

## Gendered Narratives and Linguistic Force Dynamics: Influencing Career Paths of Women

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper examines the career choice narratives and their possible impact on female adolescents' career constructs and academic aspirations in the Kasur district. The study presumes that narratives, integrated with socio-economic factors have the potential to influence career trajectories of female youth. Considering language structure as central to the system of interaction (Giddens, 1986), it takes Cognitive linguistic approach to CDA (Hart, 2014) and analyses how linguistic force-interactive patterns can influence female students' career self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations and goals. The results reveal that social actors, with their linguistic choices, become a source of enablement or dissuasion for females' career path. The research allowed young women to voice their feelings and remove barriers to better understanding their academic/professional competence; the findings are helpful to contextualize career guiding discourse.*

**JEL Classification:** Z0, Z13, Z19

**Keywords:** Narratives, Cognitive linguistic approach to CDA, linguistic force-dynamics, perception, female career choices

### INTRODUCTION

A recently aired, unacceptably prejudiced media narrative 'Kambakhto! ye jo tum ne career apney upper swar kr rakhey hen na ....' [You unfortunate women and your obsession with your careers] (Iqbal, 2019) and the numerous responses displaying multiple narratives concerning female academic aspirations and career trajectories, compelled the need to explore how different discursive strategies are realized through linguistic force-dynamics can affect women's career prospects in Pakistan. Career is a word that is mostly confined to a man's world in countries like Pakistan and has never been easy for women in a patriarchal culture. Fazal, Naz, Khan, and Pedder (2019) pointed out that 'gendered attitudes' have a critical role in the Pakistani social context. Although females may join any career path, their journey is not as easy as men's. Despite changes in socioeconomic attitudes in Pakistan, the theoretical assumptions regarding women's empowerment remain just that, challenged by the beliefs, values and practices predominant in reality (Sarwat, 2014) and gendered empowerment creates problems for women's education. Only 25 percent of working-age women in Pakistan participate in the labor force owing to the adhesive social norms with their inflexible gendered role responsibilities and absence of family support etc. The religious and cultural beliefs and values pervading Pakistani society are highly patriarchal (Javed, Syed & Turner, 2018) and much less attention is given to girls' education and careers (Habibullah & Ashraf, 2013). A common narrative that women are exposed to is that they cannot "have it all" relating to enjoying a family as well as a career (Caprino, 2014). Moreover, a plethora of slogans prevail representing different professions such as "mathematics is tough" to the positive propositions

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that “mathematics is cool for females” etc. (Museum of Science 2007). Women also encounter a variety of opinions about their potential to perform, some positive and others negative; for instance, comments like ‘tum ye nahe kar sakte’ (you cannot do this.), ‘larkion ke parhai ka koe fida nahe’ (girls’ education is useless.) can be overheard in Pakistani context. One recent example is the supportive comments made by a mother in a short documentary produced by the Lifebuoy campaign to promote girls’ education in Pakistan.

Me ne hamesha auron ke suni  
(I always listened to others)  
Ye apney fesley khud krey ge, mazboot baney ge  
(She will take her own decisions and get stronger.)

These narratives reflect the challenges faced by women due to the socio-cultural practices endemic in Pakistani patriarchal culture, which often mean that females’ decisions are not their own, rather, are in fact, influenced by others. In short, for the majority of the young females, the status quo does not offer them the liberty to make their own choices. Sue and David (1999) pointed out that Asian culture shares certain values that may impact the career choices and progress of Asian women. Freedom to select their profession of choice is not without barriers for females (Lewis, Simpson, and Broad bridge, 2010). Women’s career selections and pathways are more complicated in comparison with men’s on account of several internal and external barriers. Moreover, young females and males are influenced differently in career understanding and selections. Teenager’s lack of experience of the world makes them seek opinions and advice from a variety of sources - family, friends, peers and teachers especially when it comes to making a selection from among several academic programs and career paths. It is through the language (structure) that speech (system of interaction) is understood; linguistic structure being key to the system of interaction (Giddens, 1986) remains important at every stage of discussions and opinions etc. The process of career selection, therefore, has social, cognitive and linguistic aspects, but linguistic practices reflect preferences, expectations and biases which are not always appreciated and consequently, the influential nature of linguistic constructions and their effect on cognitive processes. Since, women tend to be more socially inspired (Abbasi and Sarwat, 2014), they are more prone to be influenced; their participation and advancement in social and professional spheres is ruled by social beliefs (Buddhapriya, 2009) and they can discover that their desires and ambitions are either encouraged or curtailed by unforgettable messages (Fels, 2004) and striking absences as well (Arendt, Buzzanell, Dohrman, and Litera, 2008). Arif, Iqbal, & Khalil (2019) assert that subject choice is complex for adolescents because it lays the foundation of the type of career they plan to pursue in the future. Social scientists have highlighted several factors that affect the career choices of Pakistani young females including parental pressure, affordability, social class, future employability, financial resources, finding a subject interesting and easy, and financial rewards etc. (Ahmed, Sharif and Ahmad, 2017). Abbasi and Sarwat (2014), emphasized reasons like prestige, respect, parents, siblings, teachers and friends’ influence etc. Sarwar and Azmat (2013) included childhood memories and adolescent’s experiences. Masood (2019) highlighted the increased involvement of women in medicine due to wedding prospects in the Pakistani context as the medical profession is considered prestigious. Pakistani women feel proud to say ‘meri bahu to doctor he’ (my daughter-in-law is a doctor) which motivates young women to follow the medical profession. This is not to say they will pursue their careers as medical doctors.

Besides, there are insufficient career counselling facilities for females to help them take accurate decisions. Saleem, Hanan, Saleem, and Shamshad (2014), highlighted the individual and mutual influence of three major factors affecting Pakistani students' career decisions: socio-economic factors, mass media and personal interest. However, the current study adds linguistic force-dynamics and examines how they, along with other factors, contribute to encourage or discourage female adolescents as it is almost impossible for them to make decisions independent of the influence of these factors (ibid.)

### **Research Questions**

The study addresses the following questions:

Q1. How do linguistic interactions get translated into influential narratives?

Q2. How do linguistic force interactive patterns affect female students' career self-efficacy beliefs, career goals and out-come expectations?

Q3. Which linguistic patterns have influenced young women's career choices in Kasur, Pakistan?

### **Significance of the study**

The present research considers linguistic interaction as part of a social system (Giddens, 1986) and career selection as one of the several social practices carried out by social actors at different levels of consciousness. Various discursive strategies, including structural configuration, identification, framing and positioning, etc., can be employed by social actors, realized through a variety of linguistic devices, transfer several modalities that influence listeners' perceptive and cognitive processes and, knowingly or unknowingly, direct their decisions. The study identifies the narratives female college students are given by various social actors in their immediate circle, which influence the choice of career path a particular female may take, considering various factors presented by those narratives. The study is directed towards linguists in general, career counselors and social and gender scientists.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Language, perception and career (constructs)**

We mediate our knowledge and experience of the world through language (Geeraerts & Cuyckens, 2007) and language reflects thought patterns (Vyvyan & Green, 2006). It helps to form the individual's world-view and unknowingly imposes habits of looking and thinking that naturally lead to forming feelings, perceptions and attitudes towards social phenomena, career selection being no exception. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (1929 & 1940) strongly underlines the influential role of language in shaping or limiting our thoughts, modifying our perceptions and creating our perception of reality. Whorf (1940) claimed that formulating concepts is not an autonomous process and linguistic forms do not just convey ideas, rather, they significantly contribute to shaping others' ideas, thoughts and views etc. Sapir (1929) pointed out the importance of linguistics as a scientific study and how our society, to a great extent, influences our way of interpreting the world we live in. Cognitive linguistic supports the weak version of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and suggests that language reveals and reflects the mind (Evans & Green, 2006). It adopts a scholarly view of studying language, human cognition, conceptual system, and meaning construction (Hart, 2011) and asserts that linguistic structure may impact on how the individual speaker performs specific perceptive

processes. It states that several linguistic devices can be used to encode and express thoughts and these can signify diverse patterns of thought, therefore our way of reasoning can also be influenced when we encounter different types of linguistic choices used to encode ideas. Cognitive linguists claim that conceptual structures are not only reflected through language use; rather, language also affects conceptualization. According to Talmy (1988) “Force Dynamics refers to a previously neglected semantic category – how entities interact with respect to force” in sentences like. ‘She didn’t lock the door and ‘Se refrained from locking the door’ pointing out that linguistic expressions have the potential to be force-dynamically neutral or can demonstrate force-dynamic patterns. Forces are additionally taken to governing the linguistic causative, encompassing concepts like obstructing, allowing and helping, etc. (Gardenfors, 2007 p.57). When it comes to discourse practices, grammar plays a significant role in imparting ideologies (Halliday, 1992). Hence, grammar involves ‘representation, evaluation or legitimation’ (Hart, 2014). The key schematic systems (conceptual structuring) i.e., configuration, perspectival, attention/ focus and force-dynamic systems combine to structure an entity, scene, or experience expressed through language. Lexical choices refer to objects or delineate situations or subjective experiences.

The grammatical system offers a variety of discursive strategies to represent similar material states of affairs in different ways, and which reflect ideological stances. Urdu is a language where grammatical genders exist. However, unlike other languages (Maldonado Garcia, 2015) no efforts have been made to make Urdu a politically correct language. In this regard, the cognitive processes of human beings comprise recurrent structures called Image schemata that are shaped through physical interaction, linguistic experience and context, and form our reasoning and understanding patterns (Johnson, 2013). Piaget (1952) also underlined the importance of schemata for cognitive growth and regarded them as the basic building blocks for arranging knowledge. Schemata can be considered “units” of knowledge, each of which relates to an aspect of the world - objects, actions, and intangible concepts. Cognitive development takes place through assimilation and accommodation. These processes are interactive and overlap used simultaneously or alternately. The process of assimilation refers to the use or transformation of the environment to fit it into cognitive structures that previously exist. Accommodation process involves changing reasoning structures to admit contribution from the outer world. Students adapt their own thinking in response to the input they are exposed to and they react accordingly. Equilibration encompasses both, according to Piaget, when an existing schema is capable of illuminating what it perceives, it holds a state of equilibrium, having a state of mental/cognitive balance (ibid.) that can inform a balanced action. The interplay between the underlying discursive force and construals (how individuals perceive the behaviour of others, in particular towards themselves) turns linguistic interactions into personal narratives.

Keeping in view the growing challenges of making the right career choice and the importance of appropriate career decisions, social scientists have been paying attention to the various facets involved in career selection and development. The number of studies dealing exclusively with female career development is huge, but to name just a few, (see Angervall, 2018; Arif & Ejaz, 2017; Eikhof, 2016; Kemp, Wong, & Berry, 2019; Masood, 2019). Gender studies scholars have been investigating the career choice phenomenon through the lens of feminist theories and issues related to sexism, gender discrimination, gender stereotypes, gendered role responsibilities etc. (e.g., Diekmann, 2015; Fazal et al., 2019; Gewinner, 2017).

The phenomenon has been examined from several perspectives including culture, human capital, privilege, and organization (e.g., Shah, 2019; Kisselburgh, Berkelaar, & Buzzanell, 2009). Saavedra, Araújo, Taveira, & Vieira (2014), examined how gendered constructions of identity get translated into the worries, uncertainties and barriers that young women experience in deciding upon a career for themselves. Mahaday (2018) highlighted gender bias as the key factor hampering women's advancement. Eikhof (2016) argued that unseen gendered consequences seriously influence female participation in certain careers. The influence of gendered family roles has also been acknowledged (Gewinner, 2017). Mutekwe, Modiba, & Maphosa (2011), identified several factors influencing school girls' career aspirations including gender roles, parents' hopes, teachers' attitudes etc. and emphasized the need to demolish stereotypical gender perceptions. Scholars have also asserted that girls' real potential and qualities are misconstrued by stereotypical gender role perceptions that can then lead to manipulation concerning career advancement decisions. Kisselburgh et al. (2009) examined female underrepresentation in STEM from a communicative perspective. By taking a discursive approach, they focused on career and its meaning in science fields that how connotations are (re) produced and conveyed through discourse. According to Leonard Talmy (2000), "Force dynamics" is a schematic system that pertains to the linguistic representation of force interactions and causal relations occurring between certain entities within the structured situation" (De Mulder, 2007) Acknowledging the inevitable sociological, psychological, communicative and discursive influences on females' career selection, studying career women's career discourse and narratives has become an important area of research for scholars. Packer's (2014) study of the career discourses of Indian working women used Feminist Standpoint Theory and assumed that social agents, including family members, often become career enablers. Force dynamics, however, is a cognitive notion (De Mulder, 2007). According to Saleem et al. (2014) parental professions, mass-media, and personal choice of students has an impact on the career selection of that particular student. In this regard, mass-media and personal choice have more influence and impact. The study was not gender based neither it includes force dynamics.

Cheney, Zorn Jr, Planalp, and Lair (2008), promoted the investigation of the discursive construction of career-related discourse to reveal the true nature and aims of a career and how its meanings are shaped by discourse and gender. Beddoes and Pawley (2014) examined the phenomenon from the perspective of discourse of choice and analysed the data using grounded theory to highlight the impact of the modernization and neo-liberal discourses that dominate the societies in various socio-economic contexts. Scholars from all disciplines have emphasised the usefulness of narrative approaches and their significance for getting an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences to explore the phenomenon of career pathways (e.g., Hartung & Santilli, 2018; Shah, 2019). The investigation of several aspects of career self-efficacy has been paid a lot of attention by scholars around the world. Researchers have investigated various features of career self-efficacy beliefs of undergraduates, the significance of vocational development programs and their impact on career decision-making (e.g., Al-Bahrani, Allawati, Abu Shindi, & Bakkar, 2020). The beliefs the individuals have about their ability to achieve are central to self-efficacy (Yuhsuan & Jodie, 2015). Lent, Brown & Hackett (2000) consider career self-efficacy beliefs, career goals and out-come expectations as central constructs in Social cognitive career theory. The theory explicates how persons develop occupational interests, make professional choices, and accomplish career success (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013 p. 96). Issues such as lack of mentoring, proper guidance,

unrealized biases may also impact decisions (Boysen & Nkomo, 2010). Further, parents' professions, knowledge, education, socio-economic background, and their moral and monetary support for their daughters are all essential aspects while choosing a career (Noreen & Khalid, 2012). Factors specific to the individual responses, the roles of family members, friends and institutions and the environment have also been analysed (e.g., Chinyamurindi, 2016). Deikmann (2015) emphasized the influence of gender socialization, individual identity variables, socio-economic background, relationship with parents and partners, guides and role models, maternal role, chauvinisms, and racial prejudice. Nancy (2019) has mentioned the influence of parental expectations on the decisions of female college students, both in their academic and professional endeavours. Klavenes, Orea-Giner, García-Muiña, and Fuentes-Moraleda, (2020) found that women are still unequal in the various professional career paths, like for example, in this particular case, football where the #metoo movement has had some impact as compared to other professional areas women of the world are contributing their skills and expertise. Shaheen and Maldonado Garcia (2020) found that "Patriarchal discourse revolves around the concept of regulating female lives." The same happens with career narratives where patriarchal discourse may be involved to regulate young women's lives, depending on the people influencing a particular young woman. In any case, a study conducted on Asian parent's influence on their children's career choice supports the fact that a huge body of literature supports the fact that parents' impact on Asian American's career choice is highly valued in Asian families (Qin, 2010).

Cervel (1999), investigated the FORCE image schema concerning subsidiarity relationships that different image schemas have and the role of FORCE schema in conceptualizing metaphors. Gardenfors (2007) argued that (linguistic) forces should be considered central for cognitive semantics as every action involves forces exerted by the social actor (agent). He related first person uses of forces with power, however not in connection with career selection. Szwedek (2017) emphasized the role of forces in relation to dynamic OBJECT schema and reinforced that force is realized through interaction. Hart (2014) highlighted force-dynamic conceptualization by identifying some linguistic force-interactive patterns in immigration discourse; he also discussed the role of linguistic force-dynamics in visual as well as political discourse .

### **The Present study**

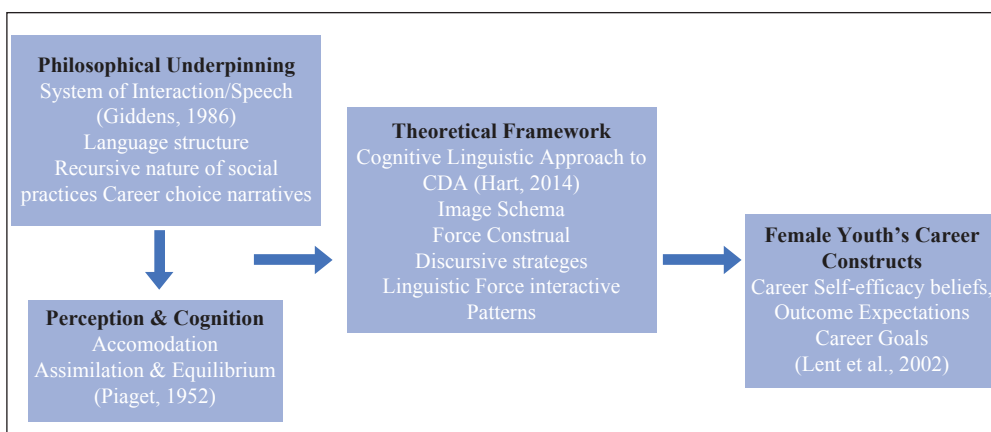
It is evident that a good deal of research has been carried out on different aspects of women's career choices, challenges, and career self-efficacy beliefs. However, investigation of the phenomenon through the lens of cognitive linguistics approach to consider CDA has received little attention. The current study attempts to fill some of this gap by taking into consideration linguistic force-dynamics to examine the inter/intra-narrative discursivity in career choice narratives. So, it examines the causal relationship between linguistic force dynamics and the career constructs postulated by SCCT: the career self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations and career goals of female adolescents in a culture such as Pakistan's, and analyses how (linguistic) structure is "both constraining and enabling" (Giddens 1984, pp.169). The previous literature highlights the social aspects of this topic. However, it fails to address the linguistic aspects of the matter.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The present research is sequential and exploratory in nature and draws on narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is a methodology in which the narratives or stories are the objects of study;



for instance, autobiographies and interview responses etc. (Benson, 2014). This study collected narratives in three stages. First, (Table 1) one hundred female students' personal narratives concerning their career choice experience were collected through open-ended questionnaires. Second, it extracted the narratives that came into the students' responses from other sources, particularly from family members-parents/siblings-peers/friends and teachers. Third, the first-hand narratives of the influencers (sample 2) i.e., parents, siblings, peers and teachers etc. were collected by interviewing them. Hart (2014 pp.2-14) pointed out the absence of research focussing on the interpretation stage, within CDA. The effective transmission of ideology relies on cognitive processes repeating the text in consumers' minds, which is why discursive strategies can only be an effective way to demonstrate ideologies when the structures reflecting them have cognitive representation (ibid.). Therefore, CDA in cognitive linguistic extends beyond a simple analytical approach to considering metaphors to produce a wider, more coherent approach in cognitive linguistics that integrates features of Cognitive Grammar, Frame Semantics, Mental Spaces, and Force-Dynamics (Hart, 2014). Cognitive Linguistics deals with conceptualization as a dynamic, operational cognitive function upon which meaning construction is based. Cognitive linguistics concentrates more on hearer/listener interactive patterns, while Functional Linguistics focuses on the "speaker" and "process", so is appropriate for analysing the interpretation stage of critical discourse analysis. Owing to the force interactive patterns in language and cognition (Talmy, 1988, 2000; Hart, 2014), the present research takes into consideration force construal within the typology of construal operations proposed by Hart (2014) and examines the (linguistic) force interactive patterns entrenched in career choice narratives. Force schema has sub-schema that involve various aspects of force, including COMPULSION, BLOCKAGE, ENABLEMENT, REMOVAL OF RESTRAINT, COUNTER FORCE and DIVERSION (Hart, 2011; Talmy, 2000).



**Figure 1. Research Design**

The study considers narratives as entities and critically analyses the lexico-grammatical constructions representing schematic patterns of force such as through modality, labelling, and contest constructions that influence women's career self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations and career goals in the Kasur district.

### The Sample

The sampling technique used was Systematic Random Sampling. One hundred female students from 5 public-sector female degree colleges in Kasur district were the participants. (aged 16 to 20 years old, from middle-class & lower middle-class backgrounds). Students who had enrolled in 2017& 2018 were selected. The colleges are located in five different towns in Kasur district.

**Table 1.**  
*Participants*

College	Total number of Participants	Participants FA/FSC/ICS	BA/BSC
1	20	10	10
2	20	10	10
3	20	10	10
4	20	10	10
5	20	10	10

### Sample 2

The parents, siblings, friends/peers and teachers that the primary participants (sample 1, college students) mentioned as influential, were interviewed (resulted in 70 interviews).

The rationale for choosing Kasur district as the research setting was because:

- Women in small towns of Punjab (in Pakistan) face more disadvantages concerning educational and career facilities than women in big cities. Kasur has several small towns typical of small towns in general in the province of Punjab (Pakistan) therefore, the findings of the study are generalizable to similar towns in Punjab.
- No study of female career selection has been carried out in the setting of small towns like those in Kasur district from the perspective of narratives and linguistic practices.

### Data collection and Ethical considerations

The study collected data from student participants through open-ended questionnaires, the questions were related to the role of language (opinions/narratives), perception and career choices. The questionnaire was adapted from an existing example concerning career choice and the experience of young women (Hartung & Santilli, 2017; Packer, 2014; Sarwar & Azmat, 2013). The questionnaire was administered in Urdu (translated from English) and the responses were in Urdu. Semi-structured interviews of the influencers were based on the same questionnaire after the appropriate structural changes had been made to in line with whether the interviewees were the parents/siblings, teachers or peers of the primary respondents. The interviews were transcribed (verbatim) in Urdu. Permission from the department and the concerned principals was secured before collecting the data and informed consent was given by the participants after they had been informed about the objectives of the research before answering the questionnaire.

### Limitations of the Study

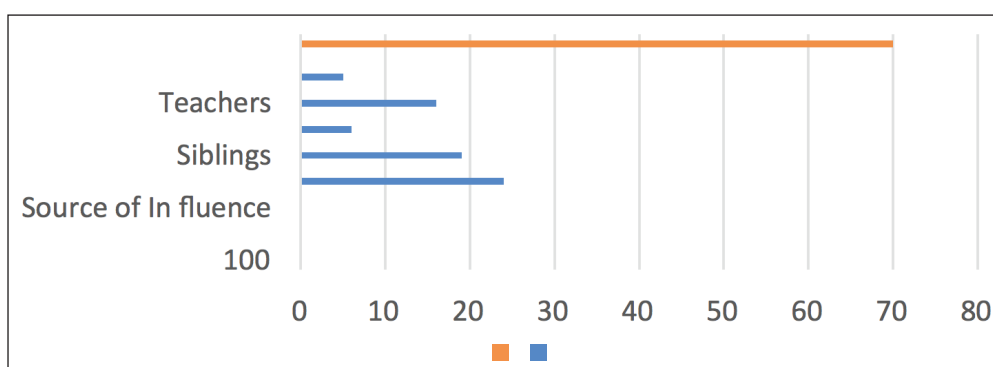
The study is limited to the female college-going student population of District Kasur, Punjab, Pakistan. The study can be reproduced to any other geographical area.



## DATA ANALYSIS

### Quantitative Analysis

Data analysis comprised two phases. The first stage involved quantitative analysis. The questionnaire responses were read carefully and repeatedly to extract the data which identified the influences on the participants (those whose academic/career choices were significantly influenced by others) and the source of influence (see figure 2). At this stage, the data were classified as self-narratives (participants' personal views) or as the narratives that had influenced them. Descriptive statistics were used to find out the percentage of the influenced participants. The figure below exhibits the number of influenced participants with regard to the source of influence.

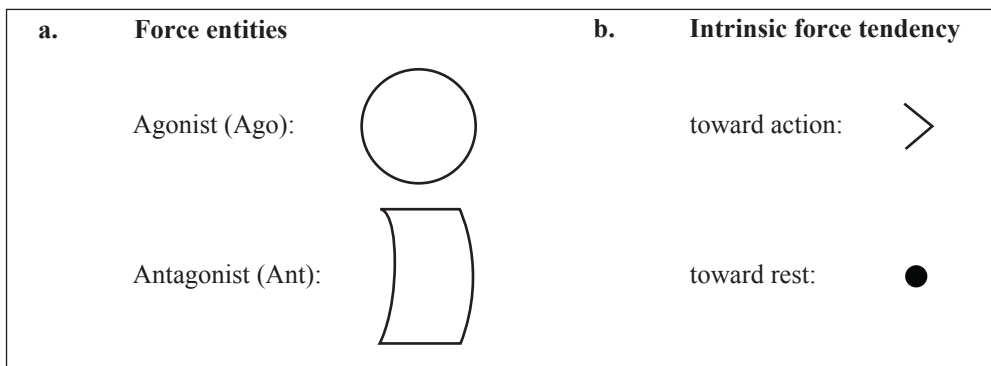


**Figure 2.** Number of Influenced Participants and Source of Influence

Figure 2 demonstrates the significant influence on the participants of their parents' and siblings' narratives. In particular, fathers' and elder brother/s' opinions carried a lot of weight according to most of the respondents. Unsurprisingly, teachers appeared to be the third strong source of influence. Some students mentioned teachers in academies (tuition centers) and high schools, some of them acknowledged the role of college teachers' narratives as well. Peers'/friends' opinions mainly influenced the participants' choice of subject (mentioned in responses), particularly in choosing between Arts and Science subjects; however, often their narratives were dominated by family narratives. In the case of significant others, sometimes an uncle or aunt, being their guardian or having a good qualification, convinced the participants to follow a particular career path.

### Linguistic Force-Dynamics (Qualitative Analysis)

In the second phase, all the data were qualitatively analysed considering force dynamics to trace force interactive patterns and their potential impact on the career constructs of female adolescents. In Talmy's terminology (2000), the entities (figure 3) involved in the interaction between the force dynamic construals are represented as the Agonist (Ago) the force entity in focus, and the opposing force entity is the Antagonist (Ant). Intrinsic force tendency takes into account two aspects including action and rest. Further, the balance of strength may shift depending upon the potential of Ago and Ant and the situation they are in; nevertheless, for the resultant of force interaction, it is Ago that either takes action or is forced to rest. In this study, the female students are listeners/hearers and Agonists (Ago) whose circumstance is at stake in terms of Talmy's definition and influential speakers are either Antagonists (Ant) or enablers.



**Figure 3.** *Elements of force -dynamics (Talmy, 2000).*

The linguistic force-dynamic elements are in bold type.

**Table 2.:**  
*(Linguistic) force Interactive Patterns of Compulsion Schema*

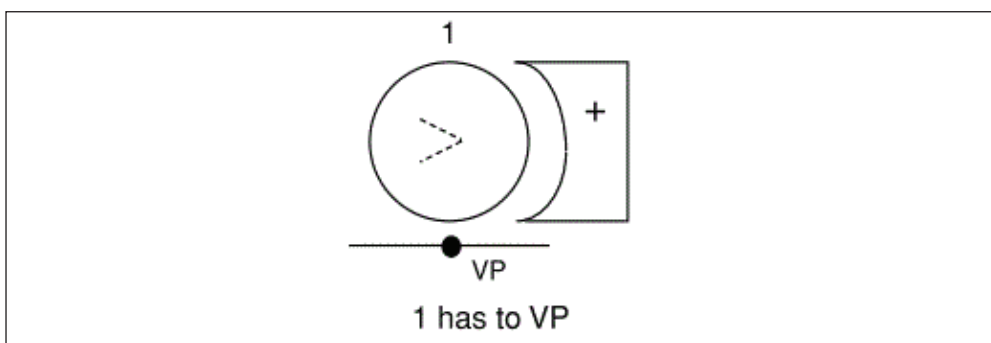
<b>Compulsion Schema</b>	<b>Translation</b>
1. Walid kehtey hen k mein teacher hun aur yehe chahta hun k tum b teaching mein he jao sirf. Is me qom ke khidmat be he or admion se kam deal krna hota.	Father says, "I am a teacher and also want you to become a teacher.' It is a service to the nation as well as meaning one has to less frequently deal with men.
2. Abbu kehtey hen, "beti agr apne khuch karna he to apna career acha zrur bnao takey ap aik bhtr or pur sakun zindge guzaren.	Father says, "Daughter, if you want to do something, make your career a good one so that you can live a better and more peaceful life'.
3. Bhai ne kaha k keh dya he k Arts he parhne he har surat.	Brother said, "You have to study arts in whatever situation you are in."
4. Bhai kehtey teaching theek he bas, isey acha samjha jata he.	Brother says, "Only teaching is appropriate as it is considered good."
5. Bhai ne kaha k science he parhna he aur science rakhwa de.	Brother said, "You have to study science" and made me opt science.
6. Teacher ne kaha k apne yehe mazameen parhne hen wrna ap k grades pe bura asr pareyga.	Teacher said, "You have to opt out of these subjects otherwise your grades will suffer.
7. Teacher ne kaha k arts he parni parey ge.	Teacher said, "You will have to study arts subjects."

### **Linguistic Force-dynamics Of Compulsion Schema**

Force schema includes an external force, physically or metaphorically pushing or tending to push, an entity. The semantic properties of binding and unavoidability are part of COMPULSION Schema. The illustrative categories of COMPULSION Schema are reflected through the choice between arts and science, getting good grades and pursuing a particular career, preference for certain professions like teaching etc. The force-dynamic patterns use intensifiers; example 1, teaching + har surat (in every situation) convey a sense of compulsion through second person perspective force. Structural configuration is the way the speaker (intentionally or not) imposes a specific image-schematic description which forms our basic understanding of the internal structure of an entity, event, situation or experience (Hart, 2014) Epistemic modality is about a speaker's desires, wishes, attitude according to his/her conception of reality, while deontic modality involves appropriateness according to some social/moral norms (Hart, 2014 pp.14). The modal forms used are deontic (how the world ought to be under certain conditions), for instance, lazmi (must) above and the conditional can in example 2, as well as the force-dynamics of karna pare ga (will have to) example 4. All these forms impose a sense of obligation and are antagonistic, that is, parents/siblings/teachers are strong entities, while the female student (Ago) in each case appears as a weaker entity who has to do what is advised or else face the consequences. Nevertheless, modality has not been expressed through modals alone; open-class lexical choices such as adjectival and adverbial phrases, theek he bas (is only appropriate) indicates the assertive attitude of siblings, especially older brothers, leaving little room for alternatives. Example 2 demonstrates a sense of compulsion for the good of Ago. In example 4, the brother's narrative seems influenced by an external force - social pressure and values - indicated by samjha jata he (is considered). It indicates interference from a third person perspective to legitimize the brother's opinion.

Teachers' words have always been important as they can be a source of inspiration, while their position allows them to exert institutional and legal pressure. When a teacher utters yehe mazameen parney hen sirf and arts he parni parege , example 6,7 that also exert psychological pressure since only (adv.) implies the inappropriateness of any other option, and involves epistemic modality as well, (the evaluation or confidence a speaker has in a proposition) reinforcing the perceived superiority of teachers' worldly knowledge. In terms of positioning strategies, both the epistemic and deontic modality identified suggest specific choices like teaching, studying arts. The teachers' narratives demonstrated epistemic modality, while the parents and siblings' narratives illustrated deontic modality. Identification and framing strategies in above examples presented teaching as one of the most appropriate professions for women and using khidmat, (service) for teaching emphasises the significance of the teaching profession for women in both religious and social terms. Adding admion se kam deal krna parta (one has to less frequently deal with men) reinforces the cultural barriers surrounding women, and intensifies the sense of obligation. How the teaching profession is framed reflects the intra-psychological (within the individual's psyche) and inter-psychological (social interaction) forces at work (Talmy, 2000). In terms of spatial concepts, COMPULSION schema works within the psychological sphere of the sentient entity i.e., Ago, though, physical force can also be observed, as in example 5. Force-interactive patterns of COMPULSION demonstrate the influence of a strong Ant, which increases the sensitivity of students to perceived barriers and pressures, making it difficult for Ago to neutralize the forced directions and maintain equilibrium (Piaget, 1952), so beliefs regarding career self-efficacy can be negatively affected and the focus moves more to the expected hurdles and adverse attitudes

rather than striving to explore different career options with a positive or confident attitude. Nevertheless, sometimes compulsion pushes the final acceptance that no other option is available, but this happens only when one can resist the inter and intra-psychological pressures; in that case, the force-dynamics of COMPULSION become enablers (Packer, 2014). The linguistic indicators of compulsion involve contest constructions, epistemic and deontic modality, adverbial phrases and synonyms, metaphors etc. reflecting the psycho-social powers at work.



**Figure 4.** *Ago Confronting Compulsion (Talmy, 2000)*

The linguistic force-dynamic elements are in bold type.

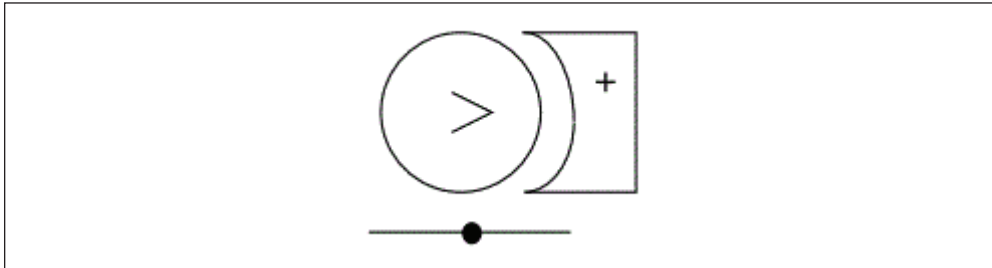
**Table 3:**

*(Linguistic) Force-interactive Patterns of Blockage and Diversion Schemas*

<b>Blockage And Diversion Schemas</b>	<b>Translation</b>
1. Waldain ne kaha k FA k bad parhne ke koe zrrurat nahe he, jald tumhari shadi ho jani. ghardari seekho. (Blockage)	Parents said, "There is no need to continue with your studies after FA, you will get married soon, learn household chores.
2. Baba kehtey hen k arts parney ke ijzat nahe he. (Blockage and diversion)	Father says, "You are not allowed to study arts."
3. Ghar se door nahe janey dey saktey, log kia kahen gey? wohe karo jo yahan reh k kar sakte ho.	Cannot let you go away from home, what would people say? Do whatever is possible here.
4. Bari behn ne kaha k Medical mehnga or mushkil he, hamen kis ne karana? choro science or khuch asan parh lo. (Diversion)	Elder sister said, "Medical is tough and expensive, who will let us do that? Leave science and study something easy".
5. Bhai ne kaha, nahe, tum ICS karo, choro Biology ko kunk ICS behtar he, mujey pata he. (Diversion)	Brother said, "No, choose ICS, leave Biology because ICS is better, I know."
6. Ghar waley boley k nurson ko koe acha nae smjhata, tara tara ke baten krtey log, is lea FA kya. (Blockage)	Family said, "Nobody considers nurses to be any good; people give different sort of comments (talk negatively) about them.' So, I did FA.
7. Rishteydar kehtey k betion ko ziada na parhao, dhoney to hamesha barten he hen. (Blockage)	Relatives say, "Do not educate your daughters too much, they always have to wash dishes in the end".
8. Teachers label Iga dete hen k ye to hen he nalaq, nahe parh saktey science ya maths etc. Hmara result kharab hoga. (Blockage and diversion)	Teachers label the students when they comment, "These (students) are totally incapable, cannot study science or Maths etc.; our results will be bad.
9. Teachers ne kaha k merey khayal se ap nae par saktey science, mushkil he, apna IQ check krwao. (Blockage and diversion)	Teacher said, "I think, you cannot study science, it is difficult, get your IQ checked".

### **Linguistic Force-Dynamics of Blockage and Diversion Schemas**

Table 3 demonstrates several lexico-grammatical constructions evoking BLOCKAGE and DIVERSION schemata giving a sense of obstruction, constraint and digression. Ant again appears as a stronger entity stopping Ago from doing what it wishes (diversion) or preventing Ago from moving on (causing rest/halt). Discursive strategies are realized through epistemic modality, (examples 8, 9). Epistemic modality here has to do with probability and requirement with regard to the knowledge or intellectual capacity of the students and used to refer to their incapacity or inaptitude in certain fields. Cannot let (example 2) reflects incapacity due to the social values and norms that prevent parents from sending their daughters away from home to make their own educational choices. Ghardari seekho (learn household chores) example 1 and dhoney to bartn he hen (has to wash dishes) example 7 underpin the gendered role responsibilities that are central to socio-cultural practices in Pakistan. Negation with nouns like ijazat (allow/permission) faida (advantage) and verb pasand (like) exert psychological pressure on Ago and directly suggest hindrance entailing that students must redirect (diversion) their interests to avoid a blockage. In the case of the elder sister's narrative, diversion is suggested due to social and financial pressures, while the interrogative (example 4) who will let us do that? indicates that less emphasis is placed on girls' education and career prospects. Lexico-grammatical choices in the brother's narrative are the imperative leave, evaluation better and the superiority of his worldly wisdom is expressed through epistemic modality I know. Marker words such as hamesha (always) example 7, comparative descriptors better and causal words because (example 5, 6) make the listener (Ago) re-visit decisions. Positioning strategies show that family members make their judgments through societal perspectives rather than any personal point of view and use generalization to persuade Ago and legitimize their decision. The phrase, Tarah tarah ke baten (different sorts of remarks) frames the nursing profession as having negative connotations (example 6) and generalization koe acha nahe smjhta clearly shows interference and preference for society's perspective. The pronoun, anyone allows the speaker to support the argument in general without offering indicatives. The teachers' narratives generally indicate diversion through epistemic modality i.e., grading students' intellectual capacity, assessing their aptitude, strengths and weaknesses for certain subjects or professional path, particularly medical and engineering. Grammatical constructions such as can with negation or allowed with negation are common. Labelling students with specific identities such as being weak or intelligent, hardworking, incompetent, lazy etc. was also noticed (example 8, 9) together with insightful words such as, I think. The interference of legal/institutional forces, brings official sanctioning and approval/disapproval into teachers' narratives and make them appear the stronger entity. Sarcastic comments such as IQ check karwao (get your IQ checked) might discourage the student from continuing in the same field. The narratives of teachers exert both psychological and institutional/legal force, drawing in a raft of rules and policies which work as barriers; our results will be bad highlighting the importance of organizational policies. Linguistic constructions relating to BLOCKAGE schema commonly involve demotivational/negative statements, labeling, ironically posed tag questions, comparative statements, comparative and superlative adjectives especially of (negative) quality and epistemic and deontic modality. BLOCKAGE Schema obstructs Ago, prevents the move towards action, so students lack the resources to maintain equilibrium in the presence of perceived hurdles. Ago's resultant behaviour is either inaction or diversion (modelled in figure 5) when Ago has less force than Ant. The system of interaction, in BLOCKAGE schema, enables social actors to exercise power, legitimize their judgment and impose decisions of their own choice, thus play the part of disablers.



**Figure 5.** *State of Inaction (Talmy, 2000).*

The linguistic force-dynamic elements are in bold type.

**Table 4:**

*(Linguistic) Force-Interactive Patterns of ENABLEMENT and RESTRAINT REMOVAL Schemas*

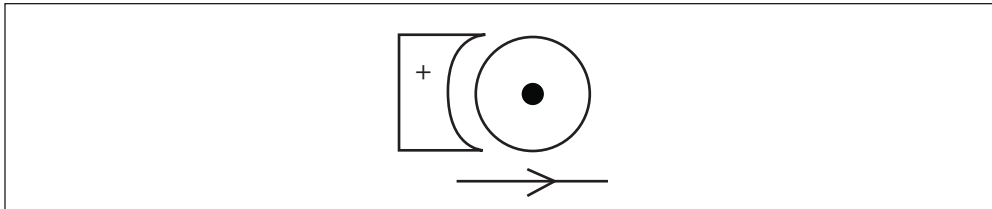
<b>Enablement and Restraint Removal Schemas</b>	<b>Translation</b>
1. Baba kehtey hen “meri bache army men bhe ja sakte he, us mein himat he or hum us k sath hen. (Enablement)	Father said, “My daughter can join the army too, she is courageous and we are with her.”
2. Meray bhai ne raey de k doctor aik acha insan ban sakta he jis se is k akhrajat purey ho saktey hen. (Enablement)	My brother said, “A doctor can become a good person, and expenses can be well-spent.”
3. Bhai ne kaha k agr army mein jana he to chale jao. Koe pabandi nahe. (Restraint removal)	Brother said, “You can join the army if you like, there are no restrictions.”
4. a. Mama ne baba se kaha k aj kal bachion ka parhna or career bnana both zruri (Enablement)	a. Mama told my father that girls’ education and careers are very important.
b. Wo boley k ijazat he mgr hmari izzat ka khyal rkhnna, hargiz koe shikayat na miley. (Restraint removal, conditional)	b. Father said, “You are allowed, but take care of the family’ honour, there must not be any complaints”.
5. Behn kehte men har hal me tumharey sath hun, mujhey tassali hue.	Sister said, “I am with you under every circumstances”. I felt relieved.
6. Class-fellow ne kaha k taleem nahe to khuch bhe nahe. Me ne fesla kya kabhi parhai nae chorunge. (Enablement)	My class-mate said, “Everything is useless without education.” I decided not to quit, ever.
7. Teacher ne kaha k ap yaqeenan kar sakte ho, ap k andar kisi cheez ke kami nahe. (Enablement)	Teacher said, “Dear, you certainly can do it, you have no deficiency.”
8. Teacher ne kaha k hum is shart pe ijazt dengey Psychology ke k marks achey lene hen. (Removal of restraint, conditional)	Teacher said, “We will allow you to choose Psychology if you make sure to get good marks”.



### **Linguistic Force-Dynamics of ENABLEMENT and RESTRAINT REMOVAL Schemas**

ENABLEMENT and RESTRAINT REMOVAL force inter-active patterns (Table 4) are the most important ones since these have to do with enablement and permission. Students always benefit from some positive force to motivate them and prompt their actions. Young women in particular are often reluctant to take any initiative without the realization of their intrinsic strength to enable them do what they wish. ENABLEMENT schematic constructions generally involve epistemic modality you/she can (examples 1 & 6) that reflects supportive and appreciative stances that can encourage the students. It also involves the acknowledgement, emotional and moral support of parents, as can be seen in motivational statements, we are with her, example 1 and, *har hal me tumharey sath hun* (I am with you in every situation), example 5) and lexical choices in case of nouns such as *aitmad* (trust) *himat* (dare/courage). Generalization and evaluation style are visible in the positive framing of the medical profession (example 2) morally/socially as well as monetarily in the adjectival/descriptive phrase *acha insan* (good human) and probability like, can make the expense worth it. These constructions exert positive psychological and social force and show Ant as strong enough to enable Ago to move towards action (modeled in figure 5). Instance 4 demonstrates the convincing power of language and the significance of education by employing the double negative that enabled Ago to go forward. The response will never quit reflects how Ago construes positive force interaction to produce intrinsic force. Teachers can play the part of enablers by encouraging remarks to their students and guiding them by (positively in this instance) assessing their aptitude. The lexical and structural choices of teachers often (but not always) indicate their confidence in their students' ability and undoubtedly, motivational comments and supportive choices like *yaqeenan* (certainly) by a teacher work like magic. Besides, labeling students with adjectives of quality like *zahen*, (intelligent) and *mehnat* (hardworking) etc. exert psychological and emotive force as well as suggest good students have the responsibility to work harder to prove their worth. The force-dynamics of ENABLEMENT enable students to accommodate and maintain equilibrium, thus significantly contribute to students' career self-efficacy beliefs. It generally involves second person perspectival force, though in some cases, a third person perspective is positively been invoked to prompt action by Ago. RESTRAINT REMOVAL schema involves removing any kind of restraint, whether physical, social, psychological, legal or official. It is concerned with giving permission for certain professional choices or getting more education, and delivered through constructions like *karney den gey* (will let her do), or an ability or verbs, suggesting approval including *ijazat he* (allowed, permit) etc. without negation. However, in some cases, permission is conditional, expressed through conditional clause (example 4b, 8) and conditional modality through conjunctions like *agr/magr* (if/but) or adjectives like *bas/sirf* (just/only). Conditional modality has different influences on construal processes when in parallel with force exerted by the pressure to fulfil the condition, though generally Ago responses action. Adjectival phrases like *puri ijazat* (complete/full permission) and pronouns *sab khuch*, everything, indicate absolute agreement. Ant appears as the stronger entity due to having the capacity to release and give permission and so transfer positive force to Ago (modeled in figure 6). Lexical choices like no restriction convey absolute freedom. With respect to siblings, authority generally lies in the hands of brothers. Teachers' narratives reinforce their authority and power to allow students to aim for specific academic programs, involving concepts of official/institutional permission. Common patterns include *may/can opt*, *krney dengey*. Further, the employment of plural pronoun *hum* (we) and conditional permission (example 8) highlight the significance of organisational policies. RESTRAINT

REMOVAL schematic patterns allow students to enhance their career self-efficacy beliefs owing to the strong socio-psychological force and the resultant for Ago is usually action.



**Figure 6.** *Elements of force -dynamics (Talmy, 2000).*

### **Discussion and Key Findings**

The analysis of linguistic force-dynamics supports the understanding of the nexus between language, perception, cognition and the formation of career constructs. The discursive strategies embedded in everyday interactions together with their schematic orientation and the recursive nature of social practices, transfer opinions and comments into influential narratives. These narratives become integrated into socio-economic factors to form a variety of stances with the potential to influence young women's self-efficacy beliefs for their career prospects, both positively and negatively, hence have an impact on the choices, expectations and career goals since these constructs are interdependent. The investigation revealed how the conceptualization of the same phenomenon/reality can be expressed in different ways by different social agents, as revealed by the narrative examples in table four, counter-narratives (counterforce) to those in table three. The study confirms the individual and mutual influence (Saleem et al., 2014) of various factors including linguistic practices and choices. Female students are generally influenced by the utterances of their family members (Ahmed et al., 2017), particularly fathers and brothers that reinforces the prevalent patriarchal culture. Narratives of siblings demonstrate the role of elder brothers as a strong entity, whereas sisters take a more submissive role. Teachers usually divert; however, parents block and divert. Interactional forces were revealed through different perspectives - first, second and third person (Gardenez, 2007). The inter and intra-narrative-discursivity revealed gender stereotypes, biased attitudes (Mahady, 2018) and the impact of socio-cultural structures including religious beliefs and social norms, reflected and reinforced through linguistic structures. The common narrative, *log kia kahlen gey?* what will people say? delegates power to every narrative a girl encounters when choosing a career path, especially when she wishes to follow a path not approved by others. These results underline the necessity to demolish gender stereotypical perceptions, as suggested by Mutekwe et al. (2011) and endorse Packer's (2014) view of seeing social actors as potential enablers, although they also can be disablers. The analysis has shown that the multiple linguistic strategies identified, including force-dynamics, impact differently on women's perceptions (Figures 3,4 & 5) and can influence their decisions.

COMPULSION schema can affect females' career constructs positively or negatively, whereas linguistic manifestations of BLOCKAGE and DIVERSION demotivate students. The Force-dynamics of ENABLEMENT and RESTRAINT REMOVAL significantly boost women's confidence and strengthen their career self-efficacy beliefs to enable them to take initiatives and explore new career/academic prospects. The study supports the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (weak version) in line with cognitive linguistics (Evans & Green, 2006) and

highlights representation, evaluation or legitimation as being key areas of grammatical function (Hart, 2014). Common linguistic strategies included the use of modality, descriptors, boosters, labelling, contest constructions, emotive words, positive/negative statements, tagged interrogatives, generalization, comparatives, imperatives, intensifiers and gender stereotypes, etc. The study emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between agent and structure as well as the influential role of the system of interaction (Giddens, 1986); linguistic practices not only reflect social practices but can also be reproduced by large numbers of agents across space and time. Social structures do not reproduce themselves; agents with their practices reproduce structures depending on particular situations (ibid.). Structure with its signifiers and through its interpretive schemes means communication is discursive and power and domination can be exercised to facilitate, impose and legitimize action or sanction approval based on subjective experiences. In essence, career selection is one of several social practices carried out by social actors at different levels of consciousness and during the whole process, the linguistic structures used to express them are always highly significant.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Jo, Ra, Lee, & Kim, (2016) assert that we, as teachers, program creators and policy-makers, are inevitably 'nudging' choices. From the same perspective, this study underscores the need for all stakeholders including family members, teachers and career advisors and so on, to contextualize and re-appropriate linguistic interactions concerning women's potential and career prospects in Kasur district. The findings can inform career counsellors about how to contextualize counselling discourse to support young women's career self-efficacy beliefs, and make them 'think about their thinking' and streamline their choices. Analysing career choice narratives from a socio-cognitive linguistic perspective highlighted the significance of language practices in forming females' career constructs and enhanced the understanding of the challenges they face from gathering direct knowledge from them based on their lived experiences (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). It helped the understanding of how to remove the barriers that prevent female adolescents from better knowing their academic/professional competence and efficacy. Future researchers can examine the career discourse/s of women in disadvantaged areas of Pakistan through additional perspectives, for instance, feminist critical discourse analysis and phenomenological approaches, as this topic still requires a great deal of investigation to enable women to be not only economically independent but socially independent as well.

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## APPENDIX A

### Questionnaire

(Adapted from Hartung & Santilli, 2017; Kajino, 2012; Packer, 2014; Savickas, 2015; Sarwar & Azmat, 2013)

Note for students:

I would like to thank you for being willing to participate in my study. The study seeks to understand how female students' career choice is influenced by linguistic interaction. It also attempts to understand how narratives of your parents, teachers and siblings etc. influence your decisions of career selection.

Before you begin, do you have any questions?

If you need to ask any questions while writing, you can feel free to ask. I would be pleased to answer them.

---

**Name:**

**Programme/ Class:**

**Age:**

**Name of the College:**

---

Note for students:

I would like to thank you for being willing to participate in my study. The study seeks to understand how female students' career choice is influenced by linguistic interaction. It also attempts to understand how narratives of your parents, teachers and siblings etc. influence your decisions of career selection.

Before you begin, do you have any questions?

If you need to ask any questions while writing, you can feel free to ask. I would be pleased to answer them.

Q.1 What do you think about career? Do you consider career important for females? If yes, why? If no, why?

س ۱۔ آپ کیریئر کے متعلق کیا رائے رکھتی ہیں؟ کیا آپ لڑکیوں کے لیے کیریئر کو اہم سمجھتی ہیں؟ اگر ہاں تو کیوں؟ اگر نہیں، تو کیوں؟

Q.2 Which careers/professions did you admire when you were growing up and why?

س ۲۔ آپ بچپن سے اب تک کن شعبہ جات/پیشوں کو پسند کرتی تھیں؟ اور کیوں؟

Q.3 What were your favourite subjects in high school/Matriculation and why? Did anyone influence your subjects' selection? If yes, how did he/she convince you?

س ۳۔ میٹرک اور ہائی سکول میں آپ کے پسندیدہ مضامین کون سے تھے اور کیوں؟ کیا کسی کی رائے مضامین کے انتخاب پر اثر انداز ہوئی؟ اگر ہاں، تو انہوں نے آپ کو کیسے قائل کیا؟

Q.4 Why did you choose your current programme/subjects? Did anyone influence you? If yes, how did he/she convince you?

س ۴۔ آپ نے موجودہ مضامین شعبے کا انتخاب کیوں کیا؟ کیا کسی کی رائے مضامین کے انتخاب پر اثر انداز ہوئی؟ اگر ہاں، تو انہوں نے کیسے آپ کو قائل کیا؟

Q.5 Do you consider interaction/discussion important while choosing subjects/career? If yes, why? If no, why?

س ۵۔ کیا آپ بات چیت، تبادلہ خیال کو کیریئر کے انتخاب کے لیے اہم سمجھتی ہیں؟ اگر ہاں تو کیوں؟ اگر نہیں، تو کیوں؟

Q.6 Write about positive personal career talks. With whom you had it? What did you learn from it?

س ۶۔ کیریئر کے متعلق ہونے والی مثبت گفتگو کو بیان کریں۔ گفتگو کس کے ساتھ تھی؟ آپ نے اس سے کیا سیکھا؟

Q.7 Write about negative personal career talks. With whom you had it? What kind of remarks you had to listen? What did you learn from it?

س ۷۔ کیریئر کے متعلق ہونے والی منفی بات چیت کے بارے میں لکھیں۔ گفتگو کس کے ساتھ تھی اور کس طرح کی باتیں سننی پڑیں؟ آپ نے اس سے کیا سیکھا؟

Q.8 What types of career paths/subjects you would never choose? And why?

س ۸۔ کون سے مضامین اور شعبہ جات آپ کبھی منتخب نہیں کریں گی، اور کیوں؟

Q.9 What types of career paths/subjects your parents and family would never want you to choose? And why?

س ۹۔ کون سے مضامین اور شعبہ جات آپ کے خاندان والے آپ کے لیے کبھی پسند نہیں کریں گے، اور کیوں؟

Q.10 Do you think the only future available to you is to become a housewife? If yes, why? If no, why?

س ۱۰۔ کیا آپ کو لگتا ہے کہ آپ کے پاس گھریلو خاتون/ہاؤس وائف بننے کے سوا کوئی شعبہ نہیں؟ اگر ہاں، تو کیوں؟ اگر نہیں، تو کیوں؟

Q.11 Does marriage consideration influence your career selection? Will your choice of career influence your potential marriage prospect? If yes, how?

س ۱۱۔ کیا شادی کا فیصلہ کیریئر کے انتخاب پر اثر انداز ہوتا ہے؟ اگر ہاں تو کیسے؟ کیا کسی خاص شعبے کا انتخاب شادی کے معاملے پر اثر انداز ہوتا ہے؟ اگر ہاں، تو کیسے؟

Q.12 How can the college administration/teachers help you to choose a career/profession?

س ۱۲۔ کالج انتظامیہ اور اساتذہ کیریئر کے انتخاب میں آپ کی کس طرح مدد کر سکتے ہیں؟