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Woman against a Woman? Inherited Discourses to Reproduce Power: A Gender Discourse Analysis of School Textbooks in the Context of Georgia

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Abstract: This study conducted a critical discourse analysis of research studies on school textbooks conducted in Georgia. The research aimed to address the following questions: What specific discourses are identified in school textbooks developed under the first, second, and third generations of the National Curriculum in Georgia? What factors contribute to the development of these identified discourses in the context of Georgia's educational system? A total of ten published research studies in this field were selected for analysis. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), developed by Lazar was used for the categorization of discourses. This discourse analysis yielded significant findings and carried both theoretical and practical implications. First, the study uncovers a noteworthy pattern in school textbooks and contributes to the development of a framework for analyzing school textbooks. Second, the study identified the formation of specific discourses through the omission and invisibility of women. This pattern is termed the development of "language-free" discourses. Third, the study demonstrated that the structural power of women in education alone is insufficient for transforming power relations through discursive practices. Therefore, in order to achieve transformation and change, it is important to challenge and transform the learned and inherited discourses of those who hold power in education. Fourth, the value of this research study is its contribution to identifying future research directions in the field.

Keywords: Georgia; school textbooks gender analysis; critical discourse analysis; gender equality; power relations in school textbooks

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Citation: Tabatadze, S. Woman against a Woman? Inherited Discourses to Reproduce Power: A Gender Discourse Analysis of School Textbooks in the Context of Georgia. *Educ. Sci.* **2023**, *13*, 795. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13080795

Academic Editor: James Albright

Received: 29 June 2023
Revised: 30 July 2023
Accepted: 1 August 2023
Published: 3 August 2023

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1. Introduction

School textbooks are crucial elements in the educational process, serving as primary sources of information for students. They significantly shape students' understanding of the world, including their perceptions of gender roles and identities. Judith Butler [1] argues that gender is not simply a fixed identity but rather something performed through actions. Gender discourse analysis examines how language constructs and reinforces gender norms, roles, and identities. In the context of school textbooks, this analysis involves scrutinizing the language, images, and ideas used to represent men and women and how gendered concepts and ideas are discussed.

The representation of gender in school textbooks has long been a subject of research and debate. Scholars such as Jane Sunderland [2] contend that textbooks often present biased and stereotypical views of gender, promoting traditional gender roles and perpetuating gender inequality. By analyzing the gender discourse in school textbooks, scholars and educators can better understand how textbooks either reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes and inequalities in the classroom. This analysis can help identify ways to improve the representation of gender in educational materials and promote gender equality in education, thereby creating more inclusive and equitable learning environments for all students.

This study conducted a content discourse analysis of research studies on school textbooks conducted in Georgia since the introduction of the new National Curriculum in 2005. The research aimed to address the following questions:

Research Question 1: What specific discourses are identified in school textbooks developed under the first, second, and third generations of the National Curriculum in Georgia?

Research Question 2: What factors contribute to the development of these identified discourses in the context of Georgia's educational system?

2. Situating the Research

The post-Soviet heritage of Georgia has significantly influenced the country's educational system and reforms. Georgia, located in Eastern Europe and bordering Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia, gained independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union. During the Soviet era, Georgia did not implement an independent educational policy within the centralized Soviet educational system [3]. It was only after the collapse of the Soviet Union that Georgia began designing and implementing its own education policy. Designing a new National Curriculum and developing new school textbooks became a priority for the Government of Georgia, particularly following the Rose Revolution in 2003 [4]. Before 2003, there were no significant reforms in this regard, as Georgia was recovering from post-Soviet trauma, chaos, and corruption [3,4].

The introduction of the new National Curriculum began in 2005 with a pilot phase in 100 schools with Georgian language of instruction and 30 public schools with non-Georgian language of instruction. The following year marked the full implementation of the first-generation National Curriculum of Georgia. The first-generation curriculum introduced innovative features and approaches, including a student-centered approach that emphasized academic achievements, consideration of students' physical and psychological capabilities with age-appropriate materials, an understanding of learning as acquiring knowledge as well as developing skills, competencies and attitudes, a teaching process designed as an agreement between teachers and students to find teachable moments, and a focus on both quality and quantity [5]. Based on this vision, new school textbooks were developed by private publishing houses and approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia [3,6].The textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education and Science were selected by public schools and purchased by parents based on free-market competition.

The second generation of the National Curriculum was introduced in 2011. Changes were made in several areas, including the transition from trimesters to two semesters, mandatory teaching of English as a foreign language for all grades, the addition of new subjects to the National Curriculum, changes in the age for school entry, and adjustments to school textbook licensing procedures [3,5].

The third-generation curriculum strongly emphasized schools' autonomous development of their curricula within the national curriculum framework, adopting a constructivist approach. The third-generation national curriculum was based on five conceptual principles: (1) teaching and learning should promote the activation of students' inner strengths; (2) teaching and learning should facilitate the gradual construction of knowledge based on previous knowledge; (3) teaching and learning should contribute to the interconnection and organization of knowledge; (4) teaching and learning should ensure the mastery of learning strategies (learning to learn); and (5) teaching and learning should include all three categories of knowledge: declarative, procedural, and conditional. In line with these principles, school textbooks were developed, an ongoing process that continues for grades 11 and 12 [7].

The issue of gender equality in education is extensively addressed in Georgian legislation, particularly in acts such as the Law on General Education, the National Goals of General Education of Georgia, the National Curriculum of Georgia, and the School Textbook Licensing Rule. These legislative documents emphasize the importance of gender

balance and the development of additional measures to ensure gender equality in school textbooks, including the involvement of representatives of public defenders in the textbook approval process [5,7].

3. School Textbooks Discourse Analysis/Literature Review

Textbook studies that predominantly employ qualitative data to examine how school textbooks construct gender have become essential in the scientific literature on gender studies in teaching materials [8]. Consequently, critical discourse analysis (CDA) has emerged as an important research method for understanding the discourses constructed by school textbooks and the power dynamics and control within society [9–11]. Critical discourse analysis is widely used to analyze school textbooks, allowing researchers to critically examine the language, power relations, ideologies, and social representations embedded within educational materials. By analyzing the discursive strategies employed in textbooks, CDA aims to uncover how knowledge, values, and social norms are constructed, reproduced, or challenged within the educational context. Apple highlights the need for CDA in analyzing school textbooks to uncover hidden agendas, biases, and social representations within them [12].

Feminist researchers have expanded on CDA and developed the feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA), which investigates power and ideology through a gender lens [13]. Lazar made significant contributions to the development of FCDA and identified a framework consisting of three domains: (1) gender power in texts and conversations, (2) gender power in social interactions, and (3) gender power in family interactions [1].

Numerous studies conducted in different countries have employed various approaches to critical discourse analysis, revealing that texts often underline masculine power [8,14–23]. These studies highlight that textbooks tend to present men as dominant, strong, active, and intelligent, while women are depicted as passive, submissive, and emotional. Such representations reinforce gender stereotypes, contribute to the marginalization of women, and perpetuate gender inequality in society.

The creation of discourses through school textbooks and the formation of discursive practices related to gender power relations can be observed in both democratic and totalitarian countries. For instance, studies on school textbook analyses in Soviet and post-Soviet countries [7,24–31], as well as in socialist countries such as the republics of former Yugoslavia and Eastern and Central European countries [32–37], highlight the prevalence of gender-related discursive practices in educational contexts. Similarly, non-socialist European states that have experienced autocratic regimes and specific gender policies in the 20th century also exhibit similar patterns in their educational systems. For example, Spain's 40-year dictatorship characterized by male dominance [38–44] and language textbook gender analyses conducted in Iran [45,46], Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh [47], illustrate the presence of gendered discourses in their educational systems.

Gender equality is a critical issue for many countries worldwide, including developed nations. The OECD report "Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now" [48] emphasizes that although girls often outperform boys in some areas of education, women continue to face lower wages, limited career advancement, and higher rates of poverty compared to men (p. 13). Gender inequality remains a concern within school settings, even in OECD countries where textbooks do not fully promote gender equality and sensitivity [49]. Research focusing on gender visibility and the ratio of male and female representations in school textbooks has been conducted globally since the early 20th century. Examples include studies in Germany by Hellinger [50] and the Netherlands by Koster [51]., as well as research in the United States by Porreca [52]. and Ndura [53]. Similarly, studies on school textbook analysis in Japan reveal similar gender representation patterns [16,54]. while Australian textbooks show significant gender sensitivity but incomplete gender balance [55,56]. Greek school textbooks also exhibit quantitative and qualitative gender

inequality [57]. and gender-unbalanced English as a foreign language instruction occurs in Indonesian public schools [58].

4. Materials and Methods

In this study, the researcher employed a systematic literature review and content discourse analysis methodology. Specifically, the study focused on analyzing research studies conducted on school textbooks in Georgia from 2005. A total of ten published research studies in this field were selected for analysis. The selection process was based on identifying all relevant studies conducted and published on the topic of school textbooks and gender equality in Georgian schools. The guidelines for the systematic review were utilized to select research studies for this review [59]. The selection process aimed to identify all research studies conducted after 2005, focusing on gender representation in school textbooks used in Georgia's educational system. Several criteria were employed to choose the relevant studies: (a) Research studies conducted after 2005. (b) Studies analyzing school textbooks developed under the first, second, or third generation of the National Curriculum. (c) Research studies examining school textbooks from a gender perspective. (d) Studies that not only quantitatively analyzed school textbooks but also discussed them qualitatively. The inclusion of research studies in the review process was carried out in multiple stages. Initially, the studies were identified through database search engines. To ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant studies, databases were selected based on their relevance, connection, and significance to the field of education. The search was conducted in the following five directions: Scopus database, Google Scholar, Openscience.ge (Digital Repository of Georgian Scientific Work); Websites of universities offering Ph.D. programs in educational sciences or related fields (including a total of six state universities and ten private universities); Research reports on the websites of prominent Georgian NGOs working in the educational field or gender issues. The second phase was sorting found documents, and the third phase envisaged the screening of titles, abstracts, keywords, executive summaries, and in some cases, the whole documents for final inclusion. Below is described in detail the inclusion process for each database.

The Scopus database used three specific search terms: (a) "School textbook gender analysis in Georgia"—resulting in two documents. (b) "Gender in Georgian education"—yielding 24 results. (c) "Intercultural Education in Schools of Georgia"—with five documents. Based on these searches, 31 documents were initially selected and screened. During the screening process, the following documents were excluded: (a) Articles written about the state of Georgia rather than the country of Georgia. (b) Articles focusing on multicultural aspects of the Georgian educational system but not addressing gender issues. (c) Articles analyzing the Georgian educational system without a specific focus on gender analysis. (d) Articles discussing gender perspectives in education but not specifically analyzing school textbooks. (e) Other irrelevant articles.

For the Google Scholar search, the term "School textbook gender analysis in Georgia" yielded 114,000 results. These results were narrowed down to 19,700 documents published between 2006 and 2023. Additional sorting was done using the title keywords "Textbooks Georgia," resulting in 56 articles. Further sorting was carried out using the keywords "Gender in Education of Georgia" (10 articles), "Intercultural Education in Georgia" (3 articles), and "Gender in Georgian Education" (2 articles). In total, 71 articles were assessed during the initial screening of titles, abstracts, and keywords. The following documents were then excluded: (a) Articles written about the state of Georgia rather than the country of Georgia. (b) Articles focusing on multicultural aspects of the Georgian educational system but not addressing gender issues. (c) Articles analyzing the Georgian educational system without a specific focus on gender analysis. (d) Articles discussing gender perspectives in education but not specifically analyzing school textbooks. (e) Articles written after 2006 that analyzed school textbooks developed before 2005. (g) Non-original research or review articles. (h) Other irrelevant articles.

The Georgian term "სახელმძღვანელოების გენდერული ანალიზი" (Gender analysis of School Textbooks) was used for the search in openscience.ge (Digital Repository of Georgian Scientific Work). This search yielded 26 scientific papers. After screening the abstracts, executive summaries, or the full documents of these 26 papers, none were found to be relevant. Although one document appeared relevant to the review's objective, it was excluded as it presented a quantitative representation of males and females in school textbooks without qualitative analysis.

The search for dissertations on university websites was conducted through a two-stage process. Initially, universities offering graduate programs in education sciences were identified. These programs were available in six public and two private universities. Additionally, private universities offered programs in social sciences, and dissertations in the field of education were accessible in these institutions as well. In total, the websites and dissertation repositories of 6 public and 10 private universities were examined, resulting in the discovery of 192 relevant dissertations. Among these, eight focused on gender aspects in education. After screening these eight dissertations, only two were selected for further review. The other dissertations were excluded for the following reasons: they addressed gender in education but did not analyze school textbooks; although the analysis was conducted from a gender perspective, the textbooks used in the study were not licensed or used in schools; some dissertations discussed gender perspectives in media, Georgian poems, or Georgian and German texts, rather than focusing on school textbooks.

The final components of the selection of the documents for review involved exploring the websites of non-profit organizations. The website https://csogeorgia.org/ge/organizations/ngo was used to identify NGOs working in the relevant fields [60]. Based on the sorting process, 451 organizations working in education and 170 organizations working on gender issues were identified. During the second phase, 42 out of 451 education-related NGOs and 17 out of 170 gender-related NGOs were found to have websites. In the third phase, a search for reports on the websites of these identified NGOs resulted in the discovery of 153 reports. These reports were then sorted using keywords such as "school textbooks analysis" and "gender aspects in education", leading to the identification of eight relevant reports. After screening these eight reports, four research reports were included in the study based on their relevance. Reports were excluded if they analyzed school textbooks from religious, ethnic, or social perspectives or discussed gender issues in education solely from the perspective of teachers' characteristics. The summary of the document selection process is provided in Table 1. The final number of documents used in this review was ten works (the list of selected documents is attached as Appendix A.

The data analysis process employed by the author involved several steps. First, the main discourses present in the school textbooks, as identified in the research studies on school textbooks in Georgia, were revealed. Second, these identified discourses were classified into three domains. The domains were defined based on the framework of the feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) developed by Lazar [13]. The author conducted the analysis of the research studies using three categories: gender power in texts and conversations, gender power in social interaction, and gender power in family interaction. Finally, the author considered relevant historical, political, and social factors and incorporated them into the interpretation of the findings.

Table 1. The phases and procedures of inclusion of documents for review.

Google Scholar	Scopus Database	Openscience.ge	University Dissertations Repositories	NGO Reports in the Field
First Phase/Searching				
A search using the term "School textbook gender analysis in Georgia" resulted in finding a substantial number of 114,000 documents.	The term "School textbook gender analysis in Georgia" in the Scopus database yielded only two documents.	Using the Georgian phrase "სახელმძღვანელოების გენდერული ანალიზი" (Gender analysis of School Textbooks) led to the discovery of 26 documents in total.	The dissertations sections of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) yielded the following number of documents: Ilia State University: 117 documents Tbilisi State University: 31 documents Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University: 18 documents Kutaisi Akaki Tsereteli State University: 16 documents Other HEIs: 10 documents	There are 451 organizations working in the field of education, as found at https://csogeorgia.org/ge/organizations/ngo (accessed on 24 April 2023). Additionally, there are 170 organizations working on gender issues, also found at https://csogeorgia.org/ge/organizations/ngo (accessed on 24 April 2023).
The documents sorted by date 2006–2023 which led to 19,700 documents	The term "Gender in Georgian Education" in the Scopus database yielded 24 documents.			NGOs with websites in the field of education-42. NGOs with websites in the field of gender issues-17.
	Intercultural Education in Schools of Georgia-5.			Research reports on the websites of the selected NGOs-153.
Second Phase/Sorting				
Sorted by title: Textbooks Georgia—in the title—56 documents.			A total of eight dissertations on gender and education (five Ph.D. and three MA) were selected based on the search results.	Research reports on school textbooks analysis or gender aspects in Education-8 research reports.
Sorted by Title: Gender in Education of Georgia-10.				
Sorted by title: Intercultural Education in Georgia-3.				
Gender in Georgian Education-2.				
In total, 71 documents were sorted.	In total, 31 documents were sorted.	In total, 26 documents were sorted.	In total, 8 documents were sorted.	In total, 8 documents were sorted.
Third Phase: Screening				
Two articles were selected after screening the titles, keywords, and abstracts.	Two articles were selected after screening the titles, keywords, and abstracts.	Zero articles were selected after screening the abstracts, executive summaries, or whole documents.	Two dissertations were selected after screening the titles, keywords, and abstracts.	Four research reports after screening the abstracts, executive summaries, or the whole documents.

5. Results

The analytical instruments used in the research study enable the researcher to categorize the discourses into three main domains. Below, the emerged discourses in the framework of each of the three domains will be presented.

5.1. Domain: Discourse on Power Relation

Discourse: Men as superior to women/Women as inferior to men.

Discourses about power relations play an important role in school textbooks. The analyzed research studies revealed the important discourses in this respect. The following discourse emerged in the reviewed and analyzed research studies: Men as superior to women/Women as inferior to men. The study of Tabatadze and Gorgadze conducted in 2021 [7,24,61] reveals the primacy of man and as the authors of the study indicated: that school books are based on masculine superiority in power and privileges [24]. Authors of this research study present examples from school textbooks of math, Georgian language and literature, Georgian as a second language, Russian as a foreign language, and social sciences, and based on these examples, they concluded that "The textbooks" analyses also showed masculine primacy; men's power and privileges remain a significant problem in school textbooks. Textbooks' content and practices contribute to the production and reproduction of stereotypes" [24] (p. 65).

Natia Gorgadze, in her Ph.D. dissertation [62] also underlines the superiority of man and masculine primacy in power relations revealed in school textbooks This research study analyzed the second generation of school textbooks. In math textbooks, the researcher identified the clear gender segregation and the superiority of men in the prestige of professions and income. As the researcher points out:

> "Women are in low-paid professions, while men are highly-paid … For example, the salary of women is 285 GEL, the highest case of female salary is 800 GEL. … Women always have a budget deficit to purchase some staff. On the other hand, men's salary is always higher … man has high credits and pays for it, and he purchases highly-priced products (furniture for 2697 GEL; Marine Boat for 4125 GEL… Mariam (Female) has in total 24 GEL, while Giorgi (male 6899 GEL)" (pp. 176–177).

Similar results are presented in the research study of the social science textbooks at the basic level of secondary school (grades 7–9) conducted in 2012 [63]. As the authors of the study underlined: "The school textbooks of Social Sciences can not promote the changes in existing models of gendered behaviors, which ingrain the inferiority of one gender and primacy and superiority of another" (p. 32).

Elza Shanidze's research of 2022 also emphasizes the differences between men and women in school textbooks and highlights the episodes in which the advantages of men in different directions are presented [64]. As the author of the study points out:

> "The content, as well as illustrations of school textbooks, conveys such stereotypes as: "Man has more developed technological skills", "Women have humanitarian skills", "Women are suitable for simple work", "Man has physical strength," and he has to move heavy things himself," "Sport is a man's job", "Painting, knitting, embroidery are suitable for a woman" (p. 45).

In all the textbooks discussed in Gorgadze and Tabatadze's research [61], the primacy of men is clearly evident. It is particularly interesting in mathematics textbooks from this point of view, where all tasks create discourses for the advantages of men over women. Moreover, as the authors stressed:

> "the primacy of men is clearly highlighted at the very beginning of the textbook, where the conditional signs of the textbook are presented. The textbook has four conditional signs: (a) work in groups; (b) pair work; (c) "Is it possible"; (d) relatively difficult thinking tasks. Out of these four conditional signs, both girls

> and boys are represented in the work part in pairs and groups, in "Is it possible" and "relatively difficult thinking tasks" only boys are depicted in conditional signs, which unequivocally emphasizes the superiority and primacy of boys in solving complex mathematical problems and, at the same time, reinforces existing stereotypes in this regard" (p. 60).

Discourse: Men have power/Women are powerless.

The discourse of men having power and women being powerless was identified in the analysis of all school textbooks. A research study conducted in 2012 on school textbooks of social sciences [63] indicates that the textbooks on history and civic education highlight the power and prestige held by men. According to the study:

> "Women are portrayed as passive compared to men. Men are depicted as kings, rulers, decision-makers, fighters, high military officials, rebels, and active figures. They 'create' history, while women are assigned passive and 'insignificant' roles. In the illustrations, men are portrayed as more active, persistent, and engaged in fighting, while women are mostly depicted as engaged in work or leisure activities. Such illustrations serve to reinforce erroneous stereotypical beliefs about the 'passive' role of women and the 'important' role of men" (p. 13).

Natia Gorgadze [62], also highlights the issue of power relations in school textbooks on multiple occasions. When discussing the Georgian language and literature textbooks for the fourth grade, she points out:

> "The third chapter contains the text 'Kings of Heaven and Earth—Eagle and Lion.' It is evident from the text that the gender distribution of power in human society also extends to nature. The ruler, the king, is portrayed as a man. In the same chapter, Lado Asatiani's poem 'Poppy' is included, where a delicate flower is described using the literary technique of personification and is associated with a shy woman" (p. 142).

Similarly, the social sciences textbooks for primary grades analyzed by Gorgadze [65] also emphasize Georgian society's power, prestige, and masculinity. The study states:

> "This chapter clearly emphasizes that different traditions and cultures prevalent in Georgia have a masculine character. In some cases, these traditions, which promote rigid stereotypes, are presented to students without discussing or evaluating them from the perspective of modern values" (p. 5). [65].

5.2. Domain: Discourses in Social Interaction

The social interactions depicted in school textbooks contribute to the creation of specific gendered discourses, focusing on the roles, status, and agency of men and women. The analyzed studies of school textbooks in Georgia have identified the following discourses: Women are invisible in social interactions, and women are portrayed as passive participants in society, while men are presented as problem solvers and agents of change and development. The following quotes and excerpts from the research studies highlight these discourses:

Discourse: Women are invisible in social interactions and unimportant in the process of social life.

The creation of discourses is influenced by the context and language used in the texts. In some cases, discourses are formed solely through the context created by the text. The representation of women in school textbooks continues to be problematic, as revealed in the analyzed studies. While some textbooks manage to achieve gender balance quantitatively, in others, women are completely invisible [61]. Even in textbooks where a quantitative balance is achieved, the representation of women in social interactions remains disproportionate, with women predominantly portrayed in family-related activities.

The analysis of social sciences textbooks underscores the invisibility of women in social interactions, stating, "Women are not really presented in the textbooks. The persons

presented in the textbooks are mostly male" (p. 12), [63]. The researchers note that despite attempts by authors to reflect gender equality, both the quantitative and qualitative analyses of civic education textbooks reveal a gender-discriminatory approach. Achieving equal gender representation remains a challenge in these textbooks, leading to an inadequate presentation of women's roles, contributions, and importance in public and political life. Although civil education textbooks provide some knowledge about human rights and equality, they offer little or no knowledge about the often unequal opportunities for different genders to realize these rights in real life.

Natia Gorgadze's dissertation [62] provides numerous examples of women's roles being hidden in public activities. One such episode concerns the fifth-grade social sciences textbook, where no mention is made of any female public figures, despite historical evidence of women's involvement in public activities during that period (p. 149).

Similar conclusions are drawn in other studies of school textbooks. Gorgadze and Tabatadze highlight that while some textbooks strive to achieve gender balance quantitatively, gender balance alone is considered the lowest level of gender socialization [7,61]. Challenges in balancing gender representation quantitatively are also identified. For instance, a study conducted by the Centre for Civil Integration and Inter-Ethnic Relations emphasizes the issues and challenges surrounding the visibility of women in various school textbooks. The following quotes are taken from this research study [66]:

"There is no representation of women in this chapter of the textbook" (p. 101), "It is evident that there is no representation of women in this chapter of the textbook" (p. 102), "In the second part of the textbook, the representation of women decreases significantly, with female characters being much more passive" (p. 112), "The gender roles depicted in the textbook are inappropriately represented in various aspects, indicating an imbalance in the intensity, norms, and forms of women's representation, as well as potential inaccuracies in the portrayal of men" (p. 122).

These conclusions are prevalent in the analysis of school textbooks.

Discourse: Women as passive participants of society.

Another discourse perpetuated by school textbooks is the portrayal of women as passive participants in social life. The qualitative analyses of school textbooks conducted by various authors across different studies have revealed that these textbooks promote gender stereotypes regarding women's involvement in civil participation [61,63,66–68] Khomeriki et al. pointed out that men are prominently represented in traditional roles such as hunters, fighters, and rulers, while women are not associated with such activities or roles that imply competence, authority, or decision-making. Instead, women's activities are mainly limited to motherhood and housekeeping (p. 31) [64].

Chanturia and Kadagidze [67] highlighted the absence of descriptions or explanations regarding the importance of gendered roles in the civic education textbook for the ninth grade. While women are represented in other social interactions, the authors noted that in financial, management, or business-related contexts, only males are depicted (p. 50). In the same study, the authors criticized the gender representation and the role of women in the geography textbook for the ninth grade. They pointed out that biographical information about individuals who have made significant contributions to the field of geography in Georgia is provided, but none of them are women, despite the presence of successful women in those areas (p. 56).

Gorgadze and Tabatadze [62] also found similar patterns in their research, providing examples from school textbooks. In the first-grade textbook "Our Environment", they observed that although the illustrations depicting girls and boys are somewhat balanced in terms of gender, the activities, involvement, and gender roles depicted contribute to the reproduction of stereotypes. Girls are often portrayed as passive or engaged in gender-stereotypical activities (p. 136).

Shanidze [64] emphasized the problem of ignoring women as active members of society in her dissertation. Analyzing several school textbooks, including the "Citizenship" course textbook, she found that women's contributions to the development of Georgian

society are largely neglected. For instance, in the list of Georgian philanthropists provided in the textbook, the names of important Georgian women were ignored, despite their significant role in the development of Georgian society (p. 47).

Natia Gorgadze's research of 2015 [62] also highlighted the passive role assigned to women in the context of societal development. For example, in the fourth-grade textbook of Georgian language and literature discussed in her study, patriotic male characters are portrayed with epithets emphasizing their loyalty, bravery, and devotion to the homeland. On the other hand, the role of female patriots is limited to raising heroes who sacrifice themselves for the country (p. 142).

Discourse: Man as a problem solver.

The portrayal of men as problem solvers and drivers of social development is a recurring discourse in the analyzed school textbooks. Various research studies have highlighted this pattern [7,24,61–65]. Shanidze's analysis of math textbooks emphasized the role of men as problem solvers [64]. Khomeriki et al. underlined the problem-solving skills of men in historical contexts, particularly in history textbooks [63]. Similar observations were made in the studies conducted by Gorgadze [65,68], Gorgadze and Tabatadze [61]. and Tabatadze and Gorgadze [7,24].

A notable example of this discourse can be found in the research study by Tabatadze and Gorgadze, which analyzed social science textbooks for the seventh grade [7]. The textbooks included a special chapter on local problems and youth participation in solving those problems in partnership with local governments. While girls were actively presented in the stories, the authors of the research study pointed out that although girls were dominant in identifying and discussing problems, these problems were ultimately solved as a result of the active participation of girls' fathers (p. 62).

Overall, the discourse of men as problem solvers and drivers of social development is consistently reinforced in the analyzed school textbooks, reflecting a gendered representation of roles and responsibilities.

5.3. Domain: Discourses in Family Interaction

Discourse: Woman as a housekeeper and subordinate to the husband

The discourse surrounding women as housekeepers and subordinate to their husbands is a prominent theme identified in the reviewed studies on family interactions. Several studies, including Gorgadze and Tabatadze [61], Elza Shanidze [64], and Chanturia and Kadagidze [67], have highlighted the different roles assigned to men and women in the family, reinforcing the idea of women's subordination and their primary responsibility for housekeeping.

Chanturia and Kadagidze [67] noted that women are predominantly presented as mothers and housekeepers in civil education textbooks. Similarly, Shanidze [64] found that women in textbooks were associated with motherhood, caregiving, housekeeping, and culinary activities.

The research study by Gorgadze and Tabatadze [61] provided specific examples from textbooks that contribute to the discourse on women's roles in family interactions. For instance, in the Georgian as a second language textbook, there is an episode depicting stereotypical gender roles, where the husband is portrayed as watching TV while the wife cleans the house. Other episodes illustrate the image of women primarily as housewives and housekeepers, such as the picture of a woman in an apron in the text "Conversation" and Anna's mother wearing a housewife's apron.

The same pattern is observed in other textbooks analyzed by Gorgadze and [61] In the Georgian as a second language textbook for second graders, the illustrations and context reinforce the discourse about women as housekeepers and subordinate to their husbands. Women are depicted doing housework, while men engage in other activities like smoking a cigar or eating cookies. A similar trend is observed in the Russian language textbook for sixth graders, where women are shown wearing aprons and doing household chores, while men are depicted reading, using computers, or enjoying food and drinks.

Overall, the discourse of women as housekeepers and subordinate to their husbands is prevalent in the analyzed textbooks, perpetuating gender stereotypes and reinforcing traditional gender roles within family interactions.

Discourse: Man as head of the family and governor.

The discourse of the man as the head of the family and governor is a recurring theme in the analyzed research studies. The textbooks examined in these studies promote the historical stereotype of men's importance and leadership in the family.

Khomeriki et al. [63] emphasize the portrayal of men's activities as significant, even within the family, compared to women's activities. The authors quote a school textbook that highlights the man's leading position in the family, stating that even a delicious dish prepared by a woman is ordinary, but if prepared by a man, it is considered "signatory". Another textbook in the field of social science advises the "Ideal Husband" not to do everything himself, emphasizing that he cannot do everything alone because he is the main man in the family.

Gorgadze and Tabatadze [61] provide several examples from the analysis of school textbooks that reinforce the discourse of the man as a governor and head of the family. In one episode, the father is portrayed as fulfilling his child's long-time dream by giving them a puppy on their birthday. Another text, Nodar Dumbadze's poem "Letter to Manana", highlights that fathers are the ones who can afford to buy gifts for their children. Similarly, in the context of Santa Claus, the father is presented as the one who brings gifts to the children because he has the financial resources. These episodes collectively reinforce stereotypes about the roles of men and women in the family.

Furthermore, in analyzing the tenth-grade civil education textbook, Gorgadze and Tabatadze [61] identify gendered tests for ideal wives and husbands. The tests emphasize different qualities and roles for men and women, portraying men as defenders, strong, heads of the family, and generators of family income, while women are described as beautiful, cheerful, good housewives, good mothers, and emotional.

In the text "Friendship of a Bear and a Peasant" by Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, the main character's wife plays a subordinate role and is depicted as the antihero. The woman's unkind attitude towards her husband's friend, the bear, is portrayed as a source of relentless pain for the bear. The text clearly illustrates the husband's primacy and dominance, as well as the wife's subordinate position. The subsequent question posed to students about the man's action of forcing his wife to kiss the bear reinforces the concepts of male generosity and loyalty to friends, highlighting the man's role as the decision-maker. These examples from the analyzed research studies collectively contribute to the discourse of the man as the head of the family and governor, reinforcing traditional gender roles and power dynamics within family interactions.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

This study had several limitations. Firstly, the number of research studies on school textbooks from a gender perspective in Georgia is very limited. Consequently, drawing definitive conclusions based on quantitative data becomes challenging. Hence, the author opted for a qualitative approach to analyze the data. Secondly, the author of this study is an active researcher on the topic in Georgia. As a result, the author's collaborative works with colleagues were also included in the list of selected documents for review.

This discourse analysis yields significant findings and carries both theoretical and practical implications. The study uncovers a noteworthy pattern in school textbooks and contributes to the development of a framework for analyzing school textbooks. Specifically, the study identifies the formation of specific discourses that exist independently of context and linguistic instruments. While discourses are typically shaped through language and linguistic devices within specific contexts, this study reveals that discourses can be developed even in the absence of words, phrases, sentences, nouns, verbs, adjectives, explicit naming, stereotyping, argumentation, or intensification. In this case, the discourse is constructed through the omission and invisibility of women. This pattern can be termed

the development of "language-free" discourses. The evidence supporting this finding is well-demonstrated in the study, where the complete absence of women's presence in social interactions and their invisibility contribute to a discourse that diminishes the significance of women in public life.

Furthermore, based on the analysis of previous research studies, the study presents a framework for examining discourses in school textbooks that scholars can use in the future. The framework consists of three domains: discourses of power relations, discourses in social interactions, and discourses in family interactions. Within these domains, eight subdomains are identified: men as superior to women, women as inferior to men, men having power, women being powerless, women as passive participants in society, men as the problem solvers, women as housekeepers and subordinate to husbands, and man as the head of the family and the governor. This framework is developed based on a review of Georgian school textbook studies and is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The framework for school textbook analysis.

Discourses of Power Relations	Discourses in Social Interaction	Discourses in Family Interaction
Discourse: Man is superior to women	Discourse: Women are passive participants in society	Discourse: Woman as a housekeeper and subordinate to the husband
Discourse: Woman is an inferior to man	Discourse: Man is a problem solver	Discourse: Man as head of the family and governor
Discourse: Man has power		
Discourse: Woman is powerless		

The significant implication of this study relates to its practical implications. Culturally constructed patterns of language and discourses play a crucial role in shaping power relations among individuals [69]. The individuals who hold power are often the creators of these discourses, and simultaneously, the discourses themselves generate power and prestige within society. This raises important questions regarding the implications for the educational system: How can schools change power relations, and how can they alter the prevailing discourses?

According to Foucault [70]. and his conceptualization of the intersection between power and knowledge [71,72]. (Foucault, 1977, 1980), knowledge and educational institutions have the potential to reshape power relations. As Weedon [73] highlights, "Education thus has a key role to play in the transformation of patriarchal, heterosexist power, and it is a precondition for new forms of agency that can transform aspects of the material, discursive practices and the power relations inherent in them" (pp. 44–45). Currently, Georgian schools serve as reproductive mechanisms for existing power relations; however, schools in general also possess the potential to become agents of reconstructing power relations [74].

To delve deeper into this issue, examining power relations within Georgia's educational system is intriguing, particularly in terms of gender. An interesting picture emerges when analyzing gender dynamics in the context of Georgia. For instance, in the Department of General and Preschool Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MoES), there are 20 women and only one man. The National Curriculum Division, which operates within this department, is responsible for developing the national curriculum. Within the MoES structure as a whole, there are 119 women and 24 men, with 27 women and only 9 men holding leadership positions in structural units. Moreover, 79% of the heads of local Educational Resource Centres (which can be compared to school district superintendents in the US, albeit with limited and varying powers) are women. Additionally, the gender distribution among school principals favors women, with 63% of school principals being women. When considering teachers in the general educational system of Georgia, women constitute a significant majority, accounting for 88% of teachers, while men comprise only 12%. The gender composition of school textbook authors and reviewers in

Georgia is skewed in favor of females. In terms of textbook authors, approximately 77% are women, while only 23% are men. Similarly, when it comes to textbook reviewers, women dominate the composition, accounting for 83% of the reviewers involved in the process between 2018 and 2022 (See Table 3 for details). These figures indicate that, structurally, power within Georgia's educational system rests with women. However, it is important to critically analyze how the discourses created by women contribute to the perpetuation of power imbalances favoring men.

Table 3. The gender statistics about authors of licensed school textbooks.

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total:
Total Number of Textbooks in Grades 1–12	65	35	30	34	64	228
Total Number of Female Authors	182	83	66	81	171	583
Total Number of Male Authors	27	23	20	25	79	174

While women may hold a significant number of positions and exercise power within the educational system, it is essential to examine the nature of the discourses that are being produced. Do these discourses challenge or reinforce existing power dynamics? How do they contribute to the construction of gender roles and expectations? It is necessary to scrutinize the content of school textbooks and the messages they convey regarding gender, as well as the extent to which they promote gender equality and challenge traditional power relations. Although the statistical data suggest that women occupy influential roles within the educational system, it is crucial to delve deeper into the discursive practices that underlie these power structures. Critically analyzing and challenging the prevailing discourses can promote more equitable power relations and foster a curriculum that encourages gender equality, inclusivity, and the empowerment of all individuals within the educational context.

These statistics shed light on the gendered power relations within Georgia's educational system. While women occupy a considerable number of positions, especially in leadership and teaching roles, it is crucial to critically examine the power dynamics and the discourses that continue to shape and influence these power relations. The development of discourses aiming to empower males by females has a rational justification. Firstly, inherited discourses developed in the 20th century have been perpetuated in the current context, partly due to inertia and partly through conscious efforts [7,24]. Secondly, women's identity with power in education has been shaped by the past masculine educational system and influential socializing agents such as the church, media, neighborhood, and family [75]. These agents of socialization have played a significant role in forming the identity of Georgian women who hold structural power in education and have transmitted "inherited" discourses and categorized identities within the educational system. Thirdly, the cultural-relational theory of gender provides explanations for this phenomenon. Scholars of this theory have observed that girls are encouraged and taught to empathize and connect with others' feelings, starting with their mothers or primary caregivers, while boys are discouraged from doing so and are pushed to pursue their self-interests, leading to a gradual disconnection from others, starting with their mothers or primary caregivers [76] (p. 73). Consequently, this factor significantly influences the creation of discourses centered around the care, support, and service of men by women, as well as the distribution of power favoring men in school textbooks.

The statistical data demonstrating the structural hegemony of women in education and the rationale behind the development of discursive practices favoring males over females reveals that structural power alone is insufficient for transforming power relations through discursive practices. Therefore, in order to achieve transformation and change, it is important to challenge and transform the learned and inherited discourses of those who hold power in education. Structural changes alone cannot lead to the abolition of subordinate power relations. Thus, it becomes crucial to create discourses promoting

gender equality in education rather than solely focusing on transforming structural power distribution in education.

One more important value of this research study is its contribution to identifying future research directions in the field of discursive practices of power relations within the educational system. The literature review of the study highlighted that both totalitarian and democratic, or aspiring democratic, states actively construct and employ discourses and discursive practices to generate and perpetuate unequal power relations within educational institutions. The motivations and justifications underlying these practices may vary across different countries. Investigating the distinctions in the rationales for gender equality policies in schools between democratic and authoritarian states becomes a critical avenue for future research.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A The List of Reviewed Research Documents

Gorgadze, N.; Tabatadze, S. გენდერული თანასწორობის საკითხები სასკოლო სახელმძღვანელოებში: გრიფირების წესისა და პროცედურების, მესამე თაობის სასწავლო გეგმის ფარგლებში შემუშავებული სახელმძღვანელოების გენდერული ანალიზი (*Gender Equality Aspect in School Textbooks. The Gender Analysis of School Textbook Licensing System and School Textbooks Developed under Third Generation National Curriculum)*; CCIIR: Tbilisi, Georgia, 2021.

Gorgadze, N. გენდერული განათლება ზოგადსაგანმანათლებლო სკოლის დაწყებით საფეხურზე (Gender Education in Primary School of Georgia). Ph.D. Thesis, Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia, 2015.

Khomeriki, I.; Javakhishvili, M.; Abramishvili, T. გენდერული თანასწორობის საკითხი საზოგადოებრივი მეცნიერებების სწავლებისას. სახელმძღვანელოების გენდერული ანალიზი (*Gender Equality in Teaching of Social Sciences. Gender Analysis of School Textbooks*); CCIIR: Tbilisi, Georgia, 2012.

Shanidze, E. გენდერული სტერეოტიპები სასკოლო განათლებაში; მეშვიდე კლასის სასკოლო სახელმძღვანელოების ანალიზი და მასწავლებელთა დამოკიდებულებების შესწავლა გენდერულ სტერეოტიპებთან დაკავშირებით (Gender Stereotypes in General Education. Analysis of School Textbooks of Grade 7th and Teachers Attitudes Toward Gender Equality). Master's Thesis, East European University, Tbilisi, Georgia, 2022.

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Tabatadze, S.; Gorgadze, N.; Gabunia k Khomeriki, I.; Tinikashvili, D. Primary School Textbook Analysis in Georgia. In *Intercultural Education Research in Primary Grades of Georgia*; Tabatadze, S., Gorgadze, N., Eds.; Centre for Civil Integration and Inter-Ethnic Relations: Tbilisi, Georgia, 2013.

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Tabatadze, S.; Gorgadze, N. Development model of gender socialization: School textbooks gender analysis in Georgia. *J. Multicult. Educ.* **2023**, *17*, 56–69.

Tabatadze, S.; Gorgadze, N. Analysis of Language Textbooks in Georgia: Approaches to Gender Equality of Males and Females While Teaching Languages. *Int. J. Educ. Reform* **2023**, *32*, 169–188. https://doi.org/10.1177/10567879221147011.

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