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In what sense do institutionalised discourses (dictionaries, texts books, reading materials, etc., the press, advertising) display gender relations? Discuss this question giving examples from texts of your choice.

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1.0 Introduction.

The study of Discourse often reveals ‘gender’; furthermore, language is often considered gendered and is reflected in forms of institutionalised discourse. By studying discourse there is a study of interaction, teaching, and how one is presented or represented; it is for these reasons that discourse reveals gender relations. For the purposes of this paper there will be an examination of written discourse, in regards to gender relations. In section 2, there will be a review of the literature; defining discourse, its importance, and the relationship it has with gender. In section 3, there will be an examination of institutionalised forms of discourse; popular readings, dictionaries, the press, and textbooks. Throughout this paper, evidence of social bias in regards to gender will be discussed. There will be an examination on the effect of discourse, the ability to teach in regards to discourse and the social constructs that are created through discourse. In conclusion, there will be a summation to the problem of gender bias being solved through progressive forms of institutionalised discourse.

2.0 Literature review: Definitions and issues in discourse analysis.

Linguist Ruth Wodak, writer of *Disorders in Discourse*, defines critical discourse as ‘the use of language in speech and writing, as a form of social practice (Wodak 1996: 17). To further elucidate, it is the study of how people communicate; what is said both directly and indirectly, through social interactions. Discourse analysis can therefore be applied to newspapers, dictionaries, or textbooks. The most descriptive definition may be Fairclough and Modak’s analysis from Teun A. Van Dijk:

1. CDA addresses social problems
2. Power relations are discursive
3. Discourse Constitutes Society and Culture
4. Discourse does ideological work
5. Discourse is historical
6. The link between text and society is mediated
7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory
8. Discourse is a form of social action

(Fairclough and Modak 1997: 271-280)

To further understand discourse analysis, the concept of institutionalized forms of discourse must be addressed. Newspaper articles, textbooks, and dictionaries are examples of institutionalized discourse. These contain discourse that society uses to shape social constructs. While their position in social discourse is cemented in the fact that they are materials of teaching and passing of knowledge, there is often debate on not only the validity of the knowledge but the true meaning as well. Analysis of discourse should therefore be 'objective' To elaborate, consider the term 'good by stating that men are 'good' there is a possibility of suggesting women to be not as good. In objective discourse analysis possible intent must be considered; moreover, lack of intent or accidental suggestion can not be factored into discourse analysis in regards to effect.

In Teun A. Van Dijk's *Discourse Power and Access*, there is yet another aspect of CDA. Dijk states 'social actors implement and reproduce ideologies in /by their discourses and other social practices' (Van Dijk 1996: 8). Here Van Dijk suggests that the study of discourse will allow a greater production of social ideologies. By carefully examining discourse, negative or positive attributes may be encouraged or discouraged; therefore, discourse analysis is a considerably productive way to create social ideologies and treat social disorder.

In regards to the study of gender related discourse it is important to acknowledge the following statements of Wodak, from her book, *Language and Gender*, 'CDA must be approached with the understanding that male dominance has been apparent in society and therefore it will be apparent in language and writing' (1997: 10). Through Wodak there is an understanding that male dominance will be apparent in CDA. By accepting that a historical male dominance has occurred in society, women are expected to speak in one manner, while men another. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet state:

'women's language is said to reflect their conservatism, prestige consciousness, upward mobility, insecurity, deference, nurturance, emotional, expressivity, connectedness, sensitivity, to others solidarity. And men's language is heard as evincing their toughness lack of affect, competitiveness, independence, competence, hierarchy, control' (Eckert, McConnell-Ginet 1992: 90).

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet outline visibly apparent lingual roles. Both females and males are victims of social classification; their roles are decided by society and reflected through discourse. An important point to consider is that this discourse may not appear forced but rather taught. From a child's early years he or she experiences discourse in a manner that shapes them towards society. A girl may be encouraged by being told she is very sweet and gentle; a boy may be told he is very strong and courageous; these seemingly innocent, and even well intentioned, remarks are teaching social ideology. In Van Dijk's paper *Discourse Power and Access*, he isolates what is really occurring here; 'Social actors implement and reproduce ideologies in /by their discourses and other social practices' (Van Dijk 1996: 8) this is a reproduction of social practices; that in turn sustains and reproduces the ideology. Here it becomes apparent that discourse is not just a reflection of social constructs, but also a very effective teaching and reproduction method. The unfortunate side of creating and repeating these social constructs, is that both male and female are far more limited through their social standing. To break one's social mould may be considered social deviance; this can carry negative results.

2.1 Literature review: The role of women.

In Jennifer Coates book, *Women, Men and Language*, she explains two methods of defining sexism (Coates 1986: 65). The dominance method places women on the receiving side of the male dominance and female submissive pattern (ibid). Because males are the dominant, females take the position of submission. The difference method is that women are an entirely different subculture (ibid). Female discourse becomes one of the many traits assigned to their culture; therefore their place in society is being defined by cultural characteristics. These definitions are both important because they define a possible problem with female self-image; moreover, this problem becomes apparent in female discourse. Coates further explains that sexism has a direct correlation to language use; for example, if someone believes a certain gender to be unequal, it will be apparent in his/her discourse. Women themselves are not immune to this, and are likely to define themselves by their own social constructs.

In Carmen Rosa Caldis-Coulthard's publication, *Women who pay for Sex and enjoy It*, Coulthard points out that many women have accepted the dominance of men. She elaborated by showing that even women's magazines, publications focusing on female ideology, show a level of sexism:

women's magazines – have a highly important role in the maintenance of cultural values, since they construct an “ideal” reader who is at the same time both produced and in a sense imprisoned by the text (Carmen Rosa Caldis-Coulthard 1996: 250)

Coulthard's statements seem to be echoed in her examples of feminine discourse:

My husband Leo died four years ago. Ann
 My husband Derek is the managing director of a large chemical company. Jane
 The idea of going to a gigolo horrified me at first, but I love my husband, Gary, very much and *he wanted me to do it*. Julie (1996: 256)

The above statements are attempts at justifying usage of male prostitutes; interestingly, Coulthard points out that each subject justifies their decision through a male partner. Discourse analysis seems to show that women have accepted gender bias. How this bias has been taught must be explored.

3.0 Critical discourse analysis: institutionalised forms of discourse.

Women are generally portrayed in gender specific roles in forms of institutionalised discourse. Women can be shown as nurses, wives, moms, secretaries, baby sitters... but often they are not equally depicted as philosophers, doctors, police officers, lawyers... It is important to note that there is a historical aspect involved. The female social construct was not an immediate construction, but rather formed over time and generations.

In William Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*; the female lead is a woman who is the opposite of her gender's ideology; she fights, has anger, and is quite brash. The premise of the story is that she be tamed and taught to behave according to female ideals. While this play is renowned as one of the greatest works of all time, it suggests a feminine ideal. The effect this form of discourse has on young readers is significant. Suggesting what type of behaviour defines a shrew may send a harsh message on acceptable behaviour.

In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, the female lead, Elizabeth Bennet, waits with great anticipation, almost doting, for a man.

She was suddenly roused by the sound of the door-bell, and her spirits were a little fluttered by the idea of its being Colonel Fitzwilliam himself, (Austen, 2001: 125).

Notice the discourse used to describe her emotional state: 'spirits were a little fluttered'; this type of discourse is not applicable to men. To describe a female in such a manner, reinforces the gender constructs of meekness and gentility mentioned previously (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet 1992: 90). Interestingly, the character is to this day, respected as an excellent example of feminine ideology.

The female depiction therefore, does seem to have a historical context. The above examples however, do not truly define how women are, rather how they have been portrayed. To see how the female gender has been taught, there should be an analysis of current social role.

3.1 Considerations in the application of CDA, to the study of dictionaries.

Dictionaries define more than words. Several words in the English language have a gender bias that becomes apparent in CDA. Words like firefighter are defined by *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* edited by Katherine Barber, as such: (1) person who wants to fight fires, or (2) fireman (Barber 2004: 557). Here there is a gender relation that associates firefighter, a believed gender neutral term, with a male. When a word is defined in such a manner then discourse will relate that manner. To elaborate, when someone says firefighter individuals may think of males; females are excluded from thought and discourse. This may seem extreme but by examining the profession of firefighters, or firemen, females are excluded. The numbers from the 2008 national study *A National Report Card on Women in Firefighting* by Hulett, Bendick, Thomas, and Moccio show the extent of female exclusion from firefighting, In Garden Grove Ca. there was a 2005 population of 165 000 with no female firefighters, New York City, one of the most diverse cities in the world, had less than one-quarter of one percent women firefighters; LA only had 2.5 (Hulett, Bendick, Thomas, Moccio: 2008). Apparently,

there is a direct correlation to the discourse that is being used and reused by the dictionary. By defining Firefighter with male distinction there is a possible reason why females do not enter the field. To state that this is the only reason why there are few female firefighters would be irresponsible but as stated earlier; institutionalized forms of discourse, like dictionaries, create social constructs, or ideologies, that males and females follow (Stolcke 1993: 19). If a role is defined by a form of institutionalised discourse, like a dictionary, individuals may accept, and even promote, the social construct.

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary though widely regarded as an elite publication of institutionalized discourse, carries several gender inequalities. The word ‘man’ in the 2004 Oxford dictionary has fourteen definitions; eight are nouns, four are verbs, 2 are interjections (Barber 2004: 937). The word “woman” has eight definitions; two are adjectives (2004: 1790). Many people consider the difference of man and woman to be biological, and that women can be the equal of men, the Oxford dictionary is not reflecting this. By giving the word “man” a more definable role with greater flexibility, the word ‘woman’ could possibly be considered less important, or not as broadly definable. Terms like “policeman” also have more definitions than the female “policewoman” (2004: 1201). The position is the same yet the gender status suggests otherwise. Interestingly the adjective forms of “women”, from the Oxford dictionary, are “womenless” and “womenlike” (2004: 2207), adjectives often used to describe men.

The Oxford dictionary also has a bias with omissions. In regards to era; “future man” or “primitive man” refers to both men and women of different era (Barber 2004: 937). There is no specific term that includes the terminology of “women”; moreover, the term mankind refers to both male and female but again the terminology only depicts “man” (Barber 2004: 937). This omission type of bias can also be reversed against the female gender. To elaborate, the word “bitch” refers to a female dog; but it is also a derogatory term for a female (Barber 2004: 148); there is no male equivalent of “bitch” the closest terminology is “sire” which refers to a male animal who has fathered offspring (2004: 1453). While both words are close to being antonyms, in regards to animals, bitch has a malicious meaning to women while sire does not. Sire is a somewhat revered term which

can even be a term for a king or royalty (2004: 1453). It is important to understand a term like “bastard” can not be considered equivalent because it is defined as gender neutral for a child born out of wedlock; there is no relation to the term “bitch” (2004: 148). In some ways calling a man a dog is actually a form of respect; “top dog” or a man of importance can be referred to as “the big dog” (2004: 1641). In regards to feminine social constructs, many men and women may not read these definitions or even be aware of them. The evidence is not conclusive, but further analysis is warranted.

3.2 Considerations in the application of CDA, to the study of press coverage.

It is important to understand the role of interpretation in the press. Chibnall theorized that the raw material of an occurrence is processed and then passed on through the reporting of the incident (Chibnall 1977: 6). That is to say that the press act as interpreters of events and pass on their thoughts through news reports. Chibnall’s theory suggests that the press report not only what they interpret, but what they deem to be appropriate and important. The relationship of this theory to gender becomes apparent when considering Coulthard’s statements that the press depict females in cultural belief systems and power structures:

‘Coulthard (1987, 1994) showed in her research that men 'shout' and 'groan' while women (and children) 'scream' and 'yell'. Other verbs like 'nag', 'gossip', 'chatter', etc... are also associated with beliefs which are accepted as common sense within a society and mark 'stereotypes' of particular groups, (Coulthard 2010: 11)

Here the creation of social constructs becomes visible. By interpreting their language and mannerisms as such through the press, the press may in fact be creating and promoting a negative portrayal; it becomes, in effect, a method of teaching men and women to perceive the feminine dialogue as nag, gossip, chatter... This becomes a very controversial theory in considering that most reporters are male and fewer are female (Journalism.org accessed on November 1 2010). It is plausible that there is a bias against female dialogue, in news discourse. It is not responsible to state that this bias is solely based on the gender of reporters, but the gender of he/she who initially interprets, and later presents, the facts must be taken into consideration.

Interestingly there is a progression that is occurring in representation. Consider these headlines: *Boyfriend forced girl to have sex with his friend* (Toronto Star: Nov 28/89: B2). *Man rapes and robs kidnapped woman* (Toronto Star Oct. 17/89: A25), in both situations the male participant is the subject of the sentence, even though the female is the victim. By using the male as the subject, there is a suggestion that the male position is more important and more worthy of interest. While the above may be true, it is of note that the dates are over 20 years old. In a headline search of the Toronto Star there were only four results that depicted the male attacker as the sentence subject; there were 45 headlines depicting the female victim as the subject (<http://www.proquest.com/> accessed December 28, 2010). The change in portrayal may be linked to the number of female journalists entering the profession (Journalism.org accessed on November 1 2010) or it may be a reflection of victim importance; regardless, how women are depicted will affect female social constructs.

3.3 Considerations in the application of CDA, to the study of textbooks.

Similar to gender in the press, textbook depiction of the sexes is in a dynamic state; textbooks are treated like works in progress, and are constantly evolving towards better fulfillment of their purpose. Unlike press coverage and dictionaries, textbooks have a more definitive role in teaching. The intended audience should have no gender imbalance yet subtle imbalances in the text do occur. The four books that will be examined deal with specific areas of English; they are geared to students studying of varied age and goals. The areas that will be explored are: possible imbalance in numbers regarding male/female depictions, portrayal of male/female role or occupation, and preference of male/female placement in sentence structure.

The phonics book, *The Complete Book of Phonics* from McGraw-Hill, shows a significant amount of male depictions, 229, and considerably fewer female, only 150. The seriousness of this imbalance is magnified in consideration that phonics books are usually for young learners; in many cases their first introduction to English. By showing fewer females there is a subtle suggestion that females are limited in their roles, and not as

important as males. While there was a majority of male depictions there were also several attempts at balancing gender portrayal.



Figure 1 from page 115 of the complete book of phonics McGraw-Hill.

Figure 1 from page 115 of the text shows a female firefighter; this suggests the publisher's awareness on gender portrayal. Throughout the text there are several examples of female doctors and a sense of gender neutrality; the only strong imbalance is that there are considerably more males and a subtle omission of females. Given the publisher/writer intent on balancing male female occupational role it is not implausible to suggest that the imbalance of gender depictions may be accidental. It seems very unlikely that the publisher/writer would go out of his/her way to show more males if they intended to show females in role challenged occupations.

Occupation portrayal and omission of the female gender would seem to be more apparent when examining texts for Business English. *Cambridge Business Vocabulary in use*, written by Bill Mascull, published in 2002 by Cambridge press, has a more serious portrayal of gender. There are 25 pictures of men either alone or in positions of leadership with only 6 pictures of women. In addition to omission, there are portrayals of women as less than men.

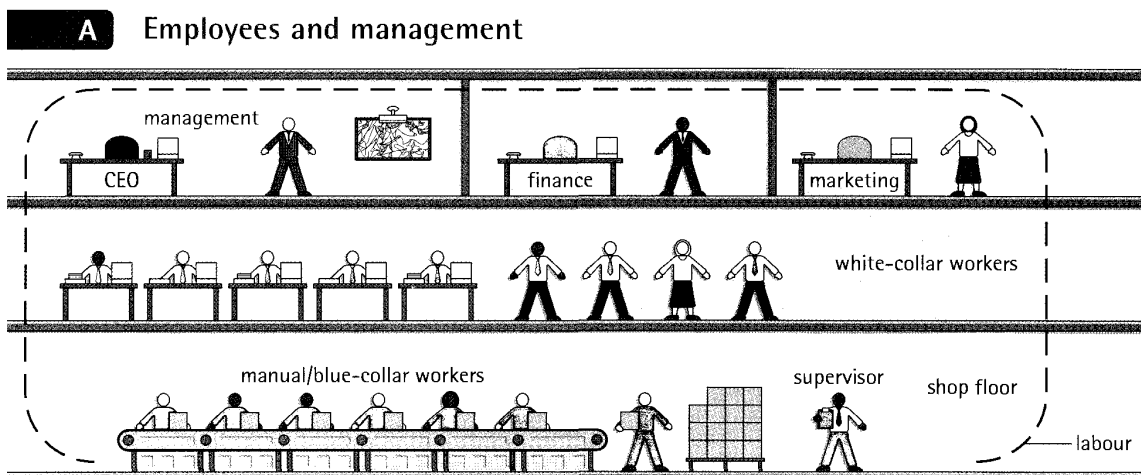


Figure 2 from pg 20 of Cambridge Business Vocabulary in use by B Mascull

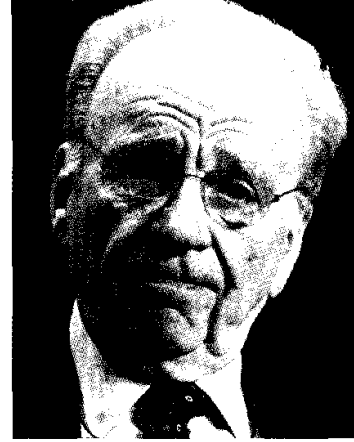
Figure 2 shows only 3 female workers; two are in white collar positions and one is in manual/blue collar work. Throughout the text there is no portrayal of women above marketing or middle management.



a Randolph Hearst
(1863–1951)



b Masayoshi Son *software tycoon* (b. 1957)



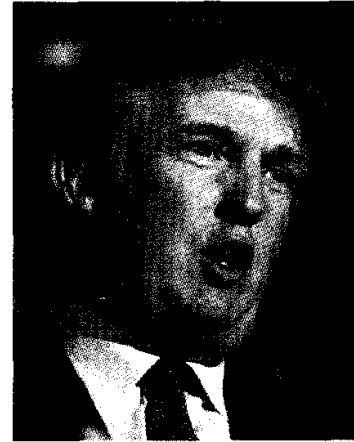
c Rupert Murdoch
(b. 1931)



d Aristotle Onassis
(1906–1975)



e Paul Getty
(1892–1976)



f Donald Trump
(b. 1946)

Figure 4 from page 29 of Cambridge Business Vocabulary in use by B Mascull

On page 29 there are several pictures of male leaders in the business world; there is an absence of females. The possible implication is that male businessmen have something to strive for, something to attain; the absence of a female suggests that women can not reach this goal in business.

23 Price

A Pricing

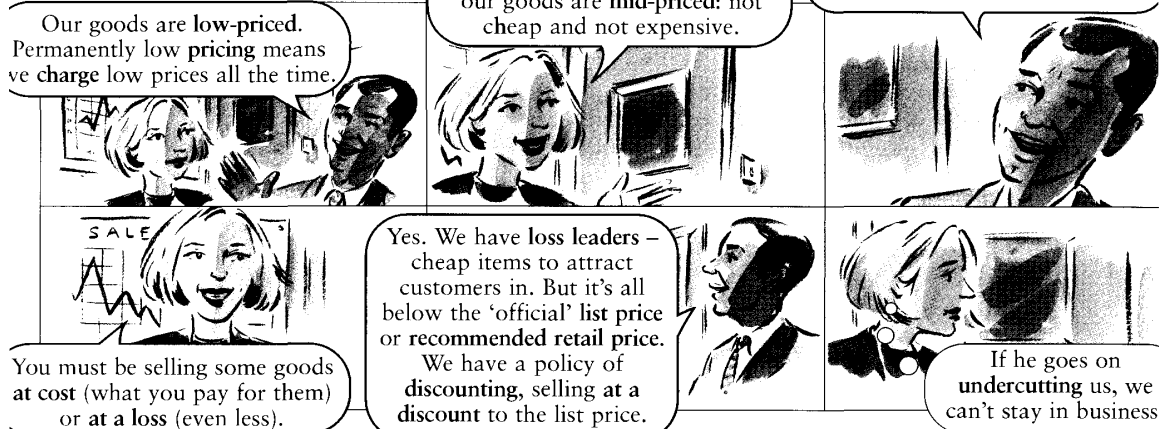


Figure 5 from page 54 of Cambridge Business Vocabulary in use by B Mascull

A Before the meeting



Hilary Rhodes is a management consultant who specializes in meeting skills:

'A good **chairperson** has to be a good **organizer**. What they do before the meeting is as important as the meeting itself. They should make sure the **agenda** (the list of things to be discussed) is complete by asking those involved what should be on it and then **circulating** (distributing) it to everyone concerned. They should check the **venue**, making sure the room will be free, without interruptions, until the end of the meeting.'

Figure 6 page 118 of Cambridge Business Vocabulary in use by B Mascull



Figure 7 page 126 of Cambridge Business Vocabulary in use by B Mascull

On page 54 there are two sales or marketing reps engaged in debate of product lines about their respective companies. The female is quite uninformed and is very nervous at the end of the conversation; her lack of ability is the polar opposite of the gentleman. Playing on stereotypical female insecurity sends a harsh message to both men and women. This type of portrayal suggests that male employees are more capable; this seems to be a pattern of the textbook. The depiction in figure 6 of a poorly prepared, theatrical, female chairperson can be considered prejudicial. While the depiction is meant to show someone who is late and poorly organised, there is no reason for this to be one of the few female depictions. In figure 7, five men are shown in a meeting while one woman takes the minutes; this example of a meeting is beside several women meditating in a workshop. Again, there is the question of why men are depicted working, while women are shown in an atmosphere more along the lines of relaxation.

By depicting women in a manner that is less flattering to that of men, there is a possibility of business men reproducing this social construct. By teaching with depictions of women in an atmosphere of inequality, the text is teaching that women are incapable, incompetent, and generally not the equal of men. It would be irresponsible to suggest that all business texts carry social inequality; however, it can be stated that the author or publisher decides the level of imbalance. Unfortunately there is a possibility that this imbalance could lead to harsh separations in the business world.

17a Complete the sentences using *was* or *were*.

- 1 He *was* very tired yesterday.
- 2 They *were* not very happy together.
- 3 You very angry with me last night.
- 4 Her doctor not very helpful.
- 5 They in France last summer.
- 6 Mr Jones not in the office yesterday.
- 7 I in bed all morning.
- 8 It not very warm in the swimming pool.
- 9 You not very friendly to my sister.
- 10 She a beautiful baby.
- 11 The children awake early this morning.
- 12 I not with them in the restaurant.
- 13 Ruth on holiday last week.
- 14 It a very nice letter.
- 15 We very pleased to see you.
- 16 Callum and his brother Josh here last night.

Figure 8 page 28 Grammar practice for Elementary Students by E. Walker and S. Elsworth

Gender Inequality does not seem to be apparent in many grammar books. *Grammar Practice for Elementary Students*, by Elaine Walker and Steve Elsworth, published by Longman; shows no visible depictions of gender inequality. In fact in figure 8 the writers go out of their way to be balanced. There is a visible effort to use one male example or female and then the opposite. In figure 9 the same equality is given to another book from Longman publishing, *English Grammar Practice Intermediate Self Study edition* by L.G. Alexander.

Complete these sentences with noun clauses.

- 1 He feels angry. It's not surprising *(that) he feels angry.*
- 2 She has resigned from her job. It's a shame
- 3 You don't trust me. It's annoying
- 4 You are feeling better. I'm glad
- 5 She's upset. I'm sorry
- 6 He didn't get the contract. He told me
- 7 It's a fair price. He believes
- 8 You're leaving. He has guessed
- 9 She's been a fool. She agrees

Figure 9 page 10 English Grammar Practice Intermediate Self Study edition by L.G. Alexander

The common traits that these books share are that (1) they are from Longman Publishing, and (2) that they are instructing grammar. That the publisher has shown a similar pattern in progressive writing is significant. This shows that there is a certain amount of awareness and recognition from the publisher even though there are different writers. In regards to the texts being grammar books, important factors to consider are: the focus is very much on the text instead of pictorial depictions, secondly, grammar books have a wider audience range in that they are not for first time English learners, nor are they primarily for business English students that have already chosen the direction of business. In possibly most cases, grammar students are late elementary, high school, post secondary and even post graduate level students.

4.0 Reflection.

The institutionalised forms of discourse seem to suggest an evolution in regards to gender awareness. In the study of the Canadian Oxford Dictionary, there was not immediate evidence of progressive gender portrayal but as mentioned earlier, dictionaries are to be an accurate guide of current discourse. The dictionary must reflect current definitions in language use. If the usages of certain words were to change, or the language itself reflected a gender balance, the dictionary would very likely present that. The Newspaper texts and perhaps the number of female reporters do suggest a change occurring in

regards to the press and news reporting. The research of Chibnall states that raw information is processed and then what is chosen to be presented, reaches the audience (Chibnall 1977: 6). The gender balance in the headlines and in the reporters themselves seems to echo his research. Evidence from the ESL textbooks suggests a change in attitude. The more progressive attitude is most apparent in the grammar text; but, it was also apparent in the phonics textbook; the business textbook however, displayed a significant gender imbalance. Though the imbalance of the business textbook may seem discouraging, there is no reason to believe that same type of book would have the same imbalance if it was of a different publisher.

5.0 Conclusion.

The examinations of institutionalized discourse have suggested that there is a visible bias in writing; however, discourse analysis also suggests that this bias is changing. It is important to restate that the imbalance has been taught, possibly through institutionalised forms of discourse, and that both genders play a role in reproducing social ideologies. It is also important to note that these social ideologies are not unbreakable. To elaborate further, discourse analysis does more than show current social order; the study itself of CDA may very well create social order. CDA is therefore, more than a study of speech that may lead to more effective communication; it is a foundational study of social interaction and reproduction of mannerisms. The subtle changes occurring, in regards to gender depictions, provide the possibility for social advancement not only through social structure, but also through employment related contributions to society. Though a complete balance is not yet visible, the changes in textbook depictions, newspaper texts, and as a possible result, employment accessibility are discernible. These progressive steps forward would seem to be the result of discourse analysis.

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