

# Preface

There is no single understanding of discourse. Different scholars have understood the term in so many different ways. Among those ‘Discourse’ may refer... “to language in use, as a process which is socially situated...discourse is a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds, a means which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds...” (Candlin, 1997, p. iix). Discourses form and influence social orders that heavily impacts on how we experience life and build knowledge around it.

Discourse Analysis is not one approach, but a series of interdisciplinary approach that can be used to explore many different social domains in many different types of studies. Preliminary definition of a discourse as a particular way of understanding the concept may be seen in this way. For instance, it can be used as a framework for analysis of gender identity. How can we understand gender identities and what consequences do the divisions of sex have? Many different ideas, opinion and concepts could be selected for analysis. The differences between various concepts of gender would be understood which represent different ways of understanding aspects of gender and construct different identities.

In discourse analysis, theory and method are intertwined and researchers must accept the basic philosophical premises. Through the whirlwind of courses, lectures and discussions, and the interactional socio cultural approach to discourse analysis that we have steeped in for several years, was taking shape and gaining in prominence. For those pursuing their studies at the Department of Women and Gender Studies, kept hearing how much they were to have the opportunity to study this kind of discourse analysis year round. In retrospect, these comments seem to foreshadow the movement, of the study of discourse from the fringes to a more mainstream position of gender.

Gender and Discourse Analysis as a tool for understanding gender identity, representation and equality starts with epistemological interface that can be represented in one collection. It focuses on a diversity of key issues related to gender. However, the book emphasizes on three main issues, such as, gender identity, representation

and equality. Each of the three issues are analyses in the different chapters written by a range of renowned scholars with their insights, approaches, understanding and empirical research and studies and specialization in their areas of work.

In contemporary world 'discourse' has become a more fashionable and sophisticated term. In texts and debates it is used indiscriminately often without being defined. The concept has become vague, either meaning almost nothing, or being used with more precise, but rather different meanings in different context.

The conceptual underpinnings of the book are vibrant and clear. Three themes are central to the papers. First, the centrality of Gender Identity; second the emphasis on Representation and third the Voice of Equality.

When we hear of the word 'gender,' we automatically think male and female, and which is correct. But what does identity involve? Identity is 'who we are,' as individuals. It provides us with the link between individuals and society; it is known that we are from our own identities, when we are young through relationship we encounter and how society involves us as a person. As we can form our own identities we can fix them or change them in later life. This can be done by either self-preservation or psychological help. Research on identity has experienced an unprecedented growth in the last several years.

The different chapters together illustrate how taking a discourse perspective facilitates understanding of the complex and subtle ways in which gender is represented, constructed and contested through different aspects/perspectives/writings. These also reflect and develop current understandings of gender, identity and particularly the shift from gender differences to the discursal shaping of gender. Perhaps the most general perspective that provides a basic way of thinking about gender identity is social construction. The different chapters explore the challenge to the field of gender posed by feminist theory and practice.

Chapters in this book are mostly written by South Asian and South East Asian scholars or scholars across the globes who are interrogating issues related to gender identity and equality in global context. The first three chapters analyze complex lives of men and women in UK. Lubna Ferdowsi in her chapter 'Intersections of Gender, Sex and Power: Control over Women's Bodies and Sexuality Amongst the Bangladeshi Diaspora in Britain' highlights the dilemma of immigrant diasporic women in a British cultural context by focusing how cultural ideologies are intersecting with patriarchal norms to gain control over women bodies and sexuality. Drawing on feminist poststructuralist theory on diaspora and intersectional matrix, she examines the gender, generation and class distinctions that create complex or changing identities of British Bangladeshis in Britain through analyzing their experiences and practices of domestic and social life in diaspora space in Britain. In her article it has been observed that the diaspora identity is constantly changing through the intersection of gender, class, generation, geography, sexuality, religion

and race. Importantly, the intersection of race and gender with working class identifies the power relations of ethnic and non-ethnic and the changing power relations of gender in the private domain.

Whereas, in Chapter 2, Masreka Khan in her 'Implications of Citizenship Discourse on Female Labor Force Participation: A Case Study of Bangladeshi Women in the UK' contributes to develop the understanding of the complex notion of citizenship and its implication in labor market participation of Bangladeshi immigrant women. She reveals how 'identity shaped by citizenship discourse' influences one of the important indicators of economic empowerment - market participation. Her chapter aims to develop a sophisticated understanding of immigrant women's labor market participation, by demonstrating the interplay of migration economy and the framing of citizenship through a feminist standpoint. Providing with a broader overview of market participation by immigrant community in the context of developed countries, it demonstrates that the realities of this group, particularly recent immigrants', is different and mostly negatively different than that of their native counterparts.

In the third chapter, Abu Saleh Mohammad Sowad has written on 'Migration Affecting Masculinities: The Consequences of Migration on the Construction of Masculinities of Migrant Bangladeshi Men Living in the United Kingdom'. Here he examines innate causes of behavioral changes among migrant Bangladeshi men after migration. This chapter upholds the ways in which migrant Bangladeshi men perceive the changes, in their masculine attributes, occurred as a result of migration and the ways in which they deal with those changes. As socio-cultural environment of the UK is quite different than that of Bangladesh, this chapter portrays the ways migrant Bangladeshi men perceive the effect of these differences on their construction of masculinities. Sowad made a significant revelation in the chapter that migrant Bangladeshi men in the UK adopt a new kind of masculinities that doesn't have serious clash with the masculine ideologies that they had before migration and doesn't challenge their hegemonic position in the family.

The fourth chapter by Fariba Parsa provides a different contextual aspect. In 'An Analysis of Iranian Women's Activism to Change the Law' she draws on lives of Iranian women and their activism to change discriminatory laws. Iranian women have organized themselves through organizations and groups to fight against these laws. There exists the belief that the culture of the majority of Iranian people do not agree with the laws placed on women. Emphasizing on the story of "One Million Signatures Campaign for Gender Equality", the chapter explains women's coalitions and cooperation without being successful to change any law about women because of lacking clear or united vision. It also argues that not only women's activists should be aware of their vision but also they should articulate a clear and united vision for their success.

In the next chapter, Dr. J. Sunita Peacock and Dr. Shaheen A. Chowdhury in their article ‘The Effect of Colonialism on the Bangladeshi Female Immigrant in Britain’ talk about effect of Colonialism on the Bangladeshi female immigrant in Britain by comparing lives of Bangladeshi female immigrants with lives of other South Asian women living in Britain. Authors takes on colonialism comes from comparing literature on immigrant women’s life in Britain. They have used Monica Ali’s novel, *Brick Lane* to show how immigrant women in the 21st century still have to negotiate a space and role for themselves inside and outside the home. One of the major objectives of the article is to show the negotiation that a migrant woman makes in her relationship between the inside/outside, her natal home/her home on foreign soil and how the migrant woman is attempting through her labor both inside and outside her home to write herself into the western nation’s discourse. The negotiation allows the woman to empower herself as she bridges the gap between the inside/outside culture of the home and the world.

Chapter 6 by Ben Tran titled ‘Culturally Gendered: The Institutionalization of Men and Masculinities in Society and Corporations’ analyses and tries to understand the existence of inequality among men of various cultures, specifically in the U.S., based on culturally gendered and institutionalized masculinities. In so doing, this chapter will cover the historical perspective of masculinities, different types of masculinities in the U.S. culture, different types of masculinities in the U.S. corporate culture, and recommendations on survival strategies to achieve equality.

In Chapter 7, Fatema Rouson Jahan talks about ‘Agency, Gender Identities, and Clothing Consumption: The Discourse on Garment Workers’. Here she tries to interrogate the discourse on the third world garment workers by problematizing three assumptions. First, the discussions of production are centered on stories of victimhood and produce a homogeneous image of third world workers as cheap and docile, second, the third world is always theorized as a site of production and women factory workers are always positioned as sweatshop workers and never as consumers. Third, women’s role as consumers appears only in relation to white women from the global north, who are assumed to have more purchasing power. She concludes that any representation of third world workers must focus on workers’ welfare and narratives, instead of highlighting their miseries.

Chapter 8 by Afsana Islam titled ‘Disparity between Boys and Girls: Concerning Sports in the Secondary Level Academic Institutions’ where she argues that the socio-bio- cultural constrains influence the facilities, perceptions and participation of girls in sports. Sports’ being a powerful agent of socialization plays influential roles in the construction of masculinity and femininity. This research attempts to find out the present situation of secondary school sports for girls. Islam strongly argued that gender stereotyping and socio-cultural perceptions are the main cause of unequal access and participation of girls’ school sports. Dress codes, family and

school apathy, students' internalization of being 'female', hesitation and also fewer facilities make the school sports sphere challenging for girls.

Chapter 9 is on 'Permanently Temporary: The Production of Migrant Workers through Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the Neoliberalization of Citizenship' by Fariah Chowdhury. Her paper is a detailed policy analysis of Canada's 'The Temporary Foreign Worker Program', and how the program marginalizes migrant workers as "Un-Canadian" based on race, gender and class hierarchies. While some labor needs in Canada can be seen as truly temporary, the lack of accountability within the TFWP in Canada have led to some occupations being falsely constructed as 'temporary', thereby employing migrant workers who are permanently temporary. She argued that the labeling of racialized migrants as "temporary workers" offers employers an excuse to keep wages systematically low, and to offer "competitive" market global environments, while not improve working conditions. In this light, "temporary" work becomes synonymous with low wage exploitable work, and continues to be part of a racist nation-state building discourse in Canada.

In Chapter 10, Dr. Rashida Khanam addresses the implications of equality and differences between women and men in 'Equality and Differences: Some Feminist Thoughts' Drawing on Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's philosophy, she focuses on the necessity to re-conceptualize equality as oppression or subordination. She argues that above mentioned philosophers believe that equality can be achieved by minimizing differences. Minimizing can be done by proving capabilities of women through their performances. Education plays utmost role to prove the capabilities that women possess. In her article, it is also pointed out that social conditioning is responsible for making gap between women and men and we need to break social conditioning to create new mind set and social attitude.

Mahbuba Jabin Lopa in Chapter 11 correlates violence against women and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). In her 'Struggle against ICT-Based Violence: Locating Socialization Process of Young Men as a Hidden Cause of Women's Vulnerability' she argues that ICT is one of the crucial factors that influence the socialization process among young men. She tried to present an in- depth analysis about the linkage among socialization process and construction of masculinities of young men and their involvement in Violence Against Women (VAW) by using ICT. It also tries to discover and rethink about the main reasons behind young men's involvement with violence against women by using ICT in the context of Bangladesh. Engagement with ICT based gadgets effects the construction of masculinities by producing discourse of domination shaped by socialization process where power is controlled by young men negatively.

The editors believe that this edited book presents recent development and empirical evidences from diverse context related to gender. The collection is a valuable

source for researchers, post graduates and advanced undergraduate in the area of gender and discourse. It transcends traditional boundaries. It is a most fascinating and stimulating collection of papers which allows to critically reflecting rigid and unproductive dichotomies of 'male' and 'female.'

The book will and should have a major impact, not only in the scholarly study of gender in context, but hopefully also to many practitioners in socially relevant professions. It is indeed a valuable resource for researchers, teachers, and students across a wide spectrum of disciplines. Furthermore, it is a new and challenging debate on the relationship between gender, society and language. Information in this book will add on to the academic knowledge on gender and will help intellectuals and student in further exploration.

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## REFERENCES

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