

## GENDER REPRESENTATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS IN BANGLADESH

Abdul Awal

*Doctoral School of Humanities, University of Lodz, Poland*

**Abstract:** This study investigated gender representation in English textbooks from Classes 6 to 10 in Bangladesh, using corpus analysis. AntConc, a textual analysis tool, was used to quantify the occurrence of gender-related lexical items in resources. The corpus comprises approximately 147,698 tokens distributed across the four textbooks. The results revealed significant disparities in the distribution of male- and female-associated lexical items. Here, male-related words occurred 1,958 times (1.33 %), whereas female-related words occurred 1,165 times (0.79 %). The highest imbalance ratio (0.94 %) was found in textbooks of class 6 having male represented words (1.95%) and female represented words (1.01%). This male-dominated gender disproportion appeared in the other three textbooks at different ratios, which may reflect Bangladesh's cultural and societal norms. These distinctive and male-centred gender-biased textbooks may have an impact on students' perceptions of gender roles and societal expectations. The findings of this corpus analysis predict how much textbook content may affect female students' sense of inclusion and their collective consciousness of gender rights. Finally, it recommends ensuring gender equality and inclusion in the textbooks.

**Keywords:** Bangladeshi textbooks, corpus analysis, gender representation, gender bias, gender equality

**About the author:** Abdul Awal is working on his Ph.D. thesis at Doctoral School of Humanities, University of Lodz, Poland. His research focuses on linguistic imperialism and World Englishes. He is currently a visiting doctoral student at the European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), Germany, and a master's student in Applied Multilingual and Multicultural Studies at the University of Warsaw, Poland. His academic interests include linguistic human rights, language policy and planning, linguistic justice, language and law, diversity management, and language planning and policy for indigenous minorities. Recently, he participated in the summer school "Youth in a Fair and Just World", organised by the YOUNG – Nordic Journal of Youth Research and Nordic Youth Research Symposium (NYRIS 2024) in Helsinki, Finland.

**e-mail:** [abduleducation2022@gmail.com](mailto:abduleducation2022@gmail.com)

**ORCID ID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3795-4583>

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## **Introduction**

Gender refers not only to social, cultural, and psychological characteristics but also to roles based on biological sex (Worthy et al., 2020). Thus, gender roles are cultural norms and expectations associated with each gender that have changed over time. Moreover, gender equality is essential for promoting a sense of inclusivity and social equality for gender rights regardless of gender identity.

Textbooks are an essential educational resource that facilitates learning in academic institutions. First, they provide structured and organized information, including key concepts, theories, and principles along with exercises, problems, and examples. Second, they often align with educational standards and learning goals, thereby providing a framework for instruction and assessment. In addition, textbooks serve as references for teachers, guide lesson planning, and provide additional resources. Finally, the information presented in textbooks is shaped by factors such as the author's knowledge, the target audience, and the educational background.

Textbooks can either represent gender stereotypes and biases or promote gender representation for critical collective consciousness and action against systemic social oppression (Moya-Mata et al., 2023; Heberle et al., 2020). Moreover, they are considered powerful tools for fostering students' perspectives and attitudes towards gender equality, social issues, and justice (Agha & Shaikh, 2022; Castro et al., 2022). Furthermore, textbooks develop national identity (Kim & Lee, 2021; Darmawan & Mulyana, 2019; Köroğlu & Elban, 2020; Fotopoulos et al., 2017; Afzal et al., 2021), national ideology and consciousness (Qazi & Shah, 2018) understanding of history, cultural norms, and values (Su, 2007; Fotopoulos et al., 2017) through the political and cultural agendas of the state or government (Kim & Lee, 2021; Rosemberg et al., 2009).

## **Literature Review**

Gender bias in English textbooks significantly affects student perceptions and learning (Suhartono & Kristina, 2018). The representation of gender disparities in textbooks has been studied in different countries recently including Indonesia (Antiksari, 2011; Tyarakanita et al., 2021; Lestariyana et al., 2020; Suwarno et al., 2021; Tusita & Emaliana, 2020; Yonata & Yoniswan, 2021), Malaysia (Mukundan & Nimehchisal, 2008), Nigeria (Ogbonnaya-Iduma, 2014), Pakistan (Ahmad & Shah, 2019; Mahmood et al., 2021; Dar & Bano, 2023; Ali & Hussain, 2019), the Philippines (Tarrayo, 2014), Japan (Lee, 2018), Uzbekistan (Norova, 2020), India (Bose & Gao, 2022), and Uganda (Barton & Sakwa, 2012).

In the context of South Asia, gender bias and stereotypical traditional gender roles are found in English language textbooks in Pakistan (Ahmad & Shah,

2019; Dar & Bano, 2023), and a similar tendency is observed in Indian English language teaching textbooks (Bose & Gao, 2022).

In South-Eastern countries, different forms of gender bias have been observed in textbooks. For example, male characters are often presented negatively in Malaysia (Mukundan & Nimehchisal, 2008), while, women are less illustrated in occupational roles in the Philippines (Tarrayo, 2024). Although there is a gender-biased stereotype and male dominance in Indonesian English language textbooks, they acknowledge the need for gender equality in educational reforms and consciousness (Yonata & Yoniswan, 2021; Tyarakanita et al. 2021; Lestariyana et al., 2020; Antiksari, 2011; Suwarno et al., 2021; Tusita & Emaliana, 2020). According to Dalle et al. (2023), two factors contribute to the higher representation of males compared to females in Indonesia. Firstly, cultural norms that underscore male supremacy within the national culture exert a significant influence on the content of books. Secondly, the foundational cultural values of society place a considerable emphasis on the roles of males across various facets of life. Similarly, in the context of Central and West Asia, patriarchal norms (Norova, 2020) and an imbalance in gender representation (Tabatabaei, 2016) are found in the textbooks of both Uzbekistan and Iran.

In African countries, gender bias creates a strong negative effect in different domains of society; for example, gender disparity contributes to social discrimination against women in education in Nigeria (Ogbonnaya-Iduma, 2014), and similar social consequences occur in Uganda and Ethiopia through underrepresentation and stereotyping of females in textbooks (Bachore, 2022; Barton & Sakwa, 2012).

On the other hand, in the case of East Asian countries, there is an emerging trend of near-gender equality found in primary textbooks in Hong Kong (Yang, 2011, 2016; Lee, 2014) and Japan but still there is a 'male- first' phenomenon (Lee, 2018).

## **Research Method**

This study used corpus analysis to investigate gender differences in four English textbooks at the secondary level of education in Bangladesh. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB)<sup>1</sup> distributes these books freely and they are easily accessible to students across the country. As these textbooks are distributed to students aged between 11 and 18, the study examined whether there is a balanced representation of both genders, and whether one gender is predominantly portrayed over the other. The textbooks examined in this investigation were as follows:

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1. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board, an autonomous entity under the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh, is responsible for the development of curricula and production and distribution of textbooks for primary and secondary education.

**Table 1.** *English textbooks used in the study.*

No	Authors	Year	Title	Publishers	Pages in total	Use
1	Jahan et al., 2022a	2023	English Class Six	National Curriculum & Textbook board	167	Class 6
2	Jahan et al., 2022b	2023	English Class Seven	National Curriculum & Textbook board	183	Class 7
3	Haque et al., 2022	2023	English For Today	National Curriculum & Textbook board	144	Class 8
4	Shams et al., 2022	2023	English For Today	National Curriculum & Textbook board	203	Classes 9 & 10

The following procedures were considered when conducting corpus analysis: First, PDF versions of textbooks were downloaded from the NCTB website. Subsequently, these PDF files were transformed into the txt format to enable analysis. Third, the corpus analysis software AntConc (Anthony, 2022) was used for corpus analysis. Finally, specific keywords (Table 2) selected for this study were used for the analysis.

This study used Dalle et al. 's (2023) list of content words to investigate gender representation in Bangladeshi English textbooks. The methodological rigor and scholarly credibility of their work on gender equality in Indonesian junior high school language textbooks ensures reliable and comparable findings. It is adaptable across cultural contexts, emphasising its relevance to this study and enhancing the broader discourse on gender in educational materials.

**Table 2.** *Keywords associated with both gender category (based on Dalle et al., 2023)*

Male			Female		
brother(s)	boy(s)	dad	aunt	daughter	dame
father(s)	gentleman	he	her	heroine	girl(s)
him	his	husband	lady(ladies)	madam	Miss
hero	king(s)	knight	mistress	Ms.	Mrs.
lord	Mr.	man(men)	mom	mother(s)	niece
master	nephew	son(s)	queen	she	sister(s)
sir	uncle	widower	woman(women)	widow	wife

## Results and Analysis

Corpus analysis showed a notable distribution of gender-associated lexical items in the textbooks. Two words from each gender category [male: nephew, gentleman; female: dame, mistress] do not appear in the text. Table 3 lists the various gender-associated lexical items found in the sample text.

**Table 3.** *Lexical items associated with gender found in four books*

Gender category	Lexical representation
Male	he, his, him, man(men), father(s), boy(s), king, knight, brother(s), son(s), uncle, dad, husband, hero, widower, sir, Mr., lord, master
Female	her, she, mother(s), mom, woman(women), sister(s), girl(girls), daughter(s), wife, lady(ladies), queen, aunt, heroine, niece, widow, madam, miss, Mrs., Ms.

### *Overview of Male Lexical Representation*

The analysis of lexical frequencies in secondary school textbooks, as detailed in Table 4, shows a significant representation of male-associated words. The total frequency of the male lexis was 1,958, encompassing a range of references related to gender roles and identities. The most often occurring lexeme is “he,” with 717 instances, accounting for 36.64% of the total male lexis. This is followed by “his” with 450 instances (22.99%), and “him” with 158 instances (8.07%). Collectively, these three references alone formed 67.70% of the male lexical items, showing a strong focus on male pronouns. Other notable male-associated words included “man(men)” with 150 instances (7.66%), “father(s)” with 113 instances (5.77%), and “Mr.” with 71 instances (3.63%). Lexemes such as “boy(s),” “king,” “brother(s),” and “son(s)” also appear frequently, each contributing between 2.30% and 3.12% to the total male lexis. Lesser-used lexemes, such as “sir,” “uncle,” and “lord,” range from 1.58% to 1.69%, while the least frequent lexemes such as “widower” appear only once, accounting for 0.05%. The range of usage for these references is relatively consistent, with most words appearing across four different contexts, except for a few such as “husband” and “hero,” which appear in two or three contexts, and “widower,” which appears in just one. Overall, the high frequency and percentage of certain male-associated words emphasised male pronouns and roles, which could influence students’ perceptions of gender roles.

**Table 4.** Male frequency and percentage of in texts of secondary school books

No	Male lexis	Frequency	Percentage	Range
1	he	717	36.64%	4
2	his	450	22.99%	4
3	him	158	8.07%	4
4	man(men)	150	7.66%	4
5	father(s)	113	5.77%	4
6	Mr.	71	3.63%	4
7	boy(s)	61	3.12%	4
8	king	49	2.50%	4
9	brother(s)	45	2.30%	4
10	son(s)	45	2.30%	4
11	sir	33	1.69%	4
12	uncle	31	1.58%	4
13	lord	10	0.51%	3
14	dad	6	0.31%	4
15	husband	6	0.31%	2
16	hero	5	0.26%	3
17	master	4	0.20%	3
18	knight	3	0.15%	2
19	widower	1	0.05%	1
Total		1958	100%	

**Overview of Female Lexical Representation**

The analysis of Table 5, detailing the frequency and percentage of female-associated lexis in secondary school textbooks, offers critical insights into gender representation within these educational materials. The total frequency of female-associated words was 1,165 words. The pronoun “her” is the most frequently occurring, with 370 instances, accounting for 31.76% of the total female lexis. This is followed by “she,” which appears 289 times (24.81%), and “mother(s),” which occurs 222 times (19.06%). The cumulative percentage of these top three references – “her,” “she,” and “mother(s)” – is 75.63%, showing a substantial concentration of usage in a limited set of lexemes. In contrast, other references such as “woman (women)” (58 instances, 4.98%), “Ms.” (36 instances, 3.09%), “sister(s)” (38 instances, 3.26%), and “girl (girls)” (44 instances, 3.78%) collectively accounted for 15.11% of the total female lexis. This highlights a notable disparity in the frequency distribution of the female-associated lexemes. Less frequent references included “daughter(s)” (24 instances, 2.06%), “mom” (16 instances, 1.37%), “wife” (14 instances, 1.20%),

“lady(ladies)” (11 instances, 0.94%), “madam” (9 instances, 0.77%), and “Miss” (9 instances, 0.77%). References such as “queen,” “aunt,” “heroine,” and “niece” each appear fewer than seven times, with “widow” being the least frequent at one instance (0.09%). The range of usage indicated that most female-associated words appeared consistently across the four contexts, mirroring the pattern observed in the male lexis. However, references such as “girl(girls)” and “daughter(s)” have a narrower contextual range, appearing in three contexts and suggesting a more limited representation of these roles.

Finally, Table 5 indicates that a small number of female-associated lexemes dominate the lexical landscape, whereas many others are used infrequently. The high concentration of references such as “her,” “she,” and “mother(s)” suggests a limited and potentially biased portrayal of female roles within the textbooks. This imbalance calls for a more inclusive and diverse representation of female-associated lexis to better reflect gender equity in educational content. The findings highlight the need for critical evaluation and revision of educational materials to promote a more balanced and fair representation of gender roles.

**Table 5.** *Female frequency and percentage of in texts of secondary school books*

No	Female lexis	Frequency	Percentage	Range
1	her	370	31.76%	4
2	she	289	24.81%	4
3	mother(s)	222	19.06%	4
4	woman(women)	58	4.98%	4
5	Ms.	36	3.09%	4
6	sister(s)	38	3.26%	4
7	girl(girls)	44	3.78%	3
8	daughter(s)	24	2.06%	3
9	mom	16	1.37%	4
10	Wife	14	1.20%	4
11	lady(ladies)	11	0.94%	3
12	madam	9	0.77%	3
13	Miss	9	0.77%	3
14	Mrs.	7	0.60%	3
15	queen	7	0.60%	3
16	aunt	6	0.52%	2
17	heroine	2	0.17%	2
18	niece	2	0.17%	2
19	widow	1	0.09%	1
Total		1165	100%	

The comparative analysis of lexical frequencies in secondary school textbooks, as presented in Tables 4 and 5, showed a significant gender disparity, with male-associated words appearing far more frequently than female-associated ones. The total frequency of the male lexis is 1,958 instances, approximately 1.68 times higher than the 1,165 instances of the female lexis. Key male-associated words such as “he” (717 instances, 36.64%) and “his” (450 instances, 22.99%) dominate, while the most frequent female-associated ones are “her” (370 instances, 31.76%) and “she” (289 instances, 24.81%). The overall percentage representation further highlights this disparity, with male lexis forming 1.33% of the total content compared to 0.79% for female lexis, a difference of 0.54 percentage points. The range of usage for male-associated lexemes is generally consistent across the four different contexts, indicating a broader scope and variety of male lexis, whereas female-associated references appear in fewer contexts, suggesting narrower usage. These data indicate a pronounced male-centric bias in textbooks, which potentially influences students’ perceptions of gender roles and reinforces traditional gender stereotypes. The findings underscore the need for more balanced and inclusive language in educational materials to ensure equitable gender representation.

### *Male Lexical Representation Across Textbooks*

Corpus analysis of the four textbooks revealed varying degrees of male lexical representations. As detailed in Table 6, the highest percentage of male lexical items was found in the Class 6 English textbooks (1.95%), whereas the lowest was in the Class 7 English textbooks (0.96%). The Class 8, Class 9 and 10 textbooks showed intermediate percentages of 1.05% and 1.46%, respectively. The variation in the frequency of male lexical representation across textbooks suggests a disparity in portrayals of male figures or references. The highest representation in the Class 6 textbook shows a more male-centric approach in earlier educational stages, which may influence young learners’ perceptions of their gender roles. The significant drop in male representation in Class 7 raises questions about the consistency of gender portrayals in the educational materials. Such inconsistencies may result in varied exposure to gender representation among students at different educational levels. The increase in the representation of male lexical items in the higher classes [Classes 8, 9, and 10] could imply a shift in narrative focus or the introduction of more complex subjects where male references become more prevalent. However, this shift also requires a critical examination of whether such changes maintain a balanced gender representation.



**Table 6.** *Male frequency and percentage in four books*

No	Book for	Tokens in the textbooks	Frequency of Male lexis	Percentage
1	Class 6	27128	528	1.95%
2	Class 7	40936	392	0.96%
3	Class 8	30882	326	1.05%
4	Class 9 & 10	48752	712	1.46%

### ***Female Lexical Representation Across Textbooks***

The analysis of the four textbooks revealed a notable variation in female lexical representation. As shown in Table 7, the Class 6 English textbook showed the highest frequency of female-associated words at 1.01%, while the Class 7 English textbook had the lowest at 0.58%. The Class 8, Class 9 & 10 textbooks showed frequencies of 0.61% and 0.96%, respectively. The highest representation of female lexical items in Class 6 suggests a more balanced approach to gender representation during the first stage of secondary education. However, the sharp decline in Class 7 textbooks is concerning. This drop may affect students' perceptions of female roles and their importance in various contexts, potentially reinforcing a gender bias. The slight increase in female representation in higher classes (Classes 8, 9 and 10) is encouraging but still highlights the need for a more consistent approach across educational stages. The variations in representation could reflect not only the content and focus of the textbooks but also broader societal attitudes towards gender roles.

**Table 7.** *Female frequency and percentage in four books*

No	Book for	Tokens in the textbooks	Frequency of Female lexis	Percentage
1	Class 6	27128	273	1.01%
2	Class 7	40936	238	0.58%
3	Class 8	30882	188	0.61%
4	Class 9 & 10	48752	466	0.96%

### ***Differences in Gender Representation***

Table 8 shows a consistent pattern of gender-based lexical disparity across the various educational levels. In all examined classes, classes 6, 7, and 8, and combined classes 9 and 10, the male lexis was more prevalent than the female lexis in both frequency and percentage references. Class 6 shows the most significant disparity, with male lexis appearing 528 times (1.95%) compared to female lexis, which appears 273 times (1.01%). This class showed the largest difference in percentage (0.94%). Class 7 shows the least disparity between

genders, with male lexis at 392 instances (0.96%) and female lexis at 238 instances (0.58%). Here, the difference in percentage was the smallest at 0.38%. Class 8 reflects a moderate disparity, where male lexis was recorded 326 times (1.05%), and female lexis 188 times (0.61%). The difference in percentage for this class stands at 0.44%. In the combined classes 9 and 10, male lexis was seen 712 times (1.46%), while female lexis was noted 466 times (0.96%). The percentage difference in this group was 0.50%.

**Table 8.** Differences between male and female representation

No	Book for	Frequency of Male lexis	Frequency of Female lexis	Percentage of Male lexis	Percentage of female lexis	Difference of the percentage of male and female lexis
1	Class 6	528	273	1.95%	1.01%	0.94%
2	Class 7	392	238	0.96%	0.58%	0.38%
3	Class 8	326	188	1.05%	0.61%	0.44%
4	Class 9 & 10	712	466	1.46%	0.96%	0.50%

**Overview of Gender Representation**

The results of the four textbooks, summarized in Table 9, show a significant difference in the representation of male- and female-associated words. The total number of tokens in the four books was 147,698, with male-associated words appearing 1,958 times, accounting for 1.33% of the total. By contrast, female-associated words occurred 1,165 times, constituting only 0.79% of the total.

**Table 9.** Overall male and female representation

Category	Total token in four books	Total categorical frequency in four books	Overall percentage of representation
Male	147698	1958	1.33%
Female		1165	0.79%

The analysis of lexical frequencies in the four educational textbooks revealed a marked disparity in gender representation, with male-associated words significantly outnumbering female-associated words. The data show that male lexis appeared 1,958 times, accounting for 1.33% of the total tokens, whereas female lexis appeared 1,165 times, constituting 0.79% of the total. This resulted in a raw frequency ratio of approximately 1.68:1 in favour of male-associated

words. The percentage difference further highlights this disparity, with the male lexis being 0.54 percentage points higher than that of the female lexis. These findings suggest a male-centric bias in textbook content, which potentially influences students' beliefs about gender roles and reinforces traditional gender stereotypes. Addressing this imbalance is crucial for promoting gender equity in educational materials and ensuring a more balanced portrayal of student gender roles.

### Interpretation of the Word Cloud from Corpus Analysis

The word cloud generated from the corpus analysis presents a visual representation of the frequency of gender-associated lexical items in the four English textbooks examined. Words like “she,” “he,” “mother,” “father,” “man,” and “woman” stand out as the most prominent, showing their higher frequency of use in the corpus.



**Figure 1.** *Word Cloud Visualization of Gender-Associated Words in Textbooks*

The sizable representation of pronouns “he” and “she” in the word cloud reflects a substantial usage of gender-specific pronouns, suggesting that the texts often specify gender. Similarly, the references “mother” and “father” appear prominently, denoting a strong emphasis on familial roles. The noticeable size of “man” and “woman” points to their recurrent use, which can influence learners’ perceptions of adult roles in society.

The larger fonts for male-associated words such as “king,” “lord,” and “master” as compared to female-associated references such as “queen” and “lady” may show a disparity in the portrayal of power and societal roles. This visual discrepancy underscores a potential gender bias within the curriculum, where male-associated lexemes are not only more frequent but may also occupy positions of higher status or authority.

### Discussion

The presence of male-focused materials in English textbooks in Bangladesh can be linked to a variety of interconnected sociocultural and historical elements. These elements have influenced the substance of educational resources and

have significant consequences for gender relations in Bangladeshi society. First, the historical background of Bangladesh is firmly grounded in patriarchal standards, where men have typically held authoritative and influential roles (Jaim, 2022; Hossen, 2020). Throughout history, societal expectations have positioned men as primary earners and decision-makers, while women have largely been confined to household duties.

These historical traditions and cultural norms continue to influence the provision of learning materials, resulting in textbooks that place a high focus on male perspectives, successes, leadership roles, and contributions (Islam et al., 2023; Mim, 2022; Prodip, 2022). These stereotypes are reflected in the development and approval procedures of instructional materials, where authors and editors, many of whom hold traditional beliefs, unintentionally reinforce biases by emphasising male-centric narratives at the expense of female representation. This persistent imbalance contributes to the continued prevalence of male-centred narratives (Dele-Ajayi et al., 2020; Kratchmer, 2021; Dhiman, 2023).

Moreover, governance structures in the education sector often exhibit significant gender imbalances, with decision-making bodies overseeing curriculum development and textbook approval being predominantly male, leading to a lack of female representation in the educational content (Mucheka, 2022; Tapala et al., 2022; Sengai, 2021; Keech, 2023; Shahzadeh, 2020). Moreover, gender imbalances are frequently observed in the government-structured education sector (O'Connor, 2020; Rosa & Clavero, 2021; Durrani & Halai, 2020; DeHart-Davis et al., 2020). This structural inequity perpetuates male-oriented narratives.

The gender gap in Bangladeshi textbooks has had a significant impact on everyday life (Muassomah et al., 2023; Wei et al., 2021; Durrani & Halai, 2020). The abundance of male-focused words and topics in textbooks has reinforced traditional gender stereotypes. This influences how young students perceive gender roles, with boys being socialised to see themselves as natural leaders and high achievers, while girls may internalise a limited view of their capabilities and potential roles in society. Additionally, the lack of female representation in educational materials can harm female students' self-esteem and aspirations (Mo et al., 2020; Varghese & Kumar, 2020; Aelenei et al., 2020). When textbooks highlight male accomplishments and minimise female contributions, girls may feel undervalued and discouraged from pursuing ambitious academic and career goals, leading to a noticeable gender disparity in various professional fields. The education system plays a critical role in shaping societal values and norms, and male-oriented textbooks contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequality by marginalising women. This marginalisation impacts various aspects of life, from employment opportunities to participation in public and political spheres, thus perpetuating systemic gender disparities. Moreover, gender bias in education

has far-reaching social and economic effects (Lechman & Popowska, 2022; Merma-Molina et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2024; Donkor & Mazumder, 2020; Nasir et al., 2020). By restricting the educational and career goals of half of the population, Bangladesh has decreased its potential for economic growth and social progress. Providing women with well-rounded education is significant for achieving sustainable development goals and creating a more inclusive society. Additionally, promoting traditional gender roles through education affects relationships within families and communities (Few-Demo & Allen, 2020; Reczek, 2020; Bullough et al., 2022; Mshweshwe, 2020). These predetermined roles may result in unequal power dynamics and restrict opportunities for fair and cooperative partnership between men and women. This situation perpetuates cycles of inequality and impedes the advancement of gender equality.

Textbooks should focus on the diverse and non-traditional roles of men and women. They should present a wide range of gender roles to promote inclusivity and fairness among the students. Moreover, the frequent use of specific female pronouns and nouns reflects societal attitudes towards gender roles. Emphasising traditional roles can limit students' understanding of the diverse contributions women make to society. Textbooks should offer a balanced representation of gender to help normalise equality and diversity while challenging traditional gender narratives. Furthermore, educational materials should follow linguistic inclusiveness to shape students' understandings of gender roles and equality. Therefore, future textbook revisions should move beyond the traditional roles to reflect a wider range of experiences and identities. Consequently, to ensure gender rights in academic discourse, textbooks should avoid overrepresentation or underrepresentation of one gender, because this can negatively influence students' beliefs about gender roles. Therefore, textbooks should offer a balanced view of all genders, requiring critical evaluation of gender roles to promote a progressive and egalitarian society. Inconsistent gender representation across grades is predicted to affect students' perceptions of their gender roles. A consistent and balanced representation of gender across all educational levels is crucial to avoiding perpetuating gender stereotypes. Often, male-associated words are more frequent and prominent in textbooks than female-associated words are. Therefore, an equal representation of gender-associated words should be developed to avoid stereotypical mindsets. Policymakers and textbook publishers should use analytical tools to review and revise content to align it with contemporary standards of gender equality. By addressing these disparities, educational materials can help to shape a more egalitarian society. The visual representation of the word cloud highlights the need for a more balanced linguistic approach to educational content to avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes.

## Conclusion

A corpus analysis of four English textbooks from the secondary education national curriculum of Bangladesh showed a visible gender imbalance in linguistic representation. This imbalance is not only a linguistic issue, but also reflects deeper societal norms, cultural traditions, and historical perspectives that are often implanted in language teaching and educational materials.

The tendency to associate certain professions or roles with a specific gender in a language reflects societal bias. Moreover, cultural values that shape language can reinforce these biases, embedding them deeply into the educational content. The predominance of male-associated words in textbooks can affect students' self-image and the values they assign to different genders in societal contexts. Furthermore, a language that favours one gender over another may lead to feelings of exclusion and undervaluation among female students, possibly affecting their motivation and achievement. Biased linguistic portrayals can shape students' aspirations, steer them towards traditionally gendered career paths, and limit their potential.

This study recommends certain issues to endure gender rights and equity in Bangladesh in the domains of educational materials. First, there is an urgent need to review curricula to ensure that content at all educational levels reflects diverse perspectives and portrays gender equality. Writers and publishers of educational materials must strive for an equal representation of gender in the language and examples used in textbooks. Finally, teachers should be equipped with a strong understanding of gender equality to foster an inclusive and respectful learning environment. The clear contrast in the distribution of male versus female lexical items, exemplified by the more frequent use of "he" over "she," underscores the need for pedagogical adjustments. Addressing this gender imbalance is essential to promote equality, empathy, and mutual respect among students. Educational stakeholders must commit to producing and delivering content that not only teaches, but also reflects the egalitarian principles of contemporary society.

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