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Gendered Voices: Human Rights and Literary Discourse

You don't speak Pukhto [Pashto]; you do Pukhto.—Pashto proverb[1]

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Abstract

This paper analyses whether Pakhtun culture shapes discourse and gender identities or discourse and gender identities shape Pakhtun culture. The paper begins with the definition of culture and discourse that I use in this paper. The respondents' answers are based on literary and human rights discourse, highlighting the cultural impact on literature and subsequently their understanding of human rights. In my findings the linguistic markers present in all respondents' discourse include usage of evaluative clauses, agency, moral geography, linguistic gender markers, "I" →"you"/"we" and "you" →"we" transitions, lamination/voices and code-switching. I analyze these linguistic findings by following theoretical paradigms explicated by Althusser (1971), Pêcheux (1982), and Leap (2003). Thus, concluding that Pakhtun culture primarily shapes discourse and gender roles.

Keywords: Pakhtun culture, discourse, gender roles, human rights, literature

Introduction

The debate whether culture shapes discourse or discourse shapes culture apparently seems rather clichéd now. In the present neoliberal world both cultures and discourse have transcended spatial and temporal spaces by forming meta-cultures and meta-discourses in cyber space. Yet, there still exist cultures and discourses, unquestionably affected by the cyber culture yet to a large extent

remain rooted in their own cultural value system, which are generating the culture-discourse debate even today. The influence of Pakhtun culture on language and discourse in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan invites such interrogation. Culture can have many definitions but in this paper I refer to culture as:

> Symbolic behaviour, patterned organizations of, perceptions of, and beliefs about the world in symbolic terms. According to this definition, the locus of cultural behaviour can be single individual. It is more typically manifested in or shaped by group of individuals (Sherzer, 1987:295).

As such, I also follow Sherzer's (1987:295) definition of discourse:

> Discourse is a level of or component of language use, related to but distinct from grammar. It can be oral or written and can be appropriated in textual or sociocultural and social-interactional terms.

In this paper I am using only a part of the text from six respondents: 3 female and three male writers/poets**.** My analysis is based on the answers to two questions, as evident from the discourse: i) what are human rights? Ii) Do writers (critics and poets) have any rights? What? With answers to these questions I have attempted to assess:

i. Can linguistic markers in a conversation or text suggest gender identities and roles in Pukhtoon culture?
ii. What are those linguistic cues that suggest the role of culture in development of the respective gender identities and how do they "speak out" in male/female discourse?
iii. Therefore, does the Pukhtoon culture shape discourse and gender identity or discourse and gender identity shape the Pukhtoon culture?

I further attempt to analyse the discourse of the various respondents following discourse analysis models suggested by Julia Penelope (1990), Jane Hill (1995, 2005) and Barbara Johnstone (2008). To draw my conclusion, I follow Althusser (1971), Pecheux (1975) and William Leap (2003). The foremost thing that I want to see is if a particular discourse can give clues as to the gender identity of the speaker? What does one say or not say that linguistically helps determining gender role?[2]

Following Penelope (1990), I am looking for presence or absence of *agency*, *deixis*, *false deixis*, and *exhortatory* phrases. Following Hill (1995) I shall be

studying the voice system particularly the *lamination* framework suggesting multiple voices: the neutral respondent, involved respondent or an evaluator and rhetorical strategies especially pertaining to *moral geography* and *temporal sequencing*. I analyse *evaluative clauses/*remarks as suggested by Hill (1995, 2005); and Johnstone (2008). Besides, I also look at the use of pronouns especially the shift from the personal "*I*" to the collective "*we*," and from the generic "*one*" or second person "*you*" to the collective "*we*." In the following responses I also try to evaluate if certain linguistic and cultural discursive markers can inform the reader/audience about the gender of the speaker, particularly at present when gender-neutral language is academically encouraged.

The following conversation took place entirely in Pashto. The linguistic markers that this respondent uses consist of lexical choices suggesting gender identity, evaluative clauses, repetition, no agents (or agency), and reference to moral (cultural) geography.

001. **Anoosh Khan (AK)**: What are human rights?
002. **Respondent #1 (SS)**: Consider everyone equal
003. **SS**: transcending race, ethnicity, colour
004. and
005. to consider everyone just a human.
006. People have difficulties
007. and
008. try to solve their problems
009. irrespective of colour, caste and creed.
010. I don't believe only in gender
011. but
012. in humanity
013. and
014. follow Rahman Baba's [Abdur Rahman] philosophy
015. to do unto others what you want for yourself.
016. What you sow that you reap
017. so
018. work…
019. or the wellbeing of others.
020. **AK**: Have you ever thought of writers/critics having any rights?
021. **AK**: What?
022. **SS:** True writers don't claim rights
023. they consider it their duty

024. to serve humanity
025. in the form of writing and their creative thoughts…
026. usually face problems with such thoughts.
027. …not business minded.

Looking at the above discourse, the only clue by which I attempt to guess the respondent's gender is maybe in L.10, "I don't believe only in gender;" proving her to be a woman because a man would be more careful to say this in order to be politically correct, under the circumstances, when the discourse is about literature and human rights; only a woman, in this particular context, I believe, can take the risk to be so blatant with words.

In the above discourse the speaker's answer from LL. 001-009 has no agency. Penelope (1990:144) states:

We're supposed to omit agency only when it is already explicit in the context and can, therefore, be easily recovered from what has already been said…. We suppress human agency, and, sometimes, try to imply grander forces at work by doing so, appealing to an unspecified, perhaps illusory, universality or evading the issue of who will be responsible for some action.

The speaker SS, apparently believes in human rights but her definition, in response to my question, does not really clarify "who" 'should consider everyone equal…transcend race, ethnicity, colour, solve [people's] problems.' Whereas, a more affirmative and forthright agency surfaces in L. 010, "I don't believe only in gender;" although the meaning of gender is not very clear here, however L.012 suggests that the speaker means the basic male/female dichotomy by using the word gender because in L.12 the speaker uses "humanity" instead. Notice how in LL. 015-016 there is a shift from the personal pronoun "I" to the second person pronoun "you," when compared to L. 010. On the one hand SS is simply using a Biblical saying (paraphrasing it rather) but on the other, linguistically, using "you" at this point suggests as if throwing away one's responsibility onto others; a detachment of sorts, thus once again pointing to the hesitation of accepting responsibility and a reason for uttering sentences without agency earlier on as well. In fact, this entire discourse seems to be full of evaluative clauses (Hill 2005, Johnstone 2008), especially L.010 and LL. 022-027 where SS herself doesn't really say what she as a writer/poet/critic should be doing but talks about "writers" in a way as if she herself is not really a part of them: "they," the writers, are "out there" or perhaps unconsciously she believes

she already has those rights and does not belong to the terrain of "those" writers who are suffering or lacking something; SS throughout acts as an evaluator rather than a neutral or involved respondent.

Besides, SS in this short discourse has the tendency to repeat herself as is evident in L.003 "transcending race, ethnicity, colour" which is repeated in L.009, "irrespective of caste, colour and creed;" then in L.005 "human" is repeated in L.012 as "humanity;" here the words used maybe different but the idea is the same. This repeated pattern, in few lines, shows some kind of an initial hesitancy, lack of knowledge about the subject or not finding appropriate words. Johnston (2007:211) explains, "Repetitions within utterances is also more common in relatively unplanned discourse than in relatively planned discourse. Often this has to do with…way of repairing potential or actual misunderstandings or incomplete understanding."

As such, SS doesn't only use sayings (as in LL.015-016) to support her claim(s) but in L. 014 also mentions Rahman Baba, a *Sufi* (mystic) Pashto poet of the 18th century. SS claims that for her the definition of human rights exists in the poetry of Rahman Baba. Alluding to the philosophy of a Pashto poet is very plausible and natural for someone who is a Pashto poet herself. However, linguistically, I believe here SS is constructing what Hill (1995:112) would refer to as *moral geography*. Thus, SS is also creating a framework of *lamination* (Hill, 1995:111) giving herself another voice, that is, of Rahman Baba: the poet and the man to assert her claim about what are human rights. SS creates this moral geography by the theme of conversation and reference to the Pashto poet, indicating the ideology of the Pukhtoon culture of which she is a product and which in turn she is reproducing as well. Hence, being a product and a manufacturer of a cultural identity. Or in other words, perhaps SS is doing something that Johnstone (2008:165) may describes as, "metadiscursive strategies—the ways of making discourse be about discourse—speakers can situate themselves outside their words, pointing to the words' origins in others' talk or writing." In SS's case she is referring to the philosophy of the Pashto poet as a basis for her definition of human rights instead of defining it in her own words or with a personal perspective. Perhaps, the reason that she lacks a personal perspective is that Rahman Baba is a male poet-philosopher with an "acclaimed voice." As such, this shows that unconsciously SS has been socialized to rely on and/or accept male (poetic) voice(s) which according to the Pakhtun

cultural ideology, is usually "heard" and "followed" more seriously than a female writer or a poet's voice.

The next discourse that I use as an example for analysis comprises of two respondents: respondent #2, AHU and respondent #3, SFK. I interviewed both these respondents simultaneously and their responses were entirely in Pashto. These respondents tend to make use of no agency, switch from "I" to "you" and "we;" they mostly act as evaluators but sometimes become involved respondents as well. These respondents also sketch a moral geography with the hope of getting their social and cultural bearing correct.

028. **Anoosh Khan**: What are human rights?
029. **AHU**: Any day that people give you basic rights
030. are human rights.
031. [give] respect to people:
032. women, servants, husband, children.
033. **SFK**: I believe Pukhtoon women don't have much of human rights
034. like *swara*… (a tribal custom where young girls are married off in order to settle family disputes).
035. [are] dependant on husbands and male members.
036. **AK**: Have you ever thought of writers/critics having any rights?
037. **AK**: What?
038. **SFK**: YES! We should get sometimes.
039. We don't even get money.
040. We sometimes get invitation cards
041. from Karachi.
042. No other benefits.
043. Writers' forum… we spend from our pockets.
044. We have no place to hold our meetings.
045. Men writers have the press club
046. because they are men.
047. **AHU**: We write under very difficult situation.
048. Government should encourage us.
049. They can at least publish one free book.
050. Circulate our books.
051. …Women writers from provinces
052. we got encouraged from Khana-e-Farhang (the Iranian cultural center at Peshawar)
053. not our own provincial government.

The first thing to notice about these two respondents is that SFK begins her answer using "Pukhtoon women…" (L.033), followed by responses in LL. 044-046, "We have no place to hold our meetings. Men writers have the press club because they are men," thereby indicating their own gender. Whereas, interestingly AHU, who answers first, in L. 032 uses "women" (not wives) and "husbands" (not just men) to say she thinks should be respected etc. This particular lexical choice hints that AHU perhaps has a 'husband' but she herself is not amongst the mistreated women or wives and therefore she uses the collective 'women' and does not include wives to counterbalance 'husbands.'

My question was directed both to AHU and SFK together and AHU decided to respond first. However, her immediate response is ambiguous, not really defining human rights, in L. 029, she says, "any day that people give you basic rights" suggests that the day is yet to come for some people. But "people" here is not very clear; it almost sounds agent-less (without agency) because we cannot really understand who these people are or are going to be: does she mean ordinary people? Or higher government authorities? Besides the usage of "you" in the same line (L. 029) is equally vague; who is the "you": herself, me or does she mean everyone generally? And if she just meant everyone generally she could have used the generic "one," "us," "everybody," or "all" etc., instead of "you." Whereas, SFK's response is not really an answer to my question either but she takes the role of an evaluator in L. 033-035, claiming that Pukhtoon women don't have much of human rights. It is not clear if this collective "Pukhtoon women" include her as well. This suggestion of Pukhtoon women being deprived of human rights and thus not being very independent is apparent in the responses of both AHU and SFK because of their later switching to the usage of the collective "we" and "our" in LL.038-058 in order to complement and support each other. In this usage of "we" and "us" (I have underlined the 'we's and 'our's for clarity) I can hear lamination of three voices: first, on the one hand, "we" situates both the respondents in the temporal present as two individuals answering together. Linde (1993:13) believes that "temporal ordering is a fundamental device for making a text coherent;" similarly I believe, that consciousness about temporal togetherness or unity, particularly in conservative cultures, like the Pukhtoon culture to which AHU and SFK belong, leads these respondents towards a more coherent belief about the issues of women in Pukhtoon society. Therefore, on the other hand, "we" is also the shared voice for all Pukhtoon women in general. Finally, the "we" can also mean a collective reference to the female poets and writers.

SFK refers to the Pukhtoon custom of *swara*[3] in LL.034-035 and AHU, in L. 052 refers to Khana-e-Farhang (the Iranian Cultural Centre at Peshawar) for supporting them. Like respondent #1, SS, SFK's referring to a custom that victimizes women and AHU's allusion to a foreign agency for support seems as if these two are sketching a moral geography of sorts. Both of them talk about the female societal victimization and according to them this victimization is caused by men and therefore can be resolved by the male family members, the provincial government or Khana-e-Farhang—all institutions placed above AHU and SFK in the social and cultural hierarchy—thus making these two women dependent on the culturally believed 'higher' authorities.

Like respondent #1, SS, both AHU and SFK are writers but they do not turn to their own respective works to define what they think are human rights. In fact, all three of them, SS, AHU and SFK, at least linguistically, resort to cultural forces: the poet Rahman Baba, male members of the society, Khana-e-Farhang, and the provincial government, for help. However, unlike SS, both AHU and SFK acted as involved respondents as in LL 033-034 and 043-047 as well as evaluators in LL.028; 033; 039-046; and 048-053, by referring to their own role and evaluating the role of others.

The following responses (LL. 054-158) are primarily transcribed to see, if any, contrast arises due different genders of the respondents. In this analysis, therefore, I continue to observe if discourse analysis reflects the gender of the respondent without a direct mention of being a male or female. What are the linguistic indicators of social and cultural gender roles?

The conversation with the next person, respondent # 4, AY, began in English but after sometime oscillated between English and Pashto. The cultural and linguistic markers that are apparent in this discourse consist of evaluative clauses, false deixis, exhortatory passives, code-switching, and lexical choices indicating gender identity.

054. **Anoosh Khan**: What are human rights?
055. **Respondent #4 (AY)**: Those people who claim
056. to be advocates of human rights
057. have given rights to animals
058. but
059. not humans!
060. I have grown up in *Jirgas* (tribal council of village elders)

061. where human rights are utterly respected.
062. *Pukhtano kay chay sumra human rights dee* (the number of human rights present among Pukhtoons can't be found anywhere)
063. there aren't anywhere.
064. Human rights:
065. do unto others
066. what you want them to do unto you.
067. *Khudai da zargay me dumra laway shaway*
068. *Chay da hur insaan da dard na rachapair shaway.*
(God! May my heart become so spacious
That it may enclose the pains of entire humanity.)
069. AND
070. *Pa yawand kay da agay wakhat kaar shee saray*
071. *Da boon-aa- dumo chay pakaar shee saray.*
(Man becomes worth the while only
When he is of service to humanity).
072. **AK**: Have you ever thought of writers/critics having any rights?
073. **AK**: What?
074. **AY**: Writers should have separate hostels
075. for meeting.
076. Should have a good professional relationship.
077. Keep in touch
078. So the hostel should be free of cost.
079. Writers shouldn't have any economic, personal responsibility.

It is interesting to note that respondent # 4, AY, also does not really respond to my question immediately but rather replies with an agency-less evaluative statement (LL. 055-059). AY begins by stating, "Those people who claim to be advocates of human rights…" but who are "those people?" I believe this, following Penelope (1990:133-137), is a case of *false deixis*; in this example "those" does not have a previous referent or an antecedent. Penelope (1990: 134-137) states:

False deixis forces readers/listeners to make contextual guesses to make "sense" of what they hear and read….A speaker's use of false deixis does not mean that the utterance is uninterpretable or impossible to understand.

Now by "those" people AY can mean anybody but the Pukhtoons because in LL. 060-063 AY makes it very clear that human rights are "utterly respected" among the Pukhtoons. Why the speaker employs this strategy of using "those" is

worth looking into. I think AY does this thinking both of us share common background knowledge of human rights and the current global political situation. It is perhaps a way of non-commitment; belonging to N-W.F.P., sharing a political border, language and culture with the American occupied Afghanistan, AY thinks I can "make sense" (Penelope 1990:134) of his allusion to "those." It is in L. 060 that the gender of the respondent also emerges from his linguistic choices, that is, by claiming to have grown up in *Jirgas*.[4] According to the cultural mores it definitely means he has to be a man to be a part of the *Jirga*. As per tribal traditions women are not part of the *Jirgas* even now. Bringing forth the idea of AY's personal presence in the *Jirgas* also suggests his moral geography because being part of the *Jirga*, in the tribal and rural areas of N-W.F.P. is suggestive of one's own morality, integrity and character. So, unlike the previous respondents AY does not attune his moral geography by alluding to historical poets/figures or civil authorities but rather refers to personal experiences. This is further proved when AY elaborates the definition of human rights for me by reciting lines from his own poems in LL.067-071. Once again, unlike previous female respondents, he recites his own poetry and not someone else's to clarify his personal ideas. However, in reply to my second question AY's response, in LL. 074-079, were what Penelope (1990:157) refers to as *exhortatory passives*. Penelope (1990:157-158) elucidates:

Exhortatory passives describe an action that the speaker may have no intention of carrying out, and they are often preceded by a modal that posits future obligation, such as should, ought to be, or must…[by] placing the responsibility on someone who "should" do it. Too often, we find it convenient to pass on responsibility and power that we should take for our own.

This is exactly what AY's response in LL.074-079 shows: there are many "shoulds" directed towards others but what he "should" do on a personal level to practice or inculcate the awareness of human rights does not come out in his discourse. Therefore, in other words, these responses are exhortatory passives but also evaluations as well, where AY does not act like an involved respondent but only an evaluator.

It is also worth noting that the previous interviews, with respondents #1, #2, and #3 were conducted in Pashto only. But this interview with respondent #4, AY, began off in English and in the middle he switches to Pashto, especially when talking about *Jirgas* and human rights. It is vital to notice that when I ask him

what the meaning of human rights is for him, he answers back in Pashto as in L. 062 and then in LL. 067-071 with lines from his own poems in Pashto and it is from here onwards that the oscillation between Pashto and English begins. Does this linguistic oscillation support the idea that if a speaker is fluent in both languages and if he or she shares a linguistic background with the listener then he or she will talk in the native language to reinforce his or her ideas? Johnstone (2008:167) also explains this code-switching by claiming, "code-switching (alternation between languages or varieties) can function as a way of negotiating community membership and ethnic identity…"

As a contrast to the previous discourse the following conversation with respondent # 5, MS, was carried out primarily in Urdu[5] except where the legal jargon is used. This time I have asked for a meaning of human rights and gender studies as well. However, the main linguistic markers present in the discourse of MS are deixis, chalking of moral geography, and use of a particular jargon/register. However, MS was the only respondent from whose responses it was difficult to evaluate his gender identity.

080. **Anoosh Khan**: What are human rights and Gender studies?
081. **Respondent #5 (MS)**: Human Rights…
082. the basic meaning of both is the same,
083. maybe…
084. with some differences.
085. *Ya to dookh sookh mil kar bantoo*
086. *Warna chamman kaa naam naa lo*
087. *Yeh kaisa insaaf hai*
088. *Jis mein sarray phool tumaharay hai*
(Either share grieves and joys
Else don't talk of the garden
What kind of justice is this
Where only you get the blossoms).
089. **AK**: Have you ever thought of writers/critics having any rights?
090. **AK**: What?
091. **MS**: Yes, writers are also human beings.
092. Especially those living in Pakistan had very bad economic conditions.
093. nowadays…
094. writers are professionally better,
095. they have education.
096. Writers' colonies, houses,

097. and copyrights.
098. Nowadays
099. those who get some prominence
100 are financially better.
101. These people should have more rights
102. because they are giving the public opinion
103. and
104. are delivering.
105. Writers…
106. very few know about intellectual property rights.
107. We talked with Justice Javed Iqbal in 1987 at Academy of Letters in Islamabad.
108. As our litigation process is very difficult
109. and lengthy
110. and expensive.

Respondent #5, MS's response to my first question about the definition of human rights and gender studies is quick and short. But even this respondent is quick to answer my question by reciting lines from his own poem (LL.085-088). Since he is basically an Urdu speaking person he just talks and recites in Urdu only. In this example we can see instances of *deixis* (Penelope 1990:129), with agency, as in LL.092, 099, 101 and 105-106. In these lines we have "those" and "these" and Penelope (1990:130) is of the opinion that, "they [deictical plurals] indicate how close or distant a specific thing is from the speaker's location." It is worth noting that in pointing to writers the speaker in LL.092 and 099 uses "those" and in L. 101 the speaker uses "these" for the same writers. As a linguistic marker "those" is suggestive of something at a relative distance from the speaker and "these" allude nearness. As such it appears that when, MS, the speaker, is talking about writers who had bad economic conditions he places them away from himself and uses "those" for them (L.092) and when he talks about prominent writers he uses "those" (L.099) again. But in L. 101, the "those" of LL.092 and 099 become "these." This shift can be suggestive of two things: first the speaker considers himself closer in status to the prominent writers (as opposed to 'some' prominence) or secondly, the speaker considers himself prominent for some reason but perhaps not as a writer only and on an unconscious level stays at a distance. In L.101 he uses "these people" saying that they qualify for more rights because they are "giving the public [some sort of] opinion and delivering" (LL.101-103). Does this mean the writers/poets are the only ones giving public opinion or are there other groups of people who are

involved in giving public opinion as well? Lawyers and legal experts? I think we get the answer in the responses that follow in LL. 105-110. In L. 106 the speaker mentions "intellectual property rights;" in L. 107 he continues by mentioning "we" meeting "Justice" Javed Iqbal in "1987"[6] at the "Academy of Letters," and then in L.108-110 MS mentions the nuances of the local litigation process. Paying attention to the choice of words used here it would not be incorrect to conjure that the speaker has good knowledge of the legal jargon, apart from proving himself a poet as well by referring to the Academy of Letters. Therefore, if not in human rights, it appears that speaker, MS, sees himself as a poet and a legal expert. As such writers can be "those" for him on an unconscious level but when he met Justice Javed Iqbal[7] at the Academy of Letters he speaks of it as a collective experience by using "we", that is, both as a poet and a legal expert, although it was a meeting that took place 20 years ago but he does not refer to it in terms of temporal, spatial or literal distance. And he talks about "our" litigation process in L.108, again suggesting that he has knowledge of the litigation process either as a legal expert or else as a criminal. However, his confident meeting with a retired justice to resolve literary issues and his usage of the legal jargon proves he is a legal expert and not really a criminal. Therefore, at times the poets/writers can be "those" for him and at other times they can be "these," depending on the speaker's spatial and temporal present which makes him identify either with writers and/or legal experts according to his context, thus accounting for his switching between "these" and "those."

However, one thing that is common in this response, as in most others, is MS's reference to a public or cultural figure. In L.107 this speaker (like respondents # 1, 2, 3 but unlike respondent # 4) also refers to Justice Javed Iqbal. This in turn, like other earlier respondents, also shows the sketching of a moral geography on part of the speaker. By referring to a man, Justice Javed Iqbal, with multiple important identities: authoritative figure of past as the Chief Justice and at that time heading the Academy of Letters and then having a national prestige as the son of a national hero point to the fact that the speaker wants to assert not only his contact with such a figure but also his own position in the microcosm of writers, poets and lawyers/legal experts and the macrocosm of a national identity which, in his case, is in turn shaped by the national culture[8] as he is not a Pukhtoon. This domination of the national cultural ideology explains why he speaks Urdu in spite of living in the Pukhtoon culture.

In the next example there is a very interesting interplay of evaluative clauses; alternate usage of gender pronouns he/she; exhortatory clauses; and finally the elusive usage of the collective "we." The following conversation was carried out primarily in Pashto, except where human rights jargon is used.

111. **Anoosh Khan**: What are human rights?
112. **Respondent #6 (RWK):** Rights that a human gives to **himself or herself.**
113. That is…
114. every individual is different from one another other.
115. Give person enough space
116. that **he** doesn't violate others' space.
117. Societal basic rights,
118. Government rights,
119. state laws that government violates should be given.
120. We should be conscious of our rights.
121. Own likes and dislikes.
122. But can't practice
123. because of others.
124. Society
125. or government should give cultural
126. and educational facilities,
127. with no gender discriminations.
128. If tax payers pay
129. government should fulfil basic needs.
130. Socio-economic and Cultural rights.
131. Political rights are more important.
132. Human rights should help collectively and individually
133. from exploitation: global, national, individual to individual.
134. Job opportunities.
135. **AK**: Have you ever thought of writers/critics having any rights?
136. **AK**: What?
137. **RWK**: YES!
138. Particularly with reference to Pashto.
139. Writer…
140. whatever **he** wants to say
141. should have freedom of expression.
142. Can be symbolic
143. but should be free enough
144. to express openly
145. and

146. not symbolically.
147. Critic…
148. [should have] freedom of expression.
149. **his** point of view should be given platforms.
150. Publishing facilities…
151. so that **he or she** can give point of view
152. to reach the goal
153. **he** wants them to reach.
154. that is…
155. the people
156. media/newspapers are politically prejudiced.
157. take views from some and not from others
158. if we are against their policies [they don't broadcast/publish our views].

Surprisingly, RWK was the only respondent who gave me a straight answer to my question what are human rights, which obviously marks RWK an informed speaker. In fact, the speaker initially took care to speak for both the genders, L.112. However, later on there is a constant inconsistency in RWK's usage of neutral or respective binary gendered pronouns (I have marked those pronouns in bold). The speaker twice uses the politically correct binaries of all-inclusiveness "himself or herself" (L.112); and then "he or she" (L.151), once the neutral "person" (L.115), whereas RWK uses "he" thrice (LL. 116, 140 & 153) and "his" once (L.149); thus, showing his inconsistency in using gender-suggestive pronouns. Since the speaker uses "he" or male pronouns more often it would not be incorrect to assume that the speaker is a male as well.

Although RWK also uses many evaluative exhortatory passives as in LL. 125; 129; 132; 141; 143; 148; and 151. However, in L. 120 RWK, at the beginning, apparently states his responsibility but by using the collective "we" which according to Penelope (1990) points to a missing agent because here it is one individual who is talking and he is talking for himself and yet he does not commit by using the explicit first person pronoun "I," thus, "evading the issue of who will be or is responsible for some action" (1990:144). Similarly, at the end the "we" in L.158 can be read as "if *I am* against their policies…" but even here the speaker uses the collective "we" to simulate the commitment or responsibility or else to show unity with other writers and critics who are critical of the media. Whereas, when it comes to evaluating the role of the government or media—the

"Other" in this case, the agency in his discourse becomes very clear as in LL. 119; 125-126; 128-129; 132-134; and 156-158.

Like earlier speakers, RWK also plays the role of an evaluator rather than an involved respondent. But he does not draw on indirect references or personal references to shape up his moral geography; he rather explicitly mentions, "Particularly with reference to Pashto" (L.138), not only alluding to his moral geography but emphatically accepting it. Thus, showing his concern for the uplift of Pashto as a literary medium and the next few lines (LL. 139-158) suggest that due to some reason perhaps Pashto literature, writer, poets and critics are not really being noticed and as such require more rights than other literary media and persons. The emphatic, "Yes!" (L.138), also reinforces this idea of how rights should be given to writers and poets and particularly Pashto writers and poets deserve more attention and rights than anybody else.

However, in comparison to other respondents, RWK's choice of words and theme of conversation suggests that he is better informed about the human rights' register and discourse, for example, LL. 112-138 and therefore he speaks with more authority and confidence about the subject as compared to others.

Conclusion

The current discourse examples were a part of another research project with a very different purpose (see Appendix 1: i-ii). As such, I chose the two questions: what are human rights? And do writers, critics and poets have any rights? Since answers to both these questions were short, they were suitable for the scope of this paper. Besides, in this study I wanted to analyse the answers only by looking at how linguistic markers further correspond or contradict what the respondents were actually saying.

In this discourse analysis, I discovered that apart from some individual linguistic markers (for comparison see Appendix 3: iv-vi, tables 1-3) many common linguistic practices emerged as the analyses unfolded. At this point, I will not go into the reasons for individual differences only, but will also go into the details of shared linguistic similarities and differences that emerge between male and female respondents (Appendix 3: vi, table 3). By examining similar linguistic markers, I attempt to answer that culture primarily shapes discourse and gender identities and not vice-versa. In this analysis, it gradually became apparent that all the respondents used linguistic markers that drew on moral or cultural

geography; most used 'exhortatory phases;' all were primarily evaluators rather than neutral or involved the respondents; and all except one, used linguistic markers indicating their gender identity. However, in contrast i) the female respondents, unlike the male, did not quote from their works at all; ii) the male respondents tended to use stronger and culture-specific linguistic markers thus, linguistically exposing their gender identity e.g. *Jirga* and shifted between respective gendered pronouns as compared to women who used neutral, weaker or collective linguistic markers of "gender," such as, "Pukhtoon women," "wives," etc., iii) MS tended to use deixis whereas AY used false deixis. It is worth noticing that collectively similarities more than differences among the two genders emerged. At this point, I will discuss the ideological framework behind culture and discourse and observe whether one affects and shapes the other or vice-versa. Culture, I believe, is produced, shaped and re-shaped by what Althusser (1970:143) terms *Ideological State Apparatuses* (ISAs). Althusser (1970:145) states:

> Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by ideology, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic.

Culture in any society and in this case in the Pukhtoon society is continuously re-shaped by institutions or ISAs like religion, family, education, and media respectively. As a result of institutional ideologies, people come to accept change(s) naturally, developing a false consciousness:

> It is not their real conditions of existence, their real worlds, that [people] represent to themselves in ideology, but in their relation to those conditions of existence which is represented to them there. It is this relation which is the centre of every ideological, i.e. imaginary representation of the real world. (1970:164)

Therefore, it is the institutions or ISAs, as Althusser calls them, that start shaping ideologies (or false consciousness), both personal and collective ideologies. It is the shaping of collective ideologies, which I believe, is commonly termed culture. Ideology interpellates or 'hails' individuals (Althusser 1970:173). In other words, following any ideology makes an individual accept a certain subject position; it makes an individual 'recognize' himself or herself in a particular way. The reason

being, "…a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes an obviousness which we cannot fail to recognize and before which we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying… 'that's obvious,' that's right,' that's true (Althusser, 1970:172)."

As a result of interpellation, the process of recognition begins, and as recognition is somewhat complete[9] an individual can either accept or reject a subject position or else he or she can agree to dis-identification, that is, "working the subject form, by its overthrow, its rearrangement, rather than a categorical endorsement of its details or its categorical abolition" (Pecheux, 1975:156-159). In other words the individual finds a middle path and refuses to be in the passive subject position.

However, the problem with my respondents is that that they have accepted their interpellated subject positions. According to Pecheux (1975:157-159), the individual who responds to and accepts the 'hailed' position is called a "universal subject" and the one who refuses to comply is the "subject of enunciation." The "universal subject" or the "good citizen" is the one who abides by the expected social and cultural norms, whereas the "subject of enunciation" or the "bad citizen" is the one who does not conform to the expected societal norms.

That is why, in order to be the "good citizens," most of my respondents try to situate themselves according to cultural or moral geographies; they are extremely evaluative as they believe it is the duty of the government or some significant 'other' to help them with their respective problems because self-reliance can sometimes be culturally interpreted as independence and thus "rejection" of higher authorities and cultural practices, especially in the case of women. Perhaps that is also the reason for respondent AY's code-switching: speaking English is symbolic of a higher status all over Pakistan but within N-W.F.P., Pashto is symbolic of authenticity and masculinity and the mention of participation in *Jirgas* all the more validates both these positions. In fact, this is also the reason why male respondents quote their own lines or use a more specific register for law and human rights—it shows academic and subsequently male superiority infused by culture (or ISAs) as a sign of good and authentic citizen. The males are more evaluative because being men, in the Pukhtoon culture, they can challenge higher authorities but at the same time aspiring to be good citizens sometimes respond covertly in their discourse. The male respondents, except one, used linguistic gender markers strongly as compared to the female respondents because culture has socialized them to be dominating and

stronger than women, thus language serves as tool for communicating this macho-Pukhtoon cultural ideology. The process of interpellation explains why the female respondents tend to be more dependent on outside resources; they do not refer to their own works, use weaker gender linguistic markers, are rather sympathetic evaluators and use the pronoun "we" showing their interdependent subject position hailed by culture. These female respondents do not come out as independent, confident and well informed as the male respondents because that is what the Pukhtoon culture has taught them to be even if they are professionals or academics now. But to be a good female citizen it is expected in the Pukhtoon society to remain relatively passive in one's respective professional, social and private circles. In order to propagate and display this 'good-citizen' persona women in Pukhtoon culture usually practice, "The dynamic of dissemblance involved creating the appearance of disclosure or openness about themselves and their feelings, while actually remaining an enigma" (Hine, 1997:436).

MS was the only respondent whose gender identity was not visible through discourse per se. The reason, I strongly believe is because he may live in a Pukhtoon culture but he is not a Pukhtoon, meaning it is not really expected of him to strictly abide by the Pukhtoon cultural ethics. In fact, that is why he was the only respondent who spoke Urdu. Besides, it's the macro-national cultural identity rather than the micro-Pukhtoon cultural identity that hails MS and leaves him in a subject position where he can manage to live in the Pukhtoon culture because the Pukhtoon ideology does not interpellate him therefore he speaks only in Urdu. As such, it was also difficult to find out the gender of MS from his discourse because the national cultural ideology does not make as specific distinctions between men and women as the Pukhtoon culture does; the Pukhtoon culture orients men and women very differently. Leap (2003:402-404) also suggests:

> Genders are cultural constructions, and not determined entirely or primarily by bodily form or biological function….linguistic practices, and the messages about gender expressed through them, take place within specific economic contexts and social and historic "moments." And because text is situated language use, text always contain formal marking which identifies their location within the larger setting and their connections to other textual materials within the same economic, social and historical setting.

Johnstone (2008: 230) reiterates the same idea by stating, "Culture-specific language ideology may make purpose more or less relevant to how people produce and interpret discourse in particular situations and settings." The above discussion shows that discourse, gender identities and roles in the Pukhtoon society are first and foremost shaped by culture which in turn is defined, shaped and re-shaped by institutions or Ideological State Apparatuses. In the case of Pukhtoons, the ISA primarily consist of religion and family which shape discourse as Bakhtin (1981:293) states, "Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life…" However, although certain cultural practices like formation of *Jirgas* and practices like *Swara* become a part of discourse and are used as lexical items but the Pukhtoon culture or the Pashto language does not go the extend of cultural *erasur*e (Gal and Irvin, 1995:975) of women as examined by Echeverria (2002:23-44) while discussing Basque showing how men compared to women are culturally endorsed to be authentic Basque.

In the Pukhtoon culture, "gender may generate its own set of voices" (Ochs, 1992: 338) but discourse, language and gender roles in this culture are shaped by cultural ISAs, like religious practices and family traditions. Consequently, discourse or language is merely used as agency to mediate and promote culture and culture-defined practices including gender roles; thus, proving that the Pukhtoon culture primarily shapes discourse and gender identities and not vice-versa.

Notes

[1] Pashto is the mother tongue of Pukhtoons; spoken largely in N-W.F.P. and parts of Balochistan in Pakistan and parts of Afghanistan. Pashto, the language is pronounced "Pukhto" in Pashto. I'm using this proverb in the sense that is discussed in detail by Benedicte Grima (1992) in The Performance of Emotion Among Paxtun Women. pp. 4-10. Austin: University of Texas Press. I have introduced the paper with this proverb in order to show how the Pukhtoon culture is performed through Pashto language.

[2] Here by gender roles, I only mean the broader male/female division and not the multiple gender identities that are ascribed to and performed in a particular sense.

[3] *Swara* is a tribal custom where young girls are married off as peace-price to a man in the enemy's family in order to settle family disputes.

[4] The *Jirga* (or the jury) primarily consists of the village local elders or people of influence (money, education etc. i.e. local landlords). The jirga system, I believe, pre-dates the colonial rule. The reason that the *Jirga* system still exists is because it is much more accessible and affordable, in terms of time, distance and finances, compared to the formal law courts. *Jirga* decisions are binding. The *Jirga* decisions, most of the times, I presume have a human rights perspective but can't say that they have a gender perspective. No women are a part of the *Jirga*.

[5] Urdu is the national language of Pakistan. Though English is the official language of Pakistan, Urdu officially is the common medium of verbal communication. Both Urdu and English are taught as compulsory subjects in schools up to the first two years of college. English is taught as a compulsory subject up to B.A.

[6] This interview was conducted in June/July 2007.

[7] Justice Javed Iqbal (L.107) who was a former Chief Justice of Lahore High Court and a retired Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and was also at an authoritative position at the Academy of Letters, Islamabad which is an autonomous organization functioning under the Federal Education Ministry for the promotion of scholars and research. Apart from his personal achievements Justice Javed Iqbal is the son of Sir Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, the national poet-philosopher of Pakistan and a one of the Independence leaders of Muslims against the British Raj in the sub-continent until the independence of Pakistan in 1947.

[8] Tracing the history of Pakistan shows that most of the freedom fighters for an Independent Pakistan from the Hindus and British were Urdu speaking, thus making Urdu the national language of Pakistan.

[9] I call it 'somewhat' complete because I believe different ideologies hail people at different times and the process of recognition or a subject position can change accordingly as well.

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