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Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Verb Dynamics: a Study of Gender Roles in  
*Blueprint A*

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# Abstract

**Keywords:** English teaching books, gender, education, text, verbs, Halliday.

The teaching book is a very important device in schools and its potential impact can be considerable. This essay analyses how gender is established in one of the most common teaching books in upper secondary school, *Blueprint A*. The study aims to find out if the teaching book is stereotypical concerning the issue of gender equality. The analysis is made with Halliday's Functional Grammar Theory as theoretical approach and is compared to the guidelines of the Curriculum and the Educational Act. To fulfil the aim of this essay, three texts are analysed from a gender perspective. If the verbs are dynamic/stative, and if the subjects function as agents or not are the factors used to establish if there is a difference between how females and males are represented in the texts. The hypothesis is based on a previous study on the same teaching book but regarding another edition and course (Odén 2005). It is hypothesised that there are differences in how men and women are presented in the texts and that women are described as more stative while men are described in more dynamic terms. The conclusion of this essay is that females are established as more stative than males and therefore it can be argued that the teaching book does not satisfy the goals of the Curriculum or the Educational Act.

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
1.1 Background.....	4
1.2 Previous Research .....	5
1.3 Aim and Research Questions.....	6
1.4 Method.....	6
2. Establishing Gender.....	7
2.1 Gender in Society and Texts .....	7
2.2 Functional Grammar Theory .....	8
2.3 Stative and Dynamic Verbs.....	9
2.4 Intransitive and Transitive verbs .....	9
2.5 Hypothesis.....	10
3. Results: The Subject in Action .....	10
3.1 <i>Making Sex</i> .....	11
3.2 <i>Lollipops and Guns</i> .....	12
3.3 <i>A match made in Cyberspace</i> .....	13
4. Analysis.....	14
4.1 Analysis of <i>Making Sex</i> .....	14
4.2 Analysis of <i>Lollipops and Guns</i> .....	15
4.3 Analysis of <i>A Match made in Cyberspace</i> .....	16
4.4 Discussion .....	17
5. Summary and Conclusion .....	20
6. References .....	23
7. Appendix: Data Included in the Study.....	24
7.1 Making Sex .....	24
7.2 Lollipops and Guns .....	25
7.3 A Match Made in Cyberspace.....	26
7.4 Parts from Lpf 94, English Version.....	29
7.5 Parts from the Educational Act .....	30

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Women and men are given different opportunities to succeed in life, opportunities which are provided throughout childhood. Teachers play an important role in providing role models of gender equality and students are most often more influenced by the teachers than we imagine. Teachers play an important role but so does the material which they choose to use and also how they choose to use it is of importance. The teaching book is the only book which every person in our society at some point in their life has to read and study and which everyone gets to read with guidance (Larsson 1991:68). The teaching book can therefore be said to have an essential role in education (Larsson 1991:70).

A common belief in Sweden today is that gender differences do not exist and that they have been abolished, a belief far from the truth. Teachers and school staff need to be aware of gender roles and how they are passed on to the next generations. The Swedish National Curriculum states that:

The school has the important task of imparting, instilling and forming in pupils those values on which our society is based.

The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are all values that the school shall represent and impart (Lpf 94:3).

Teachers are responsible for achieving the goals stated in the Curriculum and the notion and understanding of gender equality have to be central issues in education but it is hard to say if this is possible with the teaching materials provided.

Gender is established through many variables, such as language and social codes and most people are not aware of the codes they send, or the importance of them. Using certain codes can and will influence how one is perceived. Fairclough states that discourse contributes to processes of cultural change, where the social identities or `selves` associated with specific domains and institutions are redefined and reconstructed. He adds that it is a very important discursive aspect of cultural and social change, which has been given less attention in discourse analysis than it deserves (Fairclough 2000: 137). The use of codes and culture change goes hand in hand since there has to be a knowledge of the codes which are

used, and how and when they are used to influence a change in the right direction, which should be what we want to do when creating gender equal teaching books.

Attending to the issue of gender equality in teaching books does not only involve the guidelines from the curriculum, it also involves what is said in the Education Act which states that:

School activities shall be structured in accordance with fundamental democratic values. Each and every person active in the school system shall promote respect for the intrinsic value of every human being and for our common environment. Persons active in the school system shall in particular

1. Promote equality between the genders and
2. Actively counteract all types of insulting treatment such as bullying or racist behaviour. Law (1999:886).

## **1.2 Previous Research**

Previous research shows that there are differences in how gender is established in texts. Ochs and Schieffelin (1983) present studies on children's acquisition of conversational competence, and the fact that people achieve different schemes to fit in the given roles of gender (cited in Coates 2004: 148). These roles are part of today's society and are seen as an important way to show group membership. At the same time they are contradictory since gender differences are something the modern inhabitant of society wants to abolish. Coates also discusses differences in how we establish our gender towards the people we talk to. Men are more likely to dominate women in mixed talk. They have certain strategies to keep their dominance in conversation (Coates 2004:111 ). It is this dominance that needs to be distinguished, as it occurs not only in conversations but is also passed on in written texts. Meredith Cherland gives examples of how boys and girls are described differently in modern popular literature, in this case Harry Potter. She shows how females are highlighted as different from normal people; girls and women are sexual beings with dangerous power over men. Furthermore, Rowling often uses a discourse of rationality to mark male characters as reasonable and a discourse of irrationality to mark female characters as foolish (Cherland 2008:275). She states that according to post-structural theory language is the site where reality and the social order are created, constituted, and constructed. The meaning of

language shifts according to social context (Cherland 2008:275). With this in mind it should not be hard to create teaching books which are gender neutral. If we are aware of the fact that the way gender is established through language in discourse and text, is the way reality is set and furthermore, that the social order we create is also the social order that becomes real. Our aim should be to change the future by changing our use of speaking strategies to make females and males more equal. But despite this, research shows that females and males are not established equally in texts.

### **1.3 Aim and Research Questions**

The aim of this essay is to investigate if the texts in the English teaching book *Blueprint A* follow the given guidelines of gender equality according to the curriculum and the Education Act, and furthermore to find out if there are any differences in how gender is established in the texts.

- Is there a difference in the use of dynamic and stative verbs connected to female/male subjects?
- Is there a connection between transitivity/intransitivity and the gender of the subjects?

### **1.4 Method**

The English teaching book *Blueprint A* has been chosen on the qualification that it is the most common teaching book in Upper Secondary School, and the A course is obligatory in all programmes. The texts are analysed through a gender perspective, by looking at the grammatical subjects in the clauses and the grammatical subject's ability to act. The study is based on a qualitative analysis comparing the subjects in the texts to each other.

*Blueprint A* is divided into chapters with different themes, which are divided into several texts. Three texts have been chosen for the analysis: one text with a woman as main character, one text with a young boy as main character and the third text about a woman who disguises herself to learn about the other sex. These texts have been chosen particularly because they have main characters from each sex and the third has, in a playful way, both.

The results of the analysis will be compared to the guidelines in the Curriculum, to see if the teaching book meets the expectations of gender equality, or if it is biased and stereotypical towards gender issues.

## **2. Establishing Gender**

In this section I will present some ideas about gender and how gender is established in texts. I will also describe how Halliday's Functional Grammar Theory can be applied in an analysis of the texts.

### **2.1 Gender in Society and Texts**

The way people use language is a way to establish identity and a great part of our identity lies in our gender. People no longer need to establish identity so much in relation to their own sex as to social groups. Despite this there are large differences in female and male speech. Coates declares that surveys have shown that before babies can talk they alter the pitch of their voices depending on the gender of the addressee, that their frequency is lower when they talk to their fathers than when they talk to their mothers (Coates 2004:150). Coates says that at an early age children learn to perform gender by manipulating the vocal tracts. At an age when they in reality should sound identical they learn how to perform gender and culturally determined patterns appropriate for each sex (Coates 2004:150). Coates writes about the many differences in female and male speech, how those differences are established and in what way we mark our identity by vocabulary, pronunciation, etc, but also by hesitations, declaring power, and hedges (Coates 2004:110 ). The many aspects of language use which Coates mentions do not only imply that there are differences between women and men, but on closer examination it is possible to draw conclusions concerning the fixed roles in society and how gender roles are established.

The same conclusions are drawn by Wareing who stretches the claim further by arguing that women's talk most often is associated with terms as gossip, chatter, nag and yak; terms which imply that women's talk is rather pointless (Wareing 1999:86).

If these claims reflect the general assumption of gender and that women's talk is pointless, and as both Coates and Wareing mention that men are more eager to interrupt women than men, it could be argued that the way women are represented in texts is an

effect of these opinions: women's talk is pointless which reflects women's role in society and thereby how they are established in texts.

According to Cameron, there are two very important stages when women's weaker positions in language are set. The first is the Oedipal stage where the child must align with women and restricted speech. The second stage is puberty, which further distinguishes girls from boys by the appearance of adult sex difference and access to public discourse for men (Cameron 1992:64). This goes hand in hand with a study made by Ochs and Schieffelin (1983) on children's acquisition of conversational competence and what the caregivers contribute to children's future language. They take the view that learning to speak is learning to be a member of a particular culture and that the process of acquiring language and the process of acquiring socio-cultural knowledge are intimately tied. They state that caregiver's speech behaviour expresses and reflects values and beliefs held by members of a social group and that not only caregivers' but children's language as well is influenced by social expectations (Ochs and Schieffelin 1982:67). The social order is reproduced through speech. Women's and men's roles are distinguished and therefore it is reasonable to assume that when children learn to speak they also learn the cultural roles assigned to them on the basis of their sex. They are learning how to 'do' being a girl or being a boy (cited in Coates 2004: 148).

Research in the area has shown that gender is established in early childhood, and with that, gender differences are established too. The differences can be abolished but only if people admit that they exist. These differences are noticeable in written text as well as in speech, but in written text the differences manifest themselves in diverse ways and might need to be analysed for notification.

By creating differences in how males and females are represented in the texts, if they are established as dynamic or stative, transitive or intransitive, acting as an agent or not, implies if they are passive or active. An established notion is that females are most often passive while males are active.

## **2.2 Functional Grammar Theory**

In traditional grammar we learn that each clause contains one element that can be identified as its subject. The subject is the label for a grammatical function, although it is hard to define

what the role of the subject is, and moreover, it is possible to connect the subject to a number of different functions depending on the clause structure. In an attempt to capture the complexity of the subject function Halliday has widened the scope and provides three definitions:

1. Psychological Subject; that which is the concern of the message = theme
2. Grammatical Subject; that of which something is being predicated (that is, on which rests the truth of the argument) = subject
3. Logical Subject; the doer of the action = actor (Halliday 2005:56-58).

A subject is most often followed by a verb; the verb in a phrase can indicate diverse effects. It can either show that the actor is dynamic, that is, being able to produce an action. Or the action produced by the subject can affect a receiver/goal. Another function of stative verbs indicates personal emotions and feelings. In some sentences it is possible to recognise several subjects; here Halliday's Functional Grammar is useful since the subjects instead are labelled theme, subject and actor.

### **2.3 Stative and Dynamic Verbs**

An event is something that happens for a limited period of time (has a beginning and an end). Most verbs refer to events and can be used in both the progressive and the simple form, they refer to an action that the subject is able to control; these are called dynamic verbs (Estling Vannestål 2007: 51-52 :192).

Verbs mainly used in the simple form and which refer to states, such as what we experience with our senses, *feel* and *see*, *believe* and *know* but also which relates to different entities such as *belong* and *like* are called stative verbs. Verbs with stative senses do not generally occur in the progressive form, although it is possible and when used that way, the verb indicates tentativeness (Greenbaum, Quirk 1997:54-55).

### **2.4 Intransitive and Transitive verbs**

The main difference between intransitive and transitive verbs is that intransitive verbs do not take an object, whereas transitive verbs do. According to Halliday the transitivity of a

verb shows who the actor in the clause is; the actor is the source creating the change (Halliday 2005: 179). The transitivity model is based on the composition of Actor + Process; the process is either confined in its outcome to the actor or extended to another participant, the Goal. The Goal is construed as being impacted by the Actor's performance of the process (Halliday 2005: 282).

## **2.5 Hypothesis**

In 2005 Pia Odén analysed *Blueprint B* through the extra linguistic factor of gender. In her analysis she came to the conclusion that there are differences in how men and women are presented in the texts (Odén 2005: 20). My hypothesis is that I will find the same differences in *Blueprint A*, and I also expect that I will find that women are described as more stative while men are described in more dynamic terms.

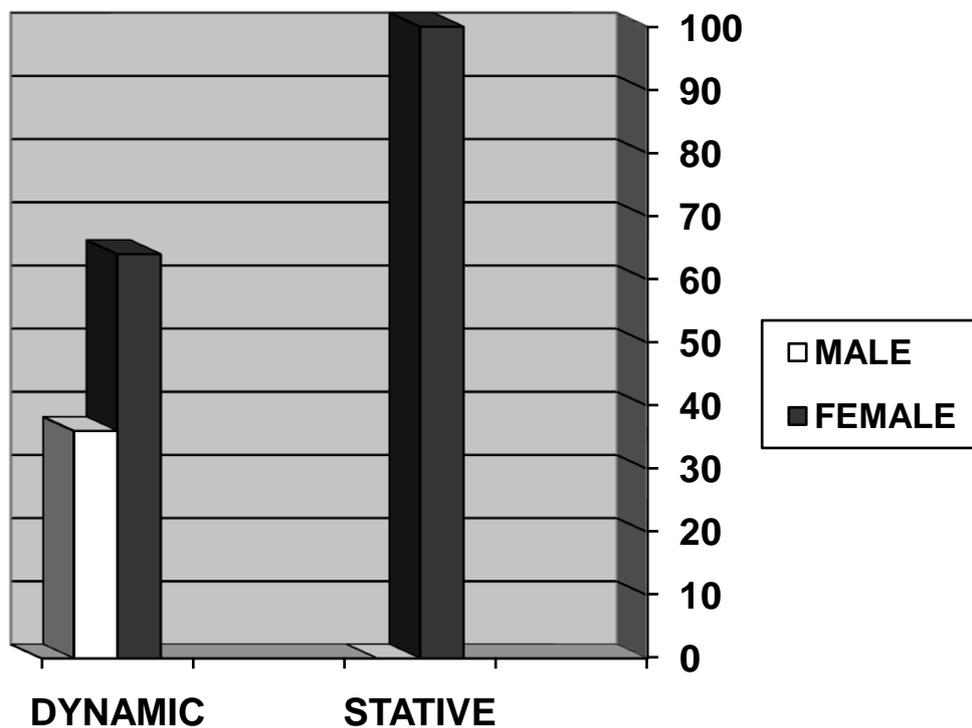
My expectation is that the texts included in the book and those three which have been chosen for the analysis are based on a belief of gender equality and with a pedagogical aim, taking gender equality into consideration, although my hypothesis is that those aims have been not been reached.

## **3. Results: The Subject in Action**

This section will give brief explanations and comments of the data and results of the analysis, text by text. As mentioned earlier, the transitive and dynamic qualities of the verb give implications about the subject in the clause. One important question is if there is a difference between the verbs that follow male and female subjects. For clarification I will also show the results of each text in tables, and below every table give brief comments about the findings. The results in the tables are presented in per cent.

### 3.1 Making Sex

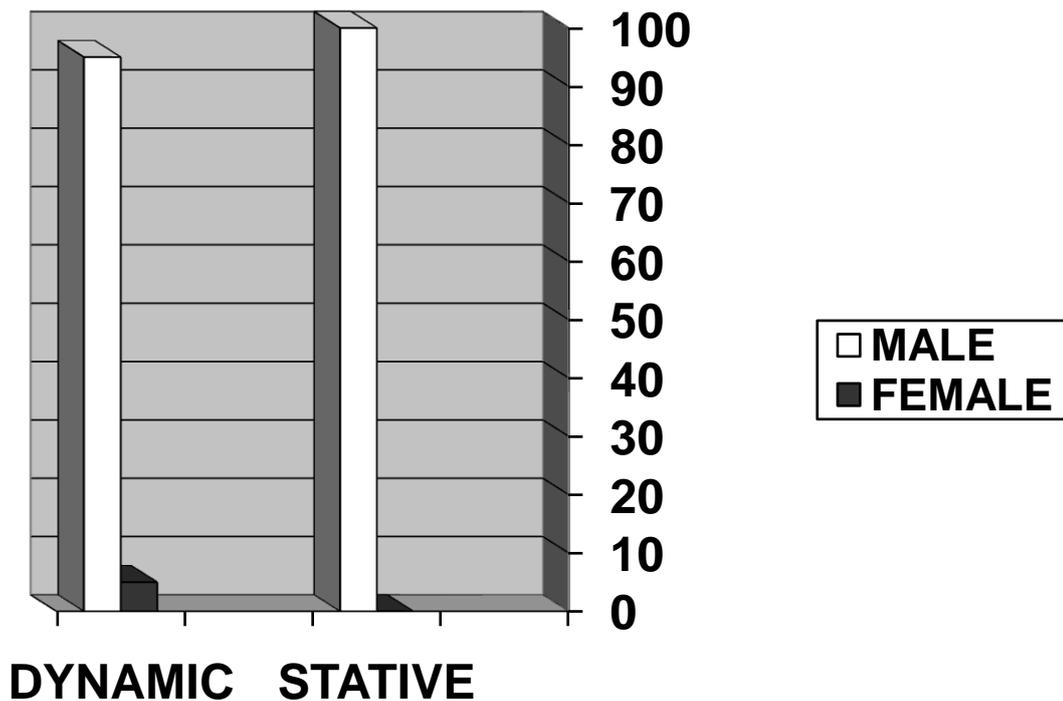
The text consists of 26 verbs, five of which have male subjects; these five subjects are all followed by dynamic verb forms. There are no stative verb forms connected to male subjects. The male subjects are outnumbered by the female subjects. Out of the 26 verbs, 21 are connected to female subjects, nine are connected to dynamic verb forms, while the 12 remaining ones are connected to stative verb forms. Throughout the text there is no subject which functions as an actor.



What is remarkable about this data is that even though the male subjects are fewer than the female subjects they show strength by being dynamic. Out of the five subjects none is stative, whereas the female subjects are 21 altogether, 12 stative and only nine dynamic.

### 3.2 Lollipops and Guns

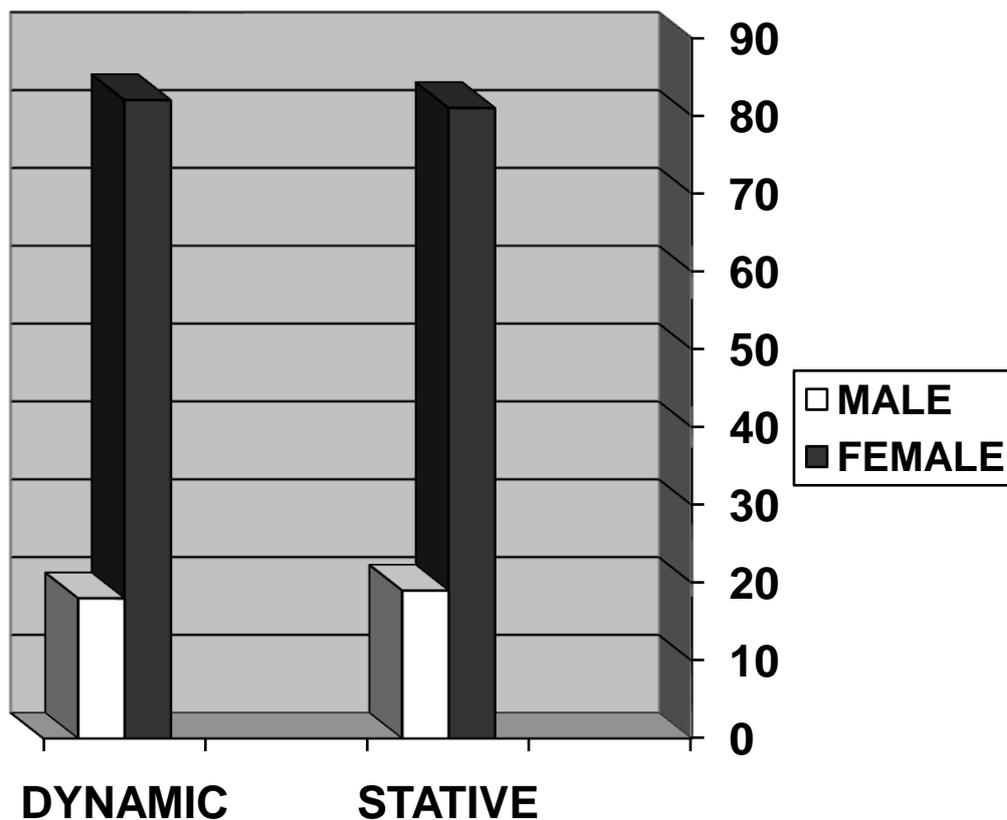
The text consists of 49 verbs, 48 of which have male subjects; out of the 48 subjects, 18 are followed by dynamic verb forms while 30 are followed by stative verb forms. There is only one female subject in the text which is dynamic. The female subject functions as an actor and four of the male subjects do.



In this text there are far more male subjects than female subjects. The text has two male characters; one of them is subordinate to the other. The dynamic verb forms are only 18 while the stative ones are 30. Most of the dynamic verb forms are connected to the superior character while the stative ones belong to the subordinate male. The female subject is dynamic because she interrupts the subordinate male character's plans. The female character functions as an agent, while 4 of the male subjects do.

### 3.3 A match made in Cyberspace

The text consists of 75 verbs, 14 of which are linked to male subjects; out of the 14 subjects six are followed by dynamic verb forms and the remaining eight are followed by stative verb forms. There are a large number of female subjects, 27 of which are followed by dynamic verb forms and the remaining 34 are followed by stative verb forms. There are no female subjects which function as actors, whereas two of the male subjects do.



Here too the male subjects are outnumbered by the female subjects, with 14 males against 27 females. The division between male stative and male dynamic is almost equal, while there is a larger gap between female stative and female dynamic with 34 against 27, not a vast difference but once again it shows that the female subjects are more often followed by stative verb forms. Another indication of difference is the two actors which are both males.

## 4. Analysis

This section will provide an analysis of each text of the data given in the sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. The data in the survey consists of 150 sentences taken from three different texts from the Teaching Book *Blueprint A*. To clarify I will give examples in the text and references are given to the data listed in the appendix. The references provide page, column and line.

### 4.1 Analysis of *Making Sex*

*Making Sex* is about a woman who chooses to disguise herself as a man and then tries to explore typical male areas in society. To make as adequate an analysis as possible and since the subject can be seen as either a female or a male subject, I have chosen to treat each occurrence separately and look at the situation. When it is obvious that the subject is female I have analysed from that perspective and when the subject is male I have analysed from that perspective, although there was never any uncertainty about the subject's implied sex.

As mentioned in section 3.1, the text consists of 26 verbs and only five of the verbs are tied to male subjects. In addition, all are followed by dynamic verb forms. The verbs used are *takes*, *noticing*, *comes*, *flirts* and *gives*. All of these verbs imply an action by an agent. Here the actor is the male subject, and furthermore the verbs also indicate that there is a receiver of the action.

An example of a dynamic verb used with a male subject is; *He flirts with women in single bars* (*Making Sex*, p 130:2:18).

21 of the 26 verbs are linked to female subjects. What is remarkable is that only 9 of them are connected to dynamic verb forms and 12 are stative. The tentative conclusion to be drawn from this is that male subjects more often are followed by dynamic verb forms than female subjects are. The dynamic verb forms which follow the female subjects are; *wears*, *explore*, *crosses*, *quest*, *hires*, *act*, *apply*, *says* and *discovers*. Only the verb *says* suggests that there is a receiver of the message. All the other verbs are intransitive and state the actor's personal emotions.

An example of a dynamic verb used with a female subject is; *so it is not just for fun that she crosses the great gender divide* (*Making Sex*, p 129:1:14).

An example of a stative verb used with a female subject is; *she is more of a neutral observer of mankind than a judge* (*Making Sex*, p 129:1:18).

There is also a difference between the dynamic verbs regarding the subjects. The verbs that follow the male subjects require a receiver while the verbs that follow the female subjects are intransitive and do not affect anyone but the agent. The stative verbs which follow the female subjects are also intransitive and indicate emotions and the actor's mood.

#### **4.2 Analysis of *Lollipops and Guns***

As mentioned in section 3.2, *Lollipops and Guns* consists of 49 verbs and 48 of them are tied to male subjects but only 18 of the 48 verbs are dynamic. There are a few transitive verbs; *handed, squeezed, making, taunted, taunting, review, said, completed, looked, said, studied* and once again *said*. The following intransitive verbs are used; *tightened, fulfilling, gripped* and *turned*. There are 30 stative male subjects in the text and all of them are intransitive. There is only one female subject and it is followed by a dynamic transitive verb.

An example of a dynamic verb used with a male subject is; *as he squeezed the barrel of the gun* (*Lollipops and Guns*, p 86:1:19).

An example of a stative verb used with a male subject is; *Miro was handed the revolver by Arktin* (*Lollipops and Guns*, p 86:1:15). This example is a bit ambiguous since it is the agent Arktin who is dynamic and functions as an actor and the subject Miro is stative since he functions as a receiver, although the example is chosen and analysed through Miro's position and therefore regarded as stative.

The reason that the female subject is dynamic is that she interrupts the plans of one of the male subjects; therefore she also functions as an actor. There are 3 male subjects who function as actors. One of them is directed towards the female subject and the other two are directed towards male subjects.

An example of a dynamic verb which functions as an agent used with a female subject is; *but a teenage girl upsets the plans* (*Lollipops and Guns*, p 86:1 from introduction).

In the text there are three main characters, one female and two male. One of the male characters is superior towards the other and this is shown through the verbs. Miro is the subordinate male character and by looking at the verbs in the sentences where he is the subject, conclusions can be drawn. Out of 30 stative verb forms, 27 are connected to Miro and only three are connected to the superior male character Arktin. There is also a difference in how the dynamic verbs are used. Miro as a subject is followed by only five

dynamic verbs while Arktin is followed by nine. The difference is not big but considering the many stative verbs that follow Miro, it shows a significant difference and these are of a great importance, since they reflect his uncertainty and inability to act.

### **4.3 Analysis of *A Match made in Cyberspace***

As mentioned in section 3.3, *A Match made in Cyberspace* consists of 75 verbs. From those 75, only 14 are tied to male subjects and out of the 14 subjects no more than 6 are dynamic. The dynamic transitive verb forms used are *offered*, *holding*, *hugs*, *kisses* and *acted*. There is only one dynamic intransitive verb connected to the male subject and that is *gotten* which describes that he becomes angry.

An example of a dynamic verb which functions as an actor used with a male subject is; *he hugs and kisses her on the cheek* (*A Match made in Cyberspace*, p 184:1:6).

An example of a stative verb used with a male subject is; *he is good-looking* (*A Match Made in Cyberspace*, p 183:2:11).

There are eight stative male subjects and all of them are intransitive. The male subjects are outnumbered by the female subjects totalling 61 verbs all together, 27 dynamic and 34 stative. A few examples of the female dynamic transitive verb forms are; *gabbles*, *murmurs*, *completed* and *refused*. There are 34 subjects followed by stative verb forms and all of them are intransitive. Furthermore in most of the examples they reflect the subjects state of mind; *falters*, *feel* and *shielding*.

An example of a dynamic verb used with a female subject is; June *completed the questionnaire and ticked off her interests from over 100 categories* (*A Match Made in Cyberspace*, p 183:1:2).

An example of a stative verb used with a female subject is; *her voice falters, and looking at the floor she murmurs, "But still"* (*A Match Made in Cyberspace*, p 183:1:18).

There are three subjects that function as actors in the text and all of them are male subjects, an observable fact since there are so many female subjects and so few male subjects.

## 4.4 Discussion

The texts were chosen from the perspective that they reflect gender in different ways. One of the texts is written to suit both female and male readers; the second text is directed towards male readers and the third towards female readers. They were analysed in the same way, by looking at the verbs which followed the subjects in the clauses, and by establishing if they were dynamic or stative, transitive or intransitive and if the subjects function as actors.

In the first text *Making Sex* there is an uneven allocation of roles between men and women. With 21 female subjects and 5 male subjects, one could argue that there should be more dynamic female subjects than there are. With only 9 female dynamic against the 5 male dynamic, and 12 female stative the text signals a difference in how female and male subjects are established. Furthermore this text is written about a woman who disguises her sex to find out what it is like to be a man. The text has a female main character, which does seem to be more dynamic when performing as a man.

The text directed towards male readers, *Lollipops and Guns*, has a large number of male subjects and only one female subject, a very uneven division. It should be mentioned that the only female subject is dynamic and functions as an actor, but the female subject is not the major concern in this text. Instead it is the difference between the two male characters, where 48 male verbs 30 are stative and 27 of these are connected to the subordinate character Miro. When the superior character Arktin performs an action he is in nine cases out of twelve followed by a dynamic verb, and there are only three occurrences where he as a subject is followed by a stative verb. Arktin only occurs in the text 12 times. Miro occurs in the text more frequently than Arktin but he is still followed by only 5 dynamic verbs. These numbers reflect Arktin's superiority towards Miro. It might be that one character has to be subordinate, but it is also possible that Miro has the role with female characteristics and therefore is presented as more stative.

The third text *A Match made in Cyberspace* is written with a female main character and can be said to be aimed at female readers. It is about a girl who is going on her first Internet date. There are 27 dynamic verbs which follow female subjects and six dynamic verbs which follow male subjects. The division is not even but that is not the interesting part. Looking at the stative verbs the data shows that there are 8 stative male verbs and 34 stative female verbs. If only comparing the data to each other it does not say much more than the amount.

But considering the fact that even if the male subjects are few, the division between stative and dynamic male verbs are quite similar, which indicates that there is at least no difference between those. In contrast to this the female verbs are 61 all together but only 27 dynamic and 34 stative. Consequently, even if the male subject is not given much space in the text, it is still more dynamic than the female subject. In a text with so many female subjects it should be the other way around.

In all of the texts analysed in the present study the females are represented as more stative than the males, even in texts where the female subjects in themselves outnumber the male subjects. It has to be said that it is not so much the number of stative verbs which is striking; it is rather the absence of dynamic female verbs which is.

It has only occurred once that a female has functioned as an actor while it occurs six times with male subjects. When a subject functions as an actor the act in itself is important, since it affects someone else and this is a way to show a dynamic context. On the contrary, when an action affects a receiver it shows that the receiver is stative. Therefore the number of male actors who function as agents is an indication of how gender is established in the texts.

There is more to study than only the dynamics of the verbs. Verbs can be dynamic and have different functions. If the verb is transitive it takes an object, and if it is intransitive it does not. In the text *Making Sex*, the dynamic verbs which are connected to the female subject are transitive but only two take a human object and those two are *said* and *hires*. Among the dynamic verbs which are connected to the male subjects only one is transitive and that is the verb *flirts*. Note that there are no stative verbs connected to the male subject but to the female there are. The stative verbs are all used to describe her state of mind; *look, make, is, understand, realizes* and *asks*. *Asks* could be argued to be transitive but since she asks herself she is the object and therefore considered as stative since the action does not affect another receiver.

In the second text, *Lollipops and Guns*, there is only one female subject, and as has been noted above, she is dynamic and an actor. There are a few more male subjects, the dynamic verbs are transitive but furthermore they imply that something is going on. Some verbs are transitive but do not take a human object; *squeezed, making, fulfilling, completed, looked, gripped, turned* and *studied*. The verbs which do take a human object are; *kill, taunting, said* and *prove*, although *prove* can be argued to be intransitive since the referent of the subject

has to prove himself, and therefore there is no other receiver than himself, but then additionally he has to prove himself towards others and that indicates a receiver. The stative verbs all indicate the subject's emotions; *worried, review, thought, wished, knew* and *felt*. They do not imply an action more than within the subject.

The third text, *A Match Made in Cyberspace*, has many dynamic verbs. Here too the female subject is mostly followed by transitive verbs which do not have a human receiver. The verbs show the subject's actions such as, *clicked, murmurs, completed, finishes, gabbles, says* and *followed* but they do not require any response. There are also some transitive verbs which do take a human object and some examples are; *says, dropped* and *e-mailing*. There is a difference between the female and male subjects. There are not so many male subjects but instead they show much more action, 5 dynamic verbs and 2 of them function as actors. The verbs used are; *offered, holding, hugs, kisses, and acted*. *Hugs* and *kisses* imply that there is a receiver, in this case a female subject. It could also be argued that *offered* is transitive since he offered her something, although it is not an action that affects a receiver the same way as a kiss does. The only intransitive dynamic male verb in the text is *gotten* and it refers to the subject's state of mind.

What we can see here is the difference in the dynamics of the verbs and how it affects the subject. If the subject performs an action that affects someone else it is considered as more dynamic than if it performs actions which affect itself or stative objects. We also see that male actors are more common than female actors and this leads to the conclusion that females are traditionally established as stative while male subjects are established as dynamic. I found that even if the male subjects are outnumbered by the female subjects they still perform as actors, or are followed by dynamic verbs to a larger extent than female subjects. Finally I found that there are more female stative verbs than male stative verbs throughout the texts.

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

Early in life children are taught how to behave according to their gender but we need to learn not to make a difference between genders. Gender equality is one of the more important questions in Swedish schools today. Teachers are bound by the Curriculum and the Educational Act of imparting, instilling and forming in pupils those values on which our society is based. The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are all values that the school shall represent and impart” (Lpf 94:3). The Educational act states that “Persons active in the school system shall in particular promote equality between the genders” Law (1999:886). Fairclough (1992) states that communication contributes to the process of cultural change. Compared to society 30 years ago much has happened and typical female/male domains have become ambisexual. Today people cross the lines which used to keep the genders apart. But this does not necessarily presuppose that we understand each other better or accept each other’s growing territories, or that territories are being demolished. Different codes are used in different places and situations and every person, no matter her/his gender is able to learn the codes of a certain domain. But we cannot be sure that there are no differences in the usage of codes based on gender, which means that we might not understand each other better anyhow.

As Barbro Larsson (1991) says, teaching books are the only books which every person has to read and study with guidance from a teacher. Therefore it is of great importance that the teaching books used in schools today represent the values which we want to pass on. This is why it should be of central importance to every school while selecting their material, to ensure that the texts establish gender in an equal way, not just by deciding if the texts are student-oriented in content, but also if females and males are given the same space, if they are representative for their gender and not of old traditional roles, and furthermore if they are established as dynamic or stative in the texts.

The aim of the present study was to find out if one of the most common teaching books in upper secondary school is gender equal. The reason for conducting such a study is that teaching books are a great opportunity to attempt a change in the set gender roles and schools could probably work much harder with issues concerning gender roles and try to make a difference. Coates (2004) and Wareing (2004) undisguised the differences between

female and males. We learned from Cameron (1995) that there are two crucial moments in childhood when gender roles are established and this knowledge needs to be used in the future. Ochs and Schieffelin (1982) made an interesting survey of children's acquisition of conversational competence; they bring up the fact that we learn how to perform our gender. We know so much and yet we are not able to use the knowledge when composing teaching books which should provide students with the values of our society. What we pass on to the students are disguised values and old traditional gender roles which hopefully most women or men do not stand for.

This study was based on two research questions:

- Is there a difference in the use of dynamic and stative verbs connected to female/male subjects?
- Is there a connection between transitivity/intransitivity and the gender of the subjects?

I found that women are represented as more stative to a higher extent than males are. The texts analysed showed that women's performances are strongly connected to their emotions and states of mind. They do not perform actions which affect other people. Even in texts with few male subjects, the male subjects showed greater action than the female subjects. The results suggest that there are clear patterns of males being more dynamic than females. And the females which were connected to a dynamic verb or an action did in almost all cases not affect someone else. Furthermore there was a difference regarding the transitivity/intransitivity of the verbs which followed the subjects. The male subjects were more often followed by transitive verbs than the female subjects which also shows in the male subjects' ability to perform as actors. Establishing gender this way is not in accordance with the guidelines of the National Curriculum or the Educational Act. Therefore I argue that the teaching book *Blueprint A* is stereotypical and biased regarding gender issues. The texts chosen for the book are probably composed to create equality, but sometimes it is not enough only to look at the content. One has to analyse sentence structure and the characters of the texts in each text of the book to see if they are suited to the aims and the values we want to communicate to the future citizens of our society.

I wanted to find out if there are any differences in how females and males are established in some carefully chosen texts from the teaching book *Blueprint A*. My hypothesis based on an earlier study on the same book was that I would find some differences, and I argue that I did. To get a fair result a larger analysis would be required, but the result of this smaller analysis does imply what can be found.

For further study it would be interesting to analyse all of the texts in the text book, and see if the same result would be found. It would also be interesting to analyse the adjectives which describes the subjects and see if there are any differences in the used adjectives.

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## 7. Appendix: Data Included in the Study

### 7.1 Making Sex

		THEME	SUBJECT	VERB	ACTOR	VERB TYPE
page 129,1	line 2	she	she	wears		dynamic
page 129,1	line 3	this is not something	she	been		stative
page 129,1	line 10	because	she	explore		dynamic
page 129,1	line 14	so it is not just for fun	she	crosses		dynamic
page 129,1	line 18	norah vincent	she	is		stative
page 129,1	line 21	she	she	is		stative
page 129,1	line 21	she is not	she	is		stative
page 129,1	line 24	she	she	is		stative
page 129,2	line 4	or don't they	she	asks		stative
page 129,2	line 5	her	she	quest		dynamic
page 129,2	line 12	although	she	look		stative
page 129,2	line 13	her fairly dark voice and her height	she	make		stative
page 130,1	line 3	she	she	hires		dynamic
page 130,1	line 5	her	she	act		dynamic
page 130,2	line 4	what Norah eventually learns	she	apply		dynamic
page 130,2	line 6	one of the things I picked up as a man	she	says		dynamic
page 130,2	line 9	she	she	discovers		dynamic
page 131,1	line 4	and s/he	she	is		stative
page 131,1	line 6	and s/he	she	is		stative
page 131,1	line 17	the gender gap would be far easier to cut short	she	understand		stative
page131,2	line 1	if women only realized	she	realized		stative

## 7.2 Lollipops and Guns

		THEME	SUBJECT	VERB	ACTOR	VERB TYPE	
page 86,1	from intro	a teenage terrorist	he	prove		dynamic	miro
page 86,1	from intro	but	she	upsets	F	dynamic	driver
page 86,1	line 1	Miro's assignment	he	kill	M	dynamic	miro
page 86,1	line 5	when	he	handed	M	dynamic	arktin
page 86,1	line 6	although	he	used		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 8	Miro	he	swallowed		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 9	he	he	squeezed		dynamic	miro
page 86,1	line 11	he	he	sneezed		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 13	you're pale	he	taunted		dynamic	arktin
page 86,1	line 14	Arktin	he	smiled		stative	arktin
page 86,1	line 16	Miro	he	tried		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 16	anger	he	show		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 16	he	he	tightened		dynamic	miro
page 86,1	line 17	kept	he	kept		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 17	he	he	was		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 17	Arktin	he	think		stative	arktin
page 86,1	line 18		he	bother		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 19	or perhaps	he	taunting	M	dynamic	arktin
page 86,1	line 19	him	he	keep		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 20	either way	he	was		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 20	he	he	was		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 21	and inflicting death	he	did		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 22	he	he	waiting		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 23	how else	he	justify		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 24	Aniel	he	died		stative	aniel
page 86,1	line 25	before	he	making		dynamic	aniel
page 86,1	line 25	before	he	fulfilling		dynamic	aniel
page 86,1	line 26	Miro	he	was		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 27	he	he	worried		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 27	he	he	do		stative	miro
page 86,1	line 28	let us	he	review		dynamic	arktin
page 86,1	line 28	Arktin	he	said		dynamic	arktin
page 87,1	line 2	suddenly Miro thought	he	thought		stative	miro
page 87,1	line 6	silence	he	completed	M	dynamic	arktin
page 87,1	line 7	Miro	he	looked		dynamic	miro
page 87,1	line 10	Miro	he	gripped		stative	miro
page 87,1	line 11	his stomach	he	lurched		stative	miro

page 87,1	line 11	he	he	turned		dynamic	miro
page 87,1	line 12	he	he	wished		stative	miro
page 87,1	line 16	we are forever homesick	he	said		dynamic	arktin
page 87,1	line 22	Arktin	he	studied		dynamic	arktin
page 87,1	line 22	he	he	knew		stative	arktin
page 87,1	line 30	Arktin	he	said		dynamic	arktin
page 88,1	line 1	Miro	he	glanced		stative	miro
page 88,1	line 3	Miro	he	was		stative	miro
page 88,1	line 4	he	he	wanted		stative	miro
page 88,1	line 4	he thought how long	he	waited		stative	miro
page 88,1	line 9	Miro	he	felt		stative	miro
page 88,1	line 10	Miro was frequently confused	he	was		stative	miro

### 7.3 A Match Made in Cyberspace

		THEME	SUBJECT	VERB	ACTOR	VERB TYPE	
page 183,1	line 1	I was online and bumped into lovesearch.com	she	says		dynamic	transitive
page 183,1	line 2	I	she	know		stative	
page 183,1	line 2	but	she	clicked		dynamic	transitive
page 183,1	line 6	In less than one hour	she	due		stative	
page 183,1	line 7	the man	she	agreed		stative	
page 183,1	line 11	this is the first blind shedate I've ever been on	she	says		dynamic	transitive
page 183,1	line 13	and		adds		dynamic	
page 183,1	line 14	not	she	been		stative	
page 183,1	line 17	her voice	she	falters		stative	
page 183,1	line 17	and	she	looking		stative	
page 183,1	line 18	she	she	murmurs		dynamic	transitive
page 183,1	line 22	June	she	completed		dynamic	transitive
page 183,1	line 24	and	she	ticked		dynamic	transitive
page		I	she	give		dynamic	transitive

183,2	line 1						
page 183,2	line 2	I	she	wrote		dynamic	intransitive
page 183,2	line 3	she	she	laughs		stative	
page 183,2	line 4	whitin days	she	received		stative	
page 183,2	line 8	well	she	given		dynamic	intransitive
page 183,2	line 10	he	he	has		stative	
page 183,2	line 11	he	he	is		stative	
page 183,2	line 12	I	she	think		stative	
page 183,2	line 12	and I	she	liked		stative	
page 183,2	line 13	I	she	knew		stative	
page 183,2	line 14	I	she	wanted		stative	
page 183,2	line 15	June	she	says		dynamic	transitive
page 183,2	line 16	and	she	finishes		dynamic	transitive
page 183,2	line 17	Elias	he	offered		dynamic	transitive
page 183,2	line 20	she	she	declined		stative	
page 183,2	line 20	I	she	staying		stative	
page 183,2	line 21	I	she	know		stative	
page 183,2	line 22	she	she	says		dynamic	transitive
page 183,3	line 7	I	she	have		stative	
page 183,3	line 7	she	she	gabbles		dynamic	transitive
page 183,3	line 8	I	she	feel		stative	
page 183,3	line 10	I	she	remember		stative	
page 183,3	line 12	I	she	afford		stative	
page 183,3	line 18	I	she	want		stative	
page 183,3	line 19	I	she	seize		stative	

page 183,3	line 24	June	she	has		stative	
page 183,3	line 25		he	holding		dynamic	transitive
page 184,1	line 1	and	he	smiling		stative	
page 184,1	line 3	she	she	laughs		stative	
page 184,1	line 5	she	she	fumbles		stative	
page 184,1	line 6	he	he	hugs	M	dynamic	transitive
page 184,1	line 6	and	he	kisses	M	dynamic	transitive
page 184,1	line 15	oh, my God	she	says		dynamic	transitive
page 184,1	line 16		she	shielding		stative	
page 184,1	line 17	I	she	believe		stative	
page 184,1	line 18	I	she	doing		dynamic	transitive
page 184,3	line 6	Elias	he	is		stative	
page 184,3	line 7	than I	she	thought		stative	
page 184,3	line 7	he	he	is		stative	
page 184,3	line 7	he is so emotional	she	says		dynamic	transitive
page 184,3	line 9		she	shaking		dynamic	transitive
page 184,3	line 9	when she	she	refused		dynamic	transitive
page 184,3	line 9		she	followed		dynamic	transitive
page 184,3	line 11		he	gotten		dynamic	intransitive
page 184,3	line 11	he	he	was		stative	
page 184,3	line 12	but	she	needed		stative	
page 184,3	line 14	now I'm not so sure I need any time at all	she	need		stative	
page 184,3	line 14	now I'm not so sure I need any time at all	she	says		dynamic	transitive
page 184,3	line 15	I	she	misjudged		stative	
page 184,3	line 17	I	she	getting	M	stative	

page 184,3	line 22	Elia's body language	he	shows	stative	
page 184,3	line 22		he	realizes	stative	
page 184,3	line 22		he	acted	dynamic	transitive
page 185,1	line 12	this isn't the romance of my life, but I had a great time	she	says	dynamic	transitive
page 185,1	line 15	strangely enough	she	am	stative	
page 185,1	line 16		she	did	dynamic	transitive
page 185,1	line 20	she	she	says	dynamic	transitive
page 185,1	line 20	she	she	dropped	dynamic	transitive
page 185,1	line 21	she	she	e-mailing	dynamic	transitive
page 185,1	line 23	of course	she	see	stative	
page 185,1	line 24		she	says	dynamic	transitive
page 185,1	line 25	if he does I'll seize the date	she	seize	stative	
page 185,1	line 25		she	says	dynamic	transitive

## 7.4 Parts from Lpf 94, English Version

### CURRICULUM FOR THE NON-COMPULSORY SCHOOL SYSTEM LPF 94

#### 1. Fundamental values and tasks of the school

##### 1.1 FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

Democracy forms the basis of the national school system. The Education Act (1985:1100) stipulates that all school activity shall be carried out in accordance with fundamental democratic values and that each and everyone working in the school shall encourage respect for the intrinsic value of each person as well as for the environment we all share (Chapter 1, §2 and §9). The school has the important task of imparting, instilling and forming in pupils those values on which our society is based. The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are all values that the school shall represent and impart. In accordance with the ethics borne by Christian tradition and Western humanism,

this is achieved by fostering in the individual a sense of justice, generosity of spirit, tolerance and responsibility. Education in the school shall be non-denominational. The task of the school is to encourage all pupils to discover their own uniqueness as individuals and thereby actively participate in social life by giving of their best in responsible freedom.

### **7.5 Parts from the Educational Act**

Department/Authority: Ministry of Education and Science in Sweden. Heading: Education Act (1985:1100).

S. 1. The state provides education for children and young persons in the form of pre-school classes,

compulsory comprehensive and upper secondary school and certain equivalent forms of school, that is special schools principally for pupils with impaired hearing/vision and speech disabilities, schools for the mentally disabled and Sami schools.

S. 2. All children and young persons shall irrespective of gender, geographic residence and social and

financial circumstances have equal access to education in the national school system for children and

young persons. The education shall be of equal standard within each type of school,

wherever in the country it is provided. The education shall provide the pupils with

knowledge and skills and, in co-operation with the homes, promote their harmonious

development into responsible human beings and members of the community. Particular

attention shall be paid to pupils who need special support. School activities shall be

structured in accordance with fundamental democratic values. Each and every person active

in the school system shall promote respect for the intrinsic value of every human being and

for our common environment. Persons active in the school system shall in particular

1. promote equality between the genders and

2. actively counteract all types of insulting treatment such as bullying or racist behavior. Law

(1999:886).