

**DECODING RELIGIOUS CONTENTS: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH
TEXTBOOKS AT PRIMARY LEVEL IN
PAKISTAN**

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Decoding Religious Contents: A Comparative Study of English Textbooks at Primary Level in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Title: Decoding Religious Contents: A Comparative Study of English Textbooks at Primary Level in Pakistan

Textbooks play an essential role in shaping students' minds, particularly during their formative years in primary education. Textbooks' discourses are significant means of disseminating desired ideology to the target readers and making them behave in a particular manner. Discursive strategies employed in this regard play a vital role in making certain ideologies common sense. The present study critically analyses the religious contents of primary English textbooks to lay bare implicit and explicit ideologies at work through the Multimodal Discourse Analysis technique. For this purpose, the data has been collected from the textbooks published in 2022. Moreover, the study employs Multimodality by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) and Focus Group Discussion by Krueger (2002) as a tool of analysis. Content Analysis has also been done to support the qualitative analysis quantitatively. The relevant data from the mentioned textbooks have been selected and analyzed. The present research highlights the significance of word-picture conjunction in the propagation of desired religious ideologies. The overall impression that is drawn from the linguistic and semiotic analyses of selected textbooks is that all textbooks contain religious contents. The percentage of religious contents in textbooks of Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is 28% whereas it is 40% in Sindh textbooks. The study contends that textbooks at the primary level play a significant role in shaping the mindset of young learners in the desired manner through their religious contents.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PTB	Punjab Textbook Board
BTB	Balochistan Textbook Board
KPTB	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board
STB	Sindh Textbook Board
OUP	Oxford University Press
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
SNC	Single National Curriculum
MMDA	Multimodal Discourse Analysis
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
FGD	Focus Group Discussion

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents, whose unwavering support, endless sacrifices, and boundless love have been the cornerstone of my success. I also dedicate this thesis to my supervisor, Dr. Muhammad Akbar Sajid, whose guidance enabled me to accomplish this task.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Textbooks play an essential role in influencing learners socially, psychologically, and cognitively. Friends, teachers, co-curricular activities, media, and society also play a role in influencing students, but especially in Pakistani society, it is observed that students spend most of their time with textbooks. So, textbooks are considered a more critical influencing factor in shaping a learner's ideology and worldview. There is a close relationship between textbooks and students. Textbooks serve as a link between the teachers and their students. The present research critically analyzes English textbooks (published in 2022) taught at the primary level in Punjab, Baluchistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. The present research analyzes textbooks to lay-bare religious ideologies embedded in the discourses of the mentioned English textbooks.

Moreover, the present research also decodes linguistic and semiotic discourses to explore religious ideologies in them. In this regard, the present research employs an amended research model. The research model used for the present research has been devised by drawing upon Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) and Krueger (2002) to analyze the religious contents present in the primary English textbooks at linguistic and semiotic levels. This is how the present research highlights word-picture conjunction in the propagation of desired religious ideologies. The researcher has also supported her findings by conducting focus group discussions among two groups. One group has six participants who are MPhil in English Linguistics, and the other group has 6 participants who are MPhil in other disciplines such as International Relations, Islamic Studies, Psychology, etc. In this way, by extracting the big idea from the remarks of the focus group participants, the researcher has validated her findings of linguistic and semiotic analyses.

Rehman (2002) opines that the roles of textbooks are very significant in shaping a learner's worldview. Mohammad (2015) argues that besides doing many things, textbooks can bring about change as well. The primary textbooks are capable of bringing change right from the beginning. The content and structure of textbooks have a profound influence on students' cognitive, social, and emotional development. Hug (1970) stated

that the curriculum design that aims to reorganize the entire content around Islamic ideas and give education an ideological orientation will be given top priority. Textbooks play an essential role in shaping students' minds, particularly during their formative years in primary education (Rehman, 2002). Similarly, we see that whatever is taught at the primary level goes a long way in making people behave in a certain way.

Language is a significant tool for propagating ideology. Similarly, the language used in a textbook or a primary textbook is very carefully designed, and it affects the researchers insidiously. The language used in textbooks, both in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure, serves as a model for students to follow and emulate. Spitulnik (1998) says that "language is a marker of society." According to Fairclough (1989), language serves as the primary domain of ideology and plays a crucial role in power struggles.

The role of textbooks can never be denied because they propagate cultural, traditional, moral, social, and religious values. Galbraith (1984) established a view that most of the ideologies are sponsored by different business organizations, different institutions, and agencies. They are trying to widen these ideologies through textbooks, society, humanity, social media, journalism, and religious seminars. Above all, most of the considerable stages in varying the worldview are through schooling and college.

Foucault (1972) observes a close relationship between discourse and ideology. He believes that ideologies are constructed and propagated through discourses. So, language and discourse are a medium to convey your ideas to others. Ideologies are conceptual frameworks that individuals use to make sense of the complex world around them. In order to help people organize their ideas and perceptions, they offer a lens through which they perceive information, experiences, and events.

Author Tracy (1757-1836) and the French philosopher Jacques Derrida demonstrated that ideology is a set of beliefs or schools of ideas. There are as many schools of ideas as there are human beings. Similarly, in the present research, the researcher attempts to critically decode the language used in primary textbooks of these two provinces to determine how significant their role is in propagating cultural and religious ideologies.

Wodak (2011) acknowledged that every religion has some basic standards, values, and principles that depict basic ideologies and aspects. For propagating different religious ideologies to the people, especially to young learners and students, different educational

institutions and academic organizations and associations like schools, universities, and colleges play a very significant role. So, curriculum setters make efforts to endow the number of religious themes, materials, and contents in the textbooks. They observe that the primary stage of the students and the learners is a vital stage to shaping the mind for the sake of winning their approval in terms of religious matters. For this purpose, the researcher preferred 5 Grade English textbooks of Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at both linguistic and semiotic levels because, at this level, it is an easy job to transmit basic ideologies in the minds of the learners and to shape them according to the required desire, especially religious ideologies.

Rehman (2001) claimed that the ideologies present in the textbooks further assemble to make the worldview of the learners. The worldview gives a way to glimpse the world according to the chosen religious settings. According to Mohammad (2015), textbooks convey noticeable modifications in determining learners' worldviews. So, semiotic studies, especially in discourses, are critical to shape the social settings and norms according to the desired settings and to look at the language in a neutral way without the pressurized effect of the society to use and interpret the language according to the given parameters. We know that pictures are very significant in propagating the desired ideologies among the learners because viewing the pictures prints the required ideologies in the mind of the learners, and the students at the primary level feel attracted to the colored images. According to researchers' observations, it is easy to alter the mind of the young learner to the desired settings.

According to Hibbing and Erickson (2003), pictures in textbooks play a significant role in shaping the minds of learners. If we analyze the pictures in the textbooks semantically that are embedded with different ideologies, these observations and interpretations are adequately conveyed. So, the present research highlighted different problems that are associated with ideology and worldview through the content of the textbooks. Textbooks, like other means of discourses, play a vital role in informing people about socio-political scenarios. They represent the dominant culture of their time. Similarly, Rehman (2002) is of the view that the majority of Pakistani learners are those who are taught at public schools, and a particular type of ideology about religion is imparted to them. They are supposed to behave in a specific manner, which is usually termed middle-class morality.

The present research critically analyzes the religious contents that have been published in the mentioned books of Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. The researcher has analyzed linguistic and visual contents carrying religious ideology to locate how religious ideologies in two different provinces of Pakistan are propagated to young learners at the primary level. According to Clifford (1987), ideology is usually taken by academicians as a methodologically evaluative term. Ideologies are referred to as legitimization of supremacy because of their conventional approach towards them, especially by the principal class or by various central groups over the poor and employed class.

Structuralists believe that individuals are formed by sociological, emotional, and dialectal structures over which they have no control, but these structuralists uncovered by using their devices of analysis (Jones, 1999). While taking into account the term discourse, the theorist Foucault (1972) has quite often quoted. According to Jones (1999), Foucault (1972) tried to analyze the discursive practices or thoughtful speech acts that claim to expose knowledge. Medonnel (1986) opines that discourses are established in different shapes, different institutions, and social practices and work on the point of those to whom they are answerable.

Ideologically invested discourse has a distinctive place in the power construction of the modern state system. In this way, the leaders often win the consent of the general masses to protract and make their regulations stronger. This has also been confirmed by Althusser (1971) in his concept of an "ideological state apparatus." In the modern era, ideological state apparatuses (ISA) are considered more powerful, influential, and long-lasting in the propagation of various ideologies. In the past, Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) were considered more influential, but ideology and means of propagating ideologies are constantly changing. The same is the case with the present research. In the present research, textbooks taught in these four provinces have been analyzed to know how ideological state apparatuses work better in the propagation of religious ideologies to the targeted audience. Therefore, the contents carrying religious ideologies implicitly or explicitly have been considered for analysis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Textbooks play a vital role in shaping the minds of primary-level students by providing them with foundational knowledge and promoting the development of their

beliefs, attitudes, and values. The problem arises when the content of these textbooks is skewed towards a particular religious ideology, which can potentially contribute to bias, misconceptions, and a lack of tolerance for different belief systems. Given the importance of textbooks in shaping young minds, it is crucial to ensure that they present a balanced and inclusive representation of religious ideologies to foster a harmonious learning environment and promote tolerance and understanding among students. Keeping in view the existing scenario, the present study attempts to analyze the linguistic and semiotic contents of primary English textbooks taught in Pakistan at present. It is going to be done to know how discursive practices play their role in shaping young learners' mindsets and to win their consent.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To explore how religious ideologies are disseminated through visual and verbal practices in Primary English Textbooks in Pakistan
- To explore how these textbooks vary in disseminating religious ideologies

1.4 Research Questions

- How are religious ideologies disseminated discursively through linguistic and semiotic discourses of Primary English Textbooks in Pakistan?
- How do Primary English Textbooks of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa vary from one another in disseminating religious ideologies?

1.5 Research Methodology

The present study employs mixed-method research with a focus on the qualitative aspect. The research employs content analysis as a quantitative method to support the qualitative analysis. The study draws upon two theories - Multimodality by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) and Focus Group Discussion by Krueger (2002) to analyze the religious content in textbooks. The purposive sampling technique is used to collect data from English textbooks of grade 5. The qualitative analysis involves a thorough examination of the textual and visual content of primary English textbooks to identify and decode the underlying religious ideologies. Focus group discussions are conducted with two groups to analyze visuals and to incorporate general opinions to validate the researcher's analysis. The duration of each focus group discussion is one hour. Each discussion is visually recorded as well.

Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) model has been employed to investigate the interaction between visual and verbal practices in primary English textbooks and how these multimodal elements work together to convey religious ideologies. The theory posits that meaning-making is a complex process involving the interplay of multiple modes of communication, such as text, images, and sound. By examining the interrelation of text and images, the study uncovers the ways in which religious content is effectively communicated through the combined use of various modes. The linguistic and semiotic data has been analyzed at the following levels:

- Semiotic modes
- Visual Grammar
- Representational meaning
- Interactive meaning
- Compositional meaning
- Social Semiotics
- Multimodal Discourse Analysis
- Design and production
- The reader's role

Krueger's (2002) Model provides a framework for conducting focus group discussions as a means of data collection. Two focus group discussions were conducted among the participants who were MPhil in English Linguistics and the participants who were MPhil in other disciplines at the same level. Generally, it is believed that people belonging to linguistics decode semiotic discourses following the rules and regulations of semiology. They usually do not go beyond these limits. However, the participants who are qualified in other domains of knowledge may decode the visual discourses in a different manner. So, in order to incorporate the perception and interpretation of the people who are qualified in linguistics and other domains of knowledge, the researcher incorporates the remarks of focus group participants in the semiotic analysis. The data collected from the focus group discussions is analyzed at the following levels of Krueger's model (2002):

- Words

- Context
- Internal Consistency
- Frequency
- Extensiveness
- Finding the big idea
- Specificity of Responses
- Intensity

These theories will be employed to explore the propagation of religious ideologies in primary English textbooks in Pakistan through visual and verbal practices (text and images).

1.6 Significance of the Study

The analysis of textbooks in Pakistan has often overlooked the use of Multimodal Discourse Analysis. Previous researches, such as that conducted by Tayyab (2022), Yaqoob (2011), Nisar (2016), Hameed (2012), Shah (2016), and others, have primarily employed content analysis or comparative analysis of school textbooks from primary to pre-college levels. This study, in contrast to previous research, will use Multimodal Discourse Analysis to analyze the religious content of primary-level English textbooks published in 2022 from all four provinces of Pakistan. It aims to explore both minor and significant religious ideologies conveyed in the texts, examining not only explicit but also implicit meanings in the context of the sentences. The study uses Focus Group Discussion to validate its findings from semiotic analysis. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the ways in which religious ideologies are propagated in primary English textbooks in Pakistan, providing insights that can inform the development of more balanced and inclusive learning materials.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The present study only takes into account the religious contents of primary English Textbooks published by the Punjab Textbook Board (taught in Punjab), Sindh Textbook Board (taught in Sindh), Baluchistan Textbook Board (taught in Baluchistan), and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board (taught in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) in Pakistan. It deals with the textbooks of the mentioned provinces published in 2022. It only focuses

on the analysis of linguistic and semiotic discourses embodying religious ideologies in textbooks explicitly or implicitly. The method of analysis is delimited to visual and verbal analysis based on research goals.

1.8 Chapter Breakdown

Chapter One: This chapter provides a background of the study and explains the importance of decoding religious content in primary English textbooks in Pakistan. The research problem and objectives are also outlined, along with the research questions and research methodology. The significance of the study and its delimitations are also discussed.

Chapter Two: This chapter provides an overview of the existing literature on the representation of religious ideologies in textbooks, including studies conducted in Pakistan and other countries. Operational definitions of the key terms are also given. The literature review also explores the theoretical concepts of Multimodality and Focus Group Discussion and their relevance to this study.

Chapter Three: This chapter explains the research design and methodology used in the study, which is a mixed-method approach with a focus on qualitative aspects. Content analysis is used as a quantitative method to support the qualitative analysis. The study draws upon the theories of Multimodality and Focus Group Discussion. The methodology also outlines the sampling strategy, data collection, and data analysis techniques.

Chapter Four: This chapter presents an in-depth data analysis of the radiance of the devised research model for the present study. It analyzes the visual and verbal practices used to convey religious ideologies at various levels. This section also provides a content analysis of religious content present in the English Textbooks of Class 5.

Chapter Five: This chapter deals with the findings of focus group discussions. Focus Group data has been analyzed at the subsequent levels, i.e., words, context, internal consistency, frequency, extensiveness, intensity, specificity of response, and finding the big idea. This has been done to correlate the researcher's analysis with the views of the participants.

Chapter Six: This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and their implications for the representation of religious ideologies in primary English textbooks in Pakistan. The recommendations for future research are also discussed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Textbooks usually contain many ideologically loaded discourses about religion, gender, politics, power, and cultural aspects. They are also considered to be one of the best sites for ideological investment. The message propagated through textbooks usually lasts for a long time because textbooks are insidious means of power. In this section, the researcher has reinforced the fact with the most relevant researches conducted in the related area. Operational definitions of the key terms and theoretical framework have also been discussed in detail. It critically reviews chronologically the previous researches to create gap for the current research.

2.1 Work Already Done

The following section deals with works that are related to religion, ideology, discourse, critical discourse analysis, semiology, multimodality, or gender. Although there are a number of researches that have been conducted on the analysis of religious content in textbooks but, the research in hand is different from previous researches as, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no research has been done in which multimodality has been used to analyze religious context in English Textbooks of class 5 of all provinces of Pakistan. So, it is important to discuss the works that are connected with the concept of ideology, discourse, culture, gender, or religion to create a research gap for this research. The following section critically evaluates the previous works chronologically.

Abdollahzadeh and Baniasad (2010) explored the existence of ideological elements in imported EFL textbooks while also assessing EFL learners' and teachers' awareness of and attitudes toward these ideologies. Employing a mixed-method approach, the research was done by combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to collect data from both learners and teachers. The results indicated the presence of ideological components within the examined textbooks, which could potentially impact students' perspectives and beliefs. Additionally, the study showed that, although EFL learners and teachers were generally conscious of the ideological content in the textbooks, their opinions on the matter differed. The research highlighted the need to acknowledge

and address the ideological influences present in EFL textbooks in order to promote critical thinking and help learners gain an impartial understanding of global viewpoints.

Yaqoob (2011) conducted research on the cultural aspects in ELT in Pakistan. The research was carried out by employing Fairclough's (2003) analytical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. The data was collected from Punjab Textbook Board (henceforth PTB) English textbooks and Oxford University Press (henceforth OUP) English textbooks. PTB English textbooks were taught in Urdu Medium Government Schools as well as in non-elite English Medium Schools at the secondary level. OUP English Textbooks were taught in Elite English Medium Schools at the same level, i.e., O'Levels. The research demonstrated that cultural ideologies prevail in both the PTB and OUP English textbooks. Also, these books represent many cultural beliefs, which makes it possible for their young readers to acquire various worldviews from them. The research highlighted the difference between the contents of PTB English Textbooks and OUP English Textbooks, and it claimed that the former represents Pakistani culture while the latter is full of Westernized culture. It also claimed that the students of government schools and non-elite English medium schools are more religious, nationalistic, anti-Israel, anti-Christians, anti-Hindu, and closer to Indigenous culture as compared to the students of elite-class English medium schools.

Hameed (2012) conducted research on gender representation in the elementary level English Textbooks produced by the Punjab Textbook Board and Oxford University Press in Pakistan. The research was designed using the eclectic approach, including the "gender-as-variable approach" and the "post-structuralist feminism approach," and the method used in this research was a mixed method approach (qualitative as well as quantitative). The research aimed to make a comprehensive comparison between the gender images displayed in the two sets of textbooks and the variety of gender ideas their respective readers have. For this purpose, both textbooks were analyzed in the first phase, and then the reader's conceptions of gender were gathered and analyzed. The analysis of this research demonstrated a discriminatory attitude towards gender in both sets of textbooks, and it revealed that readers of Oxford University Press (OUP) Textbooks have slightly improved images of gender, both in ratio and in presentation, than the readers of PTB Textbooks. It was also discovered that pupils have somewhat established notions about the characteristics, professions, and activities that are appropriate for members of

both genders. The findings suggested that textbooks play an important role in shaping the mindsets of readers about gender roles.

Nisar (2016) researched on ideological representation in English textbooks at the secondary level in Punjab. The data was collected from English Textbooks taught at government and non-government school systems at the 9th and 10th levels. The research focused on locating various aspects of the mentioned textbooks, including religious, cultural, national, and ethical aspects. The research was based on a mixed-method approach. The analysis was done by applying Van Dijk's (2004) analytical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, and it employed two macro strategies, i.e., positive self-representation and negative other-representation. The findings of the study revealed that 9th and 10th-level English Textbooks of PTB are full of the above-mentioned ideological themes, and its statistical result highlighted that the students of government and non-government schools have nearly identical worldviews with a slight difference in their opinions.

Shah (2016) investigated the cultural message encoded in Oxford English Language Textbooks at O'Level in Sindh, Pakistan. The data was collected from 'Oxford Progressive English-9 and 'Oxford Progressive English-10', which were published in 2011 and taught in elite-class English medium schools. The research used Fairclough's (2003) modal of Critical Discourse Analysis. The analytical devices used in this research included Implicature, Representation, Foregrounding, Identity, Comparison and Contrast, Inclusion, Exclusion, prominence, Difference, and Universalization. The findings highlighted that OUP Textbooks presented a Western culture to its readers, and it carried a hidden agenda to Westernize the learner. These books exposed their readers to Western culture, including social practices, religion, and values, and they wanted to train their readers to accept Western culture as an acceptable norm and to neglect their Indigenous culture, religion, and tradition.

Mahmood and Qayyum (2018) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the way religious ideologies are embedded in English language textbooks used in Pakistani schools. The research employed a qualitative research design and employed critical discourse analysis as their primary method. The findings revealed that religious ideologies were prevalent in the content of the analyzed textbooks, with Islam being the dominant religion represented. Additionally, the research found that the textbooks often

portrayed religious minorities in a stereotypical manner, which could contribute to reinforcing biases among students.

Dar and Masroor (2019) conducted research on cultural dissemination in English Textbooks. The data was collected from English textbooks for Grade 5 in Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Mixed Method Approach was used in this research to unmask prevalent cultural and social ideologies in the literary discourses of textbooks. The three-dimensional Model of Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (2015) was used for qualitative research, and Content Analysis was used to quantify the cultural themes in the books. The findings demonstrated the presence of prevailing regional beliefs and called for an overhaul of the curriculum and educational policies to better address diverse learning requirements both locally and globally. The study's results emphasized a notable imbalance in cultural portrayals within the data.

Ali et. Al. (2019) highlighted the ideological representation of an Islamic state, Pakistan, along with the leadership mindset in the textbook. The data was collected from English Textbook taught in the second year at the intermediate level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. The research analyzed various lessons from the prescribed English Textbook. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis was used as a tool of analysis, and the research used a three-dimensional model as a framework for the analysis of the textbook. The research revealed that the prescribed textbook taught at the intermediate level represents the ideology of the state as well as Islamic ideology along with the leadership qualities of the students.

Ismail et. Al. (2019) conducted research on exploring positive self-representation and negative other-representation in English Textbooks in Pakistan. The data was collected from secondary-level (9th and 10th class) English Textbooks published by the Punjab Textbook Board and taught in government and non-elite English medium schools. The data was analyzed by using Van Dijk's (2005) analytical framework of critical discourse analysis. The research explored the ideological representation of positive self and negative others in the textbooks. The findings revealed that secondary-level English Textbooks are replete with the said ideologies, and these books were more religious, nationalistic, anti-Hindus, anti-Christians, and anti-Israel.

Ahsan et. Al. (2020) conducted a comparative study of Socio-Ideological Practices in English Textbooks in the Pakistani Context. The data was collected from the

English Textbook 5, published by the Punjab (Pakistan) Textbook Board (PTB), and Oxford English Textbook Grade 5, published by Oxford University Press, to examine and compare the way socio-ideological practices are projected in these textbooks. The percentages of categories and subcategories of reading passages and activities in these two books were determined using content analysis. The research findings and conclusions showed that the Oxford English textbook was superficial and shallow in its coverage of the target (Pakistani) culture when compared to existing teaching materials or recommended English textbooks. As a result, the textbook was inadequate for teaching and transmitting socio-ideological practices in a deeper meaning. In contrast, the PTB English textbook provided a restricted platform for studying English in depth.

Sajid & Buzdar (2020) conducted research on gender politics in Pakistani English textbooks. For this purpose, the data was collected from English textbooks of class 5 of Punjab and Sindh. The selected books were "My English Book 5," published by Sindh Textbook Board (STB), Jamshoro, and "ENGLISH 5," published by Punjab Textbook Board (PTB) Lahore, Pakistan. The contents about gender representation were selected for the analysis, and the title pages were also included. A tri-angular research model was devised to analyze linguistic and semiotic contents. The research model of Fairclough's (1993) critical discourse analysis was used to analyze the linguistic data, and Kress' (2010) Social Semiotic approach was used to analyze visual contents. Also, Kruger's (2000) focus group of discussion was used to validate the semiotic analysis. This research aimed to analyze the content of these textbooks in a linguistic and semiotic manner. The content of these textbooks was analyzed on the basis of gender stereotypes and how gender is portrayed and represented in the textbooks at the primary level. It also focused on how students perceive the messages that are being given in the textbooks. It was discovered that in comparison to its equivalent, primary English textbooks used in Pakistan's Punjab region have more language and visual elements linked to the stereotypical portrayal and spread of gendered ideology. The study discovers how the discourses included in textbooks work subtly to mold young students' perspectives on gender de/construction. Furthermore, it was found that the discourses of the novels under examination function discursively to mold the young readership's worldview.

Jamil et. Al. (2021) conducted a comparative study of Urdu Textbooks at the primary level in Pakistan. The data was collected from the Urdu Textbook of Punjab Textbook Board of Class 5 and the Urdu Textbook of Class 5 of Oxford University Press,

Pakistan. The units containing religious content were selected for the purpose of analysis. Fairclough's (2003, 2012) research model of Critical Discourse Analysis was used for the linguistics analysis of selected data. Numerous components, including representation, vocabulary choices, metaphors, rhyme systems, and inclusion or exclusion in language use, were the subject of the examination. The research was qualitative and descriptive in nature. The purpose of this research was to find out how religious ideologies are represented and propagated in primary Urdu Textbooks. The analysis of the data revealed that the representation of religious content in the selected textbooks is highly polarized. The results showed a significant disparity in how religious content was portrayed, with PTB textbooks showing more religious content (26%) than OUP textbooks (12%). The research indicated that middle-class people are more likely than members of other socioeconomic classes to be religious content creators. Additionally, this is an effort to raise awareness of the varied ways that religious texts can be interpreted and the ways that different readers would perceive them differently. The study concluded that textbooks are among the most incredible places for ideological investment and that no language use is devoid of ideology.

Mahmood et. Al. (2021) researched on representation of roles of gender in English Textbooks. The data was collected from grade 9th and 10th English Textbooks of Baluchistan, Pakistan. A mixed-method approach was used to analyze data. Fairclough's (2015) Three-Dimensional Model was used to examine ideological manipulation, hegemony, power relations and identity in the textbooks. The findings revealed gender inequality in textbooks, and it supported males, which led to females being less powerful and more stereotyped. The research also claimed that gender was rarely examined in textbook evaluation since it describes the societal norms, behaviors, and roles that distinguish females from males. Language and gender relations interact in two ways: language reflects gender, and language helps to shape gender.

Mehdi et. Al. (2021) conducted research on the study of ideological aspects in English Language Textbooks. The data was collected from the 5th grade English Textbook published by Punjab Textbook Board (2017-2018) in Lahore, Pakistan. A qualitative approach was applied, and Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model (1989) was used to analyze the ideological aspects of the data. This study examined religious and national aspects of ideology present in textbook speech, and it highlighted positive reflections of

national and religious ideological features in textbook discourse, which are intended to result in the excellent grooming of students from religious and national perspectives.

Khan (2022) conducted research on exploring ideologies in primary English textbooks (SNC-2020) in Pakistan. The data was collected from English textbooks for grades 1, 2, and 3. The research was qualitative, and the data was analyzed using the theoretical framework of the 3D CDA model (Fairclough, 2001). The prominent themes that emerged include ethics in home and school, disciplined attitude, and good manners the children follow in the culture of Pakistan. The sophisticated and positive attitude of the children in social homes and educational institutions reflects ethical values as the prominent feature of productive, positive social being.

Tayyab et. Al. (2022) conducted research on 5th-class textbooks to decode religious contents through critical discourse analysis techniques. The data was collected from primary textbooks of English and Urdu, which are based on a Single National Curriculum (SNC). The selected books were published during 2021-2022. The data was analyzed by employing Fairclough's (2003, 2013) model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Critical Social Analysis (CSA). The research highlighted that different ideologies are imparted to the target audience through these textbooks. It highlighted that English and Urdu Textbooks contain 50% of content that carries religious ideology in one way or another. The research also observed that Urdu textbooks contain more persuasive language for the dissemination of religious ideology. It suggested that primary-level textbooks have a substantial impact on how young learners' mindsets are shaped.

Mushtaq et. Al. (2022) conducted research on analyzing visual images of English Language Textbooks. The data was collected from the ELT book of primary level based on a Single National Curriculum (SNC) taught in Lahore, Pakistan. Multimodal Discourse Analysis by Kress and Leeuwen (2006) was used to analyze the data. The research highlighted the role of newly designed textbooks of English in Pakistan in facilitating learning. It focused on the semiotic discourse analysis of visual images being portrayed in the ELT book of primary level. It concluded that a highly favorable and impartial picture of gender and religion had been introduced. It is also proposed that the quality of pictures in terms of drawing, colors, and textbook material be increased in order to provide a vivid and clear presentation.

Sarwat et. Al. (2023) conducted research on a comparative analysis of class 10th textbooks in Punjab and Sindh. The research highlighted the propagation of religious ideologies in the above-mentioned textbooks published in the year 2021. For this purpose, the research employed a three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The research analyzed the linguistic discourse that propagates religious ideologies and the way it spreads these ideologies. This analysis revealed that the STB English Textbook contains 3 lessons and 3 poems that propagate religious ideologies, and the PTB English Textbook has only 3 lessons and no poem in which religious content is spread.

Jan et. Al. (2023) conducted research on problematized religious contents in Textbooks after 9/11 incident. The data was collected from secondary level Textbooks of Physics and Biology in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The analysis was done on two levels: one is the thematic analysis of the contents of the selected textbooks, and the other is the analysis of data collected from the students of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The data from students was collected through an open-ended questionnaire, and the purpose of doing it was to gather the experiences and interactions of students with the textbooks. This data was analyzed through ATLAS.ti version 9. Using Talbani's conceptualization of Islamization and Foucault's idea of the "regime of truth," the study concluded that the Qur'anic verses in the selected textbooks were important technologies of power and self that helped Islamize science and scientify Islam to establish it as a legitimate religion. According to the research, the majority of pupils accept this representation of Islam and Science in the selected textbooks. Furthermore, these results implied that it reduces students' capacity for critical thought as well as their acquisition of scientific information.

Lashari et. Al. (2023) conducted research on the construction and representation of Muslim identity through textbooks. The data was collected from Sindhi, Urdu, and English Textbooks of classes 8, 9, and 10 published by Sindh Textbook Board, Pakistan. Fairclough's (2001, 2003) model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used to analyze data. In particular, the research used text analysis using the Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA) and the data from the interview. Deductive Thematic Analysis was done to analyze the contents of selected textbooks, which focused on the theme of religion. Also, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with minority learners (Hindu, Christian, Sikh) to learn their perspectives and understanding of religious content in textbooks. The results showed that language textbooks place a strong emphasis on Islam in terms of the values, customs, and beliefs that make up the majority of the

Muslim identity. The results of this study were closely supported by the literature that already exists, which suggested that language textbooks in Pakistan aim to instill ideological discourses in language classes that support the interests of the country's majority Muslim population in addition to providing language lessons that help learners improve their linguistic knowledge of Sindhi, Urdu, and English. Furthermore, it appeared from the results of the interviews that minority religion language learners believed their identities—which are shaped by their religious beliefs—were excluded from textbooks. The study suggested that language textbooks should be created in a manner that heavily incorporates minority religions in their curriculum so that students from different religious backgrounds feel welcome in language lessons.

2.2 Research Gap

The review of the researches mentioned above conducted by Lashari (2023), Sarwat (2023), Khan (2022), Tayyab (2022), Jamil (2021) and others have primarily employed content analysis or comparative analysis of school textbooks from primary to pre-college levels. These studies focused solely on the explicit meanings of ideological content and did not examine the context in which these contents were used, including the role of images in propagating desired ideology. This research, in contrast to previous researches, uses Multimodal Discourse Analysis (2006) to analyze the religious contents at linguistic and semiotic levels of primary-level English Textbooks published in 2022 of all four provinces of Pakistan. The analysis of data on the following levels distinguishes the present research from the previous researches:

1. What meaning is being made in the text?
2. How is meaning being made in the text?
3. What resources have been drawn on to make meanings in the text?
4. In what social environment is the meaning being made?
5. Whose interest and agency is at work in the making of meaning?

Definition of key terms that are used in this present research are described in the following section:

2.3 Ideology

The word ideology does not have a single clear definition and is used in a variety of ways. A set of principles that direct people's perceptions, interpretations, and interactions with the outside world are referred to as ideologies. Its most common use in everyday language is to describe a broad, cohesive set of political ideas and beliefs (e.g., liberalism, socialism, conservatism, etc.). It can cover a wide range of areas, including politics, the economy, culture, religion, and social standards. Ideologies are gradually acquired and changed throughout life. Ideologies are expressed mainly through spoken or written discourse.

Ideology plays a critical role in shaping human behavior and decision-making, as well as in influencing the formation of institutions and policies. Ideologies are conceptual frameworks that individuals use to make sense of the complex world around them. In order to help people organize their ideas and perceptions, they offer a lens through which they perceive information, experiences, and events. Author Tracy (1757-1836) and the French philosopher demonstrated that ideology is a set of beliefs or schools of ideas. There are as many schools of ideas as are human beings. Napoleon (1769-1821) introduced the term in a negative sense and also used it in his works. The term ideology has both positive and negative connotations. Positivity and negativity vary from person to person and group to group. Positive ideology for one may be otherwise for another group, so ideologies are constructed, propagated, and maintained through language (Fairclough, 1993). Ideologies provide a set of norms, values, and principles that direct behavior, which affects people's decisions and actions. They can influence people's behaviors and decisions in a variety of aspects of life by assisting them in understanding what is good or evil, right or wrong, and desirable or unwanted.

Ideologies have the power to inspire societal change by promoting new concepts and ideas that contradict the existing status. They may also result in conflicts between people and organizations that have opposing opinions, which may spark political discussions, social movements, or even acts of violence. Althusser (1971) argues that there are different types of ideological apparatuses, and he named them (ISA) and (RSA). ISA stands for ideological state apparatuses, and RSA stands for Repressive state apparatuses, so the discursive and coercive ideologies are propagated through these situations. And these institutions construct the desired version of reality for the target audience by using ideological language.

Ideologies have the power to shape group identities by fostering a sense of unity and belonging among people who hold similar beliefs and perspectives. By giving a group or community shared objectives and goals, they may promote a feeling of social cohesiveness. Dijk explains it as "the source of social demonstration shared by members of groups." Ideology is basically the ideas, opinions, and judgments of a person or a group of persons; it may be the thoughts of a collection of people. That's why it is not necessary that the ideologies, according to their perspective, are always true or correct; they may be true or false. Ideology brought many ideas and perspectives according to social, political, cultural, economic, and many other realms of life.

2.4 Worldview

In contrast to the term 'ideology', which is mostly regarded as a set of false or distorted' ideas and beliefs in society, on the other hand, the term 'world view' refers to a set of common ideas or beliefs prevailing in the society or, at least, the over shared by the people within each social class. According to Athuser (1959) and Tollefson, there is little difference between the term 'ideology' and the 'world view'. The word 'world view' is derived from the combination of two words 'welt' and 'anschauug,' which mean 'world' and 'view,' respectively. Rehman (2004) explains that the terms ideology and worldview have different meanings. According to him (2004), ideology is a narrow term, whereas worldview is a broader term. He further argues that ideology may be of an individual term, but a worldview is usually of a group of people or a sum party. However, in most often cases, they are overlapping terms.

Hawke (1996) opines that in the early twentieth century, the foundation of the postmodern era started, and Western society initiated to move from industrial manufacturing to the consumerism and exchange-based market. It was the start of the current era; then, capitalism was dominated by architecture, art, literature, music, cinema, media, technology and consumption, the internet, etc. People are influenced by all these gadgets with such images (carrying certain messages) that help create a consumer society. In short, we live in the era of representation and image. Giddens (1990) said that literature, painting, plastic art, and architecture create aesthetic reflection and pleasure upon the nature of modernity (cited in Edgar and Sedwick, 2005).

A German sociologist suggested the concept of Marxist ideology as a ruling idea. He criticized the notion that ideology does not have a strong link with class and

domination (cited in Edgar and Sedgwick, 2005). According to him, Marxism is the combination of idealism and materialism. He believes that different social classes, for example, the dominated and the dominant in a particular society, understand and represent the world in various ways.

Gramsci (1971) defines the term ideology in term of Marxism, materialism and determinism. He views ideology as a false consciousness. By the term false consciousness, he means that ideology is an ongoing process. Your true consciousness today may prove otherwise tomorrow or in the future. Therefore, he defines the term as false consciousness, which means that ideology can never be absolute.

2.5 Significance of Primary Education

Education is considered to be crucial to the development of a nation. All students have an equal and fair chance to obtain a high-quality education in a single system of education that unites curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Primary education serves as the foundation for students' knowledge, attitudes, and values, and during this crucial period, they are introduced to various subjects, including religious ideologies. A balanced representation of religious ideologies in primary education is very important. Primary textbooks are very significant because they built the ideology among the people.

Primary textbooks are very important in conveying the hidden message efficiently. They help the teacher plan yearly work properly. These textbooks are the reason to promote national goals like democracy, socialism, secularism, and national integration. It provides the overall growth and development of the child. It is also the reason for developing a sense of citizenship in community, country, and world. It also promotes the intellectual development of the child, which includes literacy in language, numeracy in mathematics, inquiry in scientific problem-solving in social studies, and inculcating values in Islamiat. It also develops the basic language skills. It is also very significant to create an understanding of the environment and the interaction among the human population. It is also the spirit of appreciation for religious and cultural activities. Primary teachers should be very innovative and have dimensional teaching methodological techniques to deal with or tackle both the students and the curriculum so that they can achieve the objectives.

2.6 Textbooks

Textbooks have a significant impact on the development and evolution of societies. According to Milton (1644), books are seen as superior to humans since they are immortal, while humans are mortal. It is obvious that the government of every nation constantly prioritizes the textbooks that are given to pupils. The content and structure of textbooks have a profound influence on students' cognitive, social, and emotional development. Textbooks frequently serve as the foundation for in-class exercises, debates, and evaluations that strengthen the learning process.

Textbooks help students develop critical thinking abilities by offering a variety of viewpoints and ideas, empowering them to assess, evaluate, and synthesize data from several sources. Public school textbooks, which are used by all students, are frequently found to have a strong Islamic emphasis. Pakistani religious minorities feel either being disregarded or entirely left out. References to Christians were frequently disrespectful and inaccurate, and Hindus, one of the religious minorities in Pakistan, were characterized negatively. Madrassas' textbook generally portrayed non-Muslims in one of the three ways.

- (i) Kafir (infidels) or shaken (Pagans)
- (ii) Dhimmis (non-Muslims living under Islamic rule)
- (iii) Murtids (postates), i.e., People who have turned away from Islam

In this regard, Hug (1970) stated that the curriculum design that aims to reorganize the entire content around Islamic ideas and give education an ideological orientation will be given top priority. This will allow Islamic ideology to permeate the thinking of the younger generation and provide them with the conviction and skills they need to reshape society in accordance with Islamic tendencies. In contemporary culture, the ideological mechanisms of language, which are embedded in textbook discourses to alter students' ideas of life and the world in ways that serve the interests of the state or the ruling class, are increasingly used to exercise control".

2.7 Significance of Textbooks

Textbooks play an important role in shaping students' minds, particularly during their formative years in primary education (Rehman, 2002). These educational resources act as the primary source of information and knowledge for young learners, guiding them

through various subjects and helping to instill essential concepts and values. As students absorb the information presented in textbooks, they develop their understanding of the world, form opinions, and create their belief systems. Mohammad (2015) argues that besides doing many things, textbooks can bring change as well.

Textbooks play a significant role in shaping students' attitudes toward different cultures, religions, and social groups. The representation of religious ideologies, gender roles, and cultural practices in textbooks can either promote inclusivity and tolerance or perpetuate stereotypes and biases. As students engage with the content of these textbooks, they internalize the messages conveyed, which can directly affect their behavior, attitudes, and relationships with others. It is essential to ensure that the content presented is accurate, balanced, and inclusive. This not only allows for a comprehensive understanding of various subjects but also helps to foster a learning environment that promotes tolerance, understanding, and respect for diversity.

2.8 Meaningful Language in Textbooks

Meaning-making depends not only on what is explicit in a text but also on what is implicit. Analysis of implicit can provide valuable insights into what is taken or given as common sense. Meaningful language in a text refers to language that is clear, relevant, and engaging, specifically tailored to connect with the reader's existing knowledge and experiences. For primary-class students, this type of language is particularly important as it not only aids in comprehension but also fosters a deeper connection with the material. By using meaningful language, educators can enhance students' learning by making concepts more accessible and relatable, which promotes better retention and understanding. This approach is crucial for young learners as it helps build a solid foundation in reading and comprehension skills, encouraging a lifelong interest in learning. Textbooks are very important in propagating messages and ideologies, whether to write in the textbook or not, how to write certain things or when to write, and what the exact time is to propagate ideologies in textbooks. The messages in the textbooks adjust people's thinking in such a way that they accept the current way of doing things and current understanding of their roles in society. They develop a sense of accepted behavior (Lye, 1997).

2.9 Ideology in Textbooks

Textbooks seem to be more than they actually are. The state has employed socializing or opinion-molding literature to achieve this to varied degrees because identity is preserved by defining boundaries, by having the other define what we are not, by drawing contrasts and oppositions, and by underplaying commonalities and overemphasizing differences. Texts that explicitly describe the world, make judgments about it, and shape our attitudes toward it are known as opinion-molding texts. Political Science, philosophy, religion, and history all talk about where we fit in the world. Texts in languages tell us more about the world than they do about languages. Authors intended for language learners were utilized to support the authors' ideological ideas. These texts were purposefully Islamized by the state, and new textbooks that were Pakistanized and Islamized were first taught in several schools in April 1952.

The textbooks' ideological elements are so subtle that it is difficult to recognize them. Pakistani textbooks are designed not merely to reinforce language's ideological components or to use language as a tool for teaching and learning but also to promote the country's Islamization agenda. In many schools, these Pakistani and Islamized textbooks were first used in 1952. The main goal is to persuade others to believe what the so-called syllabus designer considers to be true. The governments have propagated their views to others through socialization and opinion manipulation. They are so undercover that it is nearly hard to seek them out, and they define the world directly rather than allowing people to form their own ideas.

2.10 Religion

According to the definition of Jalal-Din Rumi, "The lamps are different, but the light is the same." According to John Ayto's Dictionary of Word Origins, the Latin "Religio" originally meant "obligation, bond." It was probably derived from the verb *Religare*, 'tie back, tie tight'; it developed the specialized sense of "bond between human beings and the Gods." Religion is a system of beliefs, practices, and rituals centered around a higher power or spiritual principles, which govern the moral and philosophical outlook of its followers. When defining religion and examining its historical representation in textbooks, it is crucial to consider how religions have been portrayed over time and the impact of these depictions on cultural and educational perceptions. Textbooks often serve as primary educational resources, and the way they represent

religion can influence generations of learners. The accuracy, depth, and balance of religious content are essential to foster an understanding and respect for diverse beliefs. For Muslims, the representation of Islam in textbooks is especially significant. Accurate and respectful depiction in educational materials is vital for Muslim children to understand their cultural and religious heritage deeply. It helps nurture a positive self-identity and promotes a comprehensive understanding of the teachings and history of their faith.

2.11 Religious Contents in Textbooks

In Pakistan, Textbooks are essential tools for imparting education to young learners, and the religious content in these resources plays a significant role in shaping students' understanding of different belief systems. Primary English textbooks in Pakistan typically include content that reflects the country's predominant religion, Islam. These textbooks may contain passages, stories, or poems that revolve around Islamic values, teachings, and historical events. However, Pakistan is a diverse country with various religious groups, and it is essential to ensure that other religious beliefs, such as Christianity, Hinduism, and Sikhism, are also fairly represented to promote inclusivity and understanding among students.

Religious content in primary English textbooks in Pakistan is often integrated into various subjects, such as moral education, history, and social studies. Additionally, religious themes may be present in language exercises, comprehension passages, and creative writing prompts. By incorporating religious content in different aspects of the curriculum, textbooks contribute to students' holistic understanding of diverse religious perspectives. The linguistic and visual elements of primary English textbooks play a critical role in conveying religious content to young learners. The choice of words, phrases, and sentence structures can shape students' perceptions of different religious ideologies.

Similarly, illustrations, photographs, and other visual elements can reinforce or contradict the textual content, thereby influencing students' understanding of religious themes. Textbooks can propagate beliefs through the use of visual and verbal practices. The combination of words and visuals makes a more precise portrayal of religious content possible since one medium may support and enhance the other. It results in a more thorough comprehension of the subject.

2.12 Significance of Language in Textbooks

The language in the textbook is significant. It not only conveys explicit meaning but there are also some hidden messages or meanings in the text, which are called implicit meanings. These implicit meanings are significant for the analysis of text as in common sense. Textbooks contain many different key terms laden in it. Such parts of speech contain different meanings in a definite way, such as diction, adjectives, pronouns, nouns, etc. In the textbook, there is also the concept of powerful and powerless to enjoy superiority over the powerless. It also explains religion, philosophy, History, political sciences, etc. These ideological themes are so covert that only some can easily identify them with a deep analysis of the text. Textbooks can also shape students' language development and communication skills. The language used in textbooks, both in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure, serves as a model for students to follow and emulate. By exposing young learners to a wide range of linguistic styles and registers, textbooks help students develop their language proficiency and adapt their communication skills to various contexts. Language acquisition is a political and ideological process. As Spitulnik (1998, p. 193) puts it, "language is a marker of society." According to Fairclough (1989), language serves as the primary domain of ideology and plays a crucial role in power struggles.

2.13 Discourse

Discourse in linguistics refers to the use of spoken or written language in a social context. It encompasses not just the structure of sentences but also the flow of conversation or text, examining how meaning is constructed and understood through extended stretches of communication. Different scholars define discourse from various perspectives:

- Michel Foucault saw discourse as a system of representation, focusing on how knowledge and power are constructed through language.
- Michael Halliday approached discourse through functional grammar, considering how language choices are shaped by and shape social interactions.
- Deborah Tannen emphasized the interactive nature of discourse, exploring how meaning is negotiated in conversation.

Discourse analysis in linguistics seeks to reveal the underlying social norms, power structures, and ideologies embedded in language use. It is a tool for understanding how language functions in different contexts and how it influences and is influenced by the social settings in which it is used. This approach helps in discerning patterns and functions of language that go beyond grammatical or lexical studies, offering insights into the broader social and cultural implications of language. Blommaert (2005) elaborates on discourse as "linguistics and non-linguistics features both are present in discourse. To him, discourse consists of all the forms of essential semiotic human activities. These semantic human activities are closely represented through the relation with societal, conventional, historical pattern, cultural, and advancement of use" (2005). In the definition of discourse, he used semiotic elements with proper use of connotations. All human actions, including verbal and non-verbal, carry certain ideological messages in them.

Kress, Leite- Garci and Van Leeuwen (1997) introduced the same concept but from different angles and modes. According to them, in discourse, oral or spoken communication is as important and meaningful as written language and text. It exists as one symbolic factor in the text, which is always multi-model, and it has to be read in conjunction with all other semiotics modes of that text. Foucault (1972) observes a close relationship between discourse and ideology. He believes that ideologies are constructed and propagated through discourses. So, language and discourse are a medium to convey your ideas to others.

2.14 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to studying how language reflects, perpetuates, and challenges power structures within society. It examines the ways in which discourse constructs, maintains, and legitimizes social inequalities and power imbalances. Norman Fairclough (2013) emphasizes the role of language in social practice and argues that discourse is a key way power is exercised and resisted in society. He views CDA as a method for analyzing the dynamic relationships between discourse and social and cultural change.

Van Dijk (2015) focuses on how discourse structures contribute to the reproduction of power abuse by dominant groups. His approach is particularly concerned with the way discourse influences societal structures, such as racism and political control.

Ruth Wodak (2014) explores the historical and institutional contexts of discourse, using a discourse-historical approach to study the ways in which language contributes to the construction of social identities and political ideologies. CDA seeks not only to understand the role of language in societal dynamics but also to actively intervene, promoting awareness and change. It is driven by a commitment to social justice and aims to uncover the hidden functions of language that contribute to domination and inequality. This approach to linguistic analysis is critical because it doesn't just describe linguistic features but also interprets them within broader social contexts to reveal underlying power relations.

2.15 Representation

Representation means to describe someone or something in a particular way so that the people form a particular opinion about them; thus, it means a mark or sign of someone or something particular. Representations in language are the words that stand for different ideas, concepts, facts, emotions, etc. Similarly, in politics, elected politicians represent the people of their country in parliament. For mutual understanding, "representations rely on existing and culturally understood signs and images, on the learned reciprocity of language and various signifying or textual systems" (Hartley, 2004).

We know and learn realities through the functional aspect of language or sign systems. Representations in this context are termed signifiers and a concrete form of language. Things in our political, social, and cultural life are represented by a process of selection of signs, such as gender, class, groups, nation, etc. It is, therefore, important that in discourses, certain signs are preferred to others to represent something or someone. This phenomenon is termed the ideological function of representation in language.

2.16 Semiotics

Saussure defines semiotics as a science that studies the life of signs within society. He is of the view that language is also a semiotic among other sign systems. According to him, semiotics is culturally oriented and carries a bundle of interpretations. Further, it is mentioned that our senses are culturally trained to extract meanings from these signs. Therefore, Peirce (1998) asserts that signs cannot be decoded without having sound knowledge of culture and context. He includes fashion, boxing, hairstyle, perfumes, etc., in the system of science.

Similarly, Fawcett et al. (1984) argued that the meanings associated with signs are never static. Rather, dynamic change in culture or cultural semiotics asserts in assigning meaning to the semiotics. Therefore, semiology studies the life of signs within a particular society, and hence, no finality can be had in this regard.

2.17 Semiotic Discourses of Textbooks

Religious ideologies are constructed, propagated, and shaped with the help of semiotic and linguistic discourses in primary textbooks of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They are used to build and propagate the desired religious ideologies. Primary textbooks are very important in conveying the hidden message efficiently. They help the teacher in the right planning of yearly work. These textbooks are the reason to promote national goals like democracy, socialism, secularism, and national integration. It provides the overall growth and development of the child. It is also the reason for developing a sense of citizenship in community, country, and world. It also promotes the intellectual development of the child, which includes literacy in language, numeracy in Mathematics, inquiry in Science, problem-solving in Social Studies, and inculcating values in Islamic Studies. It also develops the basic language skills. It is also very significant to create an understanding of the environment and the interaction among the human population. It is also the spirit of appreciation for religious and cultural activities. Primary teachers should be very innovative and have dimensional teaching methodological techniques to deal with or tackle both the students and the curriculum so that they can achieve the objectives.

2.18 Multimodality

Multimodality refers to the use of multiple modes or channels of communication to convey meaning, including verbal (text), visual (images), auditory (sound), and gestural (body language) elements. With the development of technology, multimodality has grown popular and has led to a regular use of visual imagery in language textbooks. In the context of primary-level textbooks, multimodality plays a crucial role in creating engaging and effective learning materials that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. The multimodal method has a wider application as it can recognize many ways that gestures, vector positions, attitudes, postures, and expressions in a picture are used to chase the objective of thought. Textbook authors use all of these techniques in

addition to including visuals in their texts. Furthermore, a single scope of multimodality is unattainable in this progressive and dynamic world (Bezemer and Kress, 2015).

The portrayal of images in primary-level textbooks can benefit significantly from multimodal approaches, as images can enhance textual content by providing visual cues, adding context, and stimulating students' imagination. Images can also simplify complex concepts. Textbooks can propagate beliefs through both spoken and visual means. A more precise portrayal of religious content is made possible by the combination of words and visuals since one medium may support and enhance the other, resulting in a more thorough and in-depth comprehension of the subject.

Visual practices include illustrations, images, diagrams, sketches, and maps that can represent religious beliefs. Subtle messages on power dynamics, hierarchy, and the importance of particular religious rituals or beliefs may also be conveyed through visual aspects. For instance, a religious group's relative relevance or prominence in the textbook may be shown by the arrangement, size, and color of illustrations related to that group. Verbal practices comprise literary materials that describe religious concepts, beliefs, and behaviors with particular words, phrases, and tales. Language choices can implicitly or explicitly promote certain ideologies by emphasizing specific aspects of religion, using loaded terms, or presenting biased perspectives. When combined, visual and verbal practices can create a powerful and persuasive portrayal of religious ideologies in primary-level textbooks.

2.19 Language and Culture

Culture and language are interrelated. Every language class includes learning about the cultures of the people who speak the language as a language is a reflection of a culture (Starkey, 1999). According to Joseph (2006), languages are historical constructions with a political process at their core. Language ideologies are significant for social and linguistic studies because they go beyond language. Language ideologies are "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests," according to Irvine (1998, p. 56). According to Starkey (1999), teaching culture has political undertones. He contends that taking foreign language classes is an important way to educate students about politics.

The religious content in primary English textbooks in Pakistan is often presented within a broader cultural context. This approach helps students appreciate the connections

between religious beliefs and cultural practices, which can promote a deeper understanding of the diverse heritage of Pakistan. According to Fairclough (1989), "language connects with the social entity by being the major domain of ideology, and by being both a site of, and a stake in, power conflicts" (Fairclough, 1989).

2.20 Language and Power

Power is more than an authoritative voice in decision-making: its most potent form is the ability to define social reality and to impose visions of the world. Such visions are inscribed in language and enacted in interaction (Gal, 1979). Language and power are interdependent. Power influences language use, and language, in turn, can reinforce or challenge power structures. Michel Foucault argues that language is a medium through which power relations are established and maintained. He posits that power is not merely repressive but also productive, shaping knowledge, discourse, and societal norms (Foucault, 1977). Norman Fairclough further explores this relationship. He contends that language contributes to the construction of social identities and relationships, as well as systems of knowledge and belief (Fairclough, 1989). According to Fairclough, language practices can either sustain or contest social hierarchies and power imbalances.

Talbot et al. (2003) highlight that Foucault views power as a force circulating through social interactions, with individuals acting as vehicles rather than mere targets of power. Standard language forms are often associated with authority and prestige, marginalizing dialects and non-standard varieties. This standardization process reinforces social inequalities, as those who speak the 'standard' language are perceived as more educated or competent. Persuasive language, or rhetoric, is a powerful tool for influencing others. Politicians, advertisers, and leaders use rhetorical strategies to shape beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Language plays a crucial role in articulating, maintaining, and challenging power dynamics within society. Through language, ideologies can be spread, shaping people's beliefs and molding their perceptions. Language not only reflects power but also helps achieve and demonstrate it. Political power, for example, exists through language, which reflects the realities of dominant groups (de Saussure, 1989).

Wodak (1989) and Kress (1989) argue that in modern democratic societies, power is more persuasive than coercive. Language does not appear in isolation; it represents systems of linguistic terms that realize discursive and ideological frameworks. Van Dijk

(1991) notes that language effectively controls group attitudes and ideologies, making audiences act according to the interests of the powerful, seemingly out of their own free will.

2.21 Theoretical Framework

This section critically reviews the existing relevant theories about discourse analysis, language power politics, language and gender, sociological discourse analysis, etc. For the theoretical framework, the researchers who contributed a lot in this domain are Fairclough, Wodak, Van Dijk, Halliday, Bathes, Kress, and Van Leeuwen. Fairclough and Wodak introduced eight principles of Critical Discourse Analysis. They are inclined to address social problems. They focus not only on language use but also on the linguistic characteristics of social and cultural processes.

Moreover, according to them, power relations are discursive; that is, CDA explains how social relations of power are exercised and negotiated in and through discourse. They argue that there is a close relationship between language and culture, and discourse constitutes society and culture. Language shapes culture, and it is shaped by culture. According to Wodak and Fairclough, discourses are embedded with ideologies, and all the discourses work on those ideologies. To understand how ideologies are produced, we have not to analyze the text as a discursive practice; instead, we must consider how the text is interpreted and received and what social effects they have. Fairclough's works refer to both "written and spoken language." He emphasizes the multi-semiotic character of text. He adds visual images and sound- using the example of television language as other semiotic forms that may be simultaneously present in the text.

Discourse contains history, and without the understanding of the background or historical perspective of that particular text, we cannot completely understand the context. also, we can never claim that it is the exact meaning and interpretation of the selected text, but it is a possible analysis. This term is considered as extra linguistics factors such as culture, society, and ideology in historical terms. They introduced the idea that the link between text and society is mediated. Critical Discourse Analysis of the text is concerned with making connections between socio-cultural processes, structures, and properties of texts. CDA goes beyond the textual analysis. It is not only interpretative but also

explanatory in text. These interpretations and explanations are dynamic and are never absolute and open; they may be affected by new reading and new contextual information.

Van Dijk (1997) elaborated on the text further by adding a socio-cognitive element to his study. The four pillars of Dijk's methodology are action, context, power, and ideology. Van Dijk and Gee approached the same subject from different perspectives. Gee subdivided his work on methodological heuristics into six categories: political building, connection building, identity and relationship building, semiotic building, world-building, and activity building. The emphasis on social elements, including action, context, power, and ideology, is what distinguishes Dijk and Gee.

2.22 Semiological Analysis

The term semiology is defined by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1974), who coined the word as meaning the scientific study of signs. The study of signs and symbols is known as semiology. Word "signs" always operate within the bounds of social meanings and traditions since, for our purposes, they stand for concepts and things as well as communication. Additionally, semiology highlights that the link between signals and their location within a communication system is what gives meaning, not the sign itself. Semiology urges us to set aside our everyday experiences with language in order to view it in a less naturalized light. It accomplishes this by generating a number of binary oppositions, some of which have consequences for how we study language across a wide range of fields. French critic Roland Barthes (1974) also inclined towards a semiological perspective and developed an influential model of Semiological Analysis, which is divided into three orders of signification (Iconic, Identical & Indexical level). It is useful in the way that it sets out a developmental relationship within meaning from lower to complex levels of association within language.

The theoretical framework for the present research draws upon two major theories: Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) model of Multimodal Discourse Analysis and Krueger's (2002) model of Focus Group Discussion. These theories will be employed to explore the propagation of religious ideologies in primary English Textbooks in Pakistan through visual and verbal practices (text and images).

2.23 Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) Model of Multimodal Discourse

Analysis

The theory posits that meaning-making is a complex process involving the interplay of multiple modes of communication, such as text, images, and sound. In the context of this study, Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) model has been employed to investigate the interaction between visual and verbal practices in primary English textbooks and how these multimodal elements work together to convey religious ideologies. By examining the interrelation of text and images, the study uncovers the ways in which religious content is effectively communicated through the combined use of various modes. Important features of this theory are:

1. What meaning is being made in the text?
2. How is meaning being made in the text?
3. What resources have been drawn on to make meanings in the text?
4. In what social environment is the meaning being made?
5. Whose interest and agency is at work in the making of meaning?

This framework is a comprehensive approach to understanding how meaning is made through various modes of communication beyond traditional text. It proposes a detailed method for analyzing the visual and other semiotic resources that contribute to the construction of meaning in a text or communication piece. Here are some key components of the framework:

- Semiotic Modes
- Visual Grammar
- Representational Meaning
- Interactive Meaning
- Compositional Meaning
- Social Semiotics
- Multimodal Discourse Analysis
- Design and Production
- The Reader's Role

2.24 Krueger's (2002) Model of Focus Group Discussion

The model provides a framework for conducting focus group discussions as a means of data collection. Two focus group discussions were conducted among the students who were MPhil in English Linguistics and the students of other disciplines at the same level. Generally, it is believed that people belonging to linguistics decode semiotic discourses following the rules and regulations of semiology. They usually don't go beyond these limits, but the participants who are qualified in other domains of knowledge may decode the visual discourses in a different manner. So, in order to incorporate the perception and interpretation of the people who are qualified in linguistics and in other domains of knowledge, the researcher incorporates the remarks of focus group participants in the semiotic analysis. The data collected from the focus group discussions are analyzed at the following levels of Krueger's model (2002):

- Words
- Context
- Internal Consistency
- Frequency
- Extensiveness
- Finding the big idea
- Specificity of Responses
- Intensity

2.25 Summary

This chapter has introduced the relative literature, work already done, operational definitions, and theoretical framework by analyzing work already done. The researcher has generated a gap for the present research. Similarly, by analyzing the theoretical framework by critically reading the existing theories in the field, the researcher is going to devise the conceptual framework that has been used in the methodology section.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter explains the methodological perspective in the present study, along with the justification of models. This chapter also deals with the source of data collection and sampling techniques. The present research employs a mixed-method approach with a focus on the qualitative aspect. The research study draws upon two theories - Multimodality by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) and Focus Group Discussion by Krueger (2002) to analyze the religious content in textbooks. The research model will be employed to analyze the data consisting of three modes: linguistic, semiotic and focus group discussion. However, the following section discusses in detail the methodology used here.

3.1 Research Approach

The present study employs mixed-method research with a focus on the qualitative aspect. The research employs content analysis as a quantitative method to support the qualitative analysis. The multimodal discourse analysis method has been used to analyze the collected data and to locate religious ideologies embedded in the primary English Textbooks of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Baluchistan Board. This model is helpful in developing meaning from lower to complex levels. The qualitative analysis involves a thorough examination of the textual and visual content of primary English textbooks to identify and decode the underlying religious ideologies. Focus group discussions are conducted with the students of MPhil English Linguistics and the students of other disciplines at the same level to analyze images and incorporate general opinions to validate the researcher's analysis. In this way, the researcher analyzed semiotic discourses of the selected primary English textbooks to determine how much the interpretations and perceptions of the general audience match the interpretation of the researcher.

3.2 Multimodality

Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2006) worked on Multimodality, which refers to the theory and study of communication and meaning through the use of multiple modes beyond just linguistic or textual forms. Modes can include visual, auditory, gestural, spatial, and linguistic means of communication. This perspective challenges

traditional notions that prioritize language as the primary means of communication, suggesting instead that meaning is made in complex ways across different modes. From a terminological perspective, the term "multimodal" within the field of linguistics is associated with the understanding that meaning is conveyed not solely through verbal language but also through other semiotic channels such as visuals, sounds, or gestures. Kress and Leeuwen (1996) believe that communication involves more than just text. They point out that several other forms, like gestures, the way we stand and look, and the visual design of images and graphics, also play a key role in how we communicate. The concept of using multiple forms for communication, or Multimodality, has been expanded upon in this study, especially through examining the meanings behind chosen images, known as semiotic analysis. Our society is filled with various signs, symbols, and images that help us communicate with each other. Barthes (1995) mentioned that signs are everywhere in the world. Meaning-making is a complex process involving the interplay of multiple modes of communication, such as text, images, and sound. In the context of this study, Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) model is employed to investigate the interaction between visual and verbal practices in primary English textbooks and how these multimodal elements work together to convey religious ideologies. By examining the interrelation of text and images, the study uncovers the ways in which religious content is effectively communicated through the combined use of various modes. Important features of this theory are:

1. What meaning is being made in the text?
2. How is meaning being made in the text?
3. What resources have been drawn on to make meanings in the text?
4. In what social environment is the meaning being made?
5. Whose interest and agency is at work in the making of meaning?

Multimodal Discourse Analysis provides a framework for analyzing how meaning is constructed through various semiotic modes beyond traditional linguistic text. This approach recognizes that communication and meaning-making are complex processes that involve not just spoken or written language but also other modes such as visual images, gestures, music, layout, and design. When applying Multimodal Discourse Analysis to linguistic and semiotic texts, researchers look at how the textual elements (words, syntax, narrative structure) and semiotic elements (images, layout, typography)

are used together to construct meaning. For instance, in analyzing a textbook, the researcher might examine how the choice of images supports the information presented in the text, how the layout guides the reader's attention and structures their understanding, and how the use of color or font style contributes to the overall meaning of the text. Through Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Kress and Van Leeuwen enable a deeper understanding of texts as complex constructs that engage multiple senses and cognitive processes in the construction and interpretation of meaning. This approach is particularly valuable in educational settings, where textbooks and other resources are designed to communicate complex information in accessible and engaging ways.

3.3 Research Instrument

Previous research and theoretical models developed by earlier scholars were thoroughly examined, and these play crucial roles in qualitative research. This study has chosen to adopt the framework by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) as its primary tool due to its relevance to the study's research questions.

This framework is a comprehensive approach to understanding how meaning is made through various modes of communication beyond traditional text. Their work, notably presented in "Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design" (first published in 1996 and updated in later editions), proposes a detailed method for analyzing the visual and other semiotic resources that contribute to the construction of meaning in a text or communication piece. Here are some key components of the framework:

1) Semiotic Modes

Kress and van Leeuwen identify several semiotic modes through which meaning can be conveyed, including linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and multimodal (which integrates several modes). Each mode has its grammar or rules that govern its use.

2) Visual Grammar

They introduce the concept of visual grammar, which consists of three main components:

i. Representational Meaning

It refers to how visual elements represent the world, which can be narrative (showing action and interaction) or conceptual (showing essence and classification).

ii. Interactive Meaning

It refers to how visuals engage viewers, considering aspects like contact, distance, and attitude.

iii. Compositional Meaning

It means how the elements of a visual are arranged, including information value (placement), salience (focus), and framing (connections and separations).

3) Social Semiotics

Their framework is grounded in social semiotics, which suggests that meanings are not fixed but are shaped by cultural and social contexts. This approach allows for the analysis of how different communities use and interpret various semiotic modes.

4) Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Kress and Van Leeuwen extend their visual grammar to multimodal discourse analysis, examining how texts combine modes (e.g., text, image, layout) to create meaning. This involves looking at how different modes complement or contradict each other and how they work together to influence the audience's interpretation.

5) Design and Production

They emphasize the role of design in communication, focusing on how creators make choices about which modes to use and how to use them based on the intended message and the anticipated audience response.

6) The Reader's Role

Kress and van Leeuwen also highlight the active role of the reader or viewer in interpreting multimodal texts, recognizing that individuals bring their own cultural, social, and personal contexts to the interpretation process.

This framework for multimodality is influential in various fields, including media studies, education, and communication, offering tools for analyzing the complex ways in which modern texts and media communicate meaning. In this study, the researcher uses Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) framework because it effectively moves from a simple to a detailed examination of the text, images, and other visual and verbal elements. It starts with word choice and progresses to how sentences are constructed across various types of communication. It analyzes the text and images that how they both work together to

communicate ideas and ideologies. MMDA seeks to uncover the underlying causes and connections in how language is used in practice by looking beyond just text to include images, layout, and other visual elements. Multimodality offers a richer and more complete analysis of how textbooks communicate ideas.

3.4 Data and Data Sources

In the present research, data is selected from four English textbooks: Punjab English Textbook, Sindh English Textbook, Baluchistan English Textbook, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa English Textbook of Class 5. The Punjab English textbook is published by the Punjab Textbook Board Lahore (PTB), the Sindh English Textbook is published by the Sindh Textbook Board Jamshoro (STB), the Balochistan English textbook is published by Balochistan Textbook Board Quetta (BTB), and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa English Textbook is published by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board Peshawar (KPTB). The four mentioned books were purposively selected for the present research published in 2022.

Punjab English Textbook (PTB), Balochistan English Textbook (BTB), and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa English Textbook (KPTB) are based on the Single National Curriculum (SNC) 2020, so the content of these three textbooks is the same. However, the content of the Sindh Textbook Board (STB) is different from the other three textbooks. PTB, BTB, and KPTB contain 14 lessons, while its counterpart Sindh English Textbook contains 5 lessons. The researcher has collected data from the various chapters of the mentioned books embodying religious contents like faith in Allah (God), honesty, truthfulness, union is strength, following the Sunnah of Prophet (PBUH), etc., from linguistic and semiotic discourses. Besides, the researcher has also focused only on the contents of the English textbooks that carry religious ideology, specifically about Islam.

Similarly, the participants for the FGD were selected on the basis of convenient sampling. This is how the data for the present research was selected through purpose and convents sampling. Moreover, the data have also been collected by conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGD) among the students of MPhil English Linguistics and the students of other disciplines at the same level. This data is available in the form of visual recording and has also been transcribed.

3.5 Focus Group Discussion

A common critique of multimodal discourse analysis or qualitative research is the belief that it often reflects the biases of the researcher's interpretation of the text, potentially overlooking the broader message's perception. To address such critiques, focus group discussions are frequently conducted to either confirm or challenge the researcher's semiotic analysis. This approach helps determine how well the researcher's interpretations align with the general public's perceptions of the semiotics being studied. In line with this approach, the current study adopts this method and gathers data through focus group discussions to ensure that the analysis considers a wider range of perspectives. In this regard, two focus group discussions were conducted among the students of M.Phil. English Linguistics and the students of other disciplines at the same level because it is usually supposed that the students of linguistics try to decode the visual discourses in accordance with some specified rules of linguistics and semiotics, and up to some extent, their perception may match with the researchers' perception as well. So, one group of participants consisted of students of M.Phil. English Linguistics and the rationale behind the inclusion of students of other disciplines is to know whether or not the students of other disciplines (MPhil Islamic Studies, MSc Psychology, MSc Mathematics, etc.) also decode the semiotic discourses like the students of linguistics. The duration of each focus group discussion was 1 hour. Each discussion has been visually recorded as well (CD available).

The rationale behind the selection of English linguists and other discipline participants for the discussion is to know multiple views about the semiotics carrying religious ideologies selected from the four primary English textbooks under consideration. English linguists typically analyze semiotic discourses through established semiotic theories and concentrate on the various linguistic strategies employed within the texts. While their interpretations tend to converge to some degree, the inclusion of participants from other disciplines aims to broaden the scope of analysis. Therefore, in order to address this issue, the researcher has also conducted a focus group discussion of one hour among both participants as well to know their interpretations and perceptions. Moreover, the data was collected by conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGD) among students in MPhil English linguistics and other disciplines. This data is available in the form of visual recording and has also been transcribed. It has been done to understand the concept of word-picture conjunctions.

The focus group participants were lecturers at NUML Multan. They were divided into two groups: one group consisted of Lecturers with an MPhil in English Linguistics, and the other group consisted of Lecturers with MPhils in other disciplines (Education, Islamic Studies, International Relations, Marketing, Psychology). Both groups were given the selected images one week before the scheduled discussions.

The researcher repeatedly kept reminding them about the purpose and date of the discussions. They were once again briefed on the nature of the discussion, and they were asked to express their views about the semiotic discourses they were previously handed over. However, students from other disciplines were also allowed to express their views in languages other than English. This was done to extract first-hand data from them. Both the groups of participants were of mixed genders (male and female), whose ages ranged from 25-40 years. This was purposely done to inculcate the people representative of all ages in order to maximize the finding of the study that these participants were the representative of male and female genders. The willing participants among the English linguists were invited to the Focus Group Discussion. The data collected from the focus group discussions has been analyzed at the following levels of Krueger's model (2002), and these levels have been defined operationally:

3.5.1 Words

It refers to the usage of specific words and phrases by the participants in the discussion. The researcher critically analyzes the words and their meanings to locate religious ideology and to understand how similar the responses are in the discussion.

3.5.2 Context

Responses come in reaction to something—either a question from the moderator or a remark from another participant. This means that when a participant has expressed his/her ideas, the researcher has to analyze whether it is his/her own idea or the idea of another participant. To understand a response fully, the researcher looks at what prompted it and considers the environment of the discussion, including the tone and emphasis of the spoken words.

3.5.3 Internal Consistency

During discussions, participants may alter or completely change their views after interacting with others. It means how consistent a participant has been during the

discussion in his/her stance. If opinions shift, the researcher looks at the discussion's flow to find hints that could explain why these changes occurred.

3.5.4 Frequency

This refers to the regular occurrence of a concept within discussions, as each conversation centers around a particular topic. Some themes are more frequent or in greater detail. It indicates their importance or special interest to the group. It is also valuable to note which topics were not discussed or barely touched upon, considering if certain expected topics were absent. In this study, the focus was on identifying religious ideologies within the context of four primary English textbooks. The theme that emerged most often in the discussions was how religious ideologies are depicted through the text and images used in the textbooks.

3.5.5 Specificity of Responses

This approach helps in determining the relevance or irrelevance of remarks made about the specified topic during the discussion. It assists in recognizing when participants might be distracted or not fully focused during the conversation. Detailed responses based on personal experiences are generally more significant than broad or general answers.

3.5.6 Extensiveness

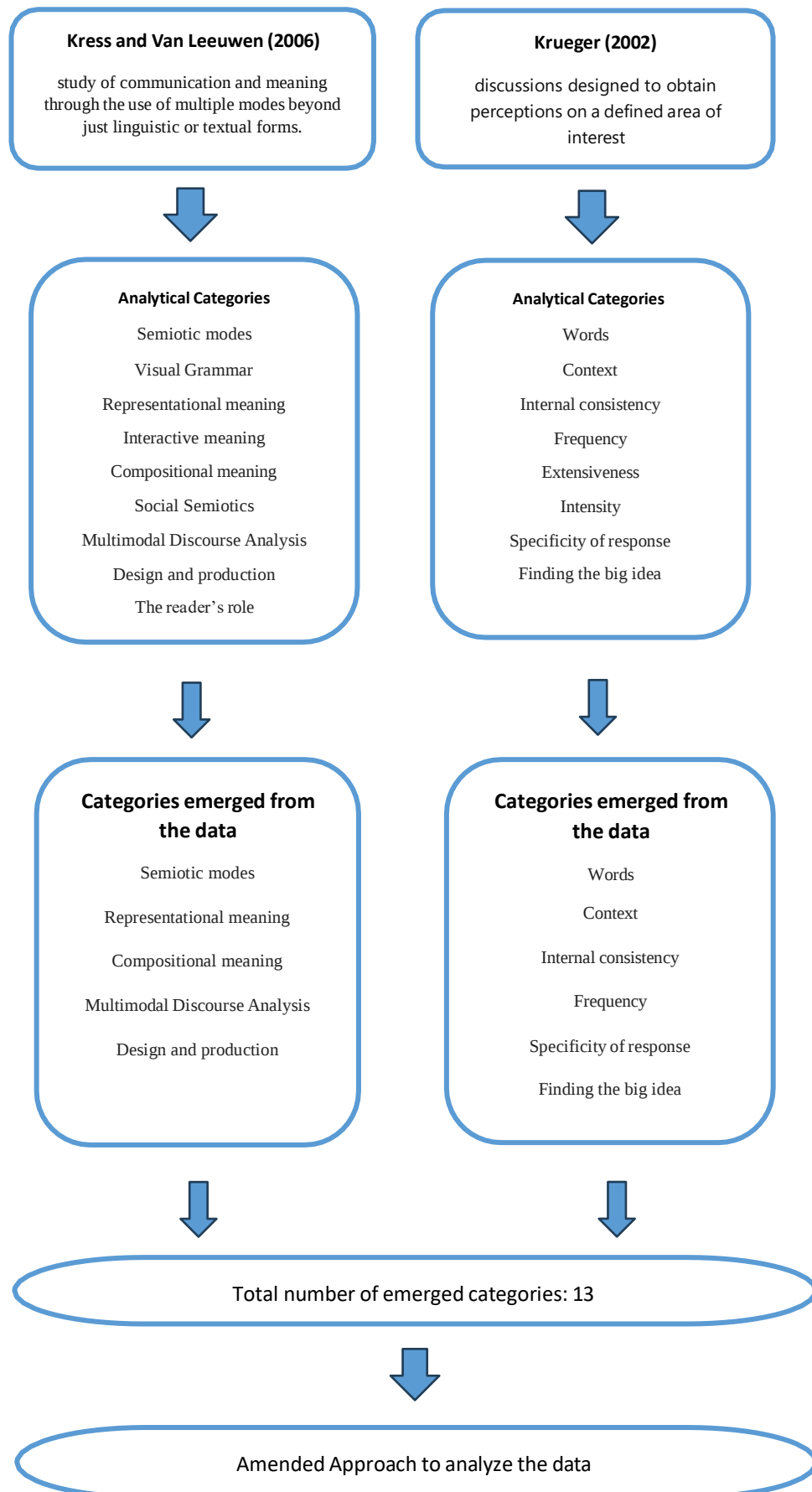
Extensiveness refers to the number of people who make a particular comment about a particular topic. It tells the researcher the degree of agreement and disagreement among the participants on a topic. This technique has been useful in analyzing focus group data.

3.5.7 Finding the Big Idea

The term big idea refers to the overall impression of the discussions. After completing the analysis, it is helpful to take a break and then revisit the findings to highlight the three or four most important themes. Getting input from assistant moderators or others experienced in qualitative analysis helps in confirming these central themes. The big idea that emerged during the discussions conducted for the present research was the propagation of religious ideologies through linguistic and semiotic texts of the selected primary textbooks. All the participants agreed that different linguistic and visual techniques have been used to propagate religious ideologies to young learners through the contents of selected textbooks.

3.6 Devised Model

The data has been purposively selected from linguistic and semiotic discourses in the selected English textbooks. The analysis of linguistic texts has been done at word-sentence and discourse levels to lay bare religious ideologies embedded in the Primary English textbooks of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. Multimodal Discourse Analysis has been used to analyze the visual and verbal contents of the selected textbooks. The analysis comprises micro and macro levels. The levels of focus group data analysis are discussed in detail in the chapter titled "Focus Group Findings," with the relevant examples picked from the discussion of participants. The devised model and its different categories used in the present research have been discussed below;



3.7 Participants of Focus Group Discussion

Two focus group discussions were conducted for data collection regarding religious ideologies in English textbooks at the primary level of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. One group consisted of participants who were MPhil in English Linguistics, and the other group consisted of participants who were MPhil in other disciplines such as Education, Islamic Studies, International Relations, Marketing, and Psychology. The age of the participants ranges from 25 to 40. Each group consisted of 6 participants, and the duration of the discussion was one hour each. The purpose behind this heterogenization of mixed genders has been to collect first-hand data on the selected semiotics from the participants in order to generalize the findings of focus group data.

3.8 Procedure

One week before the conduction of focus group discussions, material (semiotics embodying religious content) was provided to the participants. The researcher jotted down lexical items and the frequency of themes used during the discussions. However, a moderator assisted the researcher in managing the Focus Group Discussion and in the transcription of the Focus Group Data.

3.9 Important themes

In the semiotic and linguistic analyses of primary-level English textbooks, the following themes have been found;

1. Islam as a religion of enlightenment
2. Morality
3. Faith in God
4. Patriotism and Religion
5. Women Rights
6. Truthfulness
7. Human Rights
8. Honesty

3.10 Amended Model Table

The following amended model has been purposefully devised for the present research. The inclusion and exclusion of analytical categories from the mentioned research model were done after critically examining the data, which included linguistics, semiotics, and the remarks of focus group participants. The following table reproduces the list of the analytical categories used in the research.

For Multimodality

- Semiotic modes
- Representational meaning
- Compositional meaning
- Multimodal Discourse Analysis
- Design and production

For Focus Group Discussion

- Words
- Context
- Internal consistency
- Frequency
- Specificity of Responses
- Finding a Big Idea

3.11 Justification of Models

The data used in the present research comprises three modes (Linguistic, semiotic, and remarks of focus group participants). Therefore, a Multimodal discourse approach has been operationalized to analyze the data. The rationale behind using Focus Group Discussions was to have an in-depth ideological analysis of the semiotics selected from the four books. That is why Krueger's model (FGD) has been used.

3.12 Summary and Discussions

In this section, the researcher has discussed the methodological framework adopted for the present research. The rationale behind using Multimodality and Krueger's model has also been discussed. Moreover, the levels of analysis and the procedure for data collection in various forms, i.e., linguistic and semiotic discourses, have been explained. The next chapter critically analyzes linguistic and semiotic discourses concerning religious ideologies selected from the primary English textbooks of the four provinces (Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) with the help of a research model devised for the present research.

CHAPTER 4

LINGUISTIC AND SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS

This chapter deals with the analysis of data employing the devised research model discussed in chapter number 3. The analytical categories mentioned in the model have been applied one by one in this section. The chapter-wise linguistic and semiotic analysis of the mentioned textbooks has been given below:

4.1 Analysis of Unit # 01 of PTB, BTB, KPKTB

Fairclough (2003) argues that "no use of language is ideology free." The lexical items used to describe an individual highlight the way he/she has been described. Similarly, Unit 1, titled "Patience," illustrates the attributes of the Prophet (PBUH). He has been represented here as a role model and an ideal by all means. The very title "Patience" is closely associated with the attributes of His (PBUH) personality. He (PBUH) is a complete example of patience. The following lines from the text illustrate the stance clearly,

"Rasool Ullah (ﷺ) stayed in Taif for the ten days. During this period, he (ﷺ) invited tribal chiefs to embrace Islam, but they rejected his message and mocked him. One day, a mob pelted him with pebbles, injuring him. Despite his injuries, he (ﷺ) prayed for them. Then, an angel appeared before Rasoolullah (ﷺ) and sought his permission to destroy the city of Taif by crushing the mountains surrounding the city."

The excerpt mentioned above illustrates the great attribute of the patience of the Prophet (PBUH). He never followed the policy of violence. Rather, he (PBUH) bore every cruelty of his opponents with tolerance and forbearance. He (PBUH) believed in the policy of sharing ideas with the people rather than forcefully implementing them despite the rude and violent behavior of the people of Taif. He (SAW) prayed for them. The foreseeing of the Prophet (PBUH) has been discussed in the Unit under analysis. The following lines can be quoted as an example,

“O Allah (ﷻ), guide the people of Taif to the right path. Though they have not accepted Islam, I hope that their children will definitely accept the Divine Faith."

The Prophet's (PBUH) foretelling came true, and it is obvious even today that Taif is one of Saudi Arabia's popular centers for the teaching of Islam. It would not have been so if the Prophet (PBUH) had allowed the angel to destroy the city altogether.

The use of the first-person pronoun "We" in the very first paragraph of the Unit imparts a sense of unity and collectively. It means that "we," as the Muslims of the world, should follow the teachings of the Prophet (SAW), such as patience, honesty, tolerance, and forgiveness. Moreover, the use of the first-person pronoun "I" implies a degree of certainty and individuality. It implies that every Muslim should be firm in following the sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). There should be the least degree of doubt in him or her in accepting that He (PBUH) is the best model to follow.

The use of expression Rasoolullah (ﷺ) has been made ten times in the Unit under analysis. As mentioned earlier, no use of language is ideology-free. Similarly, the frequency of occurrence of the mentioned phrase ten times implies that there should be the least degree of doubt among the Muslims and others that He (PBUH) is the last Prophet of Allah. The repetition of the phrase (ﷺ) ten times is ideological and is meant to counter the ideology propounded by a sect that believes that He (PBUH) is not the last Prophet of Allah and some other prophet may follow him. Indirectly, an attempt has been made by using this expression (ﷺ) repeatedly to inculcate the ideology of his being last Prophet of Allah right from the beginning in the tender minds of young learners. This is also an attempt to counter strictly the aforementioned false belief of a sect about the appearance of some other Prophet after him. The use of adjectives such as Sadiq, honest, forbearance, Amin, pious, etc., illustrates his personality in superlative degrees, making it clearer to all that He (PBUH) is the best among human beings and mercy to all.

4.2 Analysis of Unit # 02 of PTB, BTB, KPKTB

Language is considered a tool to assign different roles. According to Rehman (2003), different ideologies are formed through language. He opines that textbooks are one of the strongest tools for investing in different ideologies. The discursive power of the textbooks plays an important role in constructing and shaping the behaviors and mindsets of the readers accordingly. Kress (1989) observes that language can never appear itself; it always appears as a representative of a system of linguistic terms, which

are discursive and ideological. Ideology provides the cognitive foundation for the attitudes of various groups in societies, as well as their own goals and interests. He offers schema relations between ideology, society, cognition, and discourse.

In the English textbook of Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there is a lesson titled "O' Allah! Love Me More!". It describes the attributes associated with Allah. The poem is designed for a younger audience. It uses simple language and vivid imagery to convey messages about faith, the natural world, and personal emotions. This poem uses various linguistic categories to convey its message. The poem opens with the speaker acknowledging the presence of the divine in the natural world. The use of "You" refers to Allah and is a direct address that signifies a personal relationship with the divine.

I see You in the stars,

When the night glows with a spark

The lines under analysis employ natural imagery (stars, night, trees, birds) that is often associated with the majesty and beauty of creation. It is a common theme in religious texts that highlights the belief that nature is a sign of Allah's power and benevolence. "You" is used as a metaphor for Allah. The "spark" in the night could symbolize hope or divine light in the darkness, and the sharing of birds could be seen as a metaphor for Allah's provision for all creatures. It suggests that everything is under Allah's watchful eye.

When I need a lot of care,

I feel Your presence there

The lines mentioned above illustrate Allah's nurturing aspect; just as flowers are cared for through natural processes, so too does the speaker feel cared for by Allah in times of need. It is an expression of the belief that Allah is ever-present, especially in moments when one feels vulnerable. The speaker asks for divine assistance in their actions, whether they are moments of joy (smiling) or sorrow (weeping). There is a deep sense of intimacy and reliance on Allah, who is seen as the all-hearing, one who is present in the quiet, unseen moments of personal struggle. This reflects the religious ideology that Allah is the ultimate confidant and support, particularly when human solace is not sufficient. This stance can be seen in the following lines;

Do help me in my deeds,

I smile or when I weep

In the final stanza, the speaker reaffirms the unique support they feel from Allah, suggesting a distance ("far off miles") from other sources of support. They ask for enlightenment, which is a plea for understanding, wisdom, and spiritual illumination. The repeated plea for Allah's love at the end of the poem reflects a yearning for a deeper connection and divine favor, which is a common desire in the personal religious experience.

O Allah! Just love me more!

The use of linguistic elements is crucial in presenting religious ideology to young learners, as they help in the understanding of concepts that are central to faith. Imagery is heavily used in this poem to evoke a sensory experience that helps the reader visualize the scenes described. Phrases like **"I see You in the stars"** or **"flowers bloom in a queue"** create vivid pictures in the mind that can make the abstract concept of divine presence more tangible for young learners. Personification is attributing human qualities to non-human entities. By suggesting that the night can **"glow with a spark"** or that trees **"sway"** and birds **"enjoy,"** the poem gives life to these natural elements, making them relatable characters that reflect divine qualities. This helps children understand the relationship between Allah and the world they interact with daily. Repetition emphasizes important ideas. The repeated invocation of **"O Allah"** stresses the focus on divine connection, reinforcing the concept of prayer and remembrance of Allah as central practices in Islam.

The poem has a rhythmic quality and a rhyme scheme that makes it catchy and memorable. This musicality helps in memorization and recall. It is important for teaching young learners who may find repetitive and rhythmic patterns engaging and easier to internalize. Using the second person **"You"** to refer to Allah creates a direct and personal connection. It suggests an intimate and immediate relationship with the divine. This is powerful for children as it can make the concept of a higher power feel close and accessible. The poem uses emotive language like **"I need a lot of care"** and **"When I bitterly shed my tears,"** expressing vulnerability and the seeking of comfort. This helps children understand that it is acceptable to express emotions and seek support from Allah in times of need.

The language is simple and clear. It avoids complex theological terminology. This ensures that young learners grasp the concepts without getting bogged down by complicated words. Simplicity is key in communication with children. The poem weaves in theological concepts like divine omnipresence, care, and love. By associating these concepts with nature, emotions, and the self, it bridges the gap between everyday life and religious teachings. Through these linguistic techniques, the poem effectively conveys religious ideologies in a manner that is approachable and resonant for young learners. It helps to lay a foundation for their spiritual and ethical development.

4.3 Analysis of Unit # 08 of PTB, BTB, KPKTB

Phillipson opines that language transmits norms and behaviors. Textbooks are the carriers of societal norms and values. The language used within textbooks transmits cultural, moral, and social ideologies to students. The linguistic text under analysis has been taken from unit#08 of the English Textbook of Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The title of the unit under analysis is "Do What's Right," and it describes the importance of moral values. The title conveys a clear command or suggestion, and it highlights the importance of moral decision-making. The title serves as a thematic precursor to the narrative. It signals a focus on ethics and morality.

The text under analysis portrays religious ideology by narrating the significance of praising and thanking Allah for everything. In Islam, gratitude towards Allah is emphasized as a fundamental virtue. The Qur'an frequently mentions the importance of being grateful to Allah for all circumstances, not just those that are outwardly favorable. The Qur'an praises those who are grateful and considers ingratitude a major sin. As stated in the Qur'an,

"If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe." (Qur'an 14:7)

Islam teaches that Allah is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and everything good that happens is by His will. Thanking Allah for every good deed reinforces the belief that all blessings, big or small, come from Him. The text under analysis conveys a scenario in which a son expresses distress about poverty and financial constraints, and his mother advises him to maintain a posture of gratitude towards Allah regardless of their circumstances. A mother advises his son (Raffay) to thank Allah in any matter. The advice from Raffay's mother and his conscience are rooted in Islamic ethics.

It emphasizes honesty, gratitude, and responsibility. The message of patience and reliance on Allah has been highlighted in the text. The textual reference is as follows:

"He always wanted to buy all these things but never had enough money. He felt sorry for himself. Just then his mother's advice came to his mind. She told him that he should thank Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) all the time."

The mother advises his son to thank Allah, which aligns with the Islamic teaching that every situation (even hardship) comes from Allah and has a purpose that may ultimately be beneficial. The advice also touches upon the concepts of patience (صبر) and reliance on Allah (توكل على الله). These are key components of the Islamic faith. A believer is encouraged to remain patient during trials and to trust that Allah has a plan for them. It teaches that one should not lose faith or hope, even in dire situations. It also suggests that material wealth is not the ultimate goal of life. Spiritual richness and closeness to God are more important in life. This perspective helps individuals cope with material scarcity and find inner peace and satisfaction in their connection with the divine. The following lines illustrate the mentioned ideology,

"Raffay thanked Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) for showing him the right path."

The unit under analysis imparts the message of doing well to others. It is our moral duty to be good with others and do the right things. The underlying ideology is to seek Allah's happiness at any cost, and we should do our best to do something good for the needy and helpless people around us. It illustrates that we should be good not only in our deeds but also in our thinking. It is because nothing is hidden from Allah.

4.4 Analysis of Unit # 10 of PTB, BTB, KPKTB

Fairclough (2002) opines that language plays a crucial role in shaping learners' worldviews. Rehman (2003) opines that textbooks are the best sites to invest in various ideologies. He is of the view that the discursive power of textbooks plays an important role in shaping the mindset of the target readership accordingly. Hug (1970) stated that the curriculum design that aims to reorganize the entire content around Islamic ideas and give education an ideological orientation will be given top priority. This allows Islamic ideology to permeate the thinking of the younger generation and provide them with the conviction and skills they need to reshape society in accordance with Islamic tendencies. Mohammad (2015) argues that textbooks can bring change as well.

The linguistic text under analysis has been taken from unit 10 of the English Textbook of Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This unit is titled "Eid-ul-Azha," and it states the importance of sacrifice and religious festivals. The text from this unit portrays religious ideology by narrating the significance of Eid-ul-Azha, an important Islamic festival. This is also known as the Festival of Sacrifice or Bakra Eid and is celebrated by Muslims around the world. This is the story of a family who is getting prepared for Eid ul Azha. The story referenced that Prophet Ibrahim's sacrifice is one of the most significant narratives shared by the Abrahamic faiths. In Islam, it is believed that Allah commanded Ibrahim in a dream to sacrifice his son, Ismail. Both father and son accepted this command as a divine test of their obedience to God. However, when Ibrahim was about to perform the sacrifice, Allah intervened and provided a ram to be sacrificed in place of Ismail. The traditional Islamic greeting, meaning "Peace be upon you," signifies the importance of peace and respect among people, which is a key principle in Islam. E.g.,

“Assalaamu Alaikum, father”

“Wa Alaikum Assalaam.”

The linguistic content of the unit under analysis describes the preparation for the festival, including the buying of cattle like goats for the sacrificial ritual, which is a key component of Eid-ul-Azha. This conveys the importance of sacrifice in the religion. The text recounts the story of Prophet Ibrahim A.S and his son, Prophet Ismail A.S, as told in Islamic tradition. It highlights the significance of obedience and sacrifice to God. It mentions dressing up in nice clothes and performing Eid prayers, which are communal aspects that bring the community together in observance of the festival. Muslims thank Allah as an expression of gratitude for His blessings and guidance in their lives. Gratitude (shukar) is a central theme in Islam, deeply embedded in its teachings and practices. Gratitude is seen as a reflection of a person's faith (iman) and trust in Allah. It signifies a believer's understanding that, even in hardship, there is wisdom and mercy from God. There is a concept in Islam based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that expressing gratitude leads to an increase in blessings. The practice of wearing nice clothes and performing prayers is an expression of respect and celebration of the festival. It reflects Islamic teachings about cleanliness, respect, and community worship. E.g.,

"We dress up in the nicest clothes and say Eid prayers in the morning to thank Allah."

This historical event is commemorated annually during the Islamic month of Dhul-Hijjah, the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar. On the 10th day of this month, Eid-ul-Azha is celebrated. This festival coincides with the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, which is one of the five pillars of Islam and must be undertaken by all Muslims who have the means to do so at least once in their lifetime. It emphasizes sharing meat from the sacrificed animal with relatives, friends, and people with low incomes, fostering a sense of community and generosity, which are important values in Islam. The division of meat among family, friends, and especially the poor reinforces the Islamic principles of charity (Zakat) and compassion towards others, ensuring that the celebration includes all layers of the community.

"We sacrifice animals on this Eid and share this meat among friends, relatives and the poor."

The history behind the festival is tied to the Quranic account of Prophet Ibrahim's test of faith. It is a time of remembrance for Muslims to reflect on the virtues of obedience and submission to the will of Allah. As for the Islamic history behind Eid-ul-Azha, it commemorates the event in the Quran where Hazrat Ibrahim A.S was willing to sacrifice his son, Hazrat Ismail A.S, as an act of obedience to God's command. However, before the sacrifice could take place, God provided a ram to sacrifice instead. This event is remembered and honored by Muslims through the sacrifice of an animal, and the meat is divided into three parts:

- One share for the family
- One share for relatives and friends
- One share for the poor and needy

One night, Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S) had a dreamthe great sacrifice by Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S) and his son Hazrat Ismail (A.S)"

The Islamic history of Eid ul Azha is significant because it is not only about sacrifice but also about obedience, faith, and the willingness to submit to God's will, which are central tenets of Islam. By learning about this, students gain insight into the motivations and practices of Muslims. The text serves as a useful educational tool to

teach young Muslims about their faith and the significance of Eid-ul-Azha, including its historical origins, the reasons behind the rituals performed, and the social and spiritual values the festival embodies. It is also a platform to discuss broader themes such as faith, sacrifice, charity, and community, which are central to Islamic teachings and have universal moral values.

4.5 Analysis of the data from Sindh Textbook

Textbooks play an important role in shaping students' minds, particularly during their formative years in primary education (Rehman, 2002). Foucault (1972) observes a close relationship between discourse and ideology. He believes that ideologies are constructed and propagated through discourses. So, language and discourse are a medium to convey your ideas to others. Verschuren (1999) says that discourse is regarded as the site of struggle and ideology investment.

The linguistic text under analysis is taken from Unit 3 of the English Textbook of Sindh. Martin (1984) states that linguistic signs achieve meanings only by virtue of their differences from each other. Similarly, the linguistic text under analysis imparts the religious message that one should never lose hope and should take a step forward to achieve his/her goals. The dominant theme of this unit is that Islam does not prohibit the education of women but rather promotes it. Up to a great extent, it fulfills the religious ideology given by Islam that women should not lose heart; they should be steadfast and should continue seeking knowledge. Islam grants equality to both males and females, especially in terms of seeking knowledge. i.e.,

"One day, her teacher told her about two famous nurses, Hazrat Rufaida and Florence Nightingale. Zahra said, "I also want to help people in some way."

The lines under analysis show that Zahra is relating herself to those who have stepped into any field of education and worked for it. She wants to help people like these girls and break the stereotype that only men can work, and girls just stay at home. Hazrat Rufaida is a religious figure who is recognized as the first Muslim nurse and one of the first to practice community health care. Her full name is Rufaidah bint Sa'ad of the Bani Aslam tribe of the Khazraj tribal confederation in Madinah. She lived during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and is known for her contributions to the field of medicine and social welfare.

Rufaida was educated at a time when formal education for women was not widespread. Her pursuit of knowledge, particularly in the field of health care, exemplifies the Islamic emphasis on learning and can inspire girls today to seek education in order to serve their communities. The essence of Rufaida's work was service to others, embodying the values of empathy, charity, and community support. For any girl like Zahra, saying, "I want to serve people in any way," Rufaida's life exemplifies how one can use their skills and education to benefit society. Her life was a model of the ethical practice of caregiving within an Islamic framework. For a girl who wants to serve and is guided by ethical or religious principles, Rufaida's story reaffirms that one can maintain one's moral compass while achieving professional success. Rufaida's work contributed to the strength and cohesion of her community. Girls today can draw on her example to understand the importance of building supportive networks and contributing to the welfare of their societies.

The lines under analysis illustrate that Islam gives equal importance to the education of girls. Islam promotes gender equality, and it is obligatory for Muslim men and women to get an education; it represents that Islam never disallows women to seek education. Just as the Prophet (SAW) himself promoted the rights of women and gave them their right to education. An important example in this regard is Hazrat Aisha Siddiqah (RA), who was one of the great believers. She was educated, and many of her hadiths are related to her. She spread the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to others. There is no prohibition in it. Moreover, the inclusion or omission of certain religious practices or beliefs in a textbook can shape a reader's view of what is normative or peripheral within a religion. This careful selection and presentation of information in educational texts not only conveys particular viewpoints but also plays a significant role in shaping the religious attitudes and understanding of students.

The analysis of data reveals that a woman should be educated, and this can lead to development and prosperity in society. In this regard, the following quote by Napoleon can be mentioned,

"Give me an educated mother, and I shall promise you an educated nation."

The linguistic chunks mentioned above highlight how a girl struggles to convince her family that she should be allowed to seek education at a boys' school. This implies

that, in certain areas, women were deprived of seeking knowledge. It can be inferred that a woman/girl can seek education if she is determined, as Zahra discussed in the book.

Similarly, in Unit 5 of the Sindh Textbook, faith in Allah has been highlighted that people should believe in Allah and should not give up despite facing difficulties. The strength of a person's connection to Allah during times of crisis, such as a flood, results in the loss of property and livelihood. It can be both deeply personal and highly variable, and it reflects a complex interplay of faith, resilience, and human emotion. Faith in Allah provides a significant source of strength and solace amid adversity for many believers. E.g.,

"People lost cattle, chickens, and other sources of income. But people had faith in Allah. They did not give up hope."

The data mentioned above reflects a resilient faith in Allah despite difficult circumstances and hardships. The Muslims have been persuaded to face trials bravely and should never get hopeless. Instead, they should continue their efforts by having strong faith in Allah. It imparts a sense of hope, purpose, and perspective that helps them cope with the loss and look towards recovery and rebuilding. The concept of surrendering to Allah's will (Tawakkul) is paramount. Affirming faith during crises is a way of acknowledging that all things happen by the will of Allah and that there is a greater plan beyond human understanding. Faith provides moral and ethical guidance during times of crisis. On the other hand, such crises can also lead to moments of spiritual questioning and reflection.

4.6 Analysis of Semiotic One



PTB, KPKTB, BTB (English Book 5), Unit 9: 'Do what Right' p. 75

Barthe (1971) suggests that images are shaped by cultural contexts, with prevailing cultural myths infusing them with specific meanings. He further posits that the significance of signs can vary over time, depending on the context in which they are interpreted. Language can either mirror societal changes or reinforce existing stereotypes. Similarly, the image being analyzed demonstrates that while women have confronted traditional gender roles, the observance of some of the norms is also evident through the semiotic discourses of the selected data. Typically, women are often seen as more appropriate for teaching younger students, especially at the primary level. The image of the female teacher in the picture reinforces this stereotype. It suggests that women, perhaps due to perceived greater patience, are effective at managing and educating young children. The classroom environment suggests that the primary objective of the image is educational. The children are depicted in a typical school setting, lined up and facing the teacher, which indicates a structured learning situation. The presence of a female teacher, who is likely guiding or instructing the children, indicates the gender-inclusive nature of education within this context. Her traditional attire reflects the cultural norms and expectations of teachers in the region.

The Quranic verse "وَقُلِّبْ لِي عِلْمًا" translates to '**My Lord, increase me in knowledge**' (Quran 20:114). Its presence in the classroom setting emphasizes the value placed on knowledge and learning within the religious and cultural context. It also

signifies the integration of religious teachings within the educational system, perhaps to underscore the importance of religious values in all aspects of life, including education. The image uses visual language to convey an atmosphere of respect and reverence for learning. The children's attentive and orderly behavior is a reflection of the discipline and respect for education that is encouraged in many religious and cultural traditions. By displaying a Quranic verse in the context of a classroom, the textbook may impart religious education alongside the conventional curriculum. It suggests a holistic approach to education where religious teachings are woven into the fabric of general knowledge and learning experiences.

The interplay between text and image contributes to the overall meaning. The placement of a religious text within an educational illustration serves to create a certain ambiance and endorse specific values. It sends a message about the integration of faith with the pursuit of knowledge. In the broader context of the research on religious content in primary English Textbooks, this picture indicates how religious elements are incorporated into everyday aspects of learning. It is interesting to analyze how such visuals align with the written content of the textbooks, and they serve to reinforce the written messages or provide a different perspective.

At the semiotic level, the prominent red and blue colors in the dress code of the depicted female teacher symbolize trust, wisdom, intelligence, and passion. These colors suggest that women, being passionate and trustworthy, are ideally suited for educating future generations. They are portrayed as capable of making swift decisions and adept at managing the challenges of teaching young students. At the primary level or the under-primary level, it is very easy to mold the brains. The presence of female teachers is implied to ensure that learning proceeds smoothly. Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols as elements of communicative behavior. The process involves the encoding and decoding of messages through various signs and symbols. In the context of this picture, the semiotic elements include signifiers and signified, denotation and connotation. The 'children' in school uniforms signify the idea of students, which is the signified concept of learners. The 'female teacher,' dressed in traditional clothing, signifies authority and cultural norms, suggesting an educator who respects and embodies local traditions.

The 'Quranic verse' on the wall is a direct religious signifier. The Arabic script is not just a text; it symbolizes the holy Quran, signifying spiritual learning and the importance of seeking knowledge. The denotation is the literal description of children in a

classroom with a teacher and an Islamic inscription on the wall. The connotations are numerous: the integration of religious education in daily schooling, the promotion of learning as a valued concept in Islam, and the respect for traditional values within the educational setting.

Multimodality looks at how various communicative modes work together to create meaning. The Quranic verse provides a linguistic message that emphasizes the importance of knowledge, a core value in Islam. Its strategic placement in the classroom setting also suggests that religious education is central to learning and personal development. The composition of the picture, with the children facing the teacher, creates a focal point on the interaction between the students and the teacher. The facial expressions and body language of the characters are friendly and attentive, which creates a welcoming and positive view of the learning environment. The 'placement of the religious text' above the characters signifies its importance and oversight in the educational journey. The classroom itself as a space signifies a place of learning and discipline. The way the characters are arranged within this space shows order and attentiveness to the authority figure, the teacher.

The colors are bright and engaging, which are often used to attract children's attention and signify a positive and stimulating learning environment. The possible ideology behind showing Quranic verse in white color is that white is an attempt towards knowledge or awareness. There used to be a time in the past when people were kept in the background or the darkness, as has been connoted by the black color. So, the combination of black and white also indicates the change. And an attempt has been made to show the right path to the young learners. An attempt has been made to show that Islam is all about light and awareness. Through this picture included in the textbooks, an attempt has been made to show that Islam is a religion that can lead you from backwardness, ignorance, and darkness to whiteness.

The multimodal elements in this picture work together to communicate the religious message. The verse acts as an anchor of religious education within the learning space. The presence of this text in a primary school textbook potentially normalizes the role of religion in the pursuit of knowledge from a young age. This is reinforced by the respectful postures of the children and the guiding role of the teacher, illustrating a harmonious balance between religious teachings and secular education.

The children's uniforms suggest that education is structured and uniform. Yet, the presence of the Quranic verse brings in the aspect of religious uniformity and the universality of the quest for knowledge in Islam. The decision to include a religious text in a textbook goes beyond just the decorative; it is a semiotic choice that conveys a deeper societal value, faith, and education. By incorporating this verse, the image sends a strong message to young learners that seeking knowledge is not just an academic pursuit but also a religious one. It embodies a holistic educational philosophy where spiritual growth accompanies intellectual development. The placement of this verse in the classroom scene, which is an everyday space for the child, subtly suggests that the pursuit of knowledge is a continuous, revered, and integrated part of life.

The calm and attentive postures of the young students in the image indicate that they are engaged in their learning activities. The serene and harmonious backdrop of the images reinforces this atmosphere of calm. Featured in the background is the frame with the Quranic verse **عَلِّمْنَا رَبِّ ٱلْهُدَىٰ**, from Surah Ta-Ha [20:114], which translates to **"My Lord, increase me in knowledge"**. This inclusion of a Quranic verse underscores the infusion of religious teachings in the educational environment, suggesting that religious values are imparted not just through words but visually as well. This verse is attributed to Prophet Musa A.S, who is a significant figure in Islam as well as in Christianity and Judaism. In the Islamic tradition, this verse is understood to reflect the humility of

Prophet Musa A.S. in recognizing that all knowledge rests with God and that humans are always in need of more wisdom. It represents a plea for enlightenment and is often cited to emphasize the importance of continuous learning and intellectual humility. It underscores the belief that no matter one's level of knowledge, one should always be in pursuit of further understanding.

The relevance of this verse to education is profound. It encapsulates the concept that seeking knowledge is a lifelong process and a virtue in Islam. In many Muslim cultures, education is not merely seen as a pathway to professional success but as a form of worship and a means to gain divine favor. The verse aligns with the belief that the quest for knowledge enables individuals to better understand the world and their responsibilities within it. This verse serves as a moral foundation, teaching children the virtues of humility and the recognition that knowledge is boundless. It encourages them to understand their perpetual role as learners in life's journey.

Overall, the image conveys that the teachers are deeply involved in their educational roles, effectively imparting knowledge to the young learners in an optimal setting. The verse "وَقُلْ َرَّبِّ زِدْنِي ِلْمًا" serves as a bridge between the religious tradition and the practice of education, highlighting the importance of knowledge and learning within the Islamic faith. For primary students, it reinforces the value of education, encourages a mindset of continual growth, and embeds their learning within a larger religious and ethical framework.

4.7 Analysis of Semiotic Two



PTB, KPKTB, BTB (English Book 5), Unit 10: 'Eid-ul-Azha' p. 96

Phillipson (1992) opines that language transmits norms and behaviors to the target readership. Rehman (2003) argues that textbooks are an important source for investing in different ideologies. He believes that textbooks play an important role in shaping the mindset of learners. The picture under analysis has been taken from chapter 10 of English textbooks from the primary class of the Punjab Textbook Board, Balochistan Textbook Board, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board.

The image portrays a scene related to the Islamic festival of Eid-ul-Azha, which is also known as the Feast of Sacrifice. This festival commemorates the willingness of Prophet Ibrahim A.S to sacrifice his son (Prophet Ismail A.S) in obedience to God. God's intervention to provide a ram as a substitute sacrifice is celebrated as an act of divine mercy and Hazrat Ibrahim's ultimate expression of faith and obedience. The presence of the goat, typically one of the animals slaughtered during Qurbani, underscores the central ritual of Eid-ul-Azha. It symbolizes the sacrificial animal in place of Prophet Ibrahim's

son, making the act of Qurbani a reminder of faith and submission to God's will. The goat is a central element of the picture, signifying the animal that is traditionally sacrificed during Eid ul Adha. It is adorned with decorative items, which could imply the special status given to Qurbani animals as part of the celebratory rituals.

The inclusion of children in the image is significant. It suggests the cultural practice of introducing the younger generation to the customs and significance of Eid-ul-Azha from an early age. This not only educates them about the rituals but also integrates them into the community's shared religious practices. The children are depicted engaging with the goat in a gentle and caring manner rather than focusing on the act of sacrifice itself. This could reflect the educational intention to introduce young learners to the concept of Qurbani in a way that emphasizes compassion and care for animals. The way the children are depicted, they are adorning the goat with beads and colorful objects, showing respect and care for the animal. It teaches that animals should be treated with kindness and dignity, even when they are being raised for Qurbani.

Within the Islamic cultural context, involving children in the practices and celebrations of Eid-ul-Azha, such as selecting and caring for the Qurbani animal, is a way to teach them about the religious significance of the event, the importance of sacrifice, and the value of sharing with those less fortunate. For primary-level students, this image serves an educational purpose: to familiarize them with the practices and values of their faith. It is a gentle introduction to the concepts of giving, sharing, and commemorating important religious histories through celebration and ritual. There could have been a grown-up instead of children in this picture. The ideology behind showing up to young children is to show children how to prepare them for sacrifice, how to care for animals, and what the purpose of sacrifice is.

The overall atmosphere of the image is cheerful and colorful. It indicates that the occasion is a festive and joyous time for families and communities. The use of bright colors and the playful interaction with the animal serve to associate positive emotions with the festival. From a semiotic perspective, the image uses visual signs (the adorned goat, the engaging children) to communicate religious messages and cultural norms. The use of colors in the picture carries additional connotations. Green is often associated with Islam due to its prevalence in Islamic art and symbolism; green is also a color of nature and life. Here, it connotes a sense of peace, tranquility, and prosperity that comes from

the sacrifice as people who take part in Qurbani distribute the meat to family, friends, and the needy, which fosters community and support.

The children are dressed in bright and joyful colors, such as yellow and purple, which convey happiness and celebration. These colors reflect the festive mood of Eid and the joy that comes with the communal gatherings, prayers, and feasting. The bowl in front of the goat is pink, which is often associated with compassion and nurturing. It further highlights the care given to the sacrificial animal. The colors chosen for this image contribute to the portrayal of Eid-ul-Azha as a joyous, vibrant celebration rather than a sad event. It emphasizes that Eid is not only a time for sacrifice but also for the celebration of divine grace and mercy.

This picture conveys the importance of Eid-ul-Azha and the act of Qurbani as a time-honored religious practice that encompasses themes of faith, sacrifice, sharing, and community. Through the use of culturally significant symbols and colors, it communicates a multifaceted message of tradition, joy, and religious observance to young learners. In a multimodal context, the image combines with the title of the lesson and the known cultural practices to convey a richer understanding of Eid-ul-Azha and the concept of sacrifice.

4.8 Analysis of Semiotic Three



STB (English Book 5), Unit 03: 'Importance of Female Education' p. 40

Althusser (1969) remarks that ideologies are not pure illusions but representations existing in institutions and practices. Rehman (2004) opines that language helps in disseminating various political and religious ideologies. This picture is associated with a

lesson titled "The Importance of Female Education" from the Sindh Textbook Board, and several semiotic elements work together to convey meaning related to gender and education. The most striking element is the presence of both male and female students in a classroom setting. The inclusion of a solitary female in the midst of male students is a powerful representation of the presence and significance of women in educational spaces. It is a visual assertion of the lesson's title about the importance of female education.

The coeducational setting implies a progressive approach to learning where both genders are given equal opportunities to learn and participate in the same environment. It suggests the breaking down of traditional barriers and promotes the idea of inclusivity. The students are all engaged in the same activity (reading from textbooks), which emphasizes the theme of equality in educational opportunities. It suggests that irrespective of gender, all students have the right to access and engage with educational material. The importance of female education is multifaceted and carries significant implications for both the individual and society at large. In terms of personal development, education empowers women with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed decisions about their lives. This empowerment extends to various societal benefits such as economic growth, improved family health, and reduced poverty. Educated women are more likely to participate in the workforce, have fewer and healthier children, and educate their children, perpetuating a cycle of opportunity.

In Islam, education is not a gendered right but a universal one. The Prophet Muhammad S.A.W is reported to have said, "Seeking knowledge is a mandate for every Muslim (male and female)." This highlights that acquiring knowledge is equally encouraged for women and men. Historically, there have been many notable Muslim women scholars, and the first university in the world, the University of Al Quaraouiyine in Morocco, was founded by a Muslim woman, Fatima al-Fihri. Islam places a high value on knowledge and learning, considering it a way to understand the world and one's duty within it. This ethos extends to women, with the religion advocating for their right to seek education and contribute to society's intellectual and moral fabric. In a broader cultural context, especially within regions where female education might have faced historical challenges, such a picture represents a shift towards valuing education for all. It speaks to the progressive steps being taken to ensure that females are not only included but are also seen as an integral part of the educational community.

Islam does not prohibit the education of women but rather promotes it. Just as the Prophet (SAW) himself promoted the rights of women and gave them their right to education. And the biggest example of this is Aisha Siddiqah (RA), who was one of the great believers. She was educated, and many of her hadiths are related to her. She herself spread the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to others. There is no prohibition in it. This particular picture, where a single girl is seeking knowledge among so many boys and under different difficult circumstances, up to a great extent, fulfills the religious ideology given by Islam that women should not lose heart; they should step forward and should continue seeking knowledge.

The female student is wearing a white dupatta that stands out against the more colorful attire of the male students. This contrast directs the viewer's focus to her, symbolically highlighting the importance of the female's role in the educational setting. It also signifies purity or the idea of a fresh start, connoting a new era where women have equal access to education. The female student is dressed in white and blue; white can symbolize purity, peace, and new beginnings. It connotes the idea of education as a clean slate or an equalizing force, suggesting that through education, societal barriers can be broken down. Blue color often represents stability and depth. It suggests the reliability and significance of education as a foundation for one's future. The boys are depicted in more colorful clothing, which might represent diversity and vibrancy. No uniform in the class may also represent the socio-economic situation of the region where this textbook is being taught. The students cannot afford the uniform, and that's why they are wearing different colors. However, the image is meant to underscore the importance of female education; the male students' attire also serves as a backdrop that makes the solitary white-clad female student stand out. It may symbolize the significance and uniqueness of women's roles in education and society.

The red color is often associated with energy and passion. In this picture, it symbolizes the passion for learning or the urgency of educational reform. The combination of colors also signifies inclusivity and diversity within educational settings. It emphasizes that education should be accessible to all, regardless of gender or background. It is important to recognize that color connotations can vary culturally. In some cultures, colors have specific meanings that differ from the common Western interpretations. However, in this picture, the prominence of the female student in white

seems to be a deliberate choice to draw attention to the theme of female education within the educational and religious context.

The composition of the image, with students seated in rows, can imply a structured, orderly approach to education. The shared focus of the students on their books underscores the idea that education requires attention and dedication, which is expected of all students regardless of gender. Alongside the visual mode, in the linguistic mode (the title of the lesson), there is a reinforcement of the message that female education is not just important but is to be regarded with the same seriousness as male education. The classroom environment, the reading activity, and the presence of the female student are all elements that work together to deliver this message.

The image interprets the lesson's title as a visual affirmation of the importance of female education. It uses gender representation, color contrast, and classroom dynamics to signify a commitment to gender equality in education and reflect a societal evolution towards inclusivity and equal opportunity for all genders in academic pursuits.

4.9 Analysis of Semiotic Four



STB (English Book 5), Unit 04: 'Truthfulness' p. 58

Textbooks are one of the strongest tools to shape public opinion and the mindset of learners. According to Galtung (1980), language is an important tool of imperialism. The discourse of textbooks is very convenient in propagating various types of ideologies. Althusser (1971) holds that ideologically invested discourses have a distant place within the power structure of the modern state system. Similarly, the inclusion of various religious contents in the books is ideological. It can be observed here that the words and pictures are working in conjunction. Visual semiotics and the ideological message are likely being conveyed to young learners in this picture of the Sindh Textbook Board. The setting is a classroom, which inherently suggests learning, growth, and the acquisition of knowledge and values. The inclusion of a variety of students within this setting conveys the universal importance of the lesson being taught, indicating that truthfulness is a value that transcends individual differences.

Rugh (2000) stated that clothing is one of the ways by which one can show belongings to a specific group. The dress code of any individual is of great significance because it is an embodiment of his/ her gender, religion, economic and social status. The teacher, wearing a hijab, is standing and reading from a book, which signifies authority and the transmission of knowledge and values. The hijab worn by the teacher in the picture represents cultural and religious identity. The hijab of a teacher is green, which is traditionally associated with Islam due to its historical significance. It is also mentioned in the Quran as the color of the inhabitants of paradise. Green symbolizes growth, harmony, and freshness, which might be relevant in an educational context where new ideas and values are nurtured. It is a visual cue that aligns the educator with Islamic values, potentially serving to reinforce the message that the lessons being taught are in accordance with Islamic principles. In many Islamic societies, the hijab is a symbol of modesty, respectability, and dedication to one's faith. By depicting the teacher in a hijab, the image conveys a sense of moral authority. It suggests that the values she imparts, including the virtue of truthfulness, come from a place of personal adherence to Islamic tenets. For students in predominantly Muslim regions, a teacher wearing a hijab might be a familiar and relatable figure and someone who shares their cultural and religious background. In Islam, the hijab is more than just a headscarf; it is part of a broader concept of modesty and includes both physical and behavioral aspects. It is important because, for many Muslim women, wearing the hijab is a fulfillment of a religious obligation, as mentioned in the Quran and Hadith, to dress modestly. The hijab serves as a

public expression of a woman's faith and commitment to her religious beliefs, symbolizing her desire to follow Islamic teachings. It is a means of upholding a standard of modesty in interactions with others, which is highly valued in Islamic tradition. For many, it is also a personal choice and an aspect of Muslim identity, which can be empowering and a source of pride.

The students appear engaged and attentive. Their focus on the teacher suggests a receptiveness to learning the virtues being taught, such as the value of truthfulness. The colorful attire of the students suggests diversity and individuality within the unity of the classroom setting. It also denotes the vibrancy and energy typical of a learning environment filled with young students. The presence of both boys and girls in the classroom reflects an inclusive approach to education. It also indicates that the values taught, such as truthfulness, are universally applicable and not gender-specific. Islam teaches that men and women are equal in the sight of Allah in terms of their spiritual worth and responsibilities. The Quran emphasizes that women have rights similar to those of men, though their responsibilities might differ in certain aspects of family and society. Education is regarded as vital for both men and women. Prophet Muhammad S.A.W declared, "Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim," a statement that is universally understood to include women. Historically, women in early Islamic societies were encouraged to seek knowledge, participate in scholarly pursuits, and teach. Women in Islam have the right to own property, conduct business, and inherit from relatives. These rights were affirmed at a time when such rights were not commonly available to women in other parts of the world. Education empowers women to fulfill their roles in society effectively.

"Bismillah hir Rehman nir Rahim" is written on the black board which is translated as "In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful". Religious ideology is being imparted through this text that whatever we do, we should do it in the name of Allah. It holds profound significance in Islamic practice and culture. This phrase begins with the invocation of Allah's name, specifically emphasizing His attributes of mercy and compassion. The inclusion of this phrase in a classroom setting reaffirms the importance of recognizing God's presence and blessings in all endeavors, particularly educational pursuits. Writing "Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim" in an educational environment, like a classroom, sets a spiritual and ethical foundation for the learning place. It reminds students and teachers to approach education with humility, respect, and

a consciousness of their moral and spiritual duties. In many cultures, including Islamic culture, white symbolizes purity, peace, and sincerity. It represents purity of intention and simplicity. In the context of the phrase "Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim," written with white color on blackboard, white may symbolize the pure intention behind seeking knowledge and the sincerity of invoking God's mercy and grace before embarking on this pursuit. Black color is often associated with power, elegance, and mystery in various cultural contexts. Black provides a strong contrast that enhances focus in this setting. Black also represents the unknown and the unseen.

The images on the wall, such as the fish and bird, add a sense of liveliness and represent the concept of nature as an honest, unpretentious existence, possibly serving as a metaphor for the purity of truth. The use of neutral colors for the walls and furniture might imply stability and order, and it underlines the structured nature of the educational setting. The overall warm tones of the classroom, such as the oranges and yellows, present a sense of welcome and comfort. It suggests that the classroom is a safe and nurturing environment. The title of the lesson, "Truthfulness," and its association with a classroom scene, the textbook is likely aiming to instill the importance of honesty as a foundational virtue in young learners. The lesson suggests that truthfulness is not just a religious principle but a social one that is crucial for the development of trust and integrity in personal and community relationships. In Islam, truthfulness is greatly emphasized, with many hadiths and Quranic verses underlining the virtue of speaking the truth and the sinfulness of lying.

The image, along with the lesson title, combines visual and linguistic elements to reinforce the message. The textual content of the lesson elaborates on the significance of being truthful. At the same time, the image shows the practical context in which this value should be exercised in everyday life. Students are being guided to develop an ideological mindset that values honesty, which is a cornerstone of character in many cultures and religions, including Islam. It is likely presented not just as a moral choice but as an expected standard of behavior. The warm and inviting colors in the classroom contribute to a feeling of comfort and safety, which is important when discussing values. A nurturing environment suggests that students can be honest and truthful without fear of harsh judgment, thus fostering an atmosphere where truth can be spoken and heard. The picture, in conjunction with the lesson title "Truthfulness," likely serves to communicate to young learners that honesty is a key value in their personal development and is

essential to Islamic teachings. The classroom setting, diverse group of students, and the central figure of the teacher collectively suggest a message about the importance of internalizing and practicing truthfulness as a daily virtue.

4.10 Content Analysis

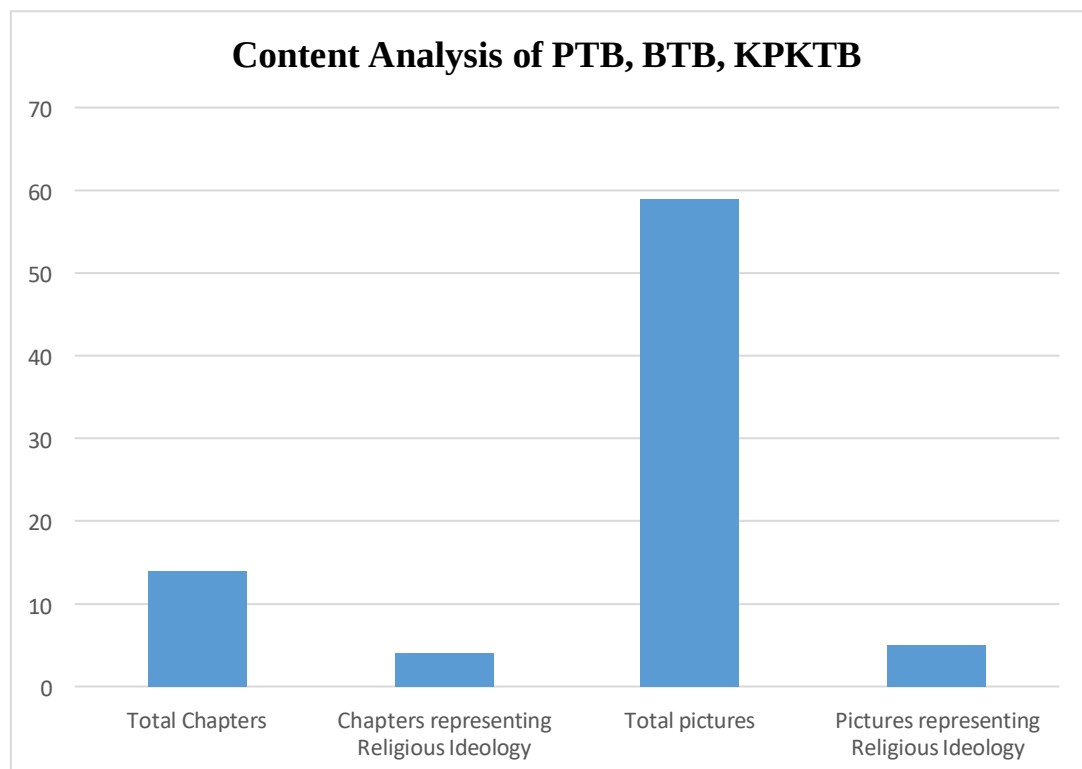
Cartwright (1953) says that content analysis is the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of symbolic behavior. Content analysis in qualitative research is a systematic method used to interpret text data by categorizing and coding content into themes or patterns. It is a way of quantifying qualitative data, making it possible to understand the prevalence of concepts, themes, and relationships within the data. Content analysis is used to explore the meanings, perspectives, and underlying messages in the textual data. Krippendorff (1980) says that content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context. The following table represents the frequency of occurrence of various lexical items.

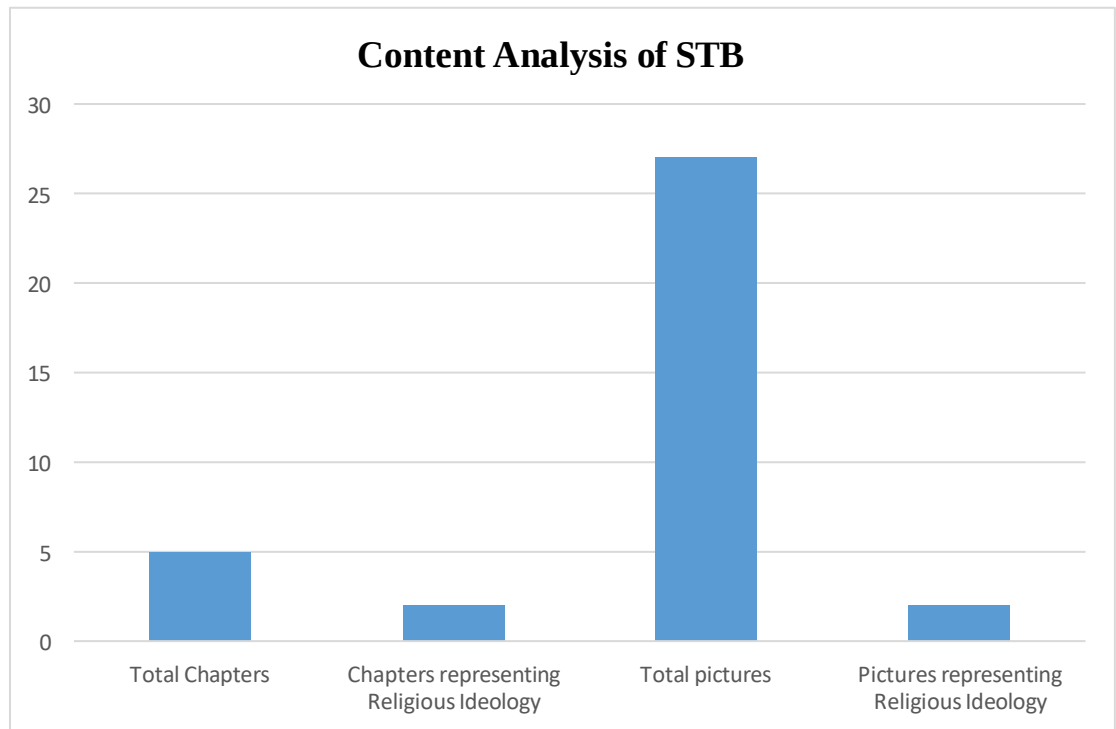
4.10.1 Lexical Items Used in Textbooks

PTB, BTB, KPKTB	STB
Patience, Rasool Allah, Role model, ideal, Hazrat Muhammad (SAW), Saadiq, Al Amin, (وسلم واصحابه اله وعلى عليه الله صلى النبيين خاتم) Truth, honest, Allah, God, forgive, divine message of Islam, Hazrat Zaid bin Haritha (عنه تعالى الله رضى), prayed to Allah, right path, Islam, divine, faith, love, peace, Allah, Muslim women, Muslim lady, Eid ul adha, AssalamoAlaikum, Waalaikum Assalam, Bakra Eid, Hazrat Ibrahim (السلام عليه), Hazrat Ismail (السلام عليه)	Hazrat Rufaida, Faith in Allah, Islamic grace, peace

4.10.2 General List

PTB, BTB, KPKTB	STB
Total Chapters: 14	Total Chapters: 05
Chapters representing Religious Ideology: 04	Chapters representing Religious Ideology: 02
Total pictures: 59	Total pictures: 27
Pictures representing Religious Ideology: 05	Pictures representing Religious Ideology: 02
Religious themes discussed: 10 Gender equality, Honesty, Patience, Tolerance, Women rights, Religious festivals, Human Rights, Faith in Allah, Sacrifice for religion, Blessings of Allah	Religious themes discussed: 02 Women rights, Faith in Allah
The book starts with بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم	بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم is not mentioned on first page





4.11 Summary

In the present chapter, the researcher has discussed in detail the prevalent themes regarding religious ideology in the English textbooks of primary level in Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. Multimodality has been employed to critically analyze the linguistic and semiotic contents. The content has been analyzed thematically and the themes have also been mentioned in the chapter. Content analysis has also been given in this chapter to analyze the qualitative data quantitatively. The next chapter presents an examination of focus group discussions by interpreting the data through the lens of Kruger's (2002) model.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

This chapter analyses the focus group discussions regarding the representation of religion in the semiotic discourses of English Textbooks of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Baluchistan. Two focus groups of one hour each were conducted with different groups comprising participants who were MPhil in English Linguistics and participants who were MPhil in other disciplines (Education, Islamic Studies, International Relations, MS Department, Psychology). Each group consisted of six participants. The participants in both groups were selected from the teachers who were teaching in NUML Multan. The ages of the participants ranged from 25 to 40 years, and they were of mixed genders.

Four semiotics were selected from the data from English Textbooks of Class 5 of all provinces in Pakistan. The content of the textbooks of PTB, KPKTB, and BTB are the same as they are based on the Single National Curriculum (2020), so two pictures were selected from these books for Focus Group Discussion. Two pictures were selected from the Sindh Textbook for FGD. This chapter identifies the primary themes that surfaced from the participants' perspectives on the chosen images concerning the depiction of the Religion Islam. Additional comments from the participants are included in the appendix. The semiotics have been numbered as one, two, three, and four. The analysis begins with participants' comments on the first semiotic, which is taken from Unit#8 (Do What's Right) of PTB, BTB, and KPKTB, followed by the second from Unit#10 (Eid-ul-Azha) of the same books as mentioned earlier. The third and fourth pictures are taken from Unit#3 (Importance of Female Education) and Unit#4 (Truthfulness) from STB, respectively. Each picture was examined using Krueger's (2002) model to identify emerging themes.

This chapter presents the findings from focus group discussions to locate the prevailing themes related to representations of Islam. The analysis incorporates aspects of the model, including words, context, internal consistency, frequency or extensiveness, specificity of responses, intensity, and finding the big idea. Definitions and implications of these terms are provided below:

- **Words**

It refers to the usage of specific words and phrases by the participants in the discussion. The researcher critically analyzes the words and their meanings to locate religious ideology and to understand how similar the responses are in the discussion.

- **Context**

Responses come in reaction to something—either a question from the moderator or a remark from another participant. This means that when a participant has expressed his/her ideas, the researcher has to analyze whether it is his/her own idea or the idea of another participant. To understand a response fully, the researcher looks at what prompted it and considers the environment of the discussion, including the tone and emphasis of the spoken words.

- **Internal Consistency**

During discussions, participants may alter or completely change their views after interacting with others. It means how consistent a participant has been during the discussion in his/her stance. If opinions shift, the researcher looks at the discussion's flow to find hints that could explain why these changes occurred.

- **Frequency**

This refers to the regular occurrence of a concept within discussions, as each conversation centers around a particular topic. Some themes are more frequent or in greater detail. It indicates their importance or special interest to the group. It is also valuable to note which topics were not discussed or barely touched upon, considering if certain expected topics were absent. In this study, the focus was on identifying religious ideologies within the context of four primary English textbooks. The theme that emerged most often in the discussions was how religious ideologies are depicted through the text and images used in the textbooks.

- **Specificity of Responses**

This approach helps in determining the relevance or irrelevance of remarks made about the specified topic during the discussion. It assists in recognizing when participants might be distracted or not fully focused during the conversation. Detailed responses based on personal experiences are generally more significant than broad or general answers.

- **Extensiveness**

Extensiveness refers to the number of people who make a particular comment about a particular topic. It tells the researcher about the degree of agreement and disagreement among the participants on a topic. This technique has been useful in analyzing focus group data.

- **Finding the Big Idea**

The term big idea refers to the overall impression of the discussions. After completing the analysis, it is helpful to take a break and then revisit the findings to highlight the three or four most important themes. Getting input from assistant moderators or others experienced in qualitative analysis helps in confirming these central themes. The big idea that emerged during the discussions conducted for the present research was the propagation of religious ideologies through linguistic and semiotic texts of the selected primary textbooks. All the participants agreed that different linguistic and visual techniques have been used to propagate religious ideologies to young learners through the contents of selected textbooks.

The following tables represent the identity and age group of focus group participants. The names of participants in both groups have not been revealed as this was not permitted, so they have been given codes such as A, B, C, etc.

Participants of Focus Group 1

No.	Code	Gender	Age	Education
1	A	F	32	MPhil English
2	B	M	34	MPhil English
3	C	M	35	MPhil English
4	D	F	30	MPhil English
5	E	M	40	MPhil English
6	F	M	38	MPhil English

Participants of Focus Group 2

No.	Code	Gender	Age	Education
1	G	M	35	MPhil Education
2	H	M	37	MPhil Management Sciences
3	I	F	30	MPhil Psychology
4	J	M	29	MPhil International Relations
5	K	M	31	MPhil Applied Psychology
6	L	F	39	MPhil Psychology

5.1 Semiotic One

The following section critically analyzes the remarks of focus group participants on Semiotic 1. The remarks of focus group participants have been analyzed at levels mentioned in Kruger's (2002) model. The first level that has been discussed by focusing on participants' remarks is the 'Word level.'

5.1.1 Word

In this section of the focus group data analysis, the words that have been used more frequently have been listed together. The following table provides the list of words used by the participants of Group 1 and Group 2:

Group 1	Group 2
Religion, hijab, veil, Quran, Quranic Verse, Waqul Rabbi Zidni Ilma, gender equality, Islamic teachings, Islamic ideology, religious contents, religious norms, female teacher, Islamic values, religious education, Muslims, Holy scriptures, noor, Ghilaf e Kabba, knowledgeable, truthfulness, O Allah, O My Lord, Arabic language, أَفلا , تتفكرون , right direction, honesty, religious harmony, ethics, morality, religiousness, Itaat e Ameer, Itaat e Rasool, Itaat e Allah.	Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim, Islamic context, Allah, Rabbi Zidni Ilma, Quranic verse, right path, Islam, ignorance, religious ideology, Islam and gender equality, Muslim, honesty, teachings of Islam, God, worldly knowledge, truthfulness, ethics, Quran, gender equality, obligation, morality

The words used by the participants of both groups represent that religious ideology is being propagated to the young learners by using a Quranic verse **زِدْنِي عِلْمًا** in the picture. This verse means, "O Allah, increase me in knowledge," and it is directly related to the significance of seeking knowledge in Islam. Words like religion, Islamic teachings, and Islamic ideology connote that the audience gets the message of Islam through this picture. It illustrates that every individual must acquire knowledge from cradle to grave.

An attempt has been made to show the leading role of the teacher and the obedience of the teacher by the students. The use of the words regarding the semiotic one by the participants implies that right from the beginning of the book, an attempt has been made on the part of the designer of the curriculum that the young learners must be inclined towards religious teachings that they should try to follow the basic principles of their religion in true letter and spirit. They should devote their lives to the following commandments of Allah and the Prophet (P.B.U.H), and they should avoid doing anything immoral.

5.1.2 Context

The discussions also revealed a recurring theme where two of the participants, one from a group of linguists and the other from a non-linguist group, expressed different views from the others, highlighting a pattern of contrasting narratives (specifically, the portrayal of Quranic verse written in white with a black background). One participant remarked that the black color is a sign of darkness and the people of earlier (old) times lived in darkness. The Quranic verses written in white imply that they are a sign of light and that the people of the age of ignorance have come to light from darkness. However, the other participant says that it is only a white complex in people's minds, and that is why we have equated white with light even though the color of Kaaba is black, and we value black as well. We should give as much importance to black as we give to white.

5.1.3 Internal Consistency

It means how consistent a participant has been in his/her stance during the discussion. Internal consistency was observed among the participants during discussions on semiotic one, and no competing theme emerged.

5.1.4 Frequency

This refers to the regular occurrence of a concept within discussions, as each conversation centers around a key theme. The most frequent theme that occurs in the semiotic one in the discussions is that every Muslim should seek knowledge from cradle to grave. The Quranic verse is written in the background, and it says, "Waqul rabbi zidni ilma," which is translated as "O Allah! increase me in knowledge." The discussion of participants of the focus group discussion revolves around how Islam emphasizes the education of males and females, as it is said that Islam promotes the education of females as well. It is obligatory for all Muslims, males, and females, to seek education. The religion Islam promotes gender equality, and it is against the oppression of females.

5.1.5 Finding the Big Idea

It refers to the overall idea of the discussion and the big idea found during the discussion on semiotic one by the participants of both groups is that an attempt has been made to persuade the young learners that seeking knowledge is obligatory for all of them. It is one of the important teachings of religion Islam. Different visual and verbal practices have been made to convey the message more comprehensively. At the same time, the selection of the verse of the holy Quran is ideological in highlighting the significance of knowledge in Islam and to counter the concept that Muslims are ignorant and backward in terms of knowledge.

5.2 Semiotic Two

5.2.1 Words

Group 1	Group 2
Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim, Eid ul Azha, Religion Islam, Islamic festival, Islamic teachings, sacrifice, Allah Almighty, Hazrat Ismail A.S, Hazrat Ibrahim A.S, Holy Quran, Religious History, Islamic context, religious obligation, Muslims, Halal, Gender Equality, guidance, religious norms, five pillars of Islam, Hajj, Zakat, Jihad, Command of Allah, religious ideology,	Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim, Eid ul Azha, sacrifice, Allah Almighty, Hazrat Ibrahim A.S, Hazrat Ismael A.S, religious history, Hajj, Zakat, religious norms, Muslims, religious ideology, Islamic teachings, right path, religious ideology, gender equality, teachings of Islam, pray, God, Eid celebrations, religious obligation

religious family, religious ceremony, Islamic year, Islamic teachings	
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The words used by the participants of both groups illustrate that religious ideology is being propagated to the young learners. The remarks of the participants on semiotics under discussion illustrate that young learners should learn the lesson of sacrifice, which is a crucial part of Eid ul Azha. They should follow the teachings of their religion that Eid ul Azha is a religious ceremony, and they should buy the most suitable animal and then sacrifice it in the name of Allah. Each Muslim should wear a new dress as it is the Sunnat, and they should keep the animal with love and care. An attempt has been made to show gender equality in the semiotic two as well. The semiotic two represent the Muslim boy and Muslim girl, and it is also shown that religion Islam emphasizes gender equality, and it is obligatory for Muslim men and Muslim women to offer sacrifice in the way of Allah. Moreover, the participants are of the view that visual and verbal practices have been appropriately made to convey the underlying ideology.

5.2.2 Internal Consistency

During the focus group discussion of the semiotic two that was given to the participants of the focus group discussion, internal consistency was observed among the participants. All participants had their ideas, and they kept their ideas the same when the other participants spoke differently. For example, one of the participants is of the view that this picture does not represent the true image of the Islamic festival, which is Eid ul Azha. Then, other participants were of the view that this image was completely fine and propagated the desired religious ideology.

5.2.3 Finding the Big Idea

In the discussion on Semiotic Two, it is observed that this picture imprints in the mind of the reader why Eid ul Azha is celebrated and how a Muslim should celebrate any Islamic festival. One of the main elements highlighted is that the teachings of Allah Almighty and the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) should be followed for prosperity not only in this world but also in the world hereafter. So, the semiotic under analysis highlights the teachings of Islam very tactfully.

5.3 Semiotic Three

5.3.1 Words

Group 1	Group 2
Bismillah hir Rehman nir Rahim, Islamic education, gender equality, Quran, Hadees, Holy Prophet (PBUH), Muslims, Islam, Human rights, Hazrat Ayesha Siddiqa (R.A), believer of Islam, teachings of Islam, Islamic scholars, Islamic limits	Bismillah hir Rehman nir Rahim, Islamic culture, religious concept, Islamic teachings, female education, gender equality, religious ideology, Islam and Muslims

The words used by the participants of the focus group discussion serve as crucial tools for highlighting the importance of female education. The choice of language, terms, and narratives of participants influence that Islam promotes gender equality, and it is obligatory for Muslim men and women to get an education. The words (religious teachings, equal rights, education, gender equality) highlight that Islam is in favor of the education of women. Just as the Prophet (SAW) himself promoted the rights of women and gave them their right to education. And the biggest example of this is Hazrat Aisha Siddiqa (RA), who was one of the great believers. She was educated, and many of her hadiths are related to her. She herself spread the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to others. There is no prohibition in it. Moreover, the inclusion or omission of certain religious practices or beliefs in a textbook shapes a reader's view of what is normative within a religion. This careful selection and presentation of information in educational texts not only conveys particular viewpoints but also plays a significant role in shaping the religious attitudes and understanding of students.

5.3.2 Context

As far as context is concerned, all the participants waited for their turn to answer the question asked by the researcher about the various aspects of the semiotic.

5.3.3 Internal Consistency

Every participant maintained their position concerning the portrayal of Islam in the semiotic discussions found in the English Textbook of Sindh Textbook Board. No change was observed in the opinions of any of the participants.

5.3.4 Frequency

The key theme of the semiotic under discussion was female education and its importance. All the participants gave their opinions on how a woman should be educated and how a woman can lead to development and prosperity in society. As Napoleon said, "Give me an educated mother, and I shall promise you an educated nation." The semiotic under discussion shows how a girl struggles to convince her family to go to a boys' school so that she can get higher education because there is no school for girls in her village. Therefore, this discussion revolves around the struggle of women and their education. All participants have talked about how Islam promotes girls' education and advocates for them.

5.3.5 Specificity of Responses

All the participants' remarks were very relevant, and everyone was very focused in the conversation. All the participants related to this image, and they gave real examples that they had seen in their lives. They mentioned how a woman has to fight for her education and for her rights and how their Islamic rights are neglected because of society.

5.3.6 Finding the Big Idea

The dominant theme of discussion on the semiotic three is that Islam does not prohibit the education of women but rather promotes it. It should be at least that they stay within the Islamic limits. To a great extent, this picture fulfills the religious ideology given by Islam that women should not lose heart; they should step forward and continue seeking knowledge. Islam grants equality to both males and females, especially in terms of seeking knowledge.

5.4 Semiotic Four

5.4.1 Words

Group 1	Group 2
Bismillah hir Rehman nir Rahim, religion, hijab, Muslim women, Islamic ideology, Islamic teaching, truthfulness, kindness, religious context, Islam, modesty, religious theme, Muslims, gender equality, God, religious knowledge, patience, forgiveness,	Bismillah hir Rehman nir Rahim, truthfulness, religion, commandments of Allah, sins, Islamic ideology, apology, forgiveness, headscarf, Muslim women, gender equality, Allah Almighty, obligation, teachings of Islam, religious

religious practice	context, spirituality, Holy Prophet (PBUH), religious ideology, Hazrat Yunus A.S, Hazrat Suleman A.S, Islamic history
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The words used by the participants of both groups represent that religious ideology is being propagated to the young learners by writing “Bismillah hir Rehman nir Rahim” on the blackboard in the picture. This means “In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful” and it is directly related to the significance of starting work with the name of Allah and seeking help from Allah Almighty. Also, the importance of hijab has been highlighted by presenting a teacher wearing a hijab in a class. The words (Islamic ideology, Bismillah hir Rehman nir Rahim, religion, Muslim women, hijab, modesty, gender equality, truthfulness) focus on the underline message that is given through the semiotic that one should follow the rules of Islam. The participants were of the view as is obvious from the marks given by them, mentioned in the above table, that in Sindh, it is important to give equal rights to females and facilitate their studies. A stress has been made in imparting religious education at first preference and worldly education on the second priority.

5.4.2 Context

All the participants in the focus discussion expressed their own ideas. All the participants waited for their turn to share their ideas. The theme of competing discourse was also emerged when two participants were against the coeducation system and other all participants were in favor of this system.

5.4.3 Internal Consistency

During the focus group discussion of the semiotic that is given to the participants, all participants have their own ideas and they did not change their ideas when the other participants speak differently. They were consistent throughout the discussion about representation of religious ideology in the picture and seeking education is important for both men and women in religion Islam.

5.4.4 Frequency

This refers to the regular occurrence of a concept within discussions, as each conversation centers around a key theme. The most frequent theme that occurs in semiotic four in the discussions is that every Muslim should start work with the name of Allah, and

every Muslim should seek help from Allah. The Arabic Phrase is written on the blackboard, and it says “Bismillah hir Rehman nir Rahim,” which means “In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.” The discussion of the participants on semiotic four revolves around the theme that Islam puts emphasis on the education of male and female as it is said that Islam promotes the education of female as well and it is obligatory for all Muslims males and females to seek education. The religion Islam promotes gender equality, and it is against the oppression of females. The coeducation system has also been discussed in the discussion that whether Islam promotes this system or not and whether we practice Islamic teachings in our daily life or not.

5.4.5 Finding the Big Idea

It refers to the overall idea of the discussion and the big idea found during the discussion on semiotic four by the participants of both groups is that an attempt has been made to persuade the young learners that seeking knowledge is obligatory to all of them. It is one of the important teachings of religion Islam. Different visual and verbal practices have been made to convey the message more comprehensively. At the same time, the selection of the phrase “Bismillah hir Rehman nir Rahim” is ideological in highlighting the significance of seeking help from Allah Almighty in Islam. The overall impression which emerges from the semiotic under discussion is that Muslims should follow the teachings of religion Islam in their lives.

5.5 Summary and Discussion

This chapter concludes with a summary of key themes identified during the focus group discussions, as mentioned earlier. Participants of both groups identified similar dominant themes while discussing the selected semiotic materials, primarily pictures that represent religious ideology. Participants of MPhil English Linguistics analyzed the semiotics through a lens of linguistics and stylistic elements, whereas the other group interpreted them based on their existing knowledge of the context. Generally, both groups perceived, with few exceptions, that there is the lesson of equality, sacrifice for God, speaking truth, love for nature, history of Islam and the history of other Prophets of God have been taught or have been brought to the notice through this picture. The role of semiotic discourses is increasingly recognized as crucial. Ultimately, the use of focus group discussions proved to be an effective method to support researcher's analysis of semiotic texts with others' interpretations.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 Summary and Conclusion

The present research has analyzed the religious contents from the primary English textbooks of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa published in 2022. The focus of the research has been to analyze religious contents present in the textbooks at linguistic and semiotic levels. The analysis involved a thorough examination of the textbooks to extract elements that represent religious ideologies. These elements were categorized and examined linguistically and semiotically, employing the research model outlined in the methodology section of this study. Multimodality by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) has been used to analyze linguistic and semiotic data. Additionally, the religious semiotic contents have been first analyzed by the researcher and then further validated through focus group discussions, using Krueger's (2002) model to understand participants' perceptions of semiotics in these textbooks.

The researcher has done a comparative analysis of English textbooks at the primary level in Pakistan. Through this comparative study, significant differences have emerged in the presentation of religious content through text and images. Content analysis has also been done to support the qualitative data quantitatively. The research was started to realize the objectives, which were to decode the contents carrying religious ideology at linguistic and semiotic levels and then systematically to achieve the objectives, research questions were designed which included:

1. How are religious ideologies disseminated discursively through linguistic and semiotic discourses of Primary English Textbooks in Pakistan?
2. How do Primary English Textbooks of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa vary from one another in disseminating religious ideologies?

And hence, the methodology has been devised accordingly. The answers to these questions are as follows:

6.2 General List

PTB, BTB, KPKTB	STB
Total Chapters: 14	Total Chapters: 05
Chapters representing Religious Ideology: 04	Chapters representing Religious Ideology: 02
Total pictures: 59	Total pictures: 27
Pictures representing Religious Ideology: 05	Pictures representing Religious Ideology: 02
Religious themes discussed: 10 Gender equality, Honesty, Patience, Tolerance, Women rights, Religious festivals, Human Rights, Faith in Allah, Sacrifice for religion, Blessings of Allah	Religious themes discussed: 02 Women rights, Faith in Allah
The book starts with بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ	بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ is not mentioned on first page

English textbooks of Class 5 of Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are based on the Single National Curriculum (2020), so the content of these three textbooks is the same. There are 14 chapters in these textbooks, out of which 04 chapters contain religious content either fully or partially. However, the content of Sindh's English textbook is different from that of the other three books. It contains five chapters in total, and two chapters have religious content (either fully or partially).

The title of the religious chapters of Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa textbooks is "Patience," "Be Grateful," "Do What's Right," and "Eid-ul-Azha." The first chapter describes the characteristics of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and he is a role model for our lives. This means that Muhammad (PBUH) is a role model for all humanity and is a practical example of how we should live if we want to win the favor of Allah. The research also highlights that خاتم النبيين has been used with the name of the Prophet of Islam. The issue of the Prophet's being the last Prophet of Allah جل جلاله has been dealt with more seriously by adding خاتم النبيين every time with his name. The second chapter describes the blessings of Allah and how Allah is closest to man and man seeks His help in everything. The third chapter is about respecting human rights and the

importance of moral values. It also tells that thanking and praising Allah is important to maintain a faithful, grateful, and conscious lifestyle in Islam. The fourth chapter talks about Eid-ul-Azha (an Islamic festival), the importance of its celebration, and its Islamic history.

The titles of the religious chapters of the Sindh textbook are "Importance of Female Education" and "Truthfulness." In the first chapter, it has been explained that Islam speaks in favor of female rights, and one should never lose heart. The second chapter talks about faith in Allah, which is that true Muslims believe in Allah in times of trouble and do not panic. There are 05 religious pictures out of 59 in Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa textbooks, while in the Sindh textbook, there are 02 out of 27 pictures that carry religious ideology. The overall impression that is drawn from the linguistic and semiotic analysis of selected textbooks is that all textbooks contain religious content. The percentage of religious content in textbooks of Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is 28% whereas this percentage is 40% in Sindh textbooks used in the present study.

Two focus group discussions were conducted, mainly analyzed at Krueger's (2002) level, and the most frequently used words by the participants in the focus group discussion were Religion, Islam, Gender Equality, Faith in Allah, Women's Rights, Quranic verse, Hijab, Sacrifice, Obligation, Jihad, etc. The variance between the textbooks of Punjab, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh is a reflection of regional educational priorities and sociocultural differences. The approach of the Single National Curriculum is more focused on inculcating specific religious teachings, while Sindh's approach suggests a more secular or inclusive educational philosophy. These differences are crucial for understanding how regional policies impact educational content and, subsequently, student worldviews. The integration of ideologies in textbooks plays a crucial role in shaping the perceptions and understanding of young minds. Textbooks are not merely educational tools but are also vehicles of ideological dissemination. It influences students' views on religion, culture, and society. Through the content of textbooks, children learn not only language skills but also social norms, historical narratives, and moral values, which are pivotal in developing their cognitive and emotional foundations.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Researches

In the present research, the researcher has analyzed the content of English textbooks of four provinces of Pakistan at linguistic and semiotic levels. It is recommended that in the future, more research of a similar nature could be conducted by analyzing the textbooks of Urdu, Islamic Studies, and History at different levels, such as Class 6, Class 7, or Class 8. Moreover, comparative research could be conducted by including the textbooks of the four provinces on one hand. At the same, the books taught in the elite school and their linguistic and semiotic analysis could be conducted. Future researchers can do a comparative analysis of textbooks to analyze different themes such as nationalism and morality and their impact on young learners. This would be a fertile area and would provide insight into the way religious ideology is propagated to the students at the primary level, which is taught in state-run schools and private schools.

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APPENDIX

TRANSCRIPTION OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Transcription of Group 1

Moderator:

Bismillah hir Rehman nir Rahim, in the name of Allah, I welcome all of you in this focus group discussion. Actually, this discussion has been arranged to collect your valuable opinion about the selected image. And this is a part of Mphil research project. And the title of this research project is “Decoding Religious Contents: A Comparative Study of English Textbooks at Primary Level in Pakistan”. So, what the researcher is going to do is she will collect data from the four primary English textbooks that are being taught at present in Pakistan. And the research is delimited only to the religious content. These contents may be in the form of written language and they may be in the form of visual language. So here you people have been invited to express your views about the visuals. Though the first picture we are going to discuss is selected from PTB (Punjab Textbook board) and the picture is before you. And it is the atmosphere, the setting of classroom is there and the young kids are there, a female teacher is there. And in the background, on the wall, a Quranic verse is written “Waqul Rabbi Zidni Ilma”. So, keeping in view the title, the picture, the context, what is your understanding of this picture?

A:

I will try to elaborate that how this picture is giving you some cues regarding our religious interpretations. As my area of specialization is much concerned with the representation of gender, so I would like to comment upon it first. First of all, when you talk about decoding any religious cues from this particular picture, I would like to say that the women who is leading these kids, these children in a queue, this woman is not covering her head. So, that was very striking for me. Because if you talk about our religion, it is obligatory to cover your head properly with dupatta or with some scarf or with some shawl, but that thing is not there. Moreover, in this picture, I have seen that the number of kids which have been shown in the picture, there is equal representation of gender, two boys and two girls. And that is also quite striking for me in the picture as well. And in the backdrop, you can see that there is a Quranic verse. And from this Quranic verse, you can say that there is equal opportunity for males and females. When you talk about this picture, there is equal opportunities for both genders. I think that now

the textbooks are also trying to inculcate this ideology that there should be equal opportunities for both genders. An ideology regarding the equality between male and female gender has been propagated through visual and this is one of the very basic teachings of Islamic teaching. And I think that this knowledge is not only confined to the male members in society, that is also for the females as well, for women as well. So, I think that is propagating this ideology because that exists in the backdrop of the picture. But the most striking fact which I'm seeing in these pictures is that I have to decode these pictures regarding its religious contents. But among four pictures, there is only one picture in which the woman is covering her head. But in the rest of the pictures, the woman is without having a scarf or a dupatta. So, you can say that now religion has been contextualized, has been appropriated according to contemporary needs as well. Now, the concept of covering yourself when you talk about females, when you talk about women, now this is very much contextualized in contemporary times.

One thing more which I am seeing in this picture is that when you talk, when you see this line or queue, a boy is leading this queue. And the last kid, who is standing in this line, he's also a male kid. And among those two male kids, there are two female kids. So, if you place this picture in the very first generation of feminists, then I think they will say that it is quite confining for women. They have been a kind of protected or secured by male members. But when you place this picture in the contemporary times, when you see feminism and when you see feminist debate in so many things, you will see that this could be interpreted in a way that the women, they occupy the center stage of something, they are the center. And the men, they are the peripheries, they are at the margin. So, in my perception, this could be interpreted like this.

Moderator:

What about the Quranic verse written in white color, in the back background is black, but the verse is written in white color? and if we go deep into the connotation of white and black, so what is your opinion?

A:

According to my knowledge, the basic perception of Noor, the knowledge, when you talk about Noor in our context or in our culture, it is always associated with something white. Noor is associated with white contrary to its religious interpretations. Because when you talk about, I don't remember the verse from the Quran, but Noor is not white as described in the Quran, in the holy scriptures. It is always a light from a lamp or from a torch and that light is not white. Well, I will see it as being a result of our cultural

connotations which we attach with the color white. And you can then relate it to British imperialism that how they have affected our minds because that gora complex is still there in our minds. I think this verse could be written in black color as well. The color of Ghilaf e Qaba is black, then why in white? Because that is our culture. That ideology of the whites being superior, that concept, that ideology is still there. So, this is my perception.

B:

This picture is actually giving a deep thought. What is the deep thought? There is a groomed female teacher who has a direction and who is now transferring this thing to the primary level kids. As a teacher, she is playing a role of leadership as well. And as she is well dressed, well disciplined, knowledgeable, so that's why she's teaching all these things to her students as well, so that students must follow all these practices as well. As a whole, we can say that it is for the sake of students as learners. So, we must impart our students, regarding all these things that they must be disciplined, they must be knowledgeable, they must improve themselves, and Islam also teaches all these practices as well. So, these are the crux and these are the abstracts of this picture. And if we see, the dress of the lady is purplish or bluish. What is the color of purple and blue? That is the sky. Means she has a knowledge that is unlimited. And just look at its direction from her hand, she is actually giving a direction to the new ones that in which direction they have to move. And they have to move in the direction that is the right one. Because the main thing is “Waqul Rabbi zidni Ilma” Translated as “Malik mery ilm me izafa farma” And what is the ilm? What is that knowledge? That is the rightness, that is the truthfulness. And if we saw the color of the dress of the small kids that is the white and gray. What is white color? “neutral”. They have nothing, just like a slate which is white and completely blank and clear. And what is the grey? Grey is the color of the iron. When you mold the iron and when it is molded, it will become a great supportive and a useful tool. And what is this tool? That is to do the good things.

C:

I think that the situation of primary schools in Pakistan or in Punjab is the opposite picture of what is being presented by the picture. It has been said that our primary school system should be like this. Secondly, we see in this that all the children are wearing uniform so it means that uniform should be taken care of because it also brings discipline in life. The first thing is that the verse of the Quran is written here, that O Allah, O my Lord, increase my knowledge. So how will this increase be? This increase

will be in one way, that the teachers themselves are experts and well organized. The second thing is that with the increase of this knowledge, your cleanliness should also be taken special care of, as you can see in this classroom. Everything is organized here and Islam also orders you to be clean

White color is a symbol of peace and peace means that children should not fight among themselves and it becomes the duty of the teacher to educate children not to fight among themselves. Second, the Qur'anic ayat written here “*waql rabi zidni ilma*”, it means to give a silent message to the children which the children read and after reading they get a lesson and remember it in their life. However, what I feel is that the verse is written in Arabic language, but the translation is not given below. Urdu is our national language, so at least there should have the translation so that the children can understand it as much as possible. And here the female teacher is shown, instead of her, there could have been a male teacher, but the female teacher knows the psychology of small children better. I am of the opinion that men are not successful in training children, so female teachers are better for young children.

D:

“*Rabbi Zidni Ilma*”, according to this particular aayat, we can learn this thing like if we want to be successful in our career then we have to learn on continuous basis. We have to improve ourselves on continuous basis. For that purpose, we can do different type of researches, we have to conduct different types of surveys. Like it is a Qurani verse “*أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ*”, meaning why you don't think about it. So, as a human being we have to think about different natural things, different creations and after that we can learn a lot of things from that and we have to study a lot of things in order to conduct researches as well. After that we can enhance our knowledge and we can be successful in our career, that is the main message we can actually learn. This picture is also a glimpse of one thing that you must be in the right direction. And the other thing is that the green color of the wall, this is again the Islamic point of you. And basically, the message is that this picture is not only fulfilling the functional knowledge of the student, not only the need of the functional knowledge of the student, but the educational and the religious needs of the students as well.

E:

Actually, this picture reflects that a teacher is guiding the students and a Quranic verse is there which is “*Waql Rabbi Zidni Ilma*”. And if we link the picture and the content of the chapter, it means that the teacher is giving the students lesson that "honesty

is the best policy", so that's why in the story, the student is returning back the wallet and the teacher is indicating with her hand and showing the students that this is the right way and she is using the right arm to show that this is the right path. Basically, she is guiding the students towards the right path and the classroom is properly organized. At the primary level or the under primary level, it is very easy to mold the brains of the kids. And it is just like, when we build some building, it's just like the basement of the building. I want to say that the designer of this particular textbook thought it appropriate that right from the beginning, a particular type of religious ideology should be inculcated to the young minds of the people because this is the age where you can shape the mind in any way.

F:

According to me, as the story is given over there, it is passed means it has been done but the picture is depicting different thing. Classroom is good and here they all are smiling. The best thing which I saw there is that the students are smiling and the teacher is guiding them to some path that you have to move here. The teacher is happy and the students are happy and the teacher is guiding so the overall atmosphere looks very happy and it looks like that the teacher is guiding with some words and she is looking towards one direction which is telling them how to move on there. And according to religious perspective, the students are in a queue, they are not breaking their queue and they are smiling which is showing that there is something good over there where they are going. On the left side of them, there is a Quranic verse written "waqul rabbi zidni ilma" and it is showing that when they started to move, they have seen it and when we see anything continuously, we remember it unconsciously and whenever anything comes like a difficult situation, at that time that thing which we see again and again comes in front of us or in front of our site automatically in our mind. And it will help them in their coming life or in their near future or whenever they will feel difficulty, they will remember that teacher has told us about this. They will try to learn knowledge and then, they will get out and get rid of that situation according to this.

Moderator:

These PTB books are primarily taught in three provinces of Pakistan and the book that is being taught in Sindh is different from this. So, this particular lesson is being given to 75% of the total population of Pakistan. So, what do you see that is there any religious uniformity? What do you think that the writer of this book wants to convey to young

children by using the art of multimodality and what is the religious ideology behind all this?

C:

In this picture, it is trying to convey a message that where you have to teach art or science, you have to keep religious teachings and the teaching of the Quran. By this, you can prepare a good generation and make their education better. Because, if you look at it, the teachings of the Quran and the teachings of Islam, they give birth to all kinds of teachings and art. It is not only for Muslims, but it is necessary for all human beings to learn the Qur'an and be guided towards it.

Moderator:

Well, keeping in view the present national and international scenario and the different sorts of religious disturbance and different interpretations of religion by different people, but keeping in view this particular picture, what is your interpretation about this picture that this particular textbook is being taught in three provinces, which is almost 75%. So, do you think that an attempt has been made to create a religious harmony or synchronization?

E:

Actually, religion always teaches us ethics, moralities, and values. Ethics, moralities, and values are the basic and the fundamental things or the fundamental factors in which religions are defined. When we are doing a right thing, it means it is socially accepted, it is morally good, it is acceptable by all society members. So, honesty is the basic factor and we can say that it's an ethical and moral value and the teacher is guiding them.

Moderator:

What type of mindset is being shaped, keeping in view that young learners are the kids and their psychology can be shaped easily when they are in a particular age. So, do you think that a particular type of religiousness is being imparted to this particular class right from the beginning to make them behave in a particular manner in the grown age?

F:

Yes, it is depicting over there because according to Islam, we always follow the leader. There must be a leader, the teacher is showing that I am a leader and students are following her. Second thing is that there is cleanliness over there, also a Quranic verse is there because our religion always follows the teachings of Quran. About dress, the dress is also shown according to Islam. But one thing is missing that the teacher is not in hijab.

Because when she is going to move over there, at that time, nonverbally, psychologically, it is going to impact on the students also. Because it is modernization also, but the thing is that students will take it unintentionally in their mind and they will think that in religion it is allowed. An attempt has been made to counter the challenges that will be perceived by the West and other people that Islam is very much in another religion and people are rigid and narrow minded or backward, and an enlightened version of teacher has been shown here. I mean to say that some of the basic teachings of Islam have been violated through this picture, a teacher must have been observing or wearing a proper, a kind of a dupatta or chadar on her head. At that time, she is teaching them non verbally how to live in this religion or according to Islam, because we are taking it according to Islam. In Pakistan, there are different cultures, different provinces and mostly there is Islam. But when they are in other religion, they are taking hijab over their heads when they are going out. In Buddhism and Hinduism and other religion, if they are going in their different churches and different temples, they are also covering their heads at that time. Obviously, it is in all religions. And if we do over there, I think so it will be good over here. Students will learn non verbally. Unconsciously, they will learn and they will follow. Other things are fine. If I see according to Islam, it is good. All things are organized, each and everything is okay.

B:

So, I just want to add only one thing from academicians' point of view, being an educationist, I come up with some little observations. Because this picture is totally telling us that there is no creativity. Students have been made bound, they are bound to follow the teachers only, and if you just look, they are even not holding, but they are touching the hands of one another. In foreign books, you will never find a picture of kids like this. Why? Because they believe every child is doing his or her own kind of things. So, it means that they are doing critical thinking, decision making or independent learning. I mean to say that religious ideology has been propagated that leader, imam or teacher is everything. And you need to follow. You are rather bound to follow. Well, just following this point means maybe they were not holding the hands of one and each other. Maybe they are or they might be going in crowds following the teachers. But here, the hand of the teacher was also shown that "now this way". So, a kind of conservativeness regarding academic point of view is shown. It is my perspective, this is what I have learned, because they're just going, if you see the back door, it means they're going only to the playground. As far as religious perspective is concerned, to my understanding, it's okay.

Moderator:

There is a saying that “ہے اطاعت کی رب امیر اطاعت”, if we keep this thing in mind, and being a Muslim, what would be your idea on this?

C:

Itaat e Ameer is actually Itaat e Rasool, and Itaat e Rasool is actually Itaat e Allah. It is a way in which Islam teaches you how to follow. It teaches you how to follow the hierarchy. The door is closed which means you cannot learn unless there is an environment of silence. For example, if we are giving a lecture and the door is closed, we will be almost disconnected from the rest of the environment. So, in this sense we can convey things in a good way and students can get knowledge in a good way. There should be peace and quiet for studying, if there is noise then it is of no use.

D:

Government textbooks are taught in government schools and mostly, it is generally believed that people belonging to middle class send their kids to that school. If we talk about the middle class or the lower middle class, maybe some of the students might not be having this kind of setup which has been given over here. But at the same time, it has been given in a beautiful manner. Well, I would say that it is depicting that class also because many lessons have been given in this picture. First, that you should follow the right path. The other, you should follow the elders. Third is that you should be obedient, that's why you're going towards the right path. Fourth, you must have some sort of colors, colors means that something is giving pleasure within you. The colors shown here represent the colors in a Muslim's life and having some positive impact on the thoughts and the minds of the students as well. And at the same time, if we see that, the thoughts and the colors and the overall impact of this picture from religious and from academic both points of views, it goes towards positivity, towards learning positivity. We can just sum up that the respect, the unity, the obedience, and love for elders, the environment of school, and the religious touch, all have been tried to be given within this one picture.

Moderator:

Moving to the next picture, it is there with you. And the very title of the lesson is “Eid ul Adha”. So, all of us are well aware of the religious history of Eid ul Adha and the concept of qurbani or sacrifice. Keeping in view all these things, context is there, and goat is there, young kids are there, and we all are well aware that in our Islamic context, or in

Muslim context, it is a source of great pleasure for the young ones to offer Qurbani of goat or animal like this. So, what is your interpretation of the text?

A:

If we see this picture, the first thing is the lesson of sacrifice especially from the history, if we discuss this thing. Then there is the obedience. If we see the goat, his head is down. Same is the case when Hazrat Ismail A. S. obeyed Allah's will and he keeps his head down in front of his father and said that please do it what Allah said to you in your dream. The thing is that the love of children is the most vital thing. But there is a lesson that even the love of children is vital, but nothing in front of Allah's will. There is again message for the Muslims, because the boy has a cap on his head and the girl has a dupatta in her neck and they are young ones but there is a lesson of the halal food. Only those animals you can go for the sacrifice on the Eid ul Adha that are halal. And if you see, there are three pillars that are just in the end of the picture. They are also the sign, the five pillars of Islam. I want to add one thing more, this is basically the international game. Even they are behind our Eid ul Adha and sacrifice. That is the Congo virus. When the Eid ul Adha will come nearer and nearer, there will be more cases of the Congo virus death. This is actually the game. And this game is basically making us away from our Qurbani. How pampered we are, we don't want to even just put a hand on our animal. This is again a point and a thing is that, we have to give this message to our young one that this is the part of Islam. And if we talk about colors, a girl is wearing the yellow. Yellow is the color of sun. And why sun is so important for us? Sun gives us light and heat and that is the essential thing for the life. An indirect message is given that every Muslim must be in the sun, must be in the light. He or she must know what Islam is and what are its teachings. And offering Qurbani is one of the best examples in Islam. There is another teaching of Islam that is equal opportunity for the girls or equality. Maybe this picture contains two boys. But there is one girl and one boy. Even the boy is younger. But this is the thing that the girls have the same opportunities, same equality, same rights in the house as the boy have. Again, this is the teaching of Islam.

B:

First of all, looking at this picture, one feels that this is not a place for goats, because it is very clean and it is the lawn of the house. The second message is that if you have brought a sacrificial animal, it is obligatory on you to clean it. The third thing is that if there is a need to sacrifice something dearer than your dearest in the way of Allah, then you should not avoid this sacrifice. In fact, the sacrifice of wealth prepares a person to

make a great sacrifice, like you sacrifice your halal animals, if you need to sacrifice yourself tomorrow according to the command of Allah or for the pleasure of Allah, you have to do it, don't hesitate. In fact, this series of sacrifices leads a person to Jihad. The third important thing is that it is good to prepare before the sacrifice. The preparation before the sacrifice is shown here. And this creates an atmosphere of how you have to follow the commandments of Allah. It is trying to create this awareness in the children. The new generation is being prepared for it. When you bring animals before the sacrifice, it also has these benefits. There could have been a grown up instead of children in this picture. The ideology behind showing up the young children is to show children how to prepare them for sacrifice and how to care for animals and what is the purpose of sacrifice.

C:

Bismillah hir Rehman nir Raheem, this lesson has been meant for younger students, that's why these young students have been given in a picture. Second, through pictures, we actually try to give all type of messages with what we call the hidden character. So, this is the part of hidden curriculum that what we want to teach them and we cannot describe all those things with words, so we actually try to depict through the picture. If you see the picture, this is according to the teachings of Islam. First of all, the love for animals have been shown as it is usually described that Islam is very strict and harsh kind of religion. So, love for animals have been shown over here. And one other thing is that we sacrifice happily whenever there is a command of Allah Almighty, we happily obey and submit to the commands of Allah Almighty. Even our children are ready for this. So, this is the other message which has been given. And since we can see the three pillars in the background, it means that the animals have been kept so close to the home that it becomes like part of the home. So, it is kept very closer to it.

Moderator:

Do you think that these three pillars show that the very ideology of the foundation of Islam rests on certain pillars. We can say that the five pillars of Islam are Namaz, Roza, Hajj, Zakat, etc. and the obedience to Allah or before the will of Allah is one of the most important of them. So, do you think that this message has been propagated to young ones? Because these are the people who will grow elder and will keep practicing all these things.

D:

It could be in the mind of those curriculum designers. But as I understand the psychology of these young kids, being into this profession, I still find that if you just show them three pillars and you don't show them the other pillars, this might come with some kind of ambiguity. Other point is that even if we consider them as pillars of the Islam, still Qurbani comes later on. So Namaz, Roza, Hajj, means all these three, so Qurbani comes later on, so maybe somewhere it is, but it could be or it could not be. But the other point is that the dresses of these young kids have been given an Islamic touch, that the dresses are for the Islamic festival. And then the decor of animal, if we see the decor of animal, means we love animals so much that we decorate them also. So, it means everything that is related to sacrifice. And in the beads like necklace, we see in the neck of this means it is again showing some or giving some touch of worship or some kind of Islamic touch.

Moderator:

Well Dr Saeed, the children sitting and showing in the picture are very happy and the animal that is going to be sacrificed is well decorated. So, do you think that a kind of message indirectly is given that if you are asked to offer something in the way of Allah, in the name of Allah, do it happily or what is your interpretation?

E:

Okay, one important thing we can say that as a Muslim, we must be compassionate and kind, not only for human, but with animals as well. So that's why this animal is under the tree, under the shadow. Second thing, we are taking care about food as well regarding that particular animal. And the other important thing is that children are very happy during this particular festival, means when we talk about this religious festival. They celebrate more, that's where they are actually focusing on decoration of that particular animal. And the other important aspect is that Eid ul Azha is a source of income as well. It creates job opportunities as well. When we talk about, on a country level, billions of businesses actually, during this particular event, happening within the country. So, it is a source of income, it plays a role of creating GDP or enhancing the GDP as well. So, as a whole sub package means we can learn how we can be careful regarding animals, how we can be careful regarding our neighbors as well. So, indirectly a message is being given to the general audience through this particular textbook, that if you obey Allah's will, not only it is better for your next world, rather it is beneficial for you in the present world as well, in the form of giving you material benefits as well.

Moderator:

In Islam, offering sacrifice is the duty of every man and woman of high status. Is it possible that the boy and girl in the picture are representatives of all the Muslim men and women of the high status?

C:

Yes, definitely that's possible. The lesson that we need to learn to unburden ourselves from this is very simple and are easy to understand. To show the girl and the boy, this is the lesson that we need to learn. This is for boys and girls. Over there the condition of the high status is kept for both, individually. For example, man has husband status and woman has wife status. Both are related to each other as husband and wife. Then on man it is compulsory to sacrifice in anon and on wife, anon. Here is the second thing I feel about it which is we usually ignore the Islamic teachings. And if one person offers sacrifice in the house and the other does not, we consider it as it is done by both. Either one person offers sacrifice or it can be done by combining all the money and his sacrifice situated in his household, this would be a very wrong way to do it. For example, if you have five dwellers in your house, and all five of them are self-employed, they should make five sacrifices. By combining five people's money or saving money, to do this sacrifice, they would definitely not sacrifice. One of the things that I've observed here is that the animals have arrived fresh and healthy. First of all, if you're willing to make any sacrifice for the animals, it must be good and healthy. It is a message in common life that whenever you want to give something in the way of Allah, it should not be rubbish, but should be good and rich. You should give what you like to others, as a donation.

Moderator:

Generally, it is seen that the rich people, the parents, the earners, they try to spend as little as possible on charity. So, to the children, the message is being given right now and you have to learn the correct teachings of the religion. The lesson that has been put in the book by the name of Eid ul Azha and has been put in primary level, do you think that this is very deliberately, intentionally try to give awareness to the children of all these things of the religion?

C:

Yes, it is exactly like this. And secondly, if it is in a textbook to teach it to the children, then the teacher will have the responsibility to explain it to the students, then they will understand. Otherwise, if it is published or made a part of the text, it will be of no use. What will the students understand?

Moderator:

We were talking about the role of the teacher in imparting the religious ideology or the underlying ideology embedded in any type of text. So, what role a teacher can play in our context or in the context of Pakistan keeping in view the context of Qurbani and this picture, what is your understanding and role of teacher?

F:

A picture is worth thousand words. So, picture means that the whole game lies on the shoulders of the teachers that how does he teaches. You might have heard teaching aids, actually, teaching aids are not somewhere that you can buy and you can implement it rather it is in the minds of the teachers. The teachers can use whatever the resources are available, and even through this picture only, he can deliver so many messages. For example, this Bakra, it is very expensive. I won't be able to buy it in the coming year. But, if you see this, girl is playing the leading role, the girls are more caring. The place of women and females in Islam, where it has been taught in the lesson that she is leading, she is playing the leading role as well as she is showing more concern and care. And then we see that this family is a religious family. It is not a show off, the goat has been kept within sight, within the house, within the premises of the house. It is not somewhere on the road that where they are just taking it. Maybe their neighbor might be some sort of in a financial position that they can't buy. Even in the house, behind the boy, there is a wall which shows that this is within the premises of house, so that the other people should not be feeling some sort of deprivation in their minds and hearts.

Moderator:

You have to say that an ideology has been propagated that if you are going to offer something in the name of Allah, don't make show off. Now, what is your interpretation, keeping in view the business scenario or job opportunities by offering sacrifice and the representation of boy and girl and religious ceremony, how would you sum up this picture?

B:

Yes, actually it starts from a basic point of view, like as a poor family even, they can earn a lot of things through this particular festival. Means if you remember our last Prime Minister, he also said that as a family member, you can earn a lot of things by this. So, when this festival is set up, each and every person can be involved. Not only rich person, even poor person can also be involved. They can get a lot of money as well.

Because, an environment is being created, there is an Islamic culture which is guiding us about this thing that we should participate in this overall.

Moderator:

You mean to say that the usefulness of Islamic culture and Islamic values have been highlighted that you can seek benefit from Islam directly or indirectly. If you are offering sacrifice, you will get benefit in many forms and if you are not offering, you can seek benefit in the form of economy, business, and equal participation and like this. Sir Mohsin, what about the color connotations of the script?

B:

Sir, basically the dominant color is the green and green is the color of Islam. The color of goat is actually looks like a dark brown. Browns are the mountains and they mean that offering qurbani is the height of religion Islam that if you are offering Qurbani and following this particular Sunnah, you are at the height of goodness. There is a reward of every hair of an animal. This is the highest pleasure.

Moderator:

Sir, please give your quick sum up of this picture, what is the idea behind this picture?

C:

Basically, the main message I think is that it is the duty of Muslims or the elders that they should brought up their children well according to Islam, according to religious teachings and according to all the commandments. They should be taught these things whether it is a class environment or a house environment. Rather, it is the responsibility of the family to inform the children not only about Eid but also about all the Islamic events that take place in the year and prepare them for it.

Moderator:

Do you think that an attempt has been made that you can learn religious values or religious teachings right from your home? You can learn it away from your home as well, but the first institution is your home.

B:

Very true because this picture has been actually explaining each and everything what you have just summed up. I only just wish that there would have been their mother father in the background also so that the whole family is feeling happy with this animal. But as we have said that they are really propagating ideology of Islam, means this picture is almost successful in delivering its message.

E:

My interpretation is that the decoration of animal shows that we are sacrificing our animals just for the sake of Allah, and we're not doing it forcefully. And it also shows that religion teaches us modesty, not that fashion. Because the girl is wearing simple dressing and the colorful theme is showing that we can wear anything but it should be modest and according to Islam. And it also shows that if we pose to be Muslims, so we have to follow certain rules of Islam. One important thing is the logic behind girl is elder than boy, maybe like, females are more respectable. This picture is again a message for Islam and for Muslims that the first month of the Islamic year is sacrifice, the last month of the Islamic year is sacrifice, means all the life of a Muslim is the sacrifice.

F:

In this picture it is being told that we send children to school so that they can learn Islamic education in a better way. In this chapter, it has been shown how we should celebrate Eid ul Adha and how we should prepare ourselves for it and what we should do for it. Because this is the age of children to learn when they are in fifth or sixth class and they can understand things in a better way and can remember them. In this picture it is shown that the children are sitting near the animal and are watching him closely and are taking care of him. It is visible through his body that the children have a good connection with the animal and a good bond has been made and, in some days, we will sacrifice it too, this is what tells us that we have to sacrifice our best and dearest thing which is to be sacrificed for the sake of Allah. And Allah loves that deed most which is done in His way with a lot of heart and with a lot of love. If I compare both the images, it turns out that the first image shows a class room in which the students are given a lesson on Islamic instructions and the second image shows an instruction being done practically in our class.

Moderator:

Now we are moving to the third picture and this particular semiotic has been taken from Sindh textbook board and the title of this particular lesson is "The importance of female education". So, in the picture, male and female students have been shown, different colors have been shown, one female and other are the boys. What is your interpretation about this picture?

A:

Now I want to say a lot about this picture. I just want to say that this picture is saying a lot about seeing things beyond Eurocentric lens. Because the kind of narratives we have got

in media, from Western lens. The narrative of Malala Yusufzai, and the narratives which only show that women is victimized in our society. And there are no opportunities and there are no facilities available for the women in Pakistan or in third-world countries. So that picture is defying all those Eurocentric norms. That Eurocentrism has been dismantled from this picture because the girl, she stands for freedom of voice. She stands for having equal educational opportunities for both men and women in Pakistan, in third world countries, in South Asian countries, particularly. So that is very much there.

B:

The main thing here is that this picture basically gives us a glimpse of one thing, that the first university for every child is the mother. If the mothers are knowledgeable, if the mothers are groomed, then definitely they will not only give this message to their young ones, but even the whole nation. As Napoleon said, “You will give me the educated mothers, I will give you the educated nation”. So, this is the importance of the topic that the education of the female is very important. The other thing is that, from the light of the Islam, or from the verses of the Quran and the hadith, the sayings of the Holy Prophet (SAW), there are many lessons like acquiring knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and woman, even if it was not ordered that getting knowledge or being knowledgeable is only for the boys. That is equally for the woman. And this Zahra, she does the same thing. “Seek knowledge even if you have to go to China”. Here China means seeking knowledge among boys. This is basically seeking power, so a young girl is seeking education among boys. In China, there are Himalayas and high mountains. This picture gives us a lesson that this is the mountains of Himalayas that this girl passed and getting the knowledge and just satisfying the thirst of the knowledge by doing these steps.

Moderator:

This is the picture and if we put the Islamic teachings in front of it, then there is Hadith “Seek knowledge even if you have to go to China”. So, the text of this particular picture is that a girl named Zahra had to go to a boy’s school to get education. How would you interpret this, keeping the religious background and this example in mind?

C:

Bismillah hir Rehman nir Raheem. First of all, Islam does not prohibit the education of women but rather promotes it. Just as the Prophet (SAW) himself promoted rights of women and gave them their own rights of education. And the biggest example of this is that of Hazrat Aisha Siddiqa (RA), who was one of the great believers. She herself was educated and many hadiths are related to her. She herself spread the teachings of the

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to others. There is no prohibition in it. I have written an article on this and I have added a few things to it that what are the Shariah regulations for the education of a woman, what should she adhere to and what is the current situation. I have added four or five things in it, for example, the same thing that Islamic scholars do. One is that if you look at coeducation right now, there is a compulsion for girls to come, this is a compulsion of the institutions and also a compulsion of the students and teachers. So, in that, it should be at least that they stay within the Islamic limits, sit in the classroom and learn. Second, whenever they leave the house, get ready according to the Islamic limits. Actually, we have adapted ourselves to Western culture. In Islamic tradition, it is also written that every woman and woman's makeup should not be noted outside of their houses. They should also not wear perfume so as not to create any false attraction. These are some regulations and keeping them in mind, it is not forbidden for a girl to leave the house or get education.

Moderator:

Sir, how will you compare the two quotations, one is “seek knowledge though it be in China” and same is the case with this particular girl named Zahra. Do you think that she has challenged the gender stereotypes that education is meant for male gender and female can be deprived of it and keeping in view the quotation, “Seek knowledge though it be in China, and this particular picture, alone she is sitting among the boys, challenging all the gender stereotypes, what is your interpretation? And what about the color connotations and the overall perception?

D:

The boys have the red color. Red color is the source of energy, that is the source of life, that is the source of future. No doubt, the future earning is for the boys. But again, we can make a comparison with the girl having the blue. The knowledge limitation tells us that the sky has no limit. This picture is basically the slap on our society, this is again a slap on our government. Why? the reason for the society is that all boys are seeing the girl just like she is a Tutti Frutti or this is just a pastry in front of the other. Even the girl is more in age than the boys, boys are younger, but still boys are boys. This is the slap on the society and the slap on the government is that, what the hell is government is doing for our nation? They are getting the funds, they are getting all the facilities, but when we talk about the nation, when we talk about the common person and the common people, their basic needs and this is the result of elections. Just look at the posture, she seems more focused on her studies as compared to the boys who are looking otherwise. This is

again the insult; the girls are more focused in every matter. Not only reading the book or the knowledge, in every other matter they are more focused, they have more eye to power. And the boys are lethargic, they are quiet, they don't take interest in the matters and they are non-serious, just like non serious like our nation. Another thing is that the boys are superior, the boys are more empowered. The girls are not, this is again the slap on our society.

Moderator:

The boys are wearing dress of different colors, white is there, black is there, red is there. Do you think that these boys are the symbol of different type of patriarchal norms and the implied message that is being given that if a girl wants to seek education, she will have to bear all these challenges, particularly in Sindh or interior or exterior of Sindh?

B:

Yes, the thing is that exterior and the interior Sindh are two different side of the picture. Interior Sindh is just like they are living in the past and they are still under the rule of the feudal lords. They are close-minded people or very conservative people. They are very conservative in their traditions, and this is a glimpse of that thoughts.

Moderator:

This book, which is already mentioned earlier, is taught in government schools, and generally middle-class children come to study in government schools and especially the literacy rate in Sindh is considered very low, so do you think that this picture or the boys in it who are wearing different colored clothes reflect the mindsets of different people? Or only these middle-class people think that they don't allow girls to study but allow boys to study, by the way, this is completely opposite to the teachings of Islam.

C:

If we keep in mind this picture, we see that there are no opportunities for girls to study separately. So, especially in the case of Sindh girls' schools, I think that if there are separate schools for girls, there will be very few in number. Most of the time, the schools are combined, and there is coeducation. This makes me think that it is such a compulsion for girls to study in school like this.

Moderator:

What do you think, focusing on picture, can we take it as a metaphor of challenging the gender stereotypes?

B:

Yes, we can. There are certain other hidden challenges we can find out from this picture also. For example, we can see the socio-economic situation of this region because we can see the students in different colors. Maybe they cannot afford the uniform, that's why they are in different colors. And one more thing, from an educationist point of view, maybe if it is the blackboard, which I can see, so how come that a class/the students have the back towards the writing board or the blackboard? So, it means it shows that in interior, especially, teachers are not that trained. Education is being imparted from traditional point of view, and teachers need more kind of training as well.

Moderator:

Religion allows us that a woman can get education by keeping these rules and regulations in mind, do you think there is any conflict or contrast between the religion's stated doctrine and our own constructed doctrine keeping in view this picture?

E:

If we look at the current situation of Pakistan or see the situation of all the Islamic countries, so it looks like it is impressed from the west and we are trying to be like them. And here I see this as a sign of truth that the way the girl sits with the boys and the way the children are shown, so as Muslims, it is our duty to get education but within Islamic limits. Islam never forbids teaching, but always promotes it, so books should also have similar pictures that reflect these Islamic teachings, not its opposite.

Moderator:

You mean to say that the pictures that are included must be carefully drawn, must be carefully designed, focusing in the context and the linguistic and semiotic messages, there must be some correlation if we are going to impart a message that Islam is not against the women in terms of seeking knowledge, the picture should have been of that type. When we look at the history of Islam, despite the difficult times, the women of Islam remained steadfast, can it be correlated with Islamic history?

E:

Yes, of course, especially in places of education when we see how our Muslim girls are educated, how they adjusted themselves I think needs to be highlighted here more. A woman must get education but then she should also make and show herself as a Muslim woman. It is not very late. It's just 1980. There is a picture of the 1980 of the college in Peshawar. The teacher is in front of the class and the class is divided with male and female, there was a separation between them with a curtain and this was also a

tradition. The dynamic of having a single female student in a predominantly male classroom could significantly influence both teaching strategies and peer interactions. This imbalance may lead to unintended biases in classroom engagement, possibly making it challenging for the female student to participate fully or feel included. Educators need to be particularly conscious of these dynamics and strive to create a balanced and inclusive atmosphere that promotes equitable participation. This includes training teachers on gender sensitivity and inclusive pedagogical techniques that ensure all students, regardless of gender, are engaged and supported equally. Since I was a trainer and conducting teacher training sessions throughout the Punjab, I myself conducted some sessions in Mianwali district where males and females were separated by some kind of curtain or some kind of partition. Even I saw the situation in the university of Bahawalpur. I don't want to say that you sit separate, it's fine. You want to mix yourself; it is perfect. The thing is, quality education is the right of each and every person whether you sit separately or whether you sit together. Domains are your own cultural values, your own religion, for example, if somebody belongs to some community or you want to follow your own rituals, perfectly alright, I don't mind. What I personally mind is that the quality education should be given at the doorstep and should not be far from their homes. And maybe this picture is showing the ratio of the female and male literacy rate in the interior Sindh.

F:

Through this particular picture, where a single girl is seeking knowledge among so many boys and under different difficult circumstances, up to great extent it fulfills the religious ideology given by Islam that women should not lose heart, they should be step forward and should continue seeking knowledge. Otherwise, it is also a message for the policy makers and the others that if it is unavoidable that both men and women are to get education together, so they must make proper arrangements. And again, that could be against the lessons or teachings of Islam. Because Islam grants equality to both male and female, especially in terms of seeking knowledge, but this picture shows something opposite. There are some other things in this. For example, if a female has a separate class and the teacher is a female teacher, then she can get a lot of such questions, a lot of knowledge from her, which even a male person would not like. There is also another thing in it that is the protection of a girl or a woman. Allah has created us and He has also created this world and He has created this religion and He has created Islam according to the nature of man. If we follow it, we have all the benefits and if we do not follow it,

there is a loss for us. The visual representation of only one female student among all males in a classroom might initially suggest a narrative of isolation and inequality. However, it is also an opportunity to reflect on the progress and ongoing challenges in achieving gender parity in education.

Moderator:

And now we move to the last picture. Again, a female teacher is there observing a particular type of dress code, covering her head and again the students are young ones and, on the blackboard, “Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim” is written. So, what is your interpretation of this linguistic and visual interpretation?

A:

As far as the visual interpretation is concerned, the woman is covering her head and she is teaching. So, she is conforming to the norms and rules of religion. You know, if you happen to be a Muslim woman, you need to cover your head by all means. So that is, she is actually conforming to the kind of the concept or ideology which we have for Muslim women and she is teaching orator. She is a teacher; she is an instructor. And when we talk about the context of the story, which has been taught or given in the lines, harmony, the truthfulness and kindness is always associated with our religion. So that could be the religious interpretation of this picture.

B:

One thing is that I have found that if you talk about our religious context, maybe student has to stand and listen to the teacher there. It's according to some of the student-teacher relation. The student should stand while the teacher is talking with them or asking him. Something that can be expressed here or the undermining message has been delivered in this particular text.

Moderator:

Don't you think that the picture shows that the young learners are there and this is the particular age at which you can inculcate any type of religious ideology among them. And one could be the possible interpretation that this particular message is given to the young learner seeing that this religious concept is missing among them.

C:

Yes, we can say that the dress the teacher is wearing is showing that she is being religious and this indirectly communicates to the young students that in Islam, girls should dress properly and as far as it is concerned with the question that you said that, at this stage, they can be taught the truthfulness, forgiveness and the kindness, so that's true.

But it is not depicted that what is being taught in the class or what is going on in the class. To some extent it is true that some religious ideology as “Bismillah hir Rehman nir Rahim” is there and the teacher is dressed properly, the religious theme can be there but what is being taught or the student’s response cannot be inferred from here.

Moderator:

Three boys are there and two girls are there and teacher is also female, so how would you interpret that this picture is observing any concept of religion that education is compulsory for both men and women and the picture of the natural objects are there?

B:

Yes, that represents the ideology that male and female both have to get education as per our religious context. The picture in the background also says religion is near to the actual nature. Or we say that Islam is actually the real religion which is near to the natural human being. All other religions are normally not near to that particular context. That picture also represents that idea there. That there should be no gender-based discrimination. And one aspect has also explained there that coeducation does not create any distraction. In my opinion, that also give respect to male and female. If you study together, then you learn how to respect a male or how to respect a female. But if you have separate classroom teaching available there, male always has to distract female and female also has to distract the male. But learning together can create a self of acceptance, self of respectfulness, helping other that has been also the part of our religion that both has to help each other.

D:

Okay, I want to comment on two things: Talking about these pictures, if you take them, you know on a broader level, there is an image of sparrow and sparrow could stand for something that fly high. And if you talk about this fish and ocean, there is an image of knowledge, the depth is also there. But my question is, talking about this picture and this happens to be in the same textbook board in the textbooks actually. So why Sindh offers such kind of co-education at this level in the rural areas. I have this question, I don't know, I'm not sure about that. Do you think it is realistic? At the primary level, it is realistic. In the schools in our villages, we have coeducation system. At the high level, high classes, maybe they have separate classes. It is not universal everywhere. There are areas where they take care of girls that they should be separate from boys in class. And in all the pictures, we have seen that a female teacher is leading from the front. There could have been a male teacher but this cannot be a religious interpretation. Because this is our

culture, this is our cultural norm that women are supposed to nurture kids. Socially and religiously, both pictures are different. If we talk about the culturally based aspect, then that can be a true picture. But if we talk about the religious based aspect, these pictures are not linking with the text or not linking with our parting verses.

B:

The thing is the pictures contradicts, theory and practice contradicts. Islam says equal rights, women emancipations, importance of teaching female as a teacher. But in Sindh, practice is different. Very few girls and women are allowed to even go for teaching. This could be an ideal thing. Ideal picture of some type of utopia. But interestingly, I am also a student of Sindh University. But my concept of Sindh is very different now because the girls are, they are quite liberal over there. And I was asking my supervisor that maybe we could visit Shahbaz Qalandar place, to shrine sometime. And she was saying “Udhr hm bhi soch smjh k hi jaaty hen” (We think twice before going there) and that was enough for me. Because at one side there is a university, the males and females, they're having education, they're having time. But there is also a place where we are not even allowed. So that is the difference. Not being allowed by the social norms. But they are being allowed by our religious or by cultural norms. So socially, actually, influencing on that person. The social construction of everything is disastrous. So, whether it be, regardless if it is Sindh or Punjab or KPK or Balochistan, we are much in social norms.

C:

But I think that is the multiplicity of our culture. Even you go to America, there are places where you cannot go, where you cannot wander around so easily. When you talk about Las Vegas and Texas, these are the places which are controversial in so many ways. So, I think that multiplicity is a part of every culture of every nation, every country. So, I think we should be open to that.

E:

My interpretation of this picture is that obviously the teacher is wearing a very modest dressing, and she is having a hijab as well. In Islam, it should be covered. And the students who were sitting there, it seems like that this student is asking for forgiveness as it is mentioned in the summary & this states the fact that everyone make mistake and you should accept the mistake and also apologize. And if someone is apologizing to you, you have to accept their apology as well. It shows that we should be kind to all and that is a good thing to do. Basically, the picture shows the importance of truthfulness and

equality that everybody is equal. Blacks and whites are all equal; no one is superior to other. Three boys and two girls are shown in class, which means that everyone is equal and men and women are equal. Again, it is showing the equality of all genders that there is no discrimination among boys and girls and they all are even sitting together and the teacher is wearing modest clothes and she is taking that apology very politely which is representing the message of kindness. And she is also appreciating the fact that he is being truthful, that he is not lying, that he did not bring the book. So instead of hiding the things and telling lies, one should be bold enough to speak the truth and face the consequences. And if we teach all these ideologies, all these things right from the beginning to our younger generation, ultimately when they grow old, they will follow the religious practices in more forceful manners.

F:

The environment in this picture is so much peaceful as the lady is the teacher. The teacher is basically the woman. So, it is also incorporating the message that a teacher who is a female, and she is been teaching the whole class. So, the importance of the female education is being discussed as a lady is teaching everyone and there is equality in the class. All the genders are present, the girls and the boys, and they are studying together. And the teacher is telling them about honesty, about truthfulness, and about the purity, and about their religion as well as the worldly activities. Especially the female education is being highlighted that a female teacher is better than a male teacher. A male teacher is okay, he is influencing all the class but the female teacher is getting more influence over the teacher. She treats everyone like her own kids. So that female teacher is equally influential in the class. And in the last picture, young children are there and again in this picture, young children are there and it could be inferred that females can handle the young ones in a better way as compared to men. They have more patience; they are well trained and they can handle the students in a better manner.

Moderator:

Thank you very much for your valuable comments.

Transcription of Group 2

Moderator:

What is your overall perception of the picture keeping in view the linguistic and visual text?

G:

Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim. Thank you for your invitation and letting me talk about my observation for this picture. First of all, this picture has been made for class 5 and it is a visual attraction which is alright but in depth, to some extent, they are representing the four provinces or the symbol of the unity and the teacher is representing almost all the community of the teaching. And as far as the content is concerned which is provided to me, the content of the chapter says that someone has lost his wallet. So, this picture is not depicting the story of the chapter. And I also see that the faces of the students are happy, so they are just trying to give the overall understanding of the students of primary level of Pakistan that the kids normally feel happy. And looking into the depth of the colour, the left arm of the first child colour is different but overall, to my understanding, for the students, its attraction is good and they are representing the unity also. But when we talk about the dressing of students, I think it is quite western, it is not eastern as such because they are not dressed in salwar kameez, though it is our national dress.

H:

In my opinion, teacher is very cheerful as well as the students are very happy, so teacher is the symbol of light and the teacher is guiding these students towards the knowledge of light. Also in this picture, two students are boys and two of them are girls and keeping religious context and Islamic context in view, that seeking knowledge is obligatory to all the male and female, so these two girls and these two boys are disseminating and having the contact of each other, and they are following the teacher because in this age, they are thinking that the teacher is right, and the teacher is guiding in all aspects. And the teacher is also in a guiding mode that she is guiding the students about the knowledge in a very good mood and in a very positive sense because she is trying to provide the positive sense of the knowledge in the small kids. Because in this age, the kids do not want to study, they run away from books. So, the teacher is guiding in a very polite manner and the students are following her because they think that the teacher is always right. According to the religious point of view, the verse is saying

“Rabbi zidni ilma” meaning Allah mere ilm mein izaafa farma, so they are in the learning stage, and they are learning a lot from their teachers attitude actually. The possible ideology behind showing Quranic verse in white color, that white is an attempt towards knowledge or awareness. And there used to be a time in the past when people were kept in the background or in the darkness as has been connoted by the black color. So, the combination of black and white also indicates the change. And an attempt has been made to show the right path to the young learners. I think that an attempt has been made to show that Islam is all about light and awareness. And through this picture included in the textbooks, an attempt has been made to show that Islam is a religion which can lead you from backwardness, from ignorance, from darkness to the whiteness.

Moderator:

What is your interpretation that a classroom scenario is there and a female teacher is leading students from the front and a Quranic verse is there "ay Allah mery ilm me izaafa farma", so what type of religious ideology to the young ones is being propagated?

I:

In my opinion, basically, the picture that has been pasted is not according to the theme. The thing you are discussing is absolutely right that Quranic verse is there but that Quranic verse is not seen by the students at that time. So, picture actually does not represent religious ideology because it is not sure that students are reading that or not. As you are saying that classroom environment is according to that, that aspect is also there. There should be a white based aspect there, but in my opinion, if there are color in the activity, the students will be more attracted, the pictures will be more attracted there.

The lesson of equality between male and female gender has been given which is one of the basic teachings of Islam that male and female are equal and seeking knowledge for both are equal. There is no gender discrimination between the male and female has been explained here and, in our religion, it has been explained that you should have to go to China if you want to have learning but as no China was there, but some kind of thematic element is there. But this picture shows the gender equality among the students. As per the gender equality, that is right, because the people are standing there but moreover, we can also explain that, in every picture, we have seen that a female is a teacher there. Man can also be a teacher but why we are actually using female can only be a teacher there. It could be that gone are the days when male used to lead, so this picture represents an element of change by granting equal rights and freedom to males and females and this is also one of the key teachings of Islam.

J:

So firstly, there is this portrait of “Rabbi Zidni Ilma”. That means they are inculcating the fact that everyone has to seek knowledge despite the fact that they are female or they are a male. And secondly, I guess the dressing in this picture is signifying the fact that religious element is there that all are covered and white is a symbol of purity and it is a symbol of knowledge and everybody is covered in white. And the teacher is adorning a very modest type of dress, which is again a religious ideology. And the same way she is like guiding the student towards something with her way on right hand. And that can be the representation of seeking knowledge and the right thing to do. Talking about different colors which students are wearing like white color which connotes knowledge, power and awareness. This is the best age to teach any kind of ideology to the students. I think that Islamic ideology in a modern setting is being propagated to the students. The dressing of students represent that you should be neat and clean, so white dress represents that neatness. It means that students should be taught about that in particular.

K:

In this picture, we can see that there is a teacher who is taking students towards there and there is this particular saying that “Rabi Zidni Ilma”. So, according to this picture, we can see that the teacher is taking the students to the right path, to the path of knowledge by using the right hand and guiding them to seek knowledge which is beneficial for the students and which is good for them. The color of uniform is gray and white and the white color represents knowledge, seeking knowledge. One thing more, an order and cemetery has been shown through this picture, this is one of the key teachings of Islam that right from the beginning one should be disciplined and this is what Islam is. Though the wallet is not here in the picture, but the message or the ideology that is being propagated by mentioning the example of wallet is of honesty. That is again are the key teachings of Islam.

L:

In my interpretation, as I get from this picture is basically that as the students are seeking the worldly knowledge, the connection between the religion and the world is being shown here. As obviously they are getting the worldly knowledge, they are getting the knowledge of the school. But they are praying to God to get the best they are getting. So, in this way the connection between the religion and their current life studies or their worldly studies is being shown here. And obviously in the picture as we see that the

equality is being shown. There are the equal number of boys and girls and the way they are dressed in a proper way. There are two girls who are standing in the middle and then boys, which depicts the thing that education is equal for all. And in Islam it is equal for all and the status is equal and everything is equal. So obviously the meaning, the way to get the education is also being incorporated here. And the teacher is also playing a leading role, the way the teacher is directing, so it is also shown that there is a perfect discipline. And if we talk about colors, so obviously white is the color of peace. So, it is also being discussed here that obviously when you are getting education, you are moving towards the peace and you are getting away from the social norms that are creating disturbance in the society. So obviously in white they are dressed up. It is getting the youth or getting the children towards the peaceful future through this picture.

Moderator:

Moving towards the next picture, a picture where a goat is there, a house is there, two kids are there wearing different colors and the chapter indicates the festival of Eid al-Adha. So, keeping in view the semiotic and linguistic text, so Mam what is your interpretation?

G:

I wonder the story of the celebration which stands for a bond between father and son but in the picture, there is a mother and son. It is again about the absence of the father. It is quite striking here because I think the story should be narrated by a father to his son, not by a mother to his son. That is not about the whole story or the whole celebration, it is all about the affection and the bond between father and the son. So now again the story is only being narrated by the mother or if both, then why father is absent in the picture. I mean to say that the very concept of Quran or sacrifice in Islamic ideology is associated with the father Hazrat Ibrahim A.S and his son Hazrat Ismail A.S, so the representation of father should have been there to strengthen that idea. If we have Hazrat Hajra in Islam, then we also have Hazrat Ibrahim A.S, right? So that concept of sacrifice is very much equal. It stands equal when Hajra was searching for water in the desert for Ismail, that is also a story which is also related to Hazrat Ibrahim and the same story is there in the form of a son and a father. So, the absence of a father in the picture is quite striking for me and I will again say that the holy story is being narrated by the parents but still the man is not there. There is a kind of distortion or kind of misrepresentation of the story it alludes to. This is a concept in our society that when it comes to a bringing of children or when it comes to nurturing the various ideologies in

the minds of the children, it is a duty of women or it should be the mother, so why only mothers & not fathers. So, a kind of distortion is there or it may be done deliberately or by unconsciously.

H:

As per the festival representation in the picture, it almost seems to be fine almost, not exactly. The reason is that it seems that may be mother is playing with the goat and the child is sitting there, it does not represent any festival definition there. Not any kind of balloons there, not any kind of the preparation of the goat is there. If we link with that celebration there, may be some of the aspects can be covered up. But if we talk about the religious based aspects, the mother is telling a story to the child, this picture does not represent either the story is told or not, it can be a playing with a goat. It does not represent any sacrifice thing such. So, again in my opinion this picture is not linked with the particular thematic activity for that. Other thing is there, some of the celebrations have been shown by putting some balloons on this skull of the goat but overall, the picture does not represent any celebration.

I:

The boy or the mother which could be a sister and they are wearing a kind of glowing colors and the glowing colors have different connotations on most cases, they represent joy, win, vigor and happiness. This represent that they are being celebrating some kind of activity, but activity was not actually mentioned by the picture. You are absolutely right that glowing colors and vibrant type activities represent that they are actually happy with that festival there but the theme of the topic religious context is not being explain by them. The glowing colors and happy faces and the green atmosphere imply some sort of message that offering sacrifice is a pleasant activity.

H:

Sacrifice in our religion is not a compulsory thing. I must make it very clear that is not compulsory or that is not obligation. A person, being an ordinary person, I may not say that we can come up to the level of prophets or the sacrifices of profits and all that. I think we should stay human and every person has this right to stay human and to be answerable to your own deeds. So, I think this is again an ideology. And one thing, I really want to share because in literature or whenever we are analyzing text, sheep or goat is a symbol of food. Again, the woman is in more contact with these things as she is touching the goat and the kid is a kind of at distance with the goat. The intimacy of the women with the sheep is closer because she is providing food and also providing clothing

because my area actually happens here as it is the analysis of genders. It might be possible that is why it is beneventing the perception of the picture, so that is also striking for me.

Moderator:

So, if we look at the picture and the happy faces of both boys and girls, they seem delightful or happy, don't you think that the underline message is being propagated to the others because these two boys and girls are representative of all the other young ones. And the message is being given that if you are going to offer a sacrifice, offer it with happiness and try to select the best type of goat or healthy type of animal?

I:

Yes, you are absolutely right. Actually, celebration has been shown in the picture there but that celebration, according to the context, is not shown. What I think is that a mother is playing with a goat, mother is not telling the story to the children but the thing you have asked in that scenario is that it also gives message to the other young people there that we have to give sacrifice for that thing.

Moderator:

If you just look at the picture, three pillars of the house have been shown in the background in white color. Can you compare them with the pillars or basic teachings of Islam or what does the white color connote?

I:

No sir, in my opinion, it does not link with the pillars of Islam. They should be highlighted but they are shown in the background only giving the back scenario. Sir:

Moderator:

What religious ideology through this picture included in primary curriculum has been given to the young learners?

H:

Again, very sorry to say that this picture is not telling or definitely they are not showing that or not highlighting the sacrifice in the picture. It is an ambiguous type of picture there that maybe they are playing or not. If you specifically talk about the religious-based aspect, very sorry to say this picture cannot represent the religious activity. It is not relating with the context of the story we are actually discussing.

I:

The mother is teaching her son about the event of Eid ul Azha and its importance. And she is doing it practically because the son is small and he can learn things better in

this age and then he will practice these things in future. And it is shown that they are taking care of the animal, so it is a teaching of Islam to take care of animals and be kind and generous to them. And another message is being given that we should sacrifice the best in the way of Allah. So, for Eid ul Azha, we should sacrifice the best animal and should feed them in best way. Also, the animal is decorated which shows the love and care towards doing Sunnat e Ibrahim.

Moderator:

What is your perception with the pillars in the background and white color, can it be associated with any sort of religious ideology?

I:

I didn't think so because the pillars are 3 in number, they are not the five. If there were five pillars, then we can link it with the religious teachings or pillars of Islam but they are only giving an image of the house.

J:

Talking about the color scheme in this picture, the dress of the girl being yellow, pink and blue depict the fact that festivals are very colorful and everybody should get ready and should wear new clothes and stuff. And the way the both children are dressed up, it is clearly shown that they are getting ready for the Eid festival that they're going to celebrate. And, they are quite enjoying with their Qurbani as well. And the girl that is trying to have some sort of conversation with the kid and they both are very attached with the animal as they are taking care of the goat and looking at the goat with so much love and care so, it is clearly shown in the picture that they really care for the animal that they are going to sacrifice in a short time. Islam teaches us to be kind with humans as well as with the animals.

K:

The girl is wearing a very simple dress and she is trying to admit that Islam teaches us simplicity. And we can wear simple dresses on festival too, and it's not important that you should wear fancy or formal dresses. The boy in this picture is so much young, obviously he has not had so much idea about the religious festival and the religious events. The lady in this picture is telling the boy that what are our religious norms, what are our religious activities, and he is teaching the little boy that we should take care of our animal that we are going to sacrifice, and we should give him the good food, and give him the healthy food, and one day, we have to alter it, and this is all we are doing just to make our God happy, just to make our God satisfied with our activities.

Again, through this picture which is published in Primary Textbook, Islamic ideology related to offering qurbani as a Sunnat e Ibrahimi has been taught to the students at this tender age. This is the possible ideology behind including this very idea or this very lesson in the fifth class is that this is the very tender age and the religious ideology or any other ideology learned at this age, it perhaps lasts forever.

L:

Overall, the picture is depicting a sacrifice and the importance of sacrifice. And then there is at the back, the three pillars of Islam, and again they are of white color, which is representing peace, and if we think like deep, then it is in hajj, which basically is one of the pillars of Islam. So, it might be depicting its religious importance that how it is important, that it is one of the pillars of Islam. I mean to say, they are among the important pillars of Islam and one of them is Hajj as well and everywhere there is a peaceful atmosphere and cleanliness and other religious ideology is there that Islam gives very much importance to peace, calm, security and obedience to Allah's will.

Moderator:

Coming towards the next picture in which there is only one female student in class and other students are all boys. What is your perception about this?

G:

Bismillah hir Rehman nir Rahim. Actually, she is the one who has went out of the box and broken some kind of values and broken some kind of traditional mindset but at the same time, I have some other reservations regarding this lesson. If this lesson still exists in the Sindh Board, being an educationist, I still have some reservations, maybe it is not the part of the picture. First of all, it is the title "Importance of Female Education", the lesson does not show importance, rather it shows hindrances and hurdles, because she is not being allowed to go for education. And second, they have depicted the culture that other females have been stopped also, whereas this lesson is not for the interior Sindh, it is for the whole of Sindh, and whole of Sindh is not like in this situation. And third is "All the way from five kilometers", that means where she lives, only boys' middle school is there and there is no female school. Whereas, government is equally giving the opportunities that the male and female schools do exist also. Fourth is, if you just look at the picture, on the one hand, there is board but on the other hand, you see that all the boys are looking at that girl as if she has come from some other planet like she is alien. So, this thing should not be depicted by the educationist, especially when you are debating. Why? Because you are actually delivering the lessons. So, on the one hand, there are some

positive things in this picture also. The name has been given Zahra. Zahra is a little modern name in interior Sindh and other, it is the symbol of this thing. And the other is, she has been seated on the front. That means she has been given more importance than the boys and she has been given the leading role. So, from this point of view, it is fine. So, this lesson and this picture may be reviewed if they look at it otherwise, it is fine. And the other girls have been still not allowed to study.

Moderator:

Doctor Sahab, do you think that only one girl is there in the classroom, if this picture violates the religious concept that there should be equal opportunities of seeking knowledge for boys and girls. And what about the colors of the dresses of the students or male members and the female members shown in the picture?

H:

Two things have to be elaborated here. One is related to your religion and other related to the society there. As per are the religious context available there. I don't think that there can be a gender discrimination in our religion. All the people have equal rights. Female and male both have the right to explain that thing. If you talk about the social norms, maybe that picture reflects that a male doesn't have to sit with a female, but it has not been taught in our religion that they cannot have the male activity or collaborative type of learning. Learning can be given to any particular aspect here. But second thing that has been elaborated in terms of Pakistan, why every text has been shown that we are not giving opportunity to the female or gender discrimination is there. Maybe some of the specific regions have these problem, very rural type of regions has this problem that maybe they are not allowed to have. So why we are actually representing this type of text in our society, in our curriculum there that only the females are not allowed.

Moderator:

The textbooks or discourse is mirroring the social reality. So, this very picture mirrors the social reality that has prevailed or is prevailing in a particular region of Pakistan that is sin. Or it could be the exterior Sindh where women are most often deprived of getting equal opportunities of seeking knowledge with men and therefore boys are more in number. Don't you think that they represent the stereotypical norms that male should learn and female should be excluded?

I:

Maybe, sir, this picture can motivate the other females there or give motivation to the parents that they should allow their children to go to study to male school also. Maybe that can be a source of motivation.

Moderator:

How will you correlate it with religious ideology, keeping in view the teachings of Islam, about getting knowledge that this is right from the beginning, how will that link?

I:

Our religion of Islam is also motivating all the people. We should have education here. We should have education for all the genders there. Actually, this motivation, our religion is the first thing to motivate both the members. I feel that this very picture challenges the norm, the way religious teachings are exploited, in certain part of the country. Cultural barriers are there that can be exploited from this particular moment.

Moderator:

Sir, what is your interpretation, keeping in view the religious ideology and the pictures and since up to great extent you belong to the very place, so what is your interpretation?

J:

As far as I am concerned about this picture or image, it is actually reflecting the something breaking stereotypes about girls' education. And if we talk about the dress or the color of dress the boys and the girl is wearing keeping in view the connotation of the colors and the religious ideology, I think it is defining the stereotype which is associated with colors. Because in our culture, men are expected not to wear colors like red and all that. Women, blue color is not for women. It is always associated with men and the male kids. But in this picture, you can see that this stereotype has also been shattered, has also been defied very blatantly, I believe.

Moderator:

Well, what is your overall perception of the picture keeping in view the picture, the scenery or picture in the background, the boys and girls seems more focused as compared to the boys?

K:

Sir, as per my interest is some of the picture-based aspect here or artistic aspect there. Two things are explained here. One, there is no equality in the uniform. We cannot say it is a uniform. And again, it is a violation of teachings. If it is a classroom, then why

all the people are sitting in different dresses. Then if we talk about that interior or some kind of opportunity in our country-based aspect, maybe that school does not or the students does not have some kind of poverty-based aspect. They don't have the uniform available. This picture also does not represent either it is a classroom or not. Maybe it can be a learning-based aspect there because no picture is identifying that they have the classrooms. Then people sitting in the back benches don't have the benches available in front of them. Maybe they are sitting on the chairs. Only the front two students have the benches available there. It means that this picture does not actually highlights that either the classroom teaching has been taught here or not. Talking about the vibrant colors there, colors are being highlighted and one female has to be shown in different color, which highlights the aspect of that particular thing.

Moderator:

Do you think that this picture observes the religious ideology up to great extent that seek knowledge, though you have to go to China. This Zahra, daily, as is obvious from the story, travels some kilometers away from her home and observing that religious teachings?

L:

Yes, this picture reflects that education is mandatory for all boys as well as girls. Regardless, you are a single girl or you are accompanied by many, you have to go for education. So, Zahra is breaking stereotypes, as I said, that she is alone traveling five kilometers and sitting in a class which is full of boys. So, the thing is having boy's majority and traveling five kilometers is not important for her. It is important for her that she has to seek education and that may be because of the religious thing, which she has been learned from his family or through the other. The lone female student among all male counterparts is a testament to her bravery and the support of her family, possibly indicating a break from traditional norms that discourage female education. Her presence is a beacon of change and symbolizes slow but progressive shifts in societal attitudes towards gender equality in education.

Moderator:

In terms of keeping in view religious contents and religious ideology, the representation of one girl, many boys, and the color connotation the story is associated with, what would be your summing up of linguistic and visual text?

L:

If a girl like this from the rural area, because rural areas is associated with something that is backward, people don't understand the need of the women for higher education. But in this picture, you can see that this girl is defying all those norms and all those stereotypes.

Moderator:

Can you take her as a metaphorical representation of all the women and challenging stereotypes?

L:

She cannot be a metaphorical representation of all women in Pakistan. We do have discrimination in so many parts. Women are suffering but the point is that this thing has been and should be challenged at international level. And I think this picture says a lot. For example, if we have women like Malala Yousafzai at international level. When women in Pakistan, when women in South Asian countries, they have always been associated with victimization, with oppression, with hegemony, then why not this girl? She can also stand as our representative. Why we are always represented as utterly homogenized, you know, under the homogenized operation or hegemony, so that is the question and that is the stereotype which this girl is shattering in this picture and that should be voiced no matter. The point is that this statistical analysis of data, sometimes, it shatters our representation in a lot more sense. Let's say if we have 60 percent women in Pakistan who are victimized, who are oppressed, but there are also 40 percent women who are studying in universities, who are having the best of their education, so why they can't be represented as well. So why only this statistical analysis is making us suffer at so many levels. So, we also need to be addressed and we also need to be voiced. Religion is not a roadblock for women and that is this picture is showing. We cannot generalize that particular thing. We cannot generalize it. But sir, according to the theme of this topic as religious context, we may can discuss that religion can opportunity to those individuals there or both genders there. Assume that deliberately an attempt has been made by the designer of curriculum to represent Pakistan or particular area backward and going against that religious norm. We are discussing in the first phase also that has been generalized by the picture maker for that thing. We may say it could be a part of some sort of other's agenda to represent the people of Pakistan not observing their religious teaching. As it has been discussed in the first phase also that Malala was there. It has been observed that now it was a planted based activity. So that picture can be a representation

of that particular serious agenda that only to represent or only to disgrace the women in our society. Maybe that can be the possibility.

Moderator:

Now we come to the last picture which is from Sindh Textbook Board and very title of this particular lesson is “truthfulness” and truth has been given a great importance in the religion of Islam. And repeatedly, it is obvious from the hadith and the commandments of Allah that telling lies is one of the biggest sins. So, through this particular lesson that is included in this particular primary textbook, what type of message has been given to the young learners that what type of ideology or ideological mindset should they develop, keeping in view this particular picture, the linguistic and semiotic text?

G:

Sir, this picture basically tells us that we must have to believe the others. We must have to believe this thing that all five fingers are not equal. All are not telling the lie. And the other thing is that, again the message is that when the student offers the apology, the teacher accepts the apology means she forgives. Again, this is the lesson we can take from the example from Islam that when we admit mistake, Allah also forgive us. But the acceptance of the mistake and the truthfulness, that is very much dependent. One thing is carelessness and the other thing is sin. We must have to make a comparison between these both. What is carelessness and what is sin? Again, that solution of both is the apology.

H:

First of all, this picture teaches us that children should be taught this that they always tell the truth. Nowadays, we see that our children are very fixated on lies. If the teacher asks them something, they should tell the truth, rather they lie and hide the truth. And if a child wants to tell the truth and he tells the truth to the teacher, then he is scolded by others. This should be completely erased from our society, from our educational institutions, from our children. It should be completely erased.

Moderator:

The purpose of your statement is that the message to include this in textbook is that you need to say truth at all cost and be honest and avoid temporary loss or benefit. Again, teacher is a female, she has a green dress and headscarf in the classroom and there are three boys and two girls. So, if you look at the whole thing, the proportion of boys is

more, the proportion of girls is less, but the teacher is female. So, what is your interpretation?

H:

I think that this is from the primary level education. So, in that, a female is more successful than the male as I said earlier, but the limitations are the same. Teachers can teach children better if they are taught within these limitations.

Moderator:

Sir Saeed, just look at the classroom environment and the teacher, she is focused and the students, the color connotation and the pictures on the wall and the truthfulness. How will you correlate all these things?

I:

As the story says, I have little observation regarding the story, but it is perfectly alright, let's talk about the positive things first. Look at the students, what I can get from the picture, there is a very good relationship of teacher and student. It shows the positivity and the comfortability. I can see that there is a very good organized environment of the classroom. It looks like a modern classroom. And there is a very good teacher-student relationship. The conducive learning environment I can see. And the picture teacher has drawn on the board shows that she is a very skillful and very qualified teacher. And this teacher has given trust and confidence in her students. That's why student was able to say a clear thing. And there is a cheerfulness in students also. And one person is looking at the back, the other looking at other. It means that there is an interaction between students and students also besides interaction with the teachers. And the bird and the fish, both is symbol of kind of truthfulness, freedom that means comfortability and knowing that I am not feeling any kind of burden. Everything and the overall environment are quite alright. As far as this story is concerned, a little difference I found. If a student forgets something, how can he lie? So, there was only option to tell a truth, so it could have come up with some other kind of story, little twist within this story.

Moderator:

Considering that it is obligatory for every Muslim man and woman to acquire knowledge, just as there are boys and girls in this classroom, and in a way, these are the representatives of Muslim men and women, so what is your opinion and do you think that this picture, according to the teachings of Islam, completes the requirements of man and woman to learn?

H:

Yes, in this respect, it does. The boys and girls here are learning. It conveys a message to our society that girls and boys should learn, and for that they should prepare for school. Again, there are limitations for coeducation that until this age, you can get coeducation, but as soon as you grow up, then you should get education separately or stay within the Islamic limits. Secondly, I would like to say that when the child said that he forgot his notebook in the house, the teacher immediately accepted his apology. One is that the teacher did not waste time there. The purpose for which she come as a teacher, she fulfilled his purpose, that is, she gave more time to teach the children and did not waste time in investigation. And one more thing is that when you speak the truth, you don't face many difficulties. And the teacher should also be a psychologist in a way that he/she can see from the child's face whether he is telling the truth or a lie because when children have confidence on their faces, it means that they are telling the truth.

Moderator:

Well Sir, focusing on words and pictures and the color connotation and the drawing of a tree drawn on the blackboard or the whiteboard, keeping in view the religious context of this particular research, how will you sum up this picture in keeping in view the religious context?

J:

The thing is that student speaking in front of teacher needs courage or needs confidence. You must be brave enough that you can speak in front of the class and the teacher and specifically the truth. When he said that I forgot the notebook at home, that out of four, three are looking at him that how confident and how brave he is that he speaks the truth in front of the class and the teacher. And as he was speaking the truth, the teacher, that is the symbol of a kindness, that is also a spiritual appearance of a student, she accepts his or her apology and she shows the confidence on her students that whatever she is teaching to her kids or the students, that is giving a right path to them. It means giving them a confidence to speak the truth in front of everyone, in every situation, everywhere. And the picture on the wall is basically the style. They have been taken from nature, these are the message of nature that be in harmony with nature, be true to nature, be true to your fellows and this is what the education should be all about. And this is what should be taught, imparted, and practically propagated from the side of the teacher to the student that you should not be ashamed of speaking truth, you must not be afraid of consequences and be brave enough to be truthful. And just look at the blackboard, there is

a tree again, the nature again. The shadow that gives you the comfort means when you speak the truth, you will be in the comfort zone. Similarly, if a teacher explains the pictures in the class in front of the children, then the children will develop the habit of understanding the pictures in this way. This is a very important part of Islamic teachings, why don't you think about it. The Prophet (S.A.W) of Allah also made regular maps to explain many things and taught the Sahaba through them. My recommendation is that whoever is making the picture or who is going to include the pictures in the syllabus should make the pictures according to modern times. The blackboard here is giving us this lesson that it should at least be a whiteboard inside the classroom because when teachers use the blackboard, their hands will get dirty all over because of chalk and their clothes will also get dirty. If there is no cleanliness, how will he teach the children?

K:

First of all, let's talk about the teacher, she is present here in Hijab. And if we talk about the environment, it is very peaceful and if we talk about the students, there is equality. And in the background "Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim" is written which means I am going to start with the name of Allah. It is written on the board. Again, religious ideology is being imparted that whatever we do, we should do it in the name of Allah. Classroom setting seems very peaceful or natural setting is shown, so Islam teaches us peacefulness, love to all, cleanliness, gender equality, importance of seeking knowledge, importance of speaking truth. It gives all these things so it is possible that whoever has made this picture can find that these things should be important to the children. And if internalize all these religious ideologies right from this tender age, it can go a long way. And what message we can learn from this picture is that truthfulness is basically a thing which can help a person in many ways. The student has forgotten his textbook at home, but he is brave enough, he is courageous enough that he is telling the truth to the teacher that I have forgotten my textbook at home. And the teacher is forgiving him and accepting his apology. So, these are some of the main messages we can get from this. There is one more lesson that is the lesson of believing on others, believing on the words of the others, even from the nature, even from your adults, even from your parents, even your colleagues, you must have a courage and a confidence to believe this thing that what the other has said and this thing must be practiced right from the beginning.

L:

In this picture we can see that it is a typical classroom of Pakistan with a teacher is wearing green colored dress, and this shows the patriotism. And the students are well dressed, they are disciplined. The boys are wearing shalwar kameez and girls are also wearing shalwar kameez. This also talks about the culture of Pakistan. In this picture, the girls are wearing a blue dress, which shows calmness and responsibility. It is a common fact that girls are more responsible than boys. And there are two pictures at the back, one is of a fish and the other is of a sparrow. So, in my perspective, that maybe the teacher is telling a story of Hazrat Younis A.S and a fish, and it may be religious history. And the thing about birds is that Hazrat Suleman A.S had this ability, he could talk to all the birds and animals. The religious history has been shown in the pictures as the picture of fish might be relating to the story of Hazrat Yunus AS and the picture of sparrow might be related towards the linguistic competence of Hazrat Yunus A. S. because he was endured by Allah, that he was capable of speaking all the languages. So, the overall impression which emerges that the lesson of speaking truth, love for nature, history of Islam and the history of other prophets of God have been taught or have been brought to the notice through this picture.

Moderator:

Thank you very much for your valuable time and reviews.

