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FROM DISCOURSE TO MARRIAGE: A COMPARATIVE CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PAKISTANI MATRIMONIAL PROFILES

Noor ul Ain Fatima noornaqvi888@gmail.com	MPhil Scholar, Department of Applied Linguistics, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan.
Ifrah Fatima ifrahfatima.ENG@tuf.edu.pk	Lecturer, Department of English Language and Literature, The University of Faisalabad, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.
Rukhsar Anwar rukhsar.anwar@tuf.edu.pk	MPhil Scholar, Department of English Language and Literature, The University of Faisalabad, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

Abstract

The present study aims to identify underlying ideologies that are manifested in Pakistani male and female matrimonial profiles. To achieve this aim, qualitative research methodology has been adopted by applying Fairclough's Three-dimensional Model of CDA with its three levels i.e., textual analysis, discursive practice analysis and social practice analysis. Through convenient random sampling, the data has been collected in the form of 15 male and 15 female profiles from two websites i.e., Muzz.com and Shadi.com. These digital websites represent contemporary instantiations of a historical practice, reproducing societal expectations through language and marital discourse. From the analysis, it is found that male profiles project religiosity, stable career, and self-authorship, while female profiles emphasize modesty, family values and tend to be written by guardians, indicative of restricted female agency and traditional gender norms. Moreover, the significance of this study is to show the transformation of traditional approach towards matchmaking to digital selection approach that emphasize the selection of a spouse on the basis of individual's own priorities. Therefore, the study results make significant contributions towards gender studies, sociology of culture and digital media discourse by influencing and challenging ongoing social marriage perceptions, roles and identity of gender within variations of cultures worldwide.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Matrimonial Discourse, Fairclough's 3d Model, Ideology, Matchmaking, Shadi.com, Muzz.com*

Corresponding Author: Ifrah Fatima (Lecturer, Department of English Language and Literature, The University of Faisalabad, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan).
Email: ifrahfatima.ENG@tuf.edu.pk

1. Introduction

Language is not just a medium of communication; it is a strong social force that expresses and constructs reality. It is a means of expression of thought, construction of identity, preservation of power relations, and the construction of ideologies in human societies. As Hall (2003) suggests, it's a tool whereby people construct social realities and transmit cultural meaning.

Discourse and its relationship to language has been the central theme of most scholarly research in contemporary linguistics and social sciences. According to Fairclough (1992), discourse has been described as a construction of the world that reflects as well as constructs social practice, power relations, and ideologies. Discourse is greater than fragments of written or spoken words and encompasses the institutionalized norms, social practices, and ideological arrangements that represent the foundations of language production and interpretation. It is concerned with the way meanings are produced and communicated within a given socio-cultural context.

Among the most prominent methods of discourse analysis, the CDA lens holds a significant importance. CDA is an inter-disciplinary critical examination of text and talk with the aim of discovering the power-knowledge and ideological aspects of language. CDA presupposes that language is constructed socially and constructing i.e., socially built by social practice and, in return, constructing those practices. Thus, it goes beyond the descriptive function of language, seeking not only to reveal underlying ideologies, but also defies power asymmetries, and facilitate social justice. Additionally, this methodology relies on the assumption that discourse is involved in social structure production, which is an overt move towards social change. In this way, Fairclough's three-dimensional model implies that discourse analysis must incorporate investigating the textual level (words, grammar, cohesion), the discursive practice (text production, distribution, and consumption), and the social practice (societal and ideological contexts).

In the recent past, web pages like matrimonial websites have been a treasured trove of naturally occurring text. Among them, matrimonial profiles are concise but intricate texts that reflect individuals' cultural, and societal values. Language used in the profiles is guided by dominant ideologies of ideal marital partners, beauty, caste, religion, profession, and family background. As highlighted by Tufekci (2014), matrimonial sites are not only

used as matchmaking resources but as cultural spaces in which the users negotiate identity, tradition, and modernity in their individual profiles. Analyzing matrimonial discourse through CDA has allowed the scholars to reveal how individuals strategically use language to negotiate social pressure and how language materializes gender stereotyping and hegemonic values.

Consequently, this study has aimed to critically examine male and female matrimonial profiles in terms of Fairclough's CDA model with a critical perspective on how men and women are positioned discursively and what social meaning is inscribed into their self-presentation.

1.1. Research Objectives

The research objectives are:

1. To investigate the linguistic and discursive strategies employed in male and female matrimonial profiles in Pakistan to reproduce gender expectations and norms
2. To reveal implicit ideologies embedded to both male and female matrimonial profiles
3. To compare and contrast linguistic patterns and hidden ideologies embedded in male and female matrimonial profiles

1.2. Research Questions

This research has answered following questions:

1. What are the linguistic and discursive strategies employed in male and female matrimonial profiles in Pakistan to reproduce gender expectations and norms?
2. What implicit ideologies are embedded in both male and female matrimonial profiles?
3. What are the similarities and dissimilarities between the linguistic patterns and implicit ideologies in both matrimonial profiles?

1.3. Significance of the Research

The significance of this research lies in showing that in what ways, matrimonial websites are responsible for construction of Pakistani society’s gender roles, norms and culture. The research also offers significant insights on the relationship of power and ideology in matrimonial websites according to Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model. As matrimonial profiles play an important role in shaping the imagination about marriage within society, this research is a wide contribution in studies of gender,

cultural sociology, analysis of digital media by analyzing how digital media disrupts prevailing narratives. Furthermore, this research is significant in filling the gap between technology and social structure that accents the necessity of having substantive analysis of digital practices in varying environments of culture.

1.4. Problem Statement

Matrimonial websites of Pakistan depict the marriage as a part of the construction of social identity, that often reflect profound power structures and norms of society. Even while language is a significant factor in shaping the people's perception of marriage at private and public levels, there are less scholarly works on how Pakistani marital discourse influences gender stereotypes, ideologies and power relationships. So, the current research has tried to address this problem by examining how Pakistani matrimonial narratives are perpetuating gender, expectation, and broader socio-political roles in addition to echoing societal values by the application of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model.

1.5. Delimitations

This study is delimited to just two Pakistani matrimonial websites by collecting only a few profiles. There is only focus on notable and prominent linguistic features by the exclusive use of Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis in the analysis. In addition, user comments or personal experiences, are not included in this study. While neglecting other factors such as geographic, economic, or religious differences within marriage traditions, gender roles, social narratives, and cultural identities have been the concern. Without addressing broader aspects of the subject matter, the study has sought to present a specific and complete understanding of the discourse and its consequences.

2. Literature Review

This section is comprised of some previous scholarly works relevant to matrimonial sites:

Khan (2008) employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in analyzing matrimonial sites in Pakistan and the ways in which the sites socially constructed marriage in their use of language. The research concluded that matrimonial sites reproduced and represented the traditional social construction of marriage by depicting women mainly as wives and mothers and men as protectors and providers. It also criticized the manner in which these sites, in the name of providing choice and freedom, quietly limited users' choices within the confines of traditional marital norms. Research has shown how

marriage ads framed marriage as the apex of an individual's life, especially for women, who are expected to fulfill the roles of family, obedience, and purity.

Jafar's (2017) study employed CDA by working on the gendered discourse in Pakistani matrimonial sites as they are not just matchmaking forums but the discourse' platforms for the negotiation and reconstruction of gender identities. Results indicated that gendered stereotypes are prominently propagated by most of the sites. Like, in females' profiles, emphasis was on self-worth, beauty standards, dignity, and domesticity, while in males' profiles, economic stability, authoritativeness and leadership were highlighted.

Another study examined that how social standards, cultural norms and expectations are reinforced on matrimonial sites by providing the access and control to the users regarding selection of the mate. The study utilized corpus tools like Ant Conc and Wordsmith to examine the gendered language that how it depicts individual's own marital and spousal choice as well as self-expression. From the analysis, it was found that emotional elements were prevailing used by females like expecting respect, compassion, dignity, care and understanding from men. While Men's language highlighted the need for aspects like goodness, innocence, beauty, simplicity and generosity in their wives. Through such forums and language usage in them, broader socio-cultural norms and expected gender roles were represented in this study and also provided significant insights on matrimonial trends (Shaukat, Qadeer & Tahir, 2020).

Sarwar, Naveed, and Irshad (2024) investigated how language use in matrimonial sites fosters traditional gender roles for Pakistani women. The examination of 43 advertisements was conducted on the basis of Systemic Functional Linguistics and Assessment Theory, and it identified the focus on women's personality, education, and looks. The findings of this study explored the role of language use in propagating societal and cultural norms and also the gender portrayals and identities in marital context. It critically delved into the shift from older matchmaking process towards online marital websites and platforms such as "Skip the Rishta Aunty" (STRA) and "Two Rings". In essence, this study challenged the traditional matchmaking procedures and highlighted the importance of digital marital sites and platforms by exploring the gender roles with their personal and social expectations, different users' experiences, the, and personal individuals' choices in present-day arranged marriages. It suggested a new lens in bringing adaptability to dynamic sociocultural landscape of Pakistan.

Zwick and Cristobal (2006) worked on identity construction in digital matchmaking sites with an integration of modern identity and appearance in relationship to religious integrity as well as users' culture. By employing qualitative approach in the study to examine the users' profiles, the hijab's role was explored as a symbolic reference.

Thus, it was determined that individuals have the contradictory and disputing views regarding tradition and modernity. This study was significant in promoting the need for digital platforms and spaces for identity negotiation within cultural, social and religious dimensions. However, the study has primarily addressed Western settings, leaving a gap in understanding how these processes have unfolded in non-Western contexts like Pakistan, where class, caste, and gender have deeply influenced identity formation.

Ahmed (2013) examined the influence of Muslim matrimonial websites on traditional Islamic courting practices, exploring how digital platforms have both preserved and transformed arranged marriage customs within Muslim communities. Through qualitative research, different ways were analyzed in which online matrimonial services have mediated religious and cultural expectations surrounding marriage. However, the study's focus was primarily on Western contexts, not on non-Western regions, such as South Asia, where local cultural, caste, and familial dynamics that can significantly shaped marriage practices.

Another study urged the individuals regarding using the matrimonial websites to exercise care when disclosing personal information and to thoroughly verify profiles, underscoring the increase of fraud on these sites (Kumar, 2018, p. 5). It utilized counterfeit profiles to obtain money or personal data from unsuspecting users, stressing the importance of strong verification methods and security protocols to avert scams (Saini, 2014, p. 92). Users should remain alert and prioritize their safety and security while engaging with matrimonial websites.

Moreover, Kharde et al. (2020) conducted a study that explored the use of advanced technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) to upgrade matchmaking policies on matrimonial websites. It highlighted the Gale-Shapley Algorithm as a key procedure for achieving accurate matches in two-sided markets. The study highlighted the limitations of traditional systems like their incapability to include behavioral factors and suggests a new application that influenced AI to analyze user behavior and priorities for personalized and real-time match suggestions.

2.1. Research Gap

By reviewing the existing academic literature, some gaps have been found. There are very less studies that have used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to reveal the underlying power dynamics, ideological frameworks, and gendered language prevalent in online matrimonial profiles. Additionally, the current body of work mainly highlights issues related to gender representation, identity construction, and the linguistic aspects of these profiles. So, the current study has addressed this gap in previous studies by working

on the comparative analysis of male and female profiles on matrimonial sites in Pakistan to explore that how through language, gendered stereotypes are constructed to reflect the male and females' self-representations. Furthermore, the current study also fills the gap through unveiling the implicit ideologies intricated by males and females and reflect that how societal and cultural expectations are shaped and negotiated on these marital sites.

3. Research Methodology

The current research is qualitative in nature by employing critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach, specifically using Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA. The aim of this research is to explore how Pakistani male and female matrimonial profiles are constructing gender stereotypes and shaping social, cultural and gendered expectations to reveal the manifested implicit ideologies. To fulfill this aim, data for this research has been collected from two most famous and frequently-used Pakistani matrimonial websites, i.e., Muzz.com and Shadi.com. Through convenient random sampling, thirty profiles have been randomly sampled, fifteen male profiles from Muzz.com and fifteen female profiles from Shadi.com, to include both gender categories in an equal balance. Then, these profiles have been downloaded and stored as PDF to proceed towards analysis. Therefore, data analysis procedure involves following the three stages of Fairclough's model of CDA. In essence, this approach has not only examined how Pakistani matrimonial profiles are constructed but also reveals the pertinent ideologies of genders in Pakistan's culture.

3.1. Research Framework

This study employs Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is the description of relationship between society and power. Fairclough's model consists of three broad dimensions: textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice.

The first dimension, the textual analysis, or the descriptive stage, closely looks into the language in the text. It analyzes vocabulary, grammar, metaphors, sentence structure, and style to determine how meaning is constructed. This stage provides initial evidence for interpretation. The second dimension, the discursive practice, analyzes the production, circulation, and interpretation of texts in society. It focuses on the power of writers, readers, and institutions to attribute meaning to texts. Here, it shows how matrimonial profiles are produced, distributed, and consumed within cultural and social norms. The social practice is the third aspect that investigates how texts are positioned in wider social and cultural contexts. According to Fairclough, language is used for purposes of communication as well as for constructing society, affirming values, and affirming or

challenging power relations. At this point, matrimonial discourse gets associated with common ideologies such as patriarchy, family honor, or religious beliefs. All three phases describe how matrimonial texts are not just common texts but are engaged in the construction and continuation of cultural norms and social identities.

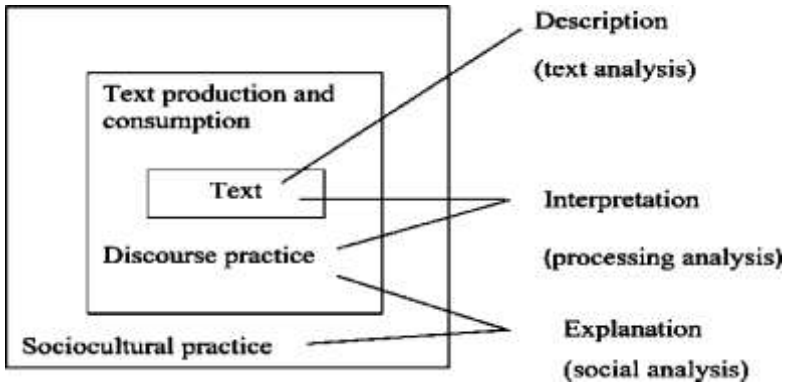

Figure 1: Fairclough`s Three-Dimensional Model of CDA

4. Data Analysis

This section is divided into three main parts. In the first part, the male matrimonial profiles from Muzz.com have been explored through Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA. In the second part, the female matrimonial profiles from Shadi.com have been analyzed through Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA. And in the third part, comparative analysis of male and female matrimonial profiles has been done in tabular form based on interpretations and chief differences which are established in males' matrimonial discourse from Muzz.com and females' matrimonial discourse from Shadi.com. CDA of Male Matrimonial Profiles in Pakistan.

4.1. CDA of Male Matrimonial Profiles in Pakistan

4.1.1. Textual Analysis

Textual analysis has attempted to look at the account of textual properties and patterns that ruled the meaning of discourse. It is based on a detailed analysis of the linguistic features of a text. Therefore, in Pakistani matrimonial profiles, the structure of the text is highly patterned and formulaic, implying a culture-conditioned conventional genre. The tone is formal, factual, and detailed, frequently being separate categories like age, height, education, occupation, and religious affiliation. Most begin with census-type information (name, age, height), go on to qualifications and background information on the parents, and finish with desires as far as the spouse is concerned. Lexical difference is

gender-based: male profiles tend to contain forceful and promotional words like "well-settled," "highly educated," or "earning Rs. X," which reflect strength and wealth. Generally, Male profiles on Muzz typically suggest partner preferences than affirm them explicitly.

Biographies that describe themselves as "romantic," "audacious," or "family-acquainted," still point towards a preference for spouses who engage or enjoy these rates. Instead of asking for certain traits, the tone-descriptions function as assignations to like-minded matches. Most profiles mention traits such as "sensible listener," "down-to-earth," or" regardful," which may serve as both a nature- criterion and a spouse expectation. This subtlety contradicts modern marriage advertisements, which tend to essentially ask for traits such as similar skin color or family background. In the meantime, lifestyle significantly influences manly biographies on Muzz. As "spa, hiking, vlogging" and "travelling, discovering societies" indicate vibrant, health-aware, and socially anxious personalities.

Certain profiles demonstrate diversity of life by combining interests such as "content creation" and "football." The diversity of life descriptions from athletic to creative instills stiffness, juvenileness, and personal agency. Muzz biographies, in contrast to conventional bones that are characterized by diurnal conditioning such as fasting or prayer, balance religious devotion with rest conditioning, a more integrated image of life. Maximum Muzz male biographies omit elaborate family details and occasionally omit the information altogether or limit it to one line. Matrimonial profiles, for example, point to specific rates instead of comparing with siblings, property, or family locations. Others use an indefinite "supportive family," suggesting minimal but favorable congruence. This deficiency indicates a change in internet wedding traditions where men are evaluated less in terms of their lineage than by their personal characteristics. It implies that in the context of Muzz, men assign other values than family when it comes to how they present themselves. Conversely, learning particularly in professional and technical domains, education is frequently highlighted. One man, for instance, speaks of his experience in the technology industry; another man speaks of his engineering qualifications. These words such as "well-educated,"; MBA qualified; or engineer by trade, are utilized to symbolize credentials as well as to verify status, intelligence, and professional course, all socially valued attributes in a Pakistani male candidate. While some omit institutions, others encompass them.

Furthermore, signs of self-authorship are plentiful in Muzz profiles. Whereas one male state writes, "I believe in empathy and adventure," individuals like one male write, "I'm a romantic and driven person who loves deep conversations." The profiles are patently written by the individuals themselves, not their families; this is evidenced by the very first-

person and emotion-laden vocabulary. This contradicts more conventional matching websites, where formal tone and third-person accounts suggest parental authorship. On Muzz, men are served as active agents in searching for marriage. Hence, Male profiles highlight English fluency or overseas exposure. Language use reflects cosmopolitanism in men.

Language and fluency as well as education also reflects class and cultural expectations. Male profiles typically bring to the fore global fluency, English skills, or international experience, boasting cosmopolitanism and adaptability. Word and tone used in men's profiles are relaxed, positive, and self-assured. First-person assertions such as "I adore taking pictures," "I'm learning Spanish," and "I'm honest" create an easy and genuine tone. This tone is indicative of confidence and ownership by the individual, thus implying that the user is personally involved in the matchmaking process. Even those profiles which mention culture or religion do so in a broad, liberal way, like "practicing Sunni, but open-minded". Older marriage formats are sometimes prone to passive language and euphemisms, which in these instances are specifically avoided. In addition, in order to determine suitability, the Muzz male profiles of the four men all make use of particular words, such as "never married". A single profile with "separated" (without elaboration) suggests avoidance of disclosing complicated personal backgrounds, likely due to societal bias.

Everyday use of action verbs like "enjoy," "believe," and "explore" and adjectives that define character and virtues, such as "kind," "loyal," and "ambitious," contribute to the development of an active, moral, and emotionally smart image. The profiles employ a structured format supplemented with informal language. Expressions such as "foodie, spontaneous, loyal" listed in a comma or bullet format describe one male profile. This follows digital literacy and replicates social media profiles. Well-structured sections categorized "Hobbies," "Religious Beliefs," and "Personality" enable one to easily and visually appealing reading of another male profile. The terms "empathetic," "cosmopolitan," and "introvert/extrovert balance" describe an advanced self-presentation tactic in line with educational and economic history. The other reason is that age is defined objectively without using emotional language. For example, as indicated in the profiles of most men, it implies that age is an actual consideration rather than a matter of disagreement or opinion. In opposition to female profiles where youthfulness is usually stressed or romanticized.

The neutral way in which age is treated indicates that men retain social capital well into their thirties and beyond, thus confirming age-gender norms within the marriage market. Most Muzz male profiles contain precise height requirements, like "5'11," "6'0," and "5'10," which are sometimes accompanied by adjectives like "tall" or "good height."

This indicates how society perceives taller men as more attractive and dominating, thereby marking masculinity and physical beauty. Though male profiles utilize height as a symbolic factor, female profiles avoid specific statistics for height and weight. Muzz male profiles focus on career opportunities. Profiles highlight "having a digital marketing company," "being in tech," and some men identifies himself as a "content creator and freelancer." These employment markers, which express money independence, aspiration, and leadership, are highlighted with pride and precision. Thus, the salience of professional identity indicates that men's achievement in the public sphere is prized as an important marriage requirement. Income Less frequently overtly disclosed, income is implied from occupational status and indirect cues. Phrases such as "working abroad," "owning my own company," and "well-established" are income proxies. Some profiles further reinforce the male provider stereotype by declaring that they are "financially stable" or "earning well." In addition to increasing the profile's attractiveness, these descriptions also imply stability and marriage readiness.

The majority of Muzz men's profiles simply assert their religious beliefs. Common declarations include "eats halal," "always prays," and "Practicing Sunni." This translates to the fact that an individual's moral alignment and religious conduct largely determine their suitability. But caste is minimized or lacking altogether, suggesting a probable shift in urban digital spheres to religious instead of caste-based endogamy. Under such ideals, some profile users prefer to just write "Sunni Muslim" instead of mentioning their sectarian associations. Therefore, it can be said that males are somehow more adaptable regarding caste and religion.

Moreover, physical appearance of males has also been highlighted that is somehow relatable to fitness at some points. Male looks have been pointed out by employing the words like "regular gym-goer," "fit," or "active lifestyle" instead of "handsome" or "attractive."

In essence, double standards relating to genders are emphasized in male profiles that men are selected and assessed mainly on educational and financial level, whereby women are evaluated commonly for appearance and beauty.

4.1.2. Discursive Practice Analysis

Discursive practice is based on the interpretation of the original text. So, Muzz site has encouraged male users to foreground their individuality, subtly reflecting their dominant role in marital negotiations where their family status is assumed but not scrutinized. Muzz profiles reflect a culture of self-representation. Men present their

personality, interests, and preferences directly, suggesting that they are not only seeking matches but also branding themselves.

It has been observed that the profiles are produced within specific cultural contexts that shape how individuals present their marital status. The prevalence of "never married" suggests a collective understanding of this status as favorable in the matrimonial market. Muzz users craft their own narratives, using personalized expressions like the mention of “sweets and colognes are close to my heart” reflects an emotional and direct tone.Shadi.com entries typically follow a more formulaic, checkbox-style structure. Interests such as "reading" and "cooking" are listed without elaboration, indicating a standardized approach possibly influenced by platform format and cultural expectations. The use of "separated" by one male may indicate a more complex narrative that could require further explanation, potentially affecting how he is perceived by others. Profiles construct identity through self-description, showcasing desired qualities and characteristics. The language used can reflect power dynamics, such as "seeking someone who can appreciate my independence. "Profiles may emphasize the importance of relationships, such as "seeking someone to share life's adventures with".

Meanwhile, the platform i.e., Muzz.com caters to different demographics, which may influence how individuals choose to present their marital status. Muzz.com may attract a more diverse audience, while Shaadi.com may focus on traditional matrimonial expectations. The uniformity in the use of "never married" across female profiles may reflect a strategic alignment with societal norms that favor this status. Matrimonial profiles in Pakistan are typically compiled by the family seniors or the candidate, then placed on marriage-bureau websites or newspapers. whereas groom profiles are authored by either the man himself or his parents. This suggests that the language used can be both formal and familial, like saying someone "belongs to a respectful family in Lahore." It shows that men’s profiles often highlight their economic stability, appealing to a wife’s youth and attractiveness. That’s why men tend to showcase their earning potential and social status. Both men and women rely on stereotypical terms when describing themselves and their ideal partners: men might label themselves as "career-oriented" and "ambitious," while they seek traits like "beauty" and "homeliness" in a spouse. On the other hand, women often describe themselves as "educated" and "soft-spoken," looking for partners who are "well-educated" and "devout."

The audience consuming these profiles may interpret "never married" as a positive attribute, enhancing the desirability of the individuals. In contrast, the mention of "separated" may lead to questions about the individual's past and readiness for a new relationship. Language use can reflect and reinforce power relationships. For example, using jargon or technical terms can create a sense of expertise or authority. Language use

can shape and reflect social relationships. For example, using language use can reflect and reinforce cultural norms and values. For example, using polite language can signal respect for social norms.

4.1.3. Social Practice Analysis

Social practice stage is concerned with the explanation of the text. In this stage, it is analyzed that men are typically encouraged to exhibit ambition and adaptability in Pakistani culture. On Muzz, males are given the chance to show their personalities as self-sufficient, independent as well as modern. Unlike women's marital responsibilities and selection of mate dependent on family, males are clearly represented as independent and self-reliant persons who have the freedom to select their spouses. It has reflected the authoritative gender role of males that their choice is somehow easily accepted in society. In this way, this platform i.e., Muzz is revealing the gendered power relations by encouraging self-reliance, authoritativeness and independence of males in Pakistani society.

In this way, it is clear that male profiles are promoting the ideology of "Patriarchal Masculinity" that has a profound and powerful social impact. This idea glorifies traits like personal freedom, choice, and the belief that individuals should be free to make decisions that serve their best interests and align with their needs and desires. This perspective challenges traditional norms and institutions, proposing a society where personal choices and market dynamics take precedence in social relationships, including marriage. In the present era, marriage is not just about fulfilling the social responsibility or family pressure and burden, but it's wholly related to companionship between two individuals of their own choice. In this regard, male profiles on Muzz are unveiling the new liberal values developing in modern Pakistani society regarding marriage. Analysis has also explored a transition from older practices towards modern individuals' own preferences in choosing their mates. Furthermore, it can be said that Muzz site is promoting the emerging liberal perspective in today's users to build their profiles according to their needs, preferences and compatibility. Through this forum, individuals are encouraged to transform the social and cultural landscape of marriage in Pakistan as it is still evolving, and reconstructing the people's mindset regrading relationships. For instance, people's way of showing their marital status indicates their underlying beliefs and mindset related to marriage like, using the term "unmarried" reflects the youth and preference towards personal freedom and individual's choices. Moreover, social practice analysis of male profiles has revealed that marriage, mates' selection and relationships are influenced by societal and cultural norms with some expectations. Choosing the mates and showing their personalities' traits and desires is all about an identity construction process where preferences are aligned and

negotiated according to the social and cultural surrounding like searching the qualities of good education, appealing physical appearance, beauty and social status.

In essence, it is clear in these profiles that patriarchal masculinity and family-based culture are overwhelmingly followed in Pakistani society. Family or the elder people have the responsibility to take the decisions about marriage and also promote the ideology that men should be the head or sole earner of the family, while women as the housewife or household nurturer. In this regard, earnings and financial stability (repetition of the expectation that a man "supports his wife and family") and belonging from a "religious, practicing Muslim family" are prominently emphasized in profiles. "Baradari" (clan) and caste have also social, cultural and religious significance in most of the profiles that being married from the same caste is a powerful social norm. The overview of CDA of male matrimonial profiles can be seen in following table 1.

Table 1: CDA of Male Matrimonial Profiles on Muzz.com

Profiles' Examples	Textual Analysis	Discursive Practice	Social Practice
"Only eats halal, non-smoker, doesn't drink"	Moral alignment and adherence to cultural expectations.	Potential partners with similar religious values.	The continuing role of Islamic norms in digital spaces.
"Gym, cycling, calisthenics"	Physically active lifestyle, self-discipline and personal fitness.	Health consciousness and encourages lifestyle.	Modern urban masculinity and physical wellness.
"Adventurous, confident, romantic"	Personality traits that reflect emotional openness and individuality	One's personality through attention-grabbing descriptors.	Emotional expression and male matchmaking representations.
"Acting, content creation, live streaming"	Language is informal and media-driven self-expression	Self-display without formal restrictions	Pakistani men framing their identity in a culturally appropriate way.
"Good with kids, respectful, generous"	The tone is soft, nurturing, and morally affirming.	Partner looking for responsible and family-oriented men	Men present stability, care and compassion in potential marriage roles.
"Be seen first"	Language is ambiguous, aligned	Profile construction's	Men use the platform to gain

	with app-specific functions	algorithmic tools and profile promotion.	prominence, self-marketing in matchmaking culture.
"Acting, content creation, live streaming"	Creativity and comfort with public presentation	Alignment with influencer culture and modern storytelling	Men increasingly borrow from global trends like digital branding.

4.2. CDA of Female Matrimonial Profiles in Pakistan

4.2.1. Textual Analysis

The first stage of Fairclough's 3d model i.e., textual analysis is concerned with linguistic features

including lexical, syntactic and stylistic choices, as well as literary and rhetorical devices. From

textual analysis, it is found that the language used in female matrimonial profiles clearly reflects

womanhood, legitimacy, appropriateness and integrity of females. In female profiles, age and height sections are stated in a very systematic way, with a common focus on age ranges like "22–28" or "23–26" that highlights the prime and preferrable age for marriage of females. Basically, these age references are just beyond the numbers as they are the depiction of younghood, beauty and fertility. On the other side, women with age of 30 or above 30 are not considered preferable as they are less appealing. Secondly, height has also been highlighted in profiles as being measured in feet and inches, that are the indicators of beauty, social desirability, and elegance. Although, it's not clearly indicative of compatibility but just about following Eurocentric standards of attractiveness, appearance and beauty.

Moreover, the language used in profiles depicts the relationship between emerging individual identities in accordance with different cultural and societal expectations. From the analysis, it is indicated that describing the career and education of females depict their self-worth but they are also influenced by some socially and culturally acceptable parameters. The proud females with high-level education i.e., "MBA," "MPhil," or "Doctor" are reflecting the dignity, self-worth, and their goal-oriented behavior but still, consistently adding the terms like "homely," "family-oriented," and "simple" is also going side by side. This lexical juxtaposition emphasizes the powerful dual nature of females

that have tendency to manage both professional achievements and also household tasks. The phrase "working lady who can balance work and home" is a clear indication that along with balancing the career, home and family will be given priority by most of the females.

Furthermore, it is also analyzed that religious belongingness and beliefs have also a very significant role in marital procedures, like using the phrase "Syed family only" is imposing some social and religious boundaries without any flexibility and negotiation. Moreover, the euphemistic phrases such as "never married," "divorced by mutual consent," and "widowed but comfortably settled" are also highlighted in females' profiles to foster a softer impact as well as to reflect the deviations from an ideal set standard. The purpose of using these expressions is to avoid personality conflicts or showing the trauma behind individual choice, like using " by mutual consent" ensures the social acceptability of females who don't fit on the criteria of traditional marital customs.

In addition, another frequent theme emphasized in females' profiles is about English language proficiency, by using the words such as "well-spoken," "fluent in English and Urdu," or "effective communication skills" to indicate the class. This depicts that it's not just about education but also, it's a symbol of capitalism and belongingness to a high-class society. Phrases like "smart, English-speaking, well-settled" as a reflection of sophistication and well-mannerism, can uphold the person's status. Moreover, graphological features like capitalization, enumeration, and placement of elements in a formulaic way also add seriousness in profiles' mentioned components and laid emphasis on the perspective that modernity is only acceptable inside some patriarchal boundaries and women empowerment comes at secondary instead of individual preference for change.

Additionally, expressions like "seeking well-settled, family-loving bridegroom" are also prevalent in females' profiles to show shyness and desire for their preferrable men in a modest and respectful way. It reflects the gendered socialization that choosing the words skillfully in expressing the desires is related to power dynamics negotiation. Overall, the tone seems formal, euphemistic, and objective by using third-person phrases like "match sought for decent, homely girl," and indirect speech. It depicts the dominant social perception that women seem to be as options for choice and considered as hiding their own individual identities.

4.2.2. Discursive Practice Analysis

Fairclough's second level, "discursive practice," is concerned with the production, distribution, and consumption of texts. It focuses on the ideological frameworks and social processes that determine the ways in which we communicate meaning and language. When we look at matrimonial profiles on Shadi.com, these practices are not merely about self-

presentation; they belong to a broader system of cultural norms, regulations, and media conventions. Interestingly, women typically do not author these profiles by themselves. In their place, parents or other members of the family create them. This collaborative authorship puts a strong mark on the tone and language of the profiles. "Match sought for our daughter" or "girl belongs to good family" tell us that women find their identities through their families. This collective strategy is more in line with South Asian cultural norms, in which marriage is considered a family affair and not a personal one. As a result, the female subject then becomes a figure shaped to conform to community expectations and not to convey personal identity.

Genres also play an important role in shaping these profiles. They possess their own genre, which is characterized by language, values shared, and social issues. These issues tend to constrain the way identity is represented, prioritizing specific features such as beauty, family values, and modesty over others. Consequently, the discourse encourages a homogenized vision of the "ideal bride."

This cyclical pattern is not coincidental; it has reference to interdiscursivity and intertextuality theories. Individuals borrow from accessible profiles, common themes, and well-known advice to construct their own identities. This leads to a frequent use of well-known phrases such as "decent girl from a respectable family," "modern yet traditional," or "well-settled." These phrases are not only repeated but also help reinforce social norms. As this language is used, it becomes self-reinforcing, upholding existing views on respectability, gender roles, and marriageability over time.

These profiles are particularly intriguing because they are publicly available. Grooms and their families examine them closely as they make marriage selections. Unfortunately, women are often objectified and evaluated instead of actively choosing profiles. This imbalance shows the dominance of males and the passivity of females in the selection process. Female profiles are created to be judged by males. Furthermore, matrimonial websites like Shadi.com are part of a broader commercial matchmaking industry. The language used and normalized on these sites is not neutral; it carries ideological weight.

4.2.3. Social Practice Analysis

Examining the females' matrimonial profiles through social practice analysis has revealed that women present themselves on matrimonial websites is the result of the pressure that is set and they have on their minds from the society. These types of profiles are designed according to the expectations of society. The focus on the beauty standards, fertility and etc. are what society expects from the women. When talking about marriage,

women are considered to be the protectors of honor and in all this their personal choices and aspirations are neglected. Though these profiles seem self-made but they encapsulate patriarchal thoughts in society. Through this clear depiction, they build and normalize the universal identity of an ideal woman to be like it.

All of this is connected to the ideology of “Patriarchal Femininity” which gets attributed for having contributed to shaping social norms. This idealizing conception beautifies traits like modesty, nurturance, docility, and physical attractiveness, but devalues traits like assertiveness, autonomy, and drive. Rather than direct pressure, this subsystem depends on conditioning through culture. Women are rewarded for conforming to a strict norm. Matrimonial rhetoric facilitates this by portraying the "ideal bride" as educated and beautiful but above all, not threatening patriarchal authority. "Professionally qualified but homely" or "independent but family-minded" suggest the fine line women are expected to walk. They are required to incorporate modernity with traditional submissiveness. Such blended terms illustrate how language might resolve opposing social expectations in one scheme. Such institutions present traditional gender roles as "common sense." They do not disclose that these roles are both socially constructed and politically motivated.

In the specific context of Pakistan, where women are seen as guardians of honor, these profiles play a significant role. They are not just tools for matchmaking; they embody specific gender roles and societal expectations. By making conformity attractive and deviance risky, matrimonial profiles help perpetuate current power dynamics. These profiles are cultural artifacts that continually reinforce the ideology of patriarchal femininity. They influence not only how society sees women but also how women view themselves. Excluding women from financial independence and career ambitions, while glorifying beauty, family background, and religious orthodoxy, pushes women into the private sphere and keeps them dependent on men. Labor and education are acknowledged but rhetorically diminished to fit within patriarchal systems. This shows that change is only acceptable if it does not threaten dominant gender ideologies. Fairclough's notion about relationship between discourse and social structure is relevant here: discourse not only reflects but also shapes and stabilizes society. Shadi.com matrimonial profiles illustrate how discourse contributes to the creation of unequal power relations. They demonstrate how language, ideology, and social institutions work together to reproduce patriarchal femininity as a standard norm. This ideological model doesn’t just describe that what a woman should be; it outlines what she can become, defining roles that emphasize male superiority and social utility. Thus, the matrimonial profile becomes an important site for analyzing how patriarchal dominance is enacted, normalized, and internalized in everyday cultural practices.

Table 2: CDA of Female Matrimonial Profiles on Shadi.com

Example	Textual Feature	Discursive Practice	Social Practice
"Age: 23," "Height: 5'3"	Factual, formulaic information	Normalization of measurements	Youth and specific height idealized as markers of beauty and marriageability
"MBA, yet homely and family-oriented"	Juxtaposed qualification and domesticity	Balancing modernity and tradition	Academic achievement allowed only if it doesn't threaten gender roles
"Slim, fair, attractive, decent looking"	Beauty-related adjectives	Aesthetic standardization	Reinforces colorism and thinness as cultural ideals of femininity
"Divorced due to mutual understanding"	Euphemistic terms for marriage	Cautious self-disclosure	Sanitizes the past for acceptability; maintains female "value" in marriage market
"Daughter of a retired government officer"	Family-based social capital	Inherited identity	Transfers value from personal achievement to family status
"Fluent in English & Urdu"	Language as a marker of class	Display of cultural capital	English proficiency = modern, elite, desirable for upward mobility
"Match sought for a decent, cultured girl"	Third-person, formal tone	Familial authorship	Objectification of women; passive role in partner choice process
"From a religious Sunni family"	Religious identity as background	Signaling cultural fit	Use of religion to enforce inmarriage and maintain cultural boundaries
"Looking for a well-settled, family-oriented groom"	Implicit expectations of partners	Polite tone, self-effacing request	Socialized to modest and non-demanding in articulating needs
"Modern yet traditional"	Contradictory adjectives	Interdiscursive language	Reflects conflict between female advancement and patriarchal acceptance

4.3. Comparative Analysis of Male and Female Matrimonial Profiles

With reference to Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis, this section consists of the comparison between male profiles from Muzz.com and female matrimonial profiles from Shadi.com. The aim is to evoke the way in which language reflects the positions of masculinity and feminism. Comparison of salient features such as tone, self-presentation, markers of identity, and relations of power, this study has analyzed how marital discourse is an arena of conformity and negotiation in patriarchal ideologies. The comparison has been depicted in the form of table for enhanced understanding.

Table 3: Comparative Overview of Male and Female Matrimonial Profiles

Category	Male Profiles (Muzz)	Female Profiles (Shadi.com)
Age and Height	Age said plainly (e.g. "29 years old"), with no feeling of urgency. Height said objectively	Restricted age groups (e.g. 22–28) to signify youth; height used to convey grace or beauty.
Education and Occupation	Assertively stressed: "MBA qualified," "Engineer," "Runs business" – status symbol	Focused but tempered with adjectives like "simple," "homely" to maintain traditional image.
Income and Financial Status	Highlighted indirectly by words like "financially stable," "working abroad"	Hidden or unnoticed most of the time; economic dependence implied or desirable
Religion and Caste	Religion said succinctly ("Practicing Sunni"), caste generally avoided	Religion and caste foregrounded; act as gatekeepers for cultural boundaries
Language and Tone	First person, informal, expressive ("I like honesty"), social media style use.	Third-person, formal, euphemistic ("match sought for."), Often written by families

Physical Appearance	Downplayed; health and fitness focus	Preferred; adjectives such as "fair," "slim," "attractive" used
Marital Status	"Split apart" used sometimes with minimal explanation to show stigma management	Euphemisms such as "divorced for mutual understanding" in order to maintain "purity"
Family Background	Stated succinctly; focus on individual achievement and independence	Strong language: "from respectable family," suggests inherited as opposed to personal value
Partner Preferences	Implicit self-description	Spoken modestly; not excessively demanding ("seeking well-established groom").
Authorship Voice	Headline of their own work; demonstrates personal drive and branding	Family tends to write it most; women are depicted as passive agents.

The above table 3 is a comparative analysis of male and female matrimonial profiles in Pakistani matchmaking scenario that authenticates deeply ingrained gender ideologies realized in specific discursive patterns. Male profiles on websites like Muzz are more likely to more informal, and in their own voice.

For females, however, profiles on Shadi.com and other sites are usually managed by families, in third-party accounts that put females in the position of objects being selected rather than agents in an active position. Youthfulness and attractiveness are the requirements here, with youth, paleness, and slenderness being preferred attributes in profiles. Even when educated or working, women are described using adjectives such as "homely" or "family-oriented" so that their ability is not inimical to patriarchal conceptions of domesticity and submissiveness. As for men's autonomy and salaries, these are valorized, but for women, these are neutralized, with religion and caste continuing to be strong markers of social acceptability.

Male profiles have encouraged the ideology of "Patriarchal Masculinity". Men are constructed as independent, modern, and emotionally intelligent beings who still possess the age-old role of provider and decision-maker. Even if the profiles contain softer

attributes such as empathy and interests such as travel or vlogging, these are presented to make the male figure more marketable and not to alter existing norms. This is consistent with the neoliberal ideal of the "optimized self" individual who is able to navigate tradition and modernity in order to compete in the marriage market. In this way, men continue to be privileged by their positioning as both economically secure and emotionally mature, connotatively reasserting class and gender divisions.

Women's profiles are guided instead by a "Patriarchal femininity" discourse. Women are discursively positioned as objects of exchange and honor for the family, not as independent subjects. They are highly valued and closely entwined with beauty, youth, modesty, family background, and class. Even when employed or educated, these statuses are repressed so as not to intrude on the woman's "natural" role as inferior marriageable caregiver. The triumphs of caste, linguistic culture, and bodily beauty proclaim a classed and gendered world in which women's voices do not speak as many profiles for the women because there are many profiles written by their relatives on their behalf. It ensures patriarch control over women's life choices and self-presentation.

Generally, the comparison reveals how patriarchy is reproduced and not deconstructed in online matrimonial discourse. Both men and women are supposed to offer idealized versions of themselves, yet the former embody empowered subjects, while the latter continue to be intricately constructed objects.

In spite of differences, female matrimonial profiles and male matrimonial profiles tend to have similarities with each other. Both men's and women's matrimonial profiles display a common strong focus on religion and culture as a core aspect of identity and compatibility. In each instance, individuals are characterized as religious by upbringing, frequently mentioning adhering to Sunni Islam, worshipping religion, or hailing from a "religious but moderate" family background. This constant focus implies religious orientation is a prerequisite for conjugal harmony, both as a personal and familial virtue. Another point of similarity between the male and female profiles is that the issue of respectability and origins in family terms is more highlighted. Profiles tend to emphasize the fact that the person is from a noble, educated, or well-off family, with mentioning parents' and siblings' occupations e.g., "father is a government officer" or "from a family of professionals." These emphasize the fact that marriage is not considered to be just a union of two people, but rather a union of two families, with social standing, education, and respectability being a central factor in determining one's fitness. Collaboratively, these websites show that in the realm of matchmaking, men and women both are required to maintain and portray religious faithfulness and family respectability, suggesting mutual social responsibilities for marriage.

5. Conclusion

Concludingly, this study has answered all the research questions by applying Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model to theoretically analyze the manner Pakistani matrimonial profiles on the websites depict and frame cultural and societal norms of marriage. The results of the study reflect that marriage does not appear as an individual choice but a social duty after fulfilling cultural, religious, and familial duties. Online matchmaking websites, although providing generative forms of association, tend to reproduce underlying ideologies and conventional norms. Male profiles on Muzz have highlighted independence, education, professional success, and cosmopolitanism, frequently written in the first person to provide independence, ambition, and self-assurance. In the opposite direction, women's profiles on Shadi.com have predominantly emphasized family history, religion, modesty, and femininity stereotypes, in the third person narrated by relatives, reflecting women's limited agency in the practice.

At the social practice level, such trends have supported general power relations, i.e., patriarchy, class hierarchies, and religious values. Men are frequently stereotyped as providers and decision-makers, and women as family-oriented and custodians of social respectability. Even linguistic choices have revealed gendered conventions: male profiles underlined self-expression and independence, whereas female profiles underscored humility, respectfulness, and compromise. Although varying in platform structure and engagement with audience, Muzz.com is more self-oriented and Shadi.com more family-oriented, albeit both exhibited consistency of social ideologies. Lastly, the study has ensured that Pakistani matrimonial websites are digital domains where time-honored values get reinterpreted in the guise of modern self-expression and indicative of a lingering connection and contradiction between tradition and modernity in shaping marriage and identity.

5.1. Recommendations

Future researches on Pakistani matrimonial discourse can be enriched by generalizing beyond Pakistani online matrimonial websites to other areas such as print media advertisements, matchmaking agencies, or social media personal pages. Inter-regional, ethnic, or religious diversity in Pakistan-based comparative studies can also uncover how society's culture affects expectations differently. Secondly, one can also examine gendered language patterns over time to contrast how modernization, education, or media impact transformed earlier discourse. Alternatively, employing other Critical Discourse Analysis models or intersectional frameworks combined e.g., feminist CDA—might more effectively expose power relations and identity constructions.

5.2. Ethical Considerations

In this research, some ethical issues have been followed by using all the publicly available online marriage profiles for the research without any usage of contact details, individual names, or identification information in order to maintain privacy and anonymity. The data has only been used academically, responsibly, and sensitively towards people and to cultural practices. The aim has been to examine language use, not to judge or censure anybody. All efforts have been put into protecting confidentiality and avoiding causing any damage to participants or represented groups**.**

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