

Gender education in Hungary – is there such a thing?

Depiction of the situation from historical and modern perspectives

Erika Grossmann
University of Szeged, Hungary

It is not an easy task to write an article on boys' education in Hungary. As the heading implies, the issue of gender-specific education in Hungary is relatively uncharted territory in educational science. Sociologists and social scientists only actually began to address the issue of gender in Hungary in the mid-1990s, and then chiefly with reference to the equality of women and from the feminist perspective. Educational scientists seldom address the issue of gender-specific differences between boys and girls of primary school age, but focus instead on democratic aspects of their equality. The objectives and subject matter of gender-specific action have consequently seldom been made a subject of discussion and these aspects do not receive the attention they deserve during teacher training and in-service training. This article has consequently attempted to explain the historical developments relating to gender education, particularly in terms of equal opportunities for girls and women, and to draw attention to aspects that are specific to Hungary, such as special leisure facilities for pupils, and the overrepresentation of women in educational occupations.

This study is divided into the following sections:

1. Historical Development of Girls' and Boys' Education in Hungary
 2. Aims and substance of gender-specific action
 3. Gender-specific aspects in the training of primary school teachers
 4. Taking stock of leisure amenities for boys
 5. Exceptional features in Hungary: women and girls, men and boys in primary school textbooks
 6. Trends and developments: female teachers in primary schools
- Suggestions for further independent study of the topic
- Bibliography and list of sources

1. Historical Development of Girls' and Boys' Education in Hungary

In 2007, around 16 years after the political turning point, there are numerous areas in Hungarian society that have either not implemented the paradigm shift at all or only to a

certain extent. For example, democracy along with political debate both in Parliament and in the media is still in its infancy; mention could also be made of the health system, the infrastructure, the education system, the legal status of migrants and minorities, domestic violence, the treatment of disabled people, the Romany question, and numerous other phenomena in our society which are in need of innovation, renewal, a paradigm shift in fact.

With respect to the issue of boys' education, it has been demonstrated that the concept either only appears occasionally, i.e. in some specialist panel discussions – or not at all. If we broaden the concept somewhat and address the issue of *gender education*, we encounter *gender studies* in several sociological or social science studies conducted since the 1990s.

In a more precise analysis of these studies, the enormous emphasis on the *policy of equal treatment of women* (emancipation of women) and the policy of promoting women are striking. They are almost exclusively oriented towards women and girls and emphasise first and foremost the importance of their equal status in society and so-called equal opportunities (Hadas 1994, Lévai 2000, Szalai 1996, Lévai; Kiss; Gyulavári 1999). Gender Studies as an independent field of science and study did not appear until at the CEU (Central European University, an international university) in Budapest until several years after the political turning point.

One of the charismatic proponents of gender mainstreaming in Hungary, Katalin Lévai (2000, 195 ff), claims that feminism had not even gained a foothold in Hungary. The sociologist, who is also a politician and Member of the European Parliament implies at the same time that it is not possible to study a gender-specific perspective since gender mainstreaming – like intercultural or multicultural education – is a *means* of achieving equal opportunity for *both* genders. Since, however, according to the view held by Lévai, women's studies, women's equality and recognition of their equal rights have not yet been achieved in Hungary, it is not possible to speak of the consideration of *both* genders from a social perspective, or of gender education and work with boys. As in so many aspects, Hungary has got some 'catching up' to do in this respect as well.

2. Aims and substance of gender-specific action

A more in-depth analysis of the aims and subject matter of gender-specific action also reveals a 'deficit' since 'gender' research in Hungary currently focuses almost exclusively on the situation and status of women. It is therefore usually feminist bodies and organisations that address this topic *about* women, *from* the perspective of women.

Gender-specific action in modern Hungarian society

The reason is easy to understand: although socialism between 1945 and 1989 propounded the „same rights for women“: it was for example an ‚honour‘ for a heavily pregnant woman to drive a tractor and to leave her newly born baby in a day nursery to enable the woman to take up work again immediately, this type of women’s ‚equality‘ appeared to be rather forced and thus negative. The biological and psychological differences in the genders were disregarded and the consequence of this type of ‚overcompensation‘ (as formulated by Lévai 2000) was to push the male and female subject, the individual, the biological gender into the background, whereas collectivism, the ‚socialist We‘ was invariably in the foreground. The woman ‚was allowed‘, indeed obliged to exercise her profession and simultaneously cope with all her responsibilities of bringing up the children and running the household. This had very little to do with gender mainstreaming. More specifically, the woman had a sort of double burden to carry that she desperately endeavoured to cope with – frequently without success and with feelings of frustration. In the meantime, men and boys continued to fulfil their stereotypical professional responsibilities duties and did not share in family responsibilities.

In this connection, Judit Acsády (1996, p. 454f) provides a comprehensive description of the ideological history of Hungarian anti-feminism, entitled, ‘
‚Von der Ritterlichkeit bis zu Anschuldigungen – Bilder des ungarischen Antifeminismus‘
¹(translated by the author). She emphasises that the historical and theoretical basis and the objective of feminism in Hungary are virtually unknown and that feminism is mistakenly equated ‚with the politics of state socialism announced as emancipation and coming from above and since socialist terminology is now illegitimate, the women-friendly analysis of the social role of the woman would be indefinable“. The present-day male anti-feminist (and the female anti-feminist) regards feminism as the ‚prop of – fundamentally misogynous – state socialism‘ (German language abstract by Acsády 1996, p. 550). The topic of women’s issues is „cast aside“, according to Acsády with the consequence that the gender issue is largely disregarded. On the contrary, the opinion is still generally held that both genders should be allocated roles and responsibilities (as defined by ‚sex‘ and ‚gender‘) in society, based on the characteristics that have existed „since time immemorial“ so that the inequalities between both genders are regarded as ‚natural‘ (Acsády 1996, p. 455) and become even more firmly entrenched. At this point, it is possible to unequivocally speak of a gender-specific problem area, even if the problems are not specified further and addressed.

New substance of gender-specific action

¹ ‘From Chivalry to Accusations - Images of Hungarian Anti-feminism’ (unofficial translation)

Our world, which is undergoing radical and global change, the shift in values as a consequence of the political upheavals in Hungary, the new role of women and men (boys and girls) in society also requires a ‚shift in thinking‘ in our country.

The changes, reorganisation and restructuring in the area of the roles of the social genders are clearly visible: for example a number of men wish to play a much greater role in bringing up their children, the so-called ‚father births‘ in the father’s presence have become a fashionable trend to all intents and purposes and from a legal perspective, men are being given greater opportunities to participate in the areas that were traditionally regarded as ‚women’s work‘ (maternity leave, extra leave after the birth of the child etc), as underlined by Ladányi (1996, p. 375 ff) and Váradi (1996, p. 541f), amongst others. On the ‚other hand‘, women are demanding an ever increasing presence in the world of work and the economy (also in areas to which they were formerly denied access), political life and science – even if with little success, as noted by Nagy (1996, p. 390). Although many people still question whether these changes are appropriate, no one doubts that it is necessary to respond to the forthcoming challenges. It is also necessary to acquire a strategy to train people in these gender-specific responsibilities.

If the issue is taken a step further, a critical stance adopted towards the familiar, traditional stereotypes is also discernible in a publication by the Hungarian doyen of sexual psychology Jenő Ranschburg (1996) written as a textbook for schools in connection with the ‚social gender‘. These stereotypes depict the man as strong and the family protector, as the head of the family and the breadwinner, and the woman as the wife and mother, *Hera*, goddess of the hearth, fire and family life, needing protection, weak, very emotional. Ranschburg criticises, amongst other things, the fact that a paradigm shift has not taken place in Hungarian society with respect to the *new* roles of men and women, boys and girls in our education (schools, media). Nagy (1996, p. 340) also notes that on the one hand, according to ‚gender-specific‘ theories, „the fact that fewer women obtain well paid or very responsible posts is attributable to their domestic and personal circumstances“. According to Nagy (1996, p. 340), this is chiefly determined by their different gender socialisation, training, and/or gender-specific schooling. With respect to the object of the analysis, this means that the orientation of the *educational field of action* is gender specific but still imparts the traditional gender models in the Hungarian education system and in the parental home, which represent the framework for men and women (boys and girls) to act, in the manner described by Ranschburg.

3. Gender-specific aspects in the training of primary school teachers

The Hungarian education system has had a traditionally homogenous school system with 8+4 grades since the 1950s. The political turning point in 1989/90 also resulted in comprehensive restructuring for the purposes of pluralisation, which produced an education system that in addition to the primary school with eight grades provided an opportunity to move to a lower and upper secondary school with eight grades after completing the first four years of primary school. Despite this change, it is possible to maintain that the majority of pupils in Hungary attend the same primary school for eight years before moving to a secondary school, vocational school, technical college or a polytechnic. This is particularly the case in smaller towns and above all in the rural communes and villages. Primary school teachers are trained on the basis of this system: the so-called primary school teachers instruct years 1 to 4, i.e. children between the ages of six and ten and are trained at primary school teacher training colleges (*Tanítóképző*). Secondary school teachers give lessons to the higher grades in the same primary school, i.e. years 5 to 8. They studied at teacher training colleges where they majored in two subjects (e.g. history and geography or music and German etc.).

Educational objective and subject matter in the training of primary school teachers

A consideration of the fundamental topics for debate in contemporary educational policy and training theory in Hungary reveals that top priority is given to *equal opportunity* as a consequence of the serious historical and social upheavals since 1989. In the 1990s, the existential differences between the social classes increased considerably. The consequence of the social (*rich versus poor*) and regional (*city/town versus ,village, country'*) inequalities was that the career opportunities for the disadvantaged classes in particular, i.e. large families, children of unemployed parents, Romany children (the Romany comprise 5% of the total population in Hungary), disabled children etc. showed a drastic and dramatic decline. The term 'vulnerable' is frequently used for these classes (Cs. Czachesz; Radó 2003). Another problem is that teachers are inadequately trained, i.e. they are not prepared, trained or do not receive additional training to meet these challenges. There is also a lack of suitably trained specialist staff, psychologists, remedial and social education workers and teaching assistants in the schools.

Differences in school performance – facts and possible causes

As a result, the issue of *differentiation and selection, segregation, inclusive pedagogy* are the main topics of discussion in the Hungarian education system as well as in the area of teacher training, and attempts are made to implement them in practice. With respect to the objective and substance of teacher training, too little attention is clearly given to the issue of gender-specific aspects. As Zoltán Báthory (2000, p. 75-80), one of the most renowned Hungarian educational politicians notes with respect to the differences between boys and girls in the

objective of educational theory, „individual differences are much greater than the gender-specific differences“.

The PISA studies and MONITOR studies conducted in Hungary at regular intervals on educational status show that although the cognitive competence of girls between the ages of 14 and 15 is far superior to that of the boys, they only actually achieved far better results than the boys in reading ability. It is interesting that the boys did better than the girls in all other areas. Cs. Czachesz and Radó (2003) have compared the results of all boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 15 in Hungary and in the OECD countries, in the areas of reading ability, mathematics and natural sciences. Whereas in the OECD countries, the reading ability of girls was significantly better than that of boys, the result for girls in Hungary is somewhat below average and the result for boys can be considered as very poor. The results in the fields of mathematics and natural sciences also show a similar trend. Experts note that a possible cause - as is the case in the OECD countries - is that in Hungary educational practice in primary schools ensures that boys are given far better opportunities, and teachers continue to have and even uphold different (*stereotypical*) expectations of boys and girls. The differences may also be partially attributable to the fact that boys and girls have different learning strategies (cf. Cs. Czachesz; Radó 2003).

It is interesting that gender-specific differences are clearly noted and research has even been done on the possible causes, but the lessons learnt have evidently not been implemented in educational practice and training! Studies continue to show that although teachers maintain that they would always treat girls and boys equally in all situations (*theory*), psychologists have demonstrated that it is not the case in *practice* (Kollár; Szabó 2004). This implies the existence of latent gender-specific differentiation. Educators and trainee teachers consequently need to be clear about their unconscious expectations, about latent prejudices, their stereotypical images of their pupils, and of girls and boys in general. The expectations that are based on stereotypes and prejudices allow us only to register as much from and of the world as we expect. The teacher's opinion may ultimately be ‚self-fulfilling‘ as a ‚*Pygmalion effect*‘ (Torgyik; Karlovitz 2006, p. 78).

Gender-specific subject matter is not dealt with in teacher training. The training of primary school teachers focuses on specialist didactic questions (*how* do I teach this subject?), and on aspects of developmental psychology (*what* are the characteristics of the specific age group?), and not on *gender-specific* questions. Differentiation is only addressed in terms of ‚compensation‘ of different levels of performance. The view of these problems taken by Báthory (2000, p. 79) is quoted at this point without comment: „The idea of educating and training both genders together is based on *democratic/humanist and financial/economic*

arguments, such as the convergence of the different roles of both genders; the emancipation of women as the oppressed social class, and the involvement of women's competences in the modernisation programme. In this sense, coeducation may be regarded as a *means of social adjustment* even if the differences in performance would require learning to be organised differently" (translated by the author) The theory underlines the fact that gender-specific education is a delicate subject in Hungary since women have not yet achieved equality.

4. Taking stock of leisure amenities for boys

The opinion cited above also determines the training and educational syllabuses at primary school.

Framework law for training and educational content in Hungary

The Educational Act (1995) introduced in 1995 and last revised in 2003, the 'Basic National Curriculum' forms a very generally formulated framework for the 1st to 10th grades that is based on guidelines and 'target competences' (Nemzeti Alaptanterv 1995). Educators have a great deal of latitude both in their choice of textbooks and syllabuses. The 'common requirements' which are regarded as interdisciplinary include *democracy, inter- and multiculturalism, European humanist values, openness towards other cultures, educational processes for the purposes of pupils' personality development, learning strategies etc.* Gender-specific fields of action are not explicitly addressed, but attention is drawn to the fact that the "biological, educational psychological, age-specific and individual characteristics, as well as socio-cultural, financial and economic, developmental, emotional and cognitive differences" may differ from pupil to pupil and educators should pay attention to this (Nemzeti Alaptanterv 1995, p. 14, translated by the author).

The Basic National Curriculum addresses individual, age-specific circumstances in detail, but does not provide any advice on gender-specific action for educational purposes. There are no guidelines on this matter for lessons for primary school pupils. However, several important aspects from routine teaching in primary schools in Hungary should be singled out by way of illustration:

- *Physical education* in the primary school is coeducational. The lessons primarily focus on games played together with a great deal of exercise as well as gymnastics.
- So-called *technology classes* cover handicrafts, metal and woodwork, cookery in some instances and healthy living. These lessons (1 lesson a week for pupils between the ages of 6 and 12) are also coeducational to enable 'boyish' or 'girlish' activities to be undertaken by both genders. Cookery increasingly takes a back seat

as the majority of schools do not have kitchens or one lesson a week is insufficient for such activities.

- Children in years 1 to 4 must spend the breaks between lessons in the playground. They are usually given balls and since almost every playground has football goalposts and basketball nets, pupils take part in these activities.

Leisure amenities provided by the school

In Hungary, the after-school care centre is an established tradition due to the fact that women were obliged to go out to work after 1945 (Ladányi 1996, p. 386-388). All primary schools currently provide this facility and every child has a right to it. Pupils receive a breaktime snack in the mornings and afternoons, as well as lunch and they are occupied by qualified staff (educators with the same training as the morning teachers) from their last lesson until 5pm.

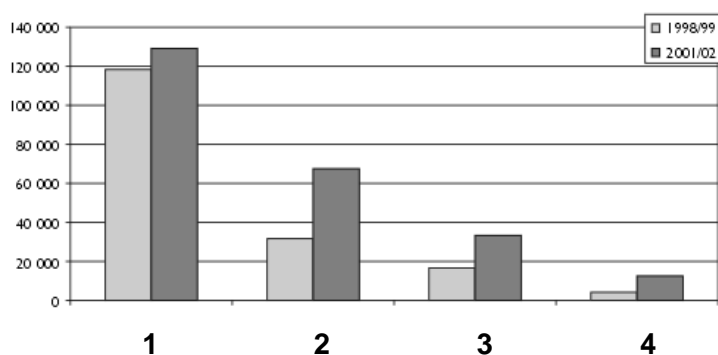
The school provides leisure amenities in addition to the supervision of homework. An estimated 90% of children make use of the after-school care centre, even there is an increasing trend towards regarding this opportunity (supervision, homework) as unnecessary from year 5 onwards. Teachers in the after-school care centre are able to use their own discretion to organise the leisure activities; in this respect the Basic Curriculum only prescribes the most important aims of skill development. Implementation of the subject matter is determined independently by the member of the teaching staff. It is compulsory for the children to spend 30 to 45 minutes in the fresh air. However, since the functional capacity of the playground is limited, the children organise spontaneous games themselves on the majority of cases. The teaching staff merely have a supervisory function.

The larger schools provide different activities in the form of organised 'specialist circles' (in addition to the existing private sports clubs). In this case, the teaching staff employed at the schools are the leaders of these groups and they more or less base their activities on their specialist field. The *sports circles, music, drama and art* are especially popular. An innovative form of leisure-time activities that has been in existence for over 50 years, and is still extremely popular, has been reintroduced in many (smaller and larger) schools within an organised framework: they are the so-called 'elementary art schools' (Cs. Czachesz; Radó 2003). They provide artistic activities in the broadest sense and take place once or twice a week, in the afternoons. This organised form of teaching is by no means intended for budding artists, but rather for those children who wish to give their creativity free rein, with no inhibitions.

The advantage of this free leisure-time facility is that pupils are able to choose from a large range of activities. The Ministry of Education is responsible for financing it, the 'art school'

receives a certain amount for each pupil to enable the teaching staff to finance the premises and the various materials from this sum. The pupils taking part agree to attend the lessons for one school year respectively, and also receive – more or less as a symbolic gesture – a certificate testifying to their performance. Cs. Czachesz and Radó (2003) draw attention to the fact that the participation of Hungarian pupils in so-called ‘organised after-school activities’ is very high in comparison to the rest of Europe. The proportion of 15-year-old Hungarian pupils (2000) was 47%. The table shows that around 250,000 pupils took advantage of this leisure-time facility in 2000/01. The number of pupils taking part has increased steadily since 2001.

Table 1: Number of pupils in ‘elementary art schools’ (1998-1999 und 2001-2002)



1: Music (classical music: instruments, singing, choir, folk music, jazz)

2: Dance (classical and jazz ballet, pair dancing, folk dancing, rhythmic gymnastics, etc.)

3: Plastic arts, graphics, painting, design

4: Drama, acting (combined with a foreign language in some instances)

(Cs. Czachesz; Radó)

Since *music lessons* based on the Kodály method (singing as well as instruments) have a long tradition in Hungary, girls and boys frequently choose this style. There are no data on the gender-specific participation of boys and girls although it is certain that girls mainly choose this type of leisure-time amenity (artistic activities), but many parents and pupils opt for it for ‘practical’, organisational reasons. It is certain that gender-specific treatment does not exist in this area.

5. Exceptional features in Hungary: women and girls, men and boys in primary school textbooks

The main difficulty in analysing gender education and work with boys in Hungary lies in the fact that this does not exist at all in practice or only sporadically in Hungary. The numerous analyses of school textbooks are an exceptional feature.

Torgyik and Karlovitz (1996) cite the following six qualitative aspects for a gender-specific analysis of school textbooks in conformity with Arens (1991):

- *Stereotyping*: boys are depicted as clever, competent, active, successful, and do their work outside the home; women are rather passive, dependent participants who are depicted undertaking activities connected with the family and home.
- *Invisibility*: one of the most striking manifestations of the prejudice is the under-representation of the female gender in textbooks as well as in the compulsory poetry and fiction that has to be read independently. History books relate the glorious deeds of kings and soldiers whereas the micro-history of families (with women and children) takes a back seat.
- *Selectivity and imbalance*: individuals are presented in a biased manner and detailed background information about events is not provided.
- *Distancing from reality*: prominent historic personalities or everyday occurrences are depicted in a biased, idealised and uncritical manner, the negative aspects of the events are not depicted.
- *Fragmentation and isolation*: information, accounts of women are often taken out of context and depicted in additional chapters. History books imply that only men have influenced events.
- *Linguistic prejudices*: It has been established in quantitative analyses that the masculine form is used far more frequently in languages that make a grammatical distinction between feminine and masculine. This is not the case in Hungarian which is a Finno-Ugric language. Nouns in Hungarian do not have genders (and articles), individuals are not distinguished by gender in the grammatical sense (e.g. ,professzor', ,eladó' = ,professor' and ,seller' stands for female as well as male). Linguists and etymologists believe that this would imply that these designations in the Hungarian language only refer to the male variant and linguist ,emancipation' has not had an impact on this area.

Representation of gender in Hungarian textbooks

Dálnokiné Pécsi Klára studied the *familial image* in Hungarian textbooks for 6 to 10 year olds in 2001. She chose 24 readers and analysed the text passages, vocabulary and illustrations using quantitative as well as qualitative methods and subsequently presented her results without comment or criticism. She endeavoured to answer the following questions: in which themes, how and how often do both genders appear, particularly in the family? With respect to the question of how the familial image should be depicted, she formulated the following dilemma:

- should the textbook make *ideal families* the theme of the book (family members are often together, go on trips, there are no divorced parents, no conflicts, problems bringing up the children) *or*
- *show genuine, real families* (with conflicts, divorces, unkindness, indifference, lonely children, uncertain parents)?

The result of the study clearly shows that textbooks depict idealised, intact, happy, harmonious families with a lot of love and tenderness. From a gender-specific perspective, the role of the woman as mother is larger than life and overemphasised; the father is seldom 'in evidence', and almost never caresses or embraces the children. It is almost always the mother who gives the children security, protection and tenderness through her presence. Both parents – and the father tends to dominate here – are held up as a role model for politeness, good behaviour and value orientation. The children's brothers and sisters as well as their friends play a much more insignificant role in the books. Although it is possible to play with them, the stereotypical gender roles are expressed in no uncertain terms: secrets may be shared with sisters and female playmates, dolls played with one in one's room, but boys play football or play with cars.

Dálnokiné Pécsi (2001, p. 101f) finds the following subject matter to be lacking: a father who assists (a mother who assists) in *conflict situations*; conflict situations, failures are very rarely depicted in fact. *Girls crying* (due to the pain of having fallen over for example) are present in some illustrations and text passages, but it is in any event the mother who assists and protects. Illustrations and text passages indicate that many boys and girls look at picture books but only fathers are to be found leafing through newspapers. Extremely stereotypical depictions are to be found in the books: it is predominantly mothers (grandmothers) who do the housework, cook (do the ironing, washing up, laundry and sewing) for the family or go shopping with their daughter(!). It is actually the daughter who assists the mother with these activities while the father or grandfather does work on or in the house and does smallish jobs. Manual work is depicted in the case of both genders; creative or intellectual activities are almost never depicted, the occupation and daily routine of men and women are never mentioned.

Father and mother are only shown in the role of 'family member' and 'parent' in connection with their children. They scarcely speak to one another and the father appears even less frequently as a tangible individual. He is often only alluded to through the mother and children: he is absent because he is working for the family and is earning money. Since the mother is always present with the children and tells the children fairytales in the evening, she is the 'contact person' and the one who provides 'very emotional protection'. It is interesting that the grandparents also play an even more stereotypical 'role' in the reading books: they

are both very old, grandmother has grey hair, wears a bonnet and old-fashioned, even unsightly clothing, and is always in the kitchen with her grandchildren. Grandpa is often depicted with a stick and is usually outside in the garden with his grandson. The families also live in small groups, i.e. there are no extended families – as is very often the case in Hungary, particularly in rural areas – or circles of friends; they are ‚nuclear‘ families so to speak.

Orsolya Kereszty's (2005) analysis addresses the gender-specific aspects of predominantly six reading textbooks for pupils between the ages of six and ten in even greater detail. It attempts in addition to mere representation (like Dálnokiné Pécsi 2001) of gender-specific aspects, to study and find the *reasons* and *solutions* for these problem areas. Her question was oriented towards the manner and quantity of the depiction of the (social) roles of both genders. She also wanted to analyse the extent to which changes in the cultural, social and socio-cultural aspects are depicted. According to Kereszty's analysis, representation (appearance, roles) of boys and girls has a crucial function in gender socialisation and identity creation. She notes (Kereszty 2005, p. 57 ff), that the visual and textual depiction of boys and girls is completely differentiated, i.e. the reader is able to tell at once which gender is being addressed. Boys/men invariably wear trousers and have short hair and/or a moustache whereas girls have long hair and a ponytail and wear skirts. It is also assumed that the majority of those human experiences that do not fit into the stereotypical representation will not be included in the textbooks at all. Kereszty notes that a quantitative overrepresentation of strong, dominant boys/men is clearly discernible. This is expressly stated on the first page in one textbook for example: the protagonists in the book are six boys and the teacher – a woman – and the events in the textbook are almost entirely portrayed through their interaction, and demonstrate the grammatical rules etc. This may result in a definitive portrayal of the norm by boys/men. Kereszty therefore tends to address the examples in the portrayal that deviate from gender mainstreaming. Texts in which the gender of the actors is not explicitly expressed invariably provide illustrations of boys/men. (As already mentioned, gender is absent in the Hungarian language).

The phenomenon of ‚invisibility‘ of girls/women is thus undisputed (Kereszty 2005, p. 56ff, Czachesz, Lesznyák, Molnár 1996). Men usually have more interesting, more creative and more important occupations than women. As was noted by Dálnokiné Pécsi (2001), women are not portrayed in their occupations – they are only seen doing the housework and bringing up the children. This is also a problem because women are currently expected to be in *gainful employment* and children may therefore perceive this to conflict with reality (Kereszty 2005). Indirect reference is made to a male teacher in a poem in just one of the textbooks analysed – as a real exception. A pregnant woman is never portrayed in these textbooks,

which is also inconsistent since the books constantly convey the mother role of the woman but only as the 'end result'.

Kereszty mentions just one example where a break is made with traditional family roles: the mother is not in the picture; cooking is taking place outside, father is leading the activities, he is cooking, his daughter is helping him, his son is bringing wood for the fire. Pupils can see an 'alternative' gender role here that differs from the traditional stereotypes and can draw conclusions with the assistance of the member of the teaching staff. Cs. Czachesz, Lesznyák and Molnár (1996) observe that in textbooks for 6 to 14 year olds, emotions are expressed almost exclusively by women. In this connection, F. Lassú (2006) refers to the very biased nature of the portrayal of characteristic traits. In the books she has analysed, men/boys appear as colourful, well-rounded personalities, whereas the women are portrayed very schematically, simply, with just a few 'typical' traits (affectionate, considerate, very emotional).

According to Kereszty (2005) it is also typical for individuals of the same gender to be portrayed together. The stereotypical depiction is even to be found in mathematics books: in statements of quantity girls are always given fewer scoops of ice-cream, cakes, dumplings, apples etc, even if the representation of both genders is more balanced than in the readers or grammar books. Cs. Czachesz, Lesznyák and Molnár (1996) also analyse the gender-specific aspects in the so-called compulsory fiction books. The writers are exclusively male authors and the themes and protagonists are boys/men. Women take a back seat in these works and have very little impact on the events.

What is lacking in Kereszty (2005), Dálnokiné Pécsi (2001), Cs. Czachesz (et al, 1996) and in other studies are the steps that need to be taken as a consequence of the facts and analyses portrayed. This is actually a serious criticism of Hungarian educational and training policy and science: major, expensive surveys and studies (e.g. MONITOR, PISA) are conducted and undergo a careful, in-depth analysis but the next step and the presentation of possible solutions for action on the educational front are lacking. It should also be emphasised that no attention is paid to the equality of women/girls in all these books. Issues of boys' education are completely disregarded – as is actually the case in all documents in Hungarian specialised literature.

6. Trends and developments: female teachers in primary schools

There is no boys' education, work with boys in Hungary, i.e. gender-specific educational work by adult men (qualified personnel) with boys. One of the reasons for this is that women and

girls have (still) not achieved equal status in Hungary, with the effect that top priority tends to be given to feminist aspects. The fact that women are increasingly, indeed almost exclusively, represented in the education system (Setényi 1996) must also be taken into consideration as well as the fact that children of divorced parents are also raised by women (mothers and grandmothers). In Hungary, the mother (almost) always gains custody of the children in divorce cases. From the time of their birth, children are chiefly surrounded by women (mother on maternity leave, grandmother as a 'stand-in' for child care, paediatricians in Hungary are predominantly women, nurses and teachers in the crèche and kindergarten are always women). Béla Buda (1996) emphasises the resultant psychosocial problems (e.g. absence of male role models).

The trend toward total overrepresentation of women in the teaching and kindergarten professions (children between the ages of six and ten and pre-school children) is typical for Hungary. Of 20 employees, 19 were women in 1987 (Setényi 1996, p. 509). The large numbers of women in educational occupations in Hungary are likely to be linked to the historic tradition, the extremely poor pay and the resultant loss of social prestige of the profession. Despite the overrepresentation of women as teachers, women are seldom to be found as headmistresses, even if their numbers have increased somewhat in the last two decades due to the dearth of men in the teaching profession in primary schools. In the 1970s, approx. 17% of women were employed as headmistresses in primary schools, whereas this number was around 50% in the 1990s. There is still a very great reluctance in Hungary to accept female directors nevertheless – a man is still regarded as a more likely candidate for a directorship even among women (F. Lassú 2006). This trend is not expected to change in the future either since the number of men training to be teachers is falling rapidly and the educational profession is continuing to decline in prestige and status.

Suggestions for further independent study of the topic

1. The study text presents the roots and current gender-specific aspects in the Hungarian education system. What problems are emphasised in this connection?
2. After 1945 'women's equality' was addressed in socialism. What consequences did this have for working life and what implications did it have for the daily life of families?
3. Several examples of educational work in the primary school in a coeducational context are described in the text (e.g. technology and sports lessons). In your opinion, are there areas (subjects) that could implement gender-specific and boy-specific action? Give examples!
4. What are the so-called „elementary art schools“ in Hungary? Is gender-equitable education and training feasible?

Bibliography and list of sources

- Acsády Judit: Lovagiasságtól a vádaskodásig. Képek a magyarországi antifeminizmus tablójáról. In: *Educatio* (1996) 3, pp. 454-466 and pp. 532
- Arens, R.I.: *Learning to teaching*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc. 1991
- Báthory, Zoltán: *Tanulók, iskolák, különbségek. Egy differenciális tanításmélet vázlat*. Budapest: OKKER Oktatási Kiadó, 2000
- Buda, Béla: A pedagóguspálya nőiesedésének pszichológiai problémái. In: *Educatio* (1996) 3, pp. 431-440
- Cs. Czachesz, Erzsébet; Radó, Péter: Oktatási egyenlőtlenségek és speciális igények. In: Halász, Gábor; Lannert, Judit (ed.): *Jelentés a magyar közoktatásról 2003*
- Cs. Czachesz, Erzsébet; Lesznyák, Márta; Molnár, Edit Katalin: Lányok és nők a kötelező olvasmányokban, tankönyvekben. In: *Educatio* (1996) 3, pp. 417-430
- Dálnokiné Pécsi, Klára: Családkép a kisiskolások tankönyveiben. In: *Új Pedagógiai Szemle* 2001. január. pp. 100-106
- Fábri, Anna (ed.): *Nő és hivatása. Szemelvények a magyarországi nőkérdés történetéből, 1777-1865*. Budapest: Kortárs Kiadó 1999
- Fischerné Dárdai Ágnes; Kojanitz László: A tankönyvek változásai az 1970-es évektől napjainkig. In: *Új Pedagógiai Szemle* (2007) 1
- Kereszty, Orsolya: A társadalmi nemek reprezentációjának vizsgálata tankönyvekben. In: *Könyv és nevelés 2005* (7.évfolyam), 3.szám. pp. 56-67
- Ladányi, Andor: Két évforduló. In: *Educatio* (1996) 3, pp. 375-389
- Lévai, Katalin: *A nő szerint a világ*. Budapest: Osiris 2000
- Hadas, Miklós (ed.): *Férfiuralom. Írások nőkről, férfiakról, feminizmusról*. Budapest: Replika Kör 1994
- Lévai, Katalin; Kiss, Róbert; Gyulavári, Tamás (ed.): *Vegyesváltó. Pillanatképek nőkről, férfiakról. Egyenlő Esélyek Alapítvány* 1999.
- N. Kollár, Katalin; Szabó, Éva: *Pszichológia pedagógusoknak*. Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2004.
- Nagy Beáta: Üzleti karrier és képzettség. In: *Educatio* (1996) 3, pp. 390-403
- Nemzeti Alaptanterv. Kiadja a Művelődési és Közoktatási Minisztérium. Budapest 1995
- Ranschburg, Jenő: *A nő és a férfi. Pszichológia és pedagógia nevelőknek*. Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó 1996
- Setényi, János: A nők helyzete az oktatásügyben. In: *Educatio* 3/1996. pp. 507-515
- Szalai, Julia (ed.): *Two studies on changing gender relations in post-1989 Hungary. Discussion papers No. 30*. Budapest: Collegium Budapest/Institut for Advanced Study July 1996
- Tóth, Olga: Attitűdváltozások a női munkavállalás megítélésében. In: *Szociológiai Szemle* (1995) 1, pp. 71-86

Váradi, Monika Mária: Nők a térben és a társadalomban. In: Educatio 3/1996. pp. 541-544

Selected links:

<http://www.oki.hu/oldal.php?tipus=cikk&kod=Jelentes2003-Egyenlőtlenségek>

<http://www.kodolanyi.hu/szabadpart/szam9/lassu.html>

<http://www.oki.hu/oldal.php?tipus=cikk&kod=2007-01-ta-Tobbek-Tankonyvek>

<http://www.uni-miskolc.hu/~btntud/multikult.pdf>

<http://www.oki.hu/printerFriendly.php?tipus=cikk&kod=Jelentes2000-10-Meltanyossag>