

## **Educational Texts from the Perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital**

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### **Abstract:**

Educational texts constitute one of the fundamental pillars of the school field, as they form the core of the educational system and represent a decisive indicator of cultural capital that determines competence and academic success. However, this situation generates individual differences among learners in their ability to analyze and understand educational texts, thereby making the school an instrument for reproducing educational inequalities, or what Pierre Bourdieu refers to as symbolic violence. A child who encounters difficulties in understanding these texts becomes disadvantaged in comparison with peers who can easily comprehend educational materials. This helps explain lower levels of academic performance and may expose such learners to exclusion within the classroom environment. This article aims to highlight how the comprehension of educational texts contributes to enhancing competence and productivity, while difficulties in understanding them may lead to the reproduction of symbolic violence.

**Keywords:** Educational Texts; Cultural Capital; Symbolic Violence; Habitus; School Field.

### **Introduction**

The school is considered one of the most important social institutions for the transmission of knowledge, as it contributes to preparing individuals capable of integrating into social life. It serves as a social space for students' acquisition of knowledge through approved curricula and educational programs. Society, in turn, expects the school, as an institution, to prepare responsible individuals who can contribute to serving the community and addressing the social problems they may encounter. In this sense, the school can be viewed as an instrument of social control.

Numerous scholars and thinkers have examined both the manifest and latent functions of the school. However, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu regarded it as a mechanism for imposing domination and maintaining a socio-cultural order, or what may be described as serving the interests of the capitalist bourgeois class at the expense of disadvantaged groups within society. Bourdieu argued that this unequal relationship does not appear in an overt or visible form; rather, it is endowed with legitimacy. This, in itself, constitutes a form of hierarchy and inequality within the educational field, which he referred to as hidden or invisible symbolic violence.

In light of this perspective, attention has been directed toward one of the challenges facing the educational system, namely educational texts and the ways in which they are read and

understood. These texts often confer a form of symbolic privilege upon certain groups within society at the expense of others, reflecting what may be termed the dominant culture. While educational texts undoubtedly contribute to the transmission of knowledge and educational culture to students, a closer examination of their content and underlying meanings reveals that they may also play a significant role in reproducing domination, power, and submission. Consequently, individuals may come to perceive their subordinate position as both legitimate and natural.

There exists a complementary relationship between the school and educational texts in the exercise of power, authority, and domination. Educational texts not only produce social and cultural values but also facilitate their transmission from one generation to another through what is known as the process of social reproduction. Accordingly, the following research question may be posed:

- ❖ How do educational texts contribute to the reproduction of symbolic violence within the educational field?

### **Significance of the Study**

This article is of considerable importance to the various disciplines within the humanities and social sciences, particularly the sociology of education. The significance of educational texts lies in their expected impact on society and on educational institutions, within which the educational and pedagogical system of learners is constructed. The value of this sociological study also stems from its examination of an important issue: the ways in which educational texts are structured, interpreted, and analyzed within the educational field. Difficulties in understanding and analyzing these texts may lead learners to experience exclusion and contribute to the reproduction of inequality, or what Pierre Bourdieu conceptualizes as symbolic violence within educational institutions.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Every sociological phenomenon determines the scientific direction upon which sociological inquiry should be based. Accordingly, the objectives of this article may be summarized as follows:

- To understand the relationship between learners and their comprehension and interpretation of educational texts.
- To identify the manifestations of symbolic violence experienced by certain groups of learners and to examine how this mechanism operates as a means of pressure and as a tool for reproducing social inequalities within the school environment.
- To propose alternative educational approaches that may help reduce these social inequalities within educational institutions.

### **1\_ Definition of Concepts**

The clarification of concepts constitutes one of the fundamental elements upon which sociological thought is based, as it enables the researcher to define the scientific and sociological framework of the study. Accordingly, the present research examines a set of key concepts, among which the following is particularly important:

### **Educational Texts**

Educational texts, particularly literary texts, may be defined as “a branch of language teaching and learning. It is a relatively new field in which research is still subject to methodological ambiguity. It is a specialization concerned with the scientific study of methods for teaching literary texts, as well as a rich field of knowledge characterized by its own theoretical and methodological foundations. It is organized around specific scientific strategies that facilitate the teaching of literary texts, make them more accessible to students, and enable learners to acquire the appropriate methodological tools necessary for understanding, analyzing, and interpreting texts.”<sup>1</sup>

Educational texts are also defined as “a coherent construction and tightly woven linguistic fabric, consisting of a network of relationships built upon its vocabulary, structures, and linguistic components, including morphological, phonological, and syntactic elements. Its content is established through this textual fabric and conveys aesthetic, spiritual, material, educational, and moral values. Consequently, it is expected to instill these values in learners, fostering in them a love for their homeland, family, society, and work. Such texts should take into account learners’ cognitive abilities, intellectual characteristics, and psychological dispositions. These values are programmed and incorporated in accordance with official regulations, curricula, and constitutional provisions stipulated by Algerian law.”<sup>2</sup>

Based on the foregoing, educational texts focus on linguistic structures that embody aesthetic, educational, and moral values. The objective of teaching them within educational institutions is to inculcate cultural values in students’ behavior and to train them in methods of analysis, interpretation, and comprehension. However, greater attention should be paid to learners’ varying levels of understanding and cognitive capacities, which differ from one student to another, since these texts may contribute to the reproduction of symbolic cultural domination within the educational field.

### **Cultural Capital**

Pierre Bourdieu employed the concept of “capital” to refer to the resources that individuals use in order to secure a position within society. In this regard, a distinction can be made between “economic capital” (financial resources), “cultural capital” (educational qualifications and the acquisition of legitimate culture), and “social capital”, which corresponds to networks of personal and family relationships.<sup>3</sup>

This concept is also considered one of the fundamental notions in Pierre Bourdieu’s sociological thought, as it encompasses a set of cultural patterns that determine an individual’s social position and status. “Cultural capital is a sociological concept developed by Pierre Bourdieu and added to the notions of material, social, and economic capital. It refers to the totality of cultural sources, foundations, and resources from which individuals draw. These include customs, traditions, social norms, narratives, myths, symbols, religion, and the arts. The

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<sup>1</sup> Malik, Mohammed, and Belhouari, Mohammed, “The Didactics of Texts in Light of the Competency-Based Approach,” *Al-Kalim Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2024, p. 590.

<sup>2</sup> Ramadani, Antar, and Manasri, Wafaa, “The Educational Literary Text: A Reading of Its Concept, Foundations, and Characteristics,” *Ta’limiyat Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 2004, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Jean-François Dortier, translated by George Kattoura, *Dictionary of the Human Sciences*, Kalima and Majd, University Foundation for Studies, Publishing and Distribution, Abu Dhabi, 2nd ed., 2011, p. 438.

concept also denotes the set of intellectual competencies produced by the family environment and the educational system. Such competencies constitute one of the mechanisms of guidance, influence, and social control over individuals. Cultural capital is accumulated over time and transmitted from one person to another through imitation, participation, and socialization. It may also be passed from one generation to the next through the process of social reproduction and the preservation of established authority.”<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, cultural capital may be understood as the collection of cultural resources, knowledge, skills, values, and intellectual dispositions acquired by individuals through their family upbringing, educational experiences, and social environment. In Bourdieu’s perspective, these resources play a decisive role in shaping social status and educational success, while simultaneously contributing to the reproduction of social inequalities across generations.

It can therefore be argued that cultural capital symbolizes the set of cultural values acquired through both the family and the school environment. These values contribute to shaping an individual’s position and status within and beyond the educational institution. Within the educational field, cultural capital also functions as a mechanism for selecting and classifying students, which can be interpreted as a process that reproduces inequalities among learners.

### **Symbolic Violence**

The term “violence” is generally associated with physical assault or bodily harm. However, the concept of violence has expanded beyond its physical dimension to encompass “forms of moral violence, such as verbal abuse, moral harassment, symbolic violence, as well as violence manifested through intimidation, harassment, and school-related violence.”<sup>5</sup>

The concept of symbolic violence is one of the most prominent notions in sociological thought. It constitutes one of the most significant forms of violence analyzed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Its danger lies in the fact that it is hidden, indirect, and largely invisible. “The first definition of symbolic violence appeared in “Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture” by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron in 1970. It is defined as every power of symbolic violence, that is, every power capable of imposing meanings and imposing them as legitimate while concealing the power relations upon which they are based. In other words, symbolic violence operates under the guise of an invisible moral authority that imposes a system of ideas, meanings, and representations.”<sup>6</sup>

It should also be noted that “symbolic violence refers to any form of influence that succeeds in imposing particular meanings through their presentation as legitimate meanings. It thereby masks underlying relations of power, reinforcing and legitimizing them while adding its own distinctive symbolic force.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hantabli, Youssef, and Attoub, Karima, “Family Cultural Capital and Manifestations of Student Alienation,” *Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 7, No. 31, 2018, p. 42.

<sup>5</sup> Jean-François Dortier, translated by George Kattoura, *Dictionary of the Human Sciences*, Kalima and Majd, University Foundation for Studies, Publishing and Distribution, Abu Dhabi, 2nd ed., 2011, p. 766.

<sup>6</sup> Bousbiat, Hayat, “Symbolic Violence in Algerian Society,” *Afaq Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2014, p. 291.

<sup>7</sup> Haddad, Nariman, El-Bakri, Abdelkader, and Khloud, “Symbolic Violence and Gender through Social Media: An Ethnographic Study of Religious Values and Social Stigma,” *International Journal of Social Communication*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2023, p. 292.

From Bourdieu's perspective, symbolic violence does not rely on coercion or physical force. Rather, it operates through cultural, educational, and linguistic mechanisms that lead individuals to accept social hierarchies and inequalities as natural and legitimate. In this way, symbolic violence contributes to the reproduction of social domination while concealing the power structures that sustain it.

Based on the preceding definitions, symbolic violence may be understood as a form of indirect domination and power exercised within the educational field through the incorporation and imposition of particular cultural values as if they were natural and legitimate. Such a process contributes to the production of inequality and disparity among learners, potentially leading them to experience either inclusion or exclusion without being fully aware of the underlying structures of power that govern these processes.

### **Habitus**

Habitus is defined as "a system of dispositions and perceptions that generates strategies and attitudes through which individuals determine their orientations and preferences. Through this process, a correspondence is established between systems of dispositions, cognitive structures, and the social conditions of individuals' lives. These are expressed through specific practices and behaviors that appear as manifestations of an external reality. Habitus may therefore be regarded as an inclination, orientation, or tendency, as well as a set of durable and transferable dispositions."<sup>8</sup>

In other words, habitus may be understood as "a system of acquired dispositions that shapes an individual's behavior and perception of both the self and the surrounding world. It resembles an individual's ingrained character or the collective mentality prevailing within a social group, which forms the logic through which reality and the world are interpreted. According to this perspective, habitus constitutes the essence of personality and the mental structure that generates action and behavior. Fundamentally, it is the product of a continuous process of internalizing the conditions and circumstances of life throughout the various stages of individual and collective existence."<sup>9</sup>

The concept of habitus can often be applied to educational texts, insofar as these texts represent cognitive and cultural formations that develop and become entrenched over time. In this sense, educational texts participate in the process of social reproduction by transmitting particular cultural norms and values, thereby reflecting and reinforcing the cultural orientations of specific social groups.

### **The Educational Field**

According to Bourdieu's writings, "a field is nothing more than a small social universe governed by its own specific rules and norms. These are the rules of the milieu. Journalistic, literary, and artistic worlds, for example, constitute relatively closed universes whose codes can only be fully mastered by those who belong to them. A field is also a space of domination and struggle; it is a field of forces within which individuals interact in pursuit of positions and status.

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<sup>8</sup> Nafoussi, Mortada Lamia, "Basic Concepts in Bourdieu's Thought," *Philosophical Approaches*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2017, p. 235.

<sup>9</sup> Debab, Zahia, "Issues and Concepts in the Sociology of Education in Pierre Bourdieu's Thought," *Laboratory Notebooks Journal (Daftar Al-Makhbar)*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2021, p. 141.

Like a game of chess, the value of each position does not derive from the individual occupying it, but rather from its relation to the positions occupied by others.”<sup>10</sup>

From this perspective, the educational field can be understood as a social arena in which various actors students, teachers, administrators, and educational institutions compete for recognition, achievement, and legitimacy. The distribution of cultural capital within this field largely determines the opportunities available to learners and influences their chances of academic success or failure.

It is therefore natural to find that Bourdieu adopted an objective perspective on contemporary societies, viewing them as being divided into “a set of fields, such as the economic field, the cultural field, and the educational field. Each field enjoys a degree of relative autonomy from society as a whole. These social spaces are characterized by social stratification and hierarchy, as well as by intense dynamic struggles and competition among individuals over material and symbolic advantages, and over positions of power and domination, depending on the type and volume of capital possessed by each individual within society.”<sup>11</sup>

Likewise, “the struggle within every field revolves around either common interests or interests specific to individual actors. Each field is governed by a set of rules, including the ongoing conflict between older and newer generations. Consequently, every field is shaped by the logic of competition, conflict, domination, and coexistence.”<sup>12</sup>

In this sense, the educational field is one of the central sociological concepts employed by Bourdieu in his analysis of schooling. This field encompasses educational institutions including primary and secondary schools, as well as universities together with teachers, administrators, students, curricula, and evaluation systems. Bourdieu argued that the educational field constitutes a space of competition and struggle among social actors, where cultural capital serves as a key mechanism through which social inequalities are reproduced and legitimized.

Accordingly, the educational field is not merely a neutral setting for the transmission of knowledge; rather, it is a social arena in which unequal distributions of cultural capital shape opportunities for success and failure. Through its practices, standards, and modes of evaluation, the educational field often contributes to maintaining existing social hierarchies while presenting them as the outcome of merit and individual achievement.

## **2\_School and Social Reproduction in Pierre Bourdieu’s Theory**

Arnold Clause argues that the school, as a social institution, may be described as “an organized system of beliefs, values, traditions, and patterns of thought and behavior that are embodied in its structure and in its particular ideology.”<sup>13</sup> As for the concept of social reproduction, within the field of the sociology of education it refers to a significant social reality that reveals what lies behind the apparent harmony and coherence of any social system. Bourdieu approached

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<sup>10</sup> Jean-François Dortier, translated by George Kattoura, Dictionary of the Human Sciences, Kalima and Majd, University Foundation for Studies, Publishing and Distribution, Abu Dhabi, 2nd ed., 2011, p. 350

<sup>11</sup> Debab, Zahia, “Issues and Concepts in the Sociology of Education in Pierre Bourdieu’s Thought,” Laboratory Notebooks Journal (Daftar Al-Makhbar), Vol. 16, No. 1, 2021, p. 145.

<sup>12</sup> Debab, Zahia, “Issues and Concepts in the Sociology of Education in Pierre Bourdieu’s Thought,” Laboratory Notebooks Journal (Daftar Al-Makhbar), Vol. 16, No. 1, 2021, p. 145.

<sup>13</sup> Ali Asaad Watfa and Ali Jassim Al-Shihab, School Sociology, 1st ed., University Foundation for Studies, Lebanon, 2004, p. 17.

this concept by raising a fundamental question: Why and how does the social world endure and persist? How is the social order perpetuated, that is, the set of relationships that constitute and sustain that order?

In the same context, the idea of social reproduction emerges “from trajectories and processes linked to the practices of social agents and the habitus and forms of capital they possess. These elements shape their social positions and enable them to reproduce existing structures in a fluid and often unconscious manner. Individuals engage in such practices without necessarily being aware of doing so, as though the educational or social field had become a space in which agents exercise influence and domination over one another according to the symbolic power and resources they hold. Consequently, social reproduction functions as a mechanism of preservation and reinforcement, protecting existing boundaries and structures so that similar beginnings inevitably generate similar outcomes.”<sup>14</sup>

From Bourdieu’s perspective, the school is not merely an institution responsible for transmitting knowledge and skills. Rather, it plays a central role in reproducing the social structure by legitimizing the cultural capital of dominant social groups and presenting it as universal and academically valuable. Through curricula, pedagogical practices, language use, and assessment methods, schools often reward students whose cultural backgrounds correspond to the dominant culture, while disadvantaging those who do not possess the same cultural resources.

Accordingly, educational success cannot be explained solely by individual effort or intellectual ability. Instead, it is closely linked to the distribution of cultural capital and the social conditions in which students are raised. In this way, the educational system contributes to the reproduction of social inequalities across generations while simultaneously concealing the mechanisms through which such inequalities are maintained.

Bourdieu's formulation of the concept of reproduction reveals an educational reality, while also addressing the following question: How can educational actors engage in relationships and practices within a system that is endowed with legitimacy, while these practices simultaneously express the habitus they possess and reflect their cultural capital, yet without their knowledge or awareness? The answer to this question leads us to the reproduction of the same social classes and hierarchies within the educational field. Consequently, education shifts from its function of transmitting knowledge and sciences to individuals to a function of transmitting forms of knowledge that embody the culture of authority, power, domination, and symbolism carried by each party. Thus, the dominant group becomes the one that maintains the continuity of the social order as it exists, in a manner that serves its interests within society.

Accordingly, reproduction within the educational field received considerable attention from Bourdieu. He incorporated this idea into a major work associated with reproduction as a theory for understanding the mechanisms through which the educational system operates. In this regard, there is a strong connection between this concept and what is known as the hidden or latent curriculum, which aims to instill specific social values and characteristics in individuals. However, the real issue does not lie in this objective itself; rather, it resides in the fact that the

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<sup>14</sup> Cherifi, Fatima, “Education and Social Reproduction: Applications to the Algerian School,” *Journal of Human and Social Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2025, p. 344.

characteristics promoted by this curriculum contribute to the creation of a non-homogeneous society, or, in more Marxist terms, a class-based society.<sup>15</sup>

Likewise, the school performs an indirect function by “excluding a broad segment of society's members who are described as having culturally unacceptable backgrounds. Cultural barriers stand in the way of these groups' access to higher education. Social origin is considered the most significant indicator of differences and distinctions among students striving for success. The school is the compulsory pathway to achieving success. According to Takashi Banaki, two indicators of an individual's social origin are: the father's social status, which has a direct effect, and the educational level, whose influence is mediated through the father's social position.”<sup>16</sup>

According to Pierre Bourdieu, the school does not contribute to the production of knowledge as much as it contributes to the production of class divisions and inequality within the classroom. Through what is referred to as reproduction, or the production of symbolic violence within the educational institution, the school perpetuates a sense of inferiority, or what may be termed the culture of symbolic violence, among members of the popular classes in comparison with those of the upper bourgeois class, who achieve better results at school. In this context, the outcomes obtained are interpreted not as a reflection of students' academic abilities, but rather as a consequence of their cultural background. However, what emerges from Bourdieu's writings is that students belonging to the dominant group tend to believe that they are more intelligent than their peers from the dominated group. This calls for uncovering the misconceptions surrounding the production of social hierarchy within the school environment. Furthermore, the role of the school in creating social hierarchies within the educational field stems from its “concealment behind the ideology of equal educational opportunities. This is what Pierre Bourdieu emphasized through educational curricula that reinforce the legitimacy of prevailing social class differences. In this way, the school contributes to masking the imposition of the field of symbolic violence while reproducing class distinctions through the promotion of a linguistic capital that better equips certain students linguistically and places them closer to the language of the school than the linguistic capital possessed by children from popular-class backgrounds. Most of these children are subjected to educational exclusion or academic failure as a result of the reinforcement of class habitus.”<sup>17</sup>

It is also well known that the symbolic violence exercised by the school is “concealed through the claim that the educational system enjoys autonomy and achieves equality, thereby maintaining class divisions in a subtle manner. The cultural level of the family is closely linked to academic success, and the role of the mother is particularly important during the child's early years at school. The dynamics of the linguistic field constitute a concrete example of the laws governing the legitimate transmission of cultural capital from one generation to another.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Cherifi, Fatima, “Education and Social Reproduction: Applications to the Algerian School,” *ibid.*, p. 345.

<sup>16</sup> Boudebza, Nacer, “Families and Educational Action: Traditional Practices or a Strategy for Producing Choices?” *Journal of Human Sciences*, No. 10, 2013, p. 325.

<sup>17</sup> Boudebza, Nacer, “Families and Educational Action: Traditional Practices or a Strategy for Producing Choices?” *ibid.*, p. 327.

<sup>18</sup> Boudebza, Nacer, “Families and Educational Action: Traditional Practices or a Strategy for Producing Choices?” *ibid.*, p. 327.

It can be argued that the school projects an image of equality within the educational system, while in reality it employs the ideologies of the dominant group to reinforce class distinctions. When examining the issue of the language of instruction, it becomes evident that the dominant group is the one that imposes its language within the educational process, transforming languages into legitimized standards for success or failure. As a result, the exclusion of popular social groups from educational success is further intensified. In this way, symbolic violence becomes an invisible mechanism through which social hierarchies are reproduced and restructured within the educational field.

Accordingly, it becomes clear that the school performs a role in class differentiation within society, having become an instrument for the reproduction of inequality through the reinforcement of a culture of domination. In this regard, the school “reproduces social and cultural structures with all their characteristics and features. The force of the arbitrariness exercised by the dominant classes compels the subordinate classes to submit to what is imposed upon them, leaving them with no alternative but to acknowledge, whether willingly or unwillingly, the legitimacy of the dominant culture and, consequently, the legitimacy of cultural arbitrariness. As a result, they come to regard their own culture as illegitimate and therefore unworthy of consideration, while adhering instead to what is perceived as superior and more secure, namely the dominant culture.”<sup>19</sup>

#### **Educational Texts and Symbolic Violence (A Reading in Light of Pierre Bourdieu’s Thought)**

The school is considered an important social field in societies in general and in Algerian society in particular, owing to the outcomes it provides for society. Its importance is also evident in the educational text specifically. Based on our reading and analysis of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, it appears that the school has become a hidden space for the exercise of symbolic violence and the production of social inequality within it. Learners and their academic achievements are increasingly evaluated according to their culture and their possession of cultural capital, while popular culture is marginalized. Through the analysis of educational texts, the mechanisms through which symbolic violence is transmitted and social inequality is legitimized in an indirect manner become apparent.

In addition, it should be noted that educational texts encompass content, themes, and curricula that, as a whole, belong to the dominant group. School texts themselves are subject to the influence of the class that possesses dominant cultural capital within the prevailing social order, while popular culture is marginalized. This ultimately contributes to the reproduction of educational disparities among students.

Furthermore, Bourdieu pointed out that symbolic violence in the school refers to “the power to impose the instruments of knowledge and expression through which social reality is perceived. These instruments are arbitrary, yet they are not recognized as such. He also defined it as the power to impose particular meanings and significations as legitimate meanings and

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<sup>19</sup> Dhiab, Salima, “Issues of Educational Discourse in Pierre Bourdieu’s Thought: A Critical Analytical Study,” *Researcher Journal for Human and Social Sciences*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2021, p. 209.

significations, while concealing the relations of power that constitute the foundation upon which this power rests.”<sup>20</sup>

On another level, the danger resulting from symbolic violence can be addressed in terms of the fact that it “quietly infiltrates various systems of values before becoming embedded within the cultural structure and sociological foundations. It subsequently manifests itself in the form of practices whose legitimacy is endorsed by social actors as a necessity for preserving society and protecting it from discord and evil, in a manner that secures the implicit consent of those upon whom it is exercised.”<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, it can be argued that symbolic violence constitutes “a problematic and functional form of violence that may contain an ideological tendency within it, or a religious dimension that itself bears an ideological character. Thus, in Bourdieu’s view, every form of authority represents a form of violence. What is meant here is that any authority capable of imposing meanings and establishing them as legitimate does so by concealing the power relations that constitute and sustain its force. Symbolic violence therefore aims to create a state of submission to the other.”<sup>22</sup>

In other words, symbolic violence in the school does not arise solely from direct relations of domination; it is also embodied in educational texts that emphasize the knowledge and culture of the dominant class, such as the dominant language and other forms of cultural expression. This grants such texts legitimacy as instruments of the educational system. Consequently, educational texts become a medium through which this violence is transmitted to the school as a whole and, more specifically, to the consciousness of the learner. The latter thus comes to perceive inequality and domination within the educational field as natural and legitimate phenomena.

It is therefore natural to observe that the educational field conceals the symbolic violence embedded in educational texts behind the veil of legal legitimacy and school traditions. Indeed, the school “contains within its visible components a form of justice whose fundamental principle is that the law applies equally to all and that everyone has equal opportunities. Accordingly, the dominant classes receive a mandate to reinforce cultural arbitrariness, through which symbolic violence quietly and subtly infiltrates the educational system.”<sup>23</sup>

If we focus on language as an example of symbolic violence, it becomes evident that “the student belonging to a wealthy family possesses a higher level of linguistic competence compared to his peer from a poor family. This is because the wealthy student’s financial resources enable him to establish broad social networks and join various cultural institutions and private language institutes, whereas the poor student lacks access to such opportunities. Consequently, the chances of success for the wealthy student in examinations are greater than

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<sup>20</sup> Fathallah, Massaad, and Zarzoura, Obeid, “Symbolic Violence and Socialization: A Relationship of Influence and Reproduction,” *Rofouf Journal*, Vol. 11, 2023, p. 877.

<sup>21</sup> Fathallah, Massaad, and Zarzoura, Obeid, “Symbolic Violence and Socialization: A Relationship of Influence and Reproduction,” *ibid.*, p. 877.

<sup>22</sup> Fathallah, Massaad, and Zarzoura, Obeid, “Symbolic Violence and Socialization: A Relationship of Influence and Reproduction,” *ibid.*, p. 877.

<sup>23</sup> Battaar, Karim, Zerhouni, Faiza, and Asaad, “Symbolic Violence in the Algerian School: A Socio-Educational Analytical Reading,” *Tobna Journal of Academic Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2023, p. 1082.

those of the poor student, since it is unfair for both students to sit for the same examination while differing significantly in terms of acquired knowledge and levels of achievement.”<sup>24</sup>

Through our reading and analysis, this leads us to conclude that the dominant class, which possesses cultural capital and material resources, generally exerts pressure on the poorer, dominated class. This situation creates a form of unequal opportunity within the educational field, as it represents a subtle form of domination that exercises symbolic violence against this group. As a result, a type of class division or hierarchy emerges within the school environment. This explains why the school relies less on physical coercion and more on invisible symbolic violence, which may be regarded as one of the most extreme forms of violence inflicted upon students.

From this perspective, it can be argued that Bourdieu successfully analyzed, interpreted, and reached the conclusion that the school constitutes a space for the production of class distinctions within society. As for an individual's academic success, it is largely attributable to the cultural level of the family, since the student possesses a refined linguistic competence that facilitates the understanding and analysis of educational texts. It also enables the student to address academic topics using correct language. Naturally, this results in higher academic achievement when compared to a fellow student from a poorer background.

Conversely, it is observed that students belonging to poor or marginalized social classes encounter difficulties in adapting and adjusting to the school environment, particularly with regard to engaging with educational texts in terms of reading, comprehension, analysis, and related activities. This is because such students possess limited linguistic and material resources, acquired through their social background. As a result, they often struggle to integrate into the school system and achieve positive academic outcomes. These students may interpret their difficulties as evidence of their own lack of competence to attain academic success, which reinforces discrimination and generates a form of silent and invisible symbolic exclusion. It is here that the concept of symbolic violence, embedded within educational texts, becomes evident, as it contributes to the production of inequality and injustice within the school.

In his attempts to uncover the ideology of symbolic violence within the school, Bourdieu highlighted the disparities, conflicts, and inequalities existing between social classes through what he termed the process of social reproduction. This process occupied a central place in his sociological thought through concepts such as habitus and cultural capital, which he regarded as fundamental mechanisms of class struggle and the production of social inequality within the school. This is precisely what is reflected in the relationship between educational texts and symbolic violence.

As for our reading, analysis, interpretation, and understanding of the article, we find that Pierre Bourdieu considers the school to be the principal arena of cultural conflict. Applying this perspective to the content of educational texts, it becomes clear that every literary text is marked by relations of power and by a bourgeois cultural capital. In other words, the text itself may contribute to the production of inequality and social differentiation, and may symbolically and invisibly exclude one group in favor of another. For instance, children from bourgeois families

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<sup>24</sup> Battaar, Karim, Zerhouni, Faiza, and Asaad, “Symbolic Violence in the Algerian School: A Socio-Educational Analytical Reading,” *ibid.*, p. 1082.

endowed with cultural capital generally find it easier to read texts and understand their meanings because of their class background. In this way, the school exercises symbolic violence in a legitimate form, leading children from poorer social classes to believe that they are incapable of analyzing and comprehending texts. Ultimately, this process produces what is referred to as social inequality and lower academic achievement among students from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is within this context that habitus is formed and the reproduction of inequality within the school is perpetuated.

### **Conclusion**

In light of the foregoing discussion and within the framework of Pierre Bourdieu's sociological approach, our analysis of the relationship between educational texts and symbolic violence reveals that, while these texts play an important role in transmitting knowledge to students, they also function as instruments of symbolic violence. The manifestations of this violence become apparent through the meanings conveyed by such texts, particularly in reproducing what may be termed social hierarchy and inequality. Educational texts themselves assume class-based dimensions linked to the system of cultural capital, thereby generating a form of injustice in students' processes of knowledge acquisition. Consequently, the educational system is reproduced from one generation to another through habitus, contributing to the creation and transmission of symbolic violence in ways that are perceived as legitimate and socially acceptable.

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