Doubt" is a gendered language for clarification. Lakoff says that women's language emphasizes cooperation, empathy, and relationship-building. As expressing confidence or strong opinions may be considered forceful, it can help women navigate social expectations and retain rapport.

2. "Why is she getting **so** aggressive over it? No need to be **so** angry, I just said normally." Lakoff's model says that authors use intensifiers like "so" to highlight the degree or intensity of what they are saying or what is happening. It is frequently used to show frustration or surprise. Also, Lakoff's model says that the way women use words like "so" in their speech can be affected by language traits linked to femininity. It can help people who are angry, surprised, or feeling any other strong emotion get their point across with more force.

Lakoff's model also shows that women tend to use words like "hedges" and "qualifiers" in their speech to soften their comments and avoid sounding too assertive. In this case, using "so" to emphasize a point could be seen as a way for the women to make their point without being too direct or aggressive.

3. "I felt very bad and my ego came between. It's very disappointing I can feel you". According to Lakoff's model, women's use of intensifiers such as "very" can be influenced by linguistic characteristics associated with femininity, indicating that they are more emotionally sensitive than men. In this context, the female author's use of "very" to emphasize the emotive impact of her statements is a linguistic choice. It emphasizes the intensity of her sorrow, disappointment, and compassion. By using "very", the female author conveys the intensity of an emotional response and attempts to establish a strong connection between herself and the drama serial's characters. It also enables them to express their emotions more vividly, emphasizing the intensity of their experience and the significance of the issue at hand.

4. "O really? *Excuse me*! How do they make such delicate sweet? By the way, only PMA people can do this. You should take a break." This usage of "Excuse me" reflects the character's linguistic manner and the dramatic context of the scene as a whole. It also demonstrates her assertiveness and participation in the discussion. According to Lakoff's model, it is used to obtain someone's attention or interrupt a conversation politely. In this instance, the character may be politely interjecting and redirecting the conversation. Furthermore, it can be interpreted as the female character asserting her right to pose a question or express her curiosity. She politely asserts her presence and requests permission to redirect the conversation by using this phrase. By expressing her curiosity, she is sarcastically asserting her right to query.

5. "I don't know how to *think* about it again. What he did *think* about himself?" In this context, the author's use of "think" indicates that she is questioning or contemplating a particular situation or action. By using "think," the author expresses uncertainty or ignorance regarding the beliefs or perspectives of another. The female author ponders the thoughts or opinions of the masculine character, seeking clarification or comprehension. It indicates her curiosity and desire to gain insight into his perspective or mentality as she considers the male character's thoughts or opinions, seeking clarification or understanding. It demonstrates her desire to obtain insight into his perspective or mentality.

6. "...., it *might* be happened in my home but my any family member could not launch F.I.R. against my son…. They might be friends as well." By using "might," the female author indicates that there is a possibility that something will occur or be accurate, but it is not confirmed or certain. It is permissible, according to Lakoff's model, for the author to incorporate some speculation or hypothesis, recognizing that there are multiple possible explanations or outcomes. It reveals the author's cautious approach to the subject. Using "might" demonstrates the author's desire to temper her language and avoid coming across as blunt.

7. "*She* achieves every goal by following the path of prosperity. *She* doesn't care about her health at all." According to Lakoff's gender paradigm, the female author's frequent use of "she" in these sentences demonstrates linguistic characteristics associated with femininity. Lakoff proposes that women frequently use language patterns emphasizing interpersonal relationships, empathy, and nurturing. In this context, the author's frequent use of "she" highlights and emphasizes a specific female individual's actions, qualities, or characteristics. It focuses on a particular woman and portrays her as the narrative's protagonist. It may indicate that the author intends to convey a sense of identification, empathy, or connection with the woman being discussed. It implies that the author is emphasizing this woman's accomplishments, her disregard for her health, and the potential repercussions of her actions.

8. "Yes, *dear*?... My *dear* daughter ...she is at PMA." Lakoff's gender model says that "dear" is a term of endearment or an affectionate way to call someone when used by a woman. It shows that women have a sense of warmth, closeness, or comfort that men don't have as much of. The use of "dear" suggests that the writer is trying to make or strengthen a good emotional connection with the message's recipient, which could be a sign of a caring or nurturing attitude. It can create a sense of familiarity or closeness and may help the speaker get along with the person he or she is talking to.

9. "*We* will lock all the things... brother just stop; *we* are poor people....". The women author's frequent usage of "we" creates unity and a common identity. It implies that the author joins a more extensive community with shared experiences or challenges. "We" implies a shared perspective and conditions. By utilizing "we," the author may be trying to promote empathy and togetherness. She's representing a group. Using "we" emphasizes community, inclusivity, and unity. It emphasizes shared identity and community. Use "we" instead of "I" to diminish individual action or aggressiveness. It may reduce self-promotion or avoid confrontation. Women use "we" to emphasize harmony, cooperation, and connection. "We" also invites others to join in.

This study explores various factors such as hedging and politeness, intensifiers and accent, politeness and indirectness, social orientation, and socialization by examining the speech patterns of women and men in drama serials. Both genders have extensively researched and written about these patterns in their writings. Therefore, Lakoff's gender model offers valuable insights into language patterns and usage by investigating numerous linguistic aspects within the context of gender disparities. Men and women may have different communication preferences and adhere to distinct cultural norms, which can be reflected in the words and language markers they employ.

According to Lakoff, women tend to use language that emphasizes politeness, uncertainty, and group dynamics. They may use terms like "dear" or "we" to establish connections with others, convey care, and foster group cohesion. Conversely, men are more inclined to use expressions like "absolutely" or "decide" to assert their strong convictions or intentions. Pakistani drama serials authored by the individuals of both genders provide a comprehensive examination of the intricate nature of language use, and how it can be influenced by factors such as personal preferences, cultural contexts, and diverse communication styles.

Conclusion

Finally, Lakoff's model provides a valuable framework for analyzing the linguistic patterns in Pakistani drama serials, revealing the presence of gender inequalities and stereotypes within discourse markers. Words that are commonly associated with one gender more than the other reflect cultural norms and expectations, thus reinforcing established gender roles and hierarchies. Lexical items frequently used by individuals identifying as male, such as "absolutely", "decide", "go", "stop", "listen", "I", "he", and "trust me" serve as linguistic markers conveying masculine assertiveness, self-assurance, and authoritative demeanor. On the other hand, words like "maybe", "very", "excuse me", "wonder", "we", "might", and "she" are used more frequently by women, implying uncertainty, politeness, and group dynamics. The way individuals of different sexes use language influences their relationships and how they are perceived by others. Certain words, when frequently used by both men and women, can reinforce existing gender stereotypes, and contribute to an imbalance of power. This underscores the importance of examining how media and popular culture shape societal norms and beliefs through language. A deeper investigation into gender disparities in language use is necessary for a comprehensive understanding of language and communication in society (Coates, 2015).

In conclusion, the analysis of discourse markers in Pakistani drama serials, when viewed through the framework of Lakoff's model, provides significant insights into the gendered

aspects of linguistic usage. This examination highlights the manifestation of gender disparities in the use of specific lexical units and the role of language in perpetuating gender-based biases. By recognizing and understanding these recurring patterns and their implications, we can begin the process of establishing a societal framework characterized by inclusivity and fairness. Such a framework will actively challenge traditional gender norms and promote equal opportunities for all individuals.

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