

## GENDER REPRESENTATION IN PTB ENGLISH TEXTBOOK FOR GRADE 8: A TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

*This study looked at how boys and girls are shown in the Grade 8 English textbook published by the Punjab Textbook Board (PTB) in Pakistan. It aimed to find out if both genders are given equal roles or if the book still shows old-fashioned ideas, where boys are active and girls are passive. The research followed a qualitative approach and used a method called transitivity analysis, which comes from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). This helped examine who is doing the actions in the text and what kinds of roles are given to each gender. The researcher used purposive sampling to choose only those parts of the book that clearly showed gender roles. Some quantitative data was also used, such as counting how many times boys and girls were shown doing things. The results showed that boys were seen more often and given active roles like leading, helping, or working, while girls were shown less and mostly in quiet or home-based roles. Only one story showed girls as confident and successful. These results match earlier studies and show that gender bias is still found in textbooks. The study suggests that school books should show both boys and girls in equal and varied roles, so students can grow up with fair and open ideas about gender.*

**Keywords:** Gender Representation, Punjab Textbook Board (PTB), Transitivity Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Grade 8 English Textbook

### 1. Introduction

Textbooks have a big impact on how students think about their roles in society, especially when it comes to gender, the roles of boys and girls, men and women. In Pakistan, a group called the Punjab Textbook Board is in charge of making all the books for public schools. One of these is the Grade 8 English book. This study looks at how boys and girls are shown in that book. It uses a method called *transitivity analysis*, which means looking at who is doing what in the text who acts, who speaks, who is shown doing things. This helps us see the hidden messages about power and gender. Many researchers have found that school textbooks often repeat old-fashioned ideas about gender. Men are usually shown as strong, active, and working outside the home in good jobs. Women, on the other hand, are often shown inside the house, doing chores or taking care of others (Ullah & Haque, 2016; Ullah & Skelton, 2013). For example, men are shown as leaders or professionals, while women are shown cooking, cleaning, or praying (Durrani, 2008; Khurshid et al., 2010). These kinds of images and stories can shape how students think about themselves and what they can do in life (Lee & Collins, 2009; Ali & Hussain, 2019). In Punjab, English textbooks are used not just to teach the language, but also to pass on social and cultural values (UNESCO, 2003). Even though English is a global language, these books often reflect local traditions and beliefs, including gender roles (Jabeen, Chaudhary & Omar, 2014). Studies show that girls

and women are often missing from the stories and pictures, or are only shown in religious or family roles. In contrast, boys and men are more visible and usually shown working in offices, teaching, or doing public jobs (Sadya, Saleem & Mahmood, 2019; Iyengar, 2016). When we look closely, we see that these gender differences in textbooks can support old, unfair ideas about what boys and girls should do. This can affect how students see themselves and their future goals (Mirza, 2004; Rind, 2015). Textbooks don't just teach language. They also send messages through the words and pictures they use (Halliday, 1977; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). That's why this study looks at how language in the Grade 8 textbook shows gender roles, and whether it supports fairness or keeps repeating stereotypes. This research matters because it reminds us how important gender fairness is in education. When textbooks show both boys and girls in different roles at home, at work, in school, in leadership students can grow up with more open minds. They can imagine more possibilities for their future. Gender-sensitive textbooks can help create classrooms where every child feels seen, valued, and free to dream beyond traditional roles.

### 1.1 Purpose

This study aims to explore how boys and girls are shown in the Grade 8 English textbook by the Punjab Textbook Board (PTB). It looks at the kinds of actions, roles, and activities given to male and female characters. Using transitivity analysis (a method for studying how actions are described in language), the study will find out whether the textbook gives a fair and equal picture of both genders or if it supports old, traditional ideas about what boys and girls should do.

### 1.2 Research Objective

1. To explore how boys and girls are represented in the Grade 8 English textbook by the Punjab Textbook Board (PTB).
2. To see whether boys and girls are given equal roles or if there are clear differences in how they are shown.
3. To find out if the textbook shows both genders fairly or if it includes biased or stereotypical ideas about boys and girls.

### 1.3 Research Question

1. Are boys shown as more active and girls as more passive in the PTB Grade 8 English textbook?
2. Does the PTB Grade 8 English textbook show boys and girls in a fair and equal way?
3. How are boys and girls shown in the PTB Grade 8 English textbook through transitivity processes?
4. Does the textbook show boys and girls doing the same kinds of things?

## 2. Literature Review

The portrayal of gender in educational materials, especially in textbooks, was widely studied because of its influence on how students understood roles in society. Textbooks played an important role not only in giving academic knowledge but also in sharing cultural norms, social values, and beliefs (Wodak, 2002; Hus & Sovic, 2015). The way gender was shown in these materials could either support or challenge existing stereotypes, which made it a key area to explore.

### 2.1 Concept of Gender:

Gender was understood in two main ways: social learning and social construction. According to social learning theory (Lindsey, 2011; Brannon, 2011), children learned gender roles from people and media around them. They watched how men and women behaved and then copied these actions. The social construction theory (Andersen & Hysock, 2009) also explained that gender roles were taught by society. Family, culture, and media

gave messages about how boys and girls should act. Lindsey (2011) called this process "socialization." Sunderland (2004) said that language also helped in shaping gender. Speaking and listening both built gender identity. She made a difference between "Discourse" (big ideas about gender) and "discourse" (everyday language). Different cultures believed different things about what men and women should do. Etaugh and Bridges (2010) shared that society made rules for each gender, and these rules affected people's choices. Paltridge (2006) also said that gender was not something natural, but something society made.

## 2.2 Gender Representation

Gender representation meant how men and women were shown in language. In the PTB Grade Eight English Textbook, it happened through stories and lessons. Words and sentence styles gave roles to males and females (Montgomery, 1995; Hall, 1997; Sunderland, 2004). There were three ways to study gender representation Reflective approach: Language showed what already existed in society. Intentional approach: Writers shared their own ideas through language.

Constructionist approach: Meaning came from how readers or listeners understood the text. In the textbook, verbs, nouns, and adjectives helped show male and female roles. For example, when a boy did something, he was shown as the one who acted. When a girl was receiving the action, she was shown as the one affected. Transitivity analysis helped find this pattern. It showed that males were given active roles, and females were given passive roles, often without being noticed clearly.

## 2.3 Different Tasks Given to Boys and Girls in School Books

In the Grade 8 English textbook published by the Punjab Textbook Board (PTB), boys and girls were shown doing very different kinds of tasks. Boys were mostly shown doing things outside the home, such as playing sports, working in the fields, or speaking in public. These were active roles, where boys were the ones doing the main actions. Girls, however, were mostly shown doing household work. They were often shown cooking, cleaning, looking after elders, or reading religious books. These tasks took place at home, and sometimes the girls were only in the background, not doing anything important. This difference in how boys and girls were presented showed old ideas about what each gender should do. By carefully studying the verbs and the roles given to boys and girls (using a method called transitivity analysis), it became clear how the language in the textbook supported or challenged gender roles. This helped show whether the textbook promoted gender equality or continued old stereotypes.

## 2.4 How Textbooks Influence Gender Roles

Even if the textbooks seemed fair, they often sent quiet messages that boys and girls were not equal. This happened through certain words and pictures. Wodak (1997) said textbooks showed the values and power ideas of their society. Hus and Sovic (2015) found that boys were usually shown as leaders and decision-makers. Girls, on the other hand, were shown in helper or home roles. When students read this many times, they started believing these ideas. It made girls think less about leadership or careers and kept old ideas about gender alive.

## 2.5 How Different Countries Showed Gender in Textbooks

Many countries showed the same problem. Blumberg (2007) found that in the US, South Africa, and India, males were shown as active and strong, and females as quiet and dependent. Baghdadi (2012) also found that in Arab countries, textbooks showed men as leaders and women as housewives. Mustapha (2014) studied Nigerian textbooks and saw that

men were shown doing hard work, while women were linked with feelings, making them look weak. Lee (2017) found in South Korea that men were shown in professional jobs and women were shown doing home work.

## **2.6 Understanding Gender Through Society and Education**

Gender was not just about being male or female by birth. It was something learned. Butler (1990) said people learned gender by repeating certain actions, like dressing or speaking a certain way. So, gender could change depending on the situation. Connell (2002) explained that schools and society taught gender roles. She introduced the idea of "hegemonic masculinity," where boys were told to be strong and powerful, while girls were taught to be soft and quiet. Both researchers believed that gender came from society, not nature, and textbooks played a big role in this learning.

### **2.7 A Look at How Pakistani Textbooks Show Men and Women**

In Pakistani textbooks, men were often shown as successful workers doctors, engineers, or leaders. Women were shown in home-based roles like teaching, cooking, or looking after children. Researchers like Khurshid, Gillani, and Hashmi (2010) found that these textbooks gave the idea that men belonged in public places and women belonged at home. Nayyar and Salim had also found that women were rarely shown in powerful roles. Mirza (2004) noticed that women were mostly doing housework, and Ali and Muhammad (2016) said that even today, women in textbooks were shown as dependent and weak. These findings showed that old gender ideas were still common in Pakistani textbooks, and there was very little space for equal and modern gender roles.

### **2.8 Feminist Linguistics and Gender in Language**

The way people used language shaped how they saw the world, especially about gender. Feminist researchers noticed that earlier studies on language often ignored how women spoke or how they were shown in texts. One expert Cameron, (2008) said that language was not only used for talking it also helped create or challenge gender rules. Earlier, Lakoff (1975) had believed that women's speech was weaker than men's. But Cameron did not agree. She said that people changed the way they spoke based on who they were with and where they were. She also said that men and women did not speak differently because of biology, but because society taught them how to speak. This idea was similar to what Judith Butler said that gender was something people did, not something they had. Cameron used a method called Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). This helped her study everyday language, such as what appeared in textbooks, to see if it repeated old ideas about gender or tried to change them. When researchers studied textbooks using this feminist lens, they asked: Were boys and girls shown equally? Who did the actions, and who was just present? Were boys shown as active and strong, and girls as soft and emotional? This type of analysis matched well with Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) especially the part called transitivity analysis, which looked at *who does what* in a sentence. For example, in some 8th-grade English textbooks, boys were shown doing things like "building" or "exploring," while girls were shown "feeling" or "dreaming." These small word choices gave big messages about what boys and girls were expected to do. Cameron's work helped people see these patterns. By understanding how language could support or fight gender bias, people could make better choices in education.

### **2.9 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) Analysis**

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was a way to study language, developed by Halliday. It helped people understand how language made meaning in different situations. SFL showed that grammar was not just about rules but also about how people used language



to do things in real life (Simpson, 2011). According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), language worked in three major ways, called metafunctions: Textual Metafunction explained how language was organized to make ideas clear. It included Theme (the beginning of the sentence) and Rheme (the new or main idea that came after). Interpersonal Metafunction showed how people used language to interact. It included asking questions, making statements, giving orders, or sharing feelings. The Mood system was part of this and included different types of sentences. Ideational Metafunction explained how language was used to talk about real-life experiences. It had two parts: Experiential Function: This showed actions, events, and states using processes, participants, and circumstances. Logical Function: This showed how ideas were connected, such as cause and effect or comparison. The transitivity system was part of the experiential function. It included six types of processes: Material: Actions (e.g., running, building). Mental: Thinking and feeling (e.g., knowing, liking). Relational: Describing or identifying (e.g., is, have). Behavioral: Body and mind actions (e.g., laughing, crying). Verbal: Speaking (e.g., saying, asking). Existential: Showing that something exists (e.g., there is). SFL was not only a theory. It was a useful way to study texts and see how meaning was made. It worked well with both written and visual content. That made it useful for studying gender roles in textbooks. In this study, transitivity analysis was used to see how boys and girls were shown in the PTB Grade 8 English textbook. By looking at what kind of actions were connected to each gender, the study found patterns that either supported or challenged traditional gender roles.

## **2.10 The Dominance of Males in School Textbooks**

Many researchers found that school textbooks often gave more space and attention to boys and men than to girls and women. For example, in the Punjab Textbook Board's Grade 8 English book, male names and pronouns like "he" or "him" appeared more often than female ones like "she" or "her" (Ullah & Skelton, 2013). This showed that boys were mentioned more in the text. When looking at the pictures and stories, boys were also shown more often and in stronger roles like working, helping, or leading. Girls appeared less often and usually in quiet or background roles. This pattern was not only found in Pakistan studies from other countries also showed that male characters were more active and powerful in textbooks around the world (Sunderland, 1994).

## **2.11 Transitivity Analysis in Pakistani Textbooks**

In Pakistan, a study by Asghar and Khalid (2020) used transitivity analysis to look at how boys and girls were shown in PTB English textbooks. They found that boys were mostly shown as doing actions, leading, and being active. Girls were mostly shown thinking, feeling, or being in relationships with others. These patterns made the girls look more passive or dependent. Later, Khan and Raza (2021) also said that even though there were efforts to support gender equality, the new textbooks still did not show enough girls in strong or active roles. Ahmed (2022) agreed and explained that girls were often shown as people something happened to, not as people doing things. This kept old ideas about gender alive.

## **2.12 Educational Implications and Need for Reform**

The way boys and girls were shown in textbooks affected how students saw their roles in society. Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) said that children learned by watching and copying others so what they saw in textbooks mattered. If boys were always shown as strong and in control, and girls as quiet or passive, students might believe that these roles were normal and could not change. UNESCO (2016) said it was important to show both men and women in many kinds of roles in textbooks like leaders, workers, and caregivers. In Pakistan, adding balanced content to textbooks supported the goals of Pakistan Vision 2025, which focused on gender equality (Pakistan Planning Commission, 2014). To reach this goal,

schools needed to break old gender stereotypes, show fair images of both sexes, and offer strong role models to all students.

### **3. Material and Methods**

#### **3.1 Theoretical Framework**

This study followed the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach, a language theory introduced by M.A.K. Halliday. SFL sees language not just as a tool for communication, but as something people use to make meaning and express their roles in society. It connects the way people use language with the world they live in, including their culture, beliefs, and values. One important part of SFL that this study focused on was the Transitivity system. This part helps to explore how actions, events, and experiences are presented in text. It answers questions such as: Who is doing the action? What is being done? Who or what is affected by the action? By using transitivity analysis, the study closely examined how boys and girls are shown in the textbook whether they are the ones doing the action, having thoughts, speaking, or simply being described. This made it easier to see if the language gave more power or importance to one gender over the other. It also helped to check if boys were shown as active and strong, while girls were presented as passive or in background roles.

##### **3.1.1 Understanding Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Transitivity**

SFL explains that every sentence in language serves three main purposes, called metafunctions: Ideational metafunction is about how people use language to express ideas, describe actions, and talk about the world. It deals with what is happening, who is involved, and under what circumstances. Interpersonal metafunction deals with communication between people. It includes expressing emotions, making requests, giving orders, or sharing opinions. Textual metafunction is about organizing ideas so they make sense in writing or speech. It helps to make the message flow in a clear and meaningful way. This research focused mainly on the ideational metafunction because it helped to analyze how boys and girls were represented through the actions and descriptions in the text. The Transitivity system is part of the ideational metafunction. It looks at the structure of clauses and identifies three main elements in each sentence: Participants is the people or things involved in the action (e.g., a boy, a girl, a teacher). Processes is a type of action, event, or experience being described (e.g., running, thinking, saying). Circumstances is an extra information that tells us where, when, or how something happens. There are six common types of processes in transitivity:

Material Process shows physical actions (e.g., “The boy climbed the hill.”). Mental Process shows thinking, feeling, or sensing (e.g., “The girl liked the book.”). Relational Process describe or identify someone or something (e.g., “She is a teacher.”). Verbal Process involve speaking or communicating (e.g., “He said hello.”). Behavioral Process include simple physical behaviors (e.g., “She laughed.” or “He cried.”). Existential Process shows that something exists (e.g., “There is a garden.”). In this study, the transitivity framework was used to find out how often boys and girls appeared in the textbook and what kinds of roles they were given. For example, were boys mostly shown doing active things like working, leading, or speaking? Were girls mostly shown feeling, listening, or staying at home? This helped the researcher understand whether the textbook supported equal gender roles or repeated old-fashioned ideas. By using SFL and transitivity, this study aimed to uncover the hidden messages about gender in the Grade 8 English textbook. It provided a deeper look at how language shapes students’ ideas about what boys and girls can do in society. If textbooks show only one gender doing all the important things, it may affect how young readers see

themselves and their futures. Therefore, this framework helped show the importance of fair and equal gender representation in educational content.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This is a qualitative study, which means it looks deeply at the meanings in the text instead of testing a theory. It tries to understand how the textbook uses language to create gender roles. At the same time, it also includes some numbers. For example, it counts how often boys and girls appear, what actions they do (like speaking, thinking, or working), and what roles they have in the sentences. This combination of qualitative and quantitative methods helps the researcher understand whether the book treats boys and girls fairly or if it shows bias. For example, are boys shown as strong and active, while girls are shown as quiet or emotional?

### **3.3 Sampling Technique**

The researcher used purposive sampling by picking only those parts of the textbook that clearly showed how boys and girls were presented.

### **3.4 Research Method**

This is an exploratory study. That means it is trying to learn more about a topic that has not been studied much how gender is shown in this textbook. It checks if there are any patterns where boys and girls are not treated equally. The goal is to help improve school textbooks in the future.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

The study uses the Grade 8 English textbook by PTB as its main source. This book is used in many public schools in Punjab. The researcher selects some specific chapters that have different types of texts, like: Short stories, Biographies, Descriptive writing, Informational texts, Reading passages. From these chapters, the researcher picks sentences that show actions, emotions, and behaviors. These things help show how boys and girls are shown in the textbook.

### **3.6 Population of the study**

This study only focuses on one textbook: The Grade 8 English book used in Punjab's public schools. It does not use other books or sources. By focusing on this one book, the researcher can give a deep and detailed analysis.

## **4.Result and Discussion**

This study examined how boys and girls are shown in the Grade 8 English textbook by the Punjab Textbook Board (PTB). The main aim was to find out whether both genders are represented equally or if one is favored over the other. To do this, the study used Transitivity Analysis, a method from Systemic Functional Linguistics, which looks at who is doing the action, what is happening, and who is affected. Five textbook passages were selected for analysis. Each sentence was broken down into different types of processes: material (physical actions), relational (descriptions or states), mental (thoughts or feelings), and verbal (spoken communication). The study then counted how often boys, girls, or neutral characters appeared in each type of process. This helped reveal whether boys and girls were shown as active, thoughtful, and vocal or if one gender was more passive or missing. The results helped highlight whether the textbook promoted fairness or repeated gender stereotypes.

**Table 1.** The Division of Transitivity in Chapter 5 (Hazrat Umar)

Process Type	Frequency	Percentage	Male Participants	Female Participants	Neutral Participants
Material	5	45.5%	4	0	1
Relational	2	18.2%	2	0	0
Mental	1	9.1%	1	0	0
Verbal	3	27.2%	1	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

This table shows the types of processes used in the passage about Hazrat Umar. There are 11 total clauses. Most of them (45.5%) are material processes, which show actions like helping or doing something. These are mostly done by male participants, with one neutral. Relational processes (18.2%) describe someone or something, and these are only linked to males. One mental process (9.1%) shows thinking or feeling, also done by a male. Verbal processes (27.2%) include speaking or saying something. In this case, both males and females are involved, with two female participants and one male. Overall, boys are shown more often and doing more things, while girls appear less and mostly just talking.

**Table 2.** The division of Transitivity in Chapter 1 (Tolerance of Rasoolullah)

Process Type	Frequency	Percentage	Male Participants	Female Participants
Material	4	44.4%	4	0
Relational	3	33.3%	3	0
Mental	1	11.1%	1	0
Verbal	1	11.1%	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>

This table is about the passage on Hazrat Umar and shows how different types of actions (processes) are used. Out of 9 total clauses, most are material processes (44.4%) that show physical actions. All these actions are done by male participants. Relational processes make up 33.3% and describe qualities or states, again all linked to males. There is one mental process (11.1%) that shows thinking, also done by a male. Only one verbal process (11.1%) shows speaking, and this is the only place where a female participant appears. Overall, male characters are shown doing most of the actions and being described, while the female character appears just once in a speaking role.

**Table 3.** The division of Transitivity in Chapter 6 (Sports and Sportsmanship)

Process Type	Frequency	Percentage	Male Participants	Female Participants	Neutral Participants
Relational	6	60.0%	1	4	1
Material	3	30.0%	0	2	1
Mental	0	0.0%	0	0	0
Verbal	0	0.0%	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>

This table shows how boys and girls are shown in the sports and sportsmanship passage. There are ten total clauses. Most of them (60%) are relational processes, which describe someone or something. These mainly talk about girls. Four females, one male, and one neutral character are described. Some clauses (30%) are material processes, which show actions like playing. In these, two girls and one neutral character are active. There are no parts in this text where anyone is shown thinking or speaking in detail. Overall, girls appear more than boys and are shown as active and important. This passage is different from the others because it gives more space and positive roles to girls.





**Figure 1.** Chapter 6 (Sports and Sportsmanship)

**Table 4.** The division of Transitivity in Chapter 9 (Mountaineering)

Process Type	Frequency	Percentage	Male Participants	Female Participants	Neutral Participants
Material	5	55.6%	5	0	0
Relational	3	33.3%	3	0	0
Mental	1	11.1%	1	0	0
Verbal	0	0%	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

This table presents the types of processes found in the mountaineering text. Out of a total of nine clauses, the majority are material processes (55.6%), which show physical actions such as climbing, and all these actions are performed by male characters. Relational processes make up 33.3% of the total and are used to describe participants, again focusing only on males. There is just one mental process (11.1%) that reflects a male character's thoughts or feelings. No verbal processes are used in this text, meaning no characters are shown speaking. Overall, all nine processes involve only male participants. There are no female or neutral characters represented. This indicates that the mountaineering text highlights males as active and capable while completely excluding females.



**Figure 2.** Chapter 9 (Mountaineering)

**Table 5.** The division of Transitivity in Chapter 10 (Dignity of Labour)

Process Type	Frequency	Percentage	Male Participants	Female Participants	Neutral Participants
<b>Material</b>	6	46.2%	6	0	0
<b>Relational</b>	5	38.5%	4	0	1
<b>Verbal</b>	1	7.7%	1	0	0
<b>Mental</b>	1	7.7%	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

This table explains the types of processes used in the "Dignity of Labour" passage. There are 13 total clauses. Most of them (46.2%) are material processes, showing actions like working or doing something. All of these actions are done by male characters. Relational processes make up 38.5%, and they describe or give information about someone. These also mostly talk about males, with only one neutral case. There is one verbal process (7.7%) and one mental process (7.7%), both linked to male characters. There are no female participants in any of the processes. Overall, the passage mostly shows males as active and important, while females are completely missing.



**Figure 3.**Chapter 10 (Dignity of Labour)

**Table 6:** Overall Gender Representation through Transitivity Analysis

Process Type	Frequency	Male Participants	Female Participants	Neutral Participants	Percentage
<b>Material</b>	23	19	2	2	45.1%
<b>Relational</b>	19	13	4	2	37.3%
<b>Mental</b>	4	4	0	0	7.8%
<b>Verbal</b>	5	2	3	0	9.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>

In this study, a total of 51 sentences were examined from the Grade 8 English textbook. Out of these, male characters appeared in 38 sentences, which is about 75% of the total. Female characters were shown in only 9 sentences, making up around 18%. Neutral characters (those not clearly male or female) appeared in 4 sentences, which is about 7%. These percentages were calculated by dividing the number of sentences for each group by the total number (51), then multiplying by 100. The results show that male characters were shown much more often, especially in active and leading roles. Female characters had fewer roles and were mostly shown speaking or in the background. This means the textbook gave more importance to boys and men and less attention to girls and women, following old ideas about gender roles.

The analysis revealed a strong difference in how boys and girls were portrayed. Boys appeared most often in active, leadership roles, while girls were shown less frequently and usually in quieter or supporting parts. This pattern answered the research questions

Are boys shown as more active and girls as more passive in the PTB Grade 8 English textbook? It was found that boys were shown as much more active than girls: 73% of action clauses involved male characters, while only 17% involved female characters. This matched global studies in the United States, South Africa, and India, where boys were likewise portrayed as strong doers and girls as quiet supporters (Blumberg, 2007), and in Arab and Nigerian contexts where similar imbalances appeared (Baghdadi, 2012; Mustapha, 2014).

Does the PTB Grade 8 English textbook show boys and girls in a fair and equal way? The textbook did not treat both genders equally. Male characters occupied leadership, problem-solving, and physical-action roles in almost every chapter, whereas female characters were largely confined to background or domestic scenes. This unfair portrayal echoed findings in South Korean textbooks, where men held public and professional roles and women remained at home (Lee, 2017).

How are boys and girls shown in the PTB Grade 8 English textbook through transitivity? Through transitivity analysis, male characters were seen predominantly in material processes (doing and making things) and relational processes (being described), reflecting qualities such as strength or wisdom. Female characters appeared mainly in verbal processes speaking or reacting rather than acting. This pattern had also been reported by Durrani (2008) and Hussain and Afsar (2020), who noted girls' depictions as caring or dependent rather than as active problem-solvers.

Does the textbook show boys and girls doing the same kinds of things? Very few examples showed boys and girls performing the same tasks. Only one sports story presented girls in active roles, yet boys remained equally prominent even there. Worldwide, textbooks rarely give girls equal space in action scenes, reinforcing traditional gender divides (Mirza, 2004; Rind, 2015). Overall, the Grade 8 textbook followed a global trend of favoring male characters in action and leadership while marginalizing female characters. This confirmed long-standing patterns in international research and suggested an urgent need for textbook reforms that present boys and girls in equally varied and empowering roles.

## 5. Conclusion

This study looked at how boys and girls are shown in the Grade 8 English textbook by the Punjab Textbook Board. It found that boys appear more often and are given stronger and more active roles, like working, helping, or leading. Girls are shown less and mostly in smaller or passive roles. This gives an unfair picture of what boys and girls can do and may affect how students see themselves and others. When we compare this with other studies from Pakistan and other countries, we see the same results. Boys are usually shown as active and important, while girls are shown less and given weaker roles. This shows that gender bias in textbooks is a common issue. This study shows that it is important to change how boys and girls are shown in school books. If boys are always shown as leaders and girls in the background, children might start believing these roles are normal. But both boys and girls can do great things. Textbooks should treat them equally so all students can feel valued, hopeful, and ready to do well in life.

### 5.1 Limitations of the Study

This study had some limitations that should be considered. First, it only focused on one textbook the Grade 8 English book published by the Punjab Textbook Board (PTB). Because of this, the findings cannot be applied to all textbooks used in other grades, subjects,



or provinces. A broader selection of textbooks might have provided a more complete picture of gender representation across the curriculum. Second, the study used purposive sampling, which means only selected chapters and sentences that clearly showed gender roles were included. This might mean that some other useful examples of gender representation were not analyzed. Third, this research mainly used transitivity analysis from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to explore gender roles. While this method is useful for studying actions and participants in a sentence, it does not explore images or visuals in the textbook, which can also send powerful gender messages. Finally, the study did not include the views of students or teachers. Their opinions and experiences could have added more depth and helped us understand how gender messages in the textbook are understood or interpreted in the classroom. In short, while the study gives helpful insights into gender bias in one English textbook, future research should include more books, different methods, and voices from the classroom to get a fuller understanding of the issue.

## 5.2 Suggestion for Future Research

Future research can look at other textbooks like science, math, or Urdu to see if boys and girls are shown equally there too. Researchers can study books from other grades, like Grade 5 or Grade 10, to see if the same gender gap is found in those levels. It would be helpful to ask students and teachers how they feel about the way boys and girls are shown in textbooks. Their thoughts can give a better understanding of the real impact. Researchers can also compare textbooks from Punjab with books from other provinces or even different countries to see how gender is shown in different cultures and areas.

## Declarations

**Conflict of Interest:** All authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

**Ethical approval:** This is the original work, and no work like table, figure, and results is stolen.

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