Submission to Human Rights Council the United Nations Universal Periodic Review of

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Submitted by: Faculty of Languages and Communication (FOLAC) at the American University in Madaba (AUM)

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Faculty of Languages and Communication (FOLAC)[2] at the American University of Madaba (AUM) respectfully submits comments concerning Jordan for consideration by the Human Rights Council within its Universal Periodic Review at its 31st session (Oct-Nov 2018).

The Faculty promotes an exceptional learning environment, characterized by dynamism, activism and civility that enable students to become successful, both personally and professionally, and prepare them to become responsible global citizens conscientious about human values of equality and social justices.

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[1] Dr. Wafa Al-Khadra holds a Ph.D. in Contemporary American Literature and is currently the Acting Dean of Faculty of Languages & Communication at the American University of Madaba. Dr. Al-Khadra has many research interests and publications within the realm of literature, cultural studies, and women's studies with a focus on the literature of Arab-American and Arab women writers. Furthermore, as part of her activism in women's issues, Dr. Al-Khadra has contributed to the "academization" of feminist thought, and to the institutionalization of women's studies in Jordan, she succeeded in reaching out to women across Jordan through holding workshops organized by Jordanian Women's Union, she has also coined the term "bare- foot feminism" to appropriate a new paradigm of women's leadership in the Arab world. Her current research and activism interest is focused on examining VAW and rethinking its root causes. In her latest study, she conveys how women and girls are narrated in school textbooks through symbolic annihilation and exclusion that trigger a violent act on the subjectivity, the personhood, self worth and agency of women and girls. Dr. Wafa Al-Khadra has been involved in the process of reform in higher education and was a reviewer and elevator in the National Accreditation Committee and a member in the steering committee of Quality Assurance and Excellence at King Hussein Foundation of Excellence working on building the barometers of active learning, governance, transparency and autonomy.

[2] Faculty of Languages and Communication currently grants a Bachelor of Arts degree in two majors: English Language and Literature, and Translation. Students in the two majors share common core courses, and then they diverge into two different directions: Students of Languages and Literature study specialized courses in linguistics and literature, while translation students study specialized courses in translation theory and practice. Students in both majors receive well-balanced and multifaceted education that combines theory and practice so that our students will satisfy the demand of the competitive workplace locally, regionally and internationally.

1. Scope of International Obligations

1.1 Among the Human Rights conventions Jordan had signed and ratified, are the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

1.2 According to 13 of ICESCR, Jordan is obliged to direct education to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. According to article 10 of CEDAW Jordan is also obliged to take all appropriate measures to eliminate any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods

1.3 According the Ministry of Education mission, vision and core values, human rights and gender equality are not mentioned and totally ignored.

1.4 A large obstacle that Jordan faces with gender and education is gender mainstreaming. Elementary and pre-elementary schools obtain the power to shape and mold the paradigms of their students. Yet most schools in Jordan continue to cast and sustain traditional and outdated roles of a woman in society By doing so, the educational system reinforces the notion of the gender identity of Jordanians from a young age and perpetuates traditional gender status, thereby undermining women's social status, autonomy, educational opportunities, and professional careers. As a result of the lack of gender mainstreaming in the curricula, it is more common for girls to take traditional "female" courses and boys traditional "male" courses on women's employment options and income'.

"The current curriculum imposes specific roles on males in early ages as well, and if he tried to do something different, he will be eliminated. This is discrimination. Role of men and women are integrative and should complete each other".

As a result, women continue to be concentrated in a narrow range of employment. In this context, the elimination of gender stereotypes in educational materials should halt in order to facilitate the diversification of the educational choices of boys and girls. "Women's economic participation will not be improved, unless we work to change the curricula, otherwise, each poor family will become six poor families"

Additionally, "We are all Jordan", an Initiative adopted by His Majesty King Abdullah II in 2006 emphasized the need to abolish all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex in school curriculum, namely the role of women in society. Jordan is also committed, according to Arab and international conventions, to the elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programs. Unfortunately, no efforts have been made to tackle this national priority.

According to prominent experts in the education field, there is essential need to assess the gender roles in school text books in order to give the girls the voice and the respect in order to recognize their role and value to be empowered and independent, in addition the expert stated that this study is important as it contributes to achieve the concepts of citizenship and civil state, as well as the economic welfare and political participation based on equality and equity, which will be achieved only through creating active female citizens who are equally competing and communicating with males citizens. Unfortunately these efforts did not take into consideration gender equality or elimination of stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women.

1.5 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in its concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Jordan raised its concern about the traditional images of women's roles and responsibilities in schoolbooks as they perpetuate the disadvantaged status of girls and women[3]. These concerns were also raised in previous concluding observations, but no serious effort was taken by the concerned authorities[4].

1.6 Furthermore, Jordan accepted several recommendations related to women's rights and some of them relate to intensively pursue current national priorities and strategies, with effective measures focusing on the rights to health, education and gender equality[5] and continue its efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment[6]. Unfortunately elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education has not been raised although highlighted by Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as explained in paragraph 2.5.

2. Human Rights on the Ground: Equality & Non-Discrimination (focus on elimination Gender Stereotypes)

A popular focus of research in gender and education is assessing gender equality in national curricula. To that effect, several studies have been conducted on depictions of men and women in textbooks. These studies generally focus on a key indicative variables, including gross number of female and male characters in textbooks, the order in which men and women are presented, the number of homo and hetero-social interactions, the nature of those interactions, depictions of male and female behavior, the extent to which men and women fulfill stereotypical roles, and the number and diversity of male and female heroes or role models.[7] Based on these variables, researchers then conclude the extent to which the examined curricula can be described as gender inclusive.

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[3] CEDAW/C/JOR/CO/6, 9 March 2017, paragraph 41/d
[4] See for example CEDAW/C/JOR/CO/5, 23 March 2012, paragraphs 35 & 36.
[5] A/HRC/25/9, 6 January 2014, paragraph 118.23
[6] A/HRC/25/9, 6 January 2014, paragraph 118.30
[7] See, for example, Ullah and Skelton 2012, Barton and Sakwa 2012, Yang 2011, Evans and Davis 2000, Lee and Collins 2010, and Salami and Ghajarieh 2015.

A study by Dr. Wafa AlKhadra, Acting Dean of Faculty of Languages & Communication, entitled Gender Role Assessment in Jordanian School Textbooks[8], A Case for Content, Context and Environment Review, reached the following conclusions:

2.1 Language and Grammar

One of the most striking drivers of genderization in these textbooks is the difference in the identification of men and women. Throughout, men are identified by their proper names, by their roles, and by their professions in society. For example, male characters are defined nationalistically, through their relationship to the state: citizens (Muwatenin), sons of Jordan (Abna' Al-Urdun), good citizens (Al-Muwatenin Al-Salehin), the knights of Jordan (Fursan Al-Urdun), etc. They are also described in relation to their military services and guardianship roles in the country and the state. They are colonels, lieutenants, generals, valiants, Mujahidin and martyrs. Moreover, men are depicted through their leadership status and roles. They are: the king, sultan, prince, governor, mayor, caliph, etc. Men are identified as productive and with a profession agency; they are farmers, painters, bakers, physicians, businessmen, writers, translators, engineers, architects, shepherds, etc. They are also associated with judicial roles (judges, heads of the supreme court, chief judges) and have religious authority: Muftis, Imams, Sahabeh (the Prophet's companions). The constant association of males with science and technology is clearly stated in roles and professions like Ulama' (scientists), inventors, entrepreneurs.

Conversely, women are almost exclusively identified in terms of their relationship to men, marital status and familial positions. The woman is, for example, a wife, a sister, a mother, an aunt, a grandmother, etc. Moreover, she is associated with caregiving roles: she is the angel of mercy, the nurse, and the teacher. Women fulfil roles that are typically "female."

When women are placed in relational positions to men, they are obviously given a minor, marginal (most importantly dependent) status. They cannot be independent, and they cannot be themselves. Whereas men are independent and play active roles in society, women are secondary and accessory. Mills and Mulaney reveal how framing and grammar within texts reinforce traditional discourses of patriarchy and femininity. Femininity in those texts correlate to exclusion or marginalization.

This negation of women's individual agency is further reflected in the use of nouns and proper nouns. For every 42 proper nouns referring to men, there is only 1 referring to women, and for the 176 male profession-nouns (such as fireman, lawyer, engineer, scientist, farmer, policeman, judge, carpenter, poet, etc.), there are only 5 female profession-nouns (a teacher, a nurse, a traffic- warden and a doctor). On the other hand, pronouns referring to women, which largely denote anonymity, far outnumber pronouns referring to men. Whereas a woman is "she," a man can be an astronaut, teacher, lawyer, policeman, etc.

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[8] The study covered 4th to 6th grade students' text books grade in the two subjects of Arabic Language and Social and Civic Education

This inequality is further reflected in the types of verbs associated with men and women. While men are associated with action and doing verbs (run, throw, crawl, kneel, organized, won, fight, fly, participated, sped up, remembered, imagined, researched, wrote, commanded, woke up, invented, thought, jumped, etc.), women are associated with largely passive and static verbs:(wondered, retracted, withdrew, leaned on, bored, etc.).

This distinction is also seen in the disproportionately high number of men as grammatical SUBJECTS and the correspondingly high number of women as grammatical OBJECTS. Women are conceptualized as passive objects, capable only of receiving actions rather than initiating or owning them. This passivity, in conjunction with the erasure of unique female identities, runs in stark contrast to the numerous active identities offered to Jordanian boys and men.

The language of Jordanian textbooks glorifies male agency at the expense of the female. It elevates male agency by conveying it in dynamic and active verbs, diversifying it within a holistic trajectory of male roles; while women are limited to caregiving. Women's actions and words are placed either in the passive form or in static-verb constructs. As linguist Jennifer Coates notes, there are different ways by which children are socialized to adhere to gender norms through language. Defining women through their only work of caregiving and excluding all other important roles performed by them would be discriminatory and fragmentary.

Women's contribution to history, state building and present culture is belittled, fragmented and sporadic. At times, it is depicted in derogatory terms. In the Islamic period, for example, there are references to: the first nurses in Islam (Nuseibah Al-Mazeniah and Rufaidah Al-Aslamiah) (Arabic Language Book 4, Part 2), to the wives of the Prophet's companions, and – also – to the story of the "stupid female slave" الجارية الحمقاء (Arabic Language Book 6, Part 2).   Such textual representation, underrepresentation or mis-representation of women in Islamic history is clearly inadequate. The more worrying, however, is women's absence and the vacuum in representation. The same patriarchal textual strategies are manifested in the Arab Revolt narratives as well. Gender is constructed, through the "performance" and "upholding" of gender roles depicted and disseminated, as sociologist Michael A. Messner reveals.

Another disturbing finding in this study is that language is almost totally masculine, and addressing intended masculine audiences and readers. This affects students negatively, perpetuating either bias toward women or negation of their roles. It shapes students' thinking and perception habits in a skewed manner and precludes gender neutrality. Worse, such discourse prolongs stereotyping and gender imbalance and gives a further boost to patriarchy, making forward-looking reform or change plans very difficult to succeed.

In other words, women and girls are either narrated in absence or in silence in language and in history; they are represented in vacuum or in subservience or in the peripheral. This structural normalization of

the marginalization of women and girls and at times the symbolic annihilation of women and girls naturalizes marginalization and absence of women

2.2 Settings, Action and Images

The study also focused on depictions of men and women in their action/activity settings to understand the gendered representations to which students are exposed. As for the settings in which men and women appear, men pervade both history and public space throughout. Their strong, domineering presence is emphasized from throughout Islamic history, in particular, all through the history of the Arab Revolt and contemporary Jordan. The depiction of this strong, domineering presence is both constant and consistent throughout. By contrast, women have fleeting appearances throughout historical narratives and remain largely absent from contemporary public space. Oxymoronically, their presence is largely perceived in terms of absence. A critical analysis of such absence is revealing about the status of women, obviously, but also about the patriarchal exclusive mindset that lies behind such depiction.

The study of images of fragmentation and absence was based on Foucault's body-object articulation, the means whereby a person learns "the relations the body must have with the object that it manipulates." Throughout the texts, men were associated with lofty actions in the highly celebrated domains or in macho settings: war, knowledge, writing, engineering, architecture, law, science, medicine, technology, aviation, history, patriotism, nationhood, public spaces, battlefields, nature, desert, countryside, the city, flags. Conversely, women were associated with the domestic and the mundane: households, utensils, gardens, schools. In the realms of science, technology, and even literature, they are almost entirely absent. Thus, while men construct, invent, experiment, govern, and fight for their country, women are largely restricted to the house. When they enter the public sphere, it is only as an extension of the private caretaking role, either as teachers or nurses.

2.3 Themes and Content

Finally, this study examined the content/subject-matter in these textbooks. In Arabic Language textbooks, all 31 poets studied were men, and within the stories in the "Selection from Our Beautiful Language", all protagonists were men; and female characters are either minor or antagonists. A variety of themes were addressed in the stories, including intelligence, wit, heroism, altruism, martyrdom, leadership, security, heritage, progress, morality, invention, strength, unity, and courage. All of these themes, without variation, are associated with male figures. Whereas men become champions of progress and national values, women lurk in their shadow and in the background, playing only a supporting or minor role.

Furthermore, the problem here does not lie in women not being tied to any one of these values, but in their exclusion from any leading roles. Not only is their poetry absent from that presented as worthy of study, but there is no depiction of women as worthy of admiration for school children in the included stories. Children are taught to expect worthy literature only from men, who are the only protagonists

and role models worthy of attention. This discrepancy in content serves only to solidify the restrictions on female agency developed throughout the texts and "naturalize" symbolic annihilation of women in our literature and literary discourse.

Another alarming pattern of representation of men and women is epitomized in the story of Earle Dickson in the Arabic book (G4 part 2), narrated to show how the injury of his wife in the kitchen was a driving force for him to invent the band aid. The representation of women as patients in hospitals or clinics has been repeated many times in these textbooks. This pattern of binary opposites that posit or position women as patients and weak and men as doctors and healers perpetuate the victimization and vulnerabilities of women, and – naturally – patriarchy and stereotyping.

The aim of themes and content as prevalent in the Social and Civic Education textbooks is to build civic engagement, a value system, and country and state literacy. This task has been executed in a totally exclusive context as far as women are concerned. In other words, state literacy building is a process of marginalization of women and masculinization. For example, the learning about state institutions and organizations, about the state's various sectors and resources, and the state's processes of democratization and modernization has been narrated in a masculine language and within a masculine context, marginalizing women and capitalizing on men's visibility and impact. Issues like citizenship, democracy, civic engagement and social work are almost always associated with men, men being the "protectors" of both the family and the country.

The students learn about the important, noble theme of civic engagement, through reinforcement of social work, voluntary community service, environmental ethics, human rights and civic values. However, this has been conveyed to students on a misogynistic and patriarchal platform. The subjugation of women and the foregrounding of men is an all-pervading theme. Social and state institutions – the family, the school, the neighborhood, the community, the government – are all led, guarded, protected and "owned" by men. The resources, natural and material, are portrayed as possessed by men. As stated earlier, man is the good citizen, the farmer, the carpenter, the shepherd, the pilot, the architect, the engineer, the king, the mayor, the traffic warden, the civil engineer, the soldier, the policeman, etc. He is the owner or provider[9].

3. Recommendations:

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[9] On page 50 of part two of the Grade 4 Social and Civic Education textbook, there is an illustration of a boy holding a cardboard saying "My country is my responsibility." This says it all; girls are never given such illustration and role. Illustrations in Social and Civic Education speak for themselves – even numerically and statistically. In grade 4, part 1, there are 10 pictures for males, and 3 for females. In grade 4, part 2, there are 22 for men and 6 for women and girls. In grade five, part 1, there are 25 male characters to 8 females. In grade 5, part 2, there are 18 males to 3 females. In the 6th Grade book, part 1, there are 20 male to 6 female characters. In part 2, there are 9 males to 2 females. Furthermore, the higher the grade is, the more illustrations of young girls replace illustrations of women. This is also a phenomenon worth studying.

FOLAC appeals to the member states of the Human Rights Council to strongly urge the GoJ to take the following recommendations into consideration as they fall under its obligations under International Human Rights Law

3.1 Review the vision, mission and core values of the Ministry of Education to include gender equality, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

3.2 Intensify GoJ efforts to review curricula and textbooks at all levels of education to eliminate any stereotyped and patriarchal depictions of the roles of women, and enhance training for teachers on gender equality and women's rights with a view to changing existing stereotypical views and attitudes towards the roles of women and men in the family and society

Annex I

Executive Summary

The objective of the study is to look at how gender bias is embedded and normalized in school texts for grades 4,5,6. The study argues that the curriculum discourse-in analysis of language, role modeling and accompanying illustrations - does not contribute to the development of a balanced identity that is also equitable and sound from a gender perspective. The discourse of the curriculum clearly sidelines positive gender role models and largely fails to portray the "feminine" identity and therefore role as diverse, proactive and based in real and equal framework. Examples of roles assigned to men but not women include founders, scientists, reformers, mobilizers, leaders and positive contributors to the nation and state in general.

This reductionist representation of women and girls in school text is not haphazard. The study can show how the exclusion from national historical narrative and archiving and the marginalization - if not outright denial - of women's contribution to any scientific progress, intellectual or technological knowledge creation and advances is almost systematic, intentional and structured. The "masculinization" of the language in school curriculum and limiting women and girls' contributions to closed and marginal spaces naturally contribute to the evolution of a national identity for women that are constrained by the male and masculinity. In total, the narrative and framing of the women in text internalizes a perception and an imagination of the society that is based in either the absence of women or their marginalization and subordination of their role.

Annex II

Methodology

This paper reports the findings of a study that examines gender disparity with reference to sexist language, content, images and illustrations in current Jordanian school textbooks pertaining to the two subjects in contemporary Jordanian textbooks of Arabic Language and Social Studies. The portrayal of girls and women in these textbooks is, to a large degree, similar to those in many countries, both Arab and non-Arab – which makes the findings relevant to a global readership.

This paper specifically sought answers to the following questions:

(1) What is the ratio of female to male characters in the school textbooks?

(2) To what extent are women/men portrayed in social settings and how?

(3) To what extent are men/women depicted in domestic roles and how?

(4) What is the visual representation of men and women?

(5) What linguistic generic constructions are used for both sexes?

Twelve textbooks of Arabic language and social studies for 4-6 grade learners were selected. Each Grade has two books for each subject: one for the first academic semester and another for the second semester. All books were published in Jordan in 2016 and all were in use at the time of the study. Moreover, these books were for native speakers of Arabic language in public schools at the primary level. All chapters from each book were selected for content and linguistic analysis. A systematic analysis was made of the characters and depiction of men, boys, women and girls in written and imaging forms.

First, linguistic analysis focuses on sexism as reflected in language use, in particular with respect to the following:

1- Nouns and proper nouns for both sexes

2- How nouns identify female and male characters.

3- The ratio of subjects and objects for both sexes

Second, the study counted: (1) male and female characters in images and illustrations; (2) male and female depiction and references in sentences, scripts and stories; (3) male and female social roles (e.g. engineer, secretary, coach); (4) male and female domestic roles (e.g. mother, father, brother, sister); (5) sequence of appearance of male and female characters within the body object correlation/articulation. The assignment of a social role to a character did not preclude assignment of a domestic role as well.

Hence an individual who was both a mother and manager was entered in both the 'domestic role' and 'social role' categories. Illustrations, which were designed to enhance students' understanding and learning interests, were also examined in this study. The focus of the picture investigation was on the number and proportion of men and women in the pictures.