

Part 2: Theoretical Background and Further Information

Child and social psychologist, György Révész views child abuse and the emergence of both physical and psychological violence in schools of the Twentieth Century in a broad context. According to Révész, the different forms of verbal and physical aggression – therefore also bad language- are the inevitable consequence of the global trend towards violence and in fact directly correlated with it. In this sense, violence is a universal phenomenon that can take place anywhere: terrorist attacks, bomb attacks at schools and other institutions, inexplicable attempted murder of young people by other young people, bullying, an increasing interest in violent computer games as well as web pages and television shows with verbal and physical aggression. The media and news today are full of reports on violence. However, are children more violent today than in the past?

A representative study of Hungarian youth (including a total of 603 young people aged around 15 or 16 years of age) conducted in 1999 and 2000, focused on various subjects such as child-rearing, identity, coping and politeness formulas. Ten items were specifically related to good upbringing and good behaviour. 2002, in response to the question: "Do you use swear words?", 22% replied that this was often the case and 66% of the young people surveyed indicated that they sometimes used swear words (from time to time). A total of 4% of those surveyed, answered that they often initiated fights, whereas 35% said that they only did this sometimes.



(Source:

http://www.radiobremen.de/magazin/gesellschaft/_bild/fluchen_300_stinkefinger_dp.jpg)

As expected, the study shows a significant difference between girls and boys: Boys are more often involved in fights, whereas girls tend to use swear words and crude language more often. This is actually all the more surprising, as in the previous year (1999), the results were the exact opposite with the same group: i.e. the use of bad language at that time was mainly "reserved" for boys. It should also be noted that insults contained in the Hungarian language are much more offensive than in German or English.

Regarding almost all ten items related to "a good upbringing/good manners", Kulcsár and Domokos' study shows a negative trend, i.e. youth have significantly worsened in this area.

Concerning the aggressiveness of children in school, Zsuzsanna Vajda (University of Szeged) stated rather provocatively in an interview: "Is that actually so surprising, as aggression is actually a part of our daily lives. All living beings are struggling for survival, only the weak and the sick give up. We are all carrying out power struggles and childhood as such represents a kind of dynamic energy reserve, a continuous experimentation with limits: How far can I? How far am I allowed to go? Ideally, in a developed society, the limits are set through a system of regulatory norms and systems."

What are the options as well as educational tools, methods and resources that a teacher can use when verbal and physical aggression is gaining a greater foothold in educational institutions? Aliz Fülöp-Böszörményi has described the increasingly more difficult situation teachers have to face in schools and stresses the danger from aggression taking increasingly more complex forms: bad language, mobbing, psycho-terror, outbursts of anger, physical aggression, beatings, slandering, stereotyping, prejudices against "others" etc. are examples of the different manifestations of aggression. Fülöp-

Böszörményi also mentions the very important influence of "role models" such as parents, siblings, peers, group of friends, the school, the media and idols. They all together are responsible for the development of aggression.

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