

Gender Representations and Language Teaching: Analyzing the Language text Book for the Second Grade of the Greek Primary School

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Abstract: *School textbooks are a basic source of knowledge, but also an important means of socializing individuals, since various messages are mainly transmitted through language, part of which are gender representations. This paper focuses on the analysis of gender representations that are presented in the language textbook taught in the second grade of primary school in Greece. For this purpose, I utilized combined tools from Content Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, in order to examine gender references and highlight the ideology and discourses that construct them. The results showed an attempt to quantitatively balance the number of references to men and women, which, however, is not reflected in the qualitative analysis, as men are shown to dominate the workplace and more broadly in public life, with women being underrepresented and limited to actions related to family responsibilities.*

Keywords: school textbooks, gender representations, content analysis, critical discourse analysis, language teaching

INTRODUCTION

An issue that has long concerned both individuals and entire societies, both in Greece and internationally, is that of gender equality. This is because the two sexes are not treated equally in the fields in which they operate, since specific perceptions have been formed, according to which it is considered that individuals respond better to specific roles depending on their gender (Lampropoulou & Georgouleia 2017).

A field of action where gender inequalities have been recorded is the school, which, after the family, is the second-largest socialization agency for individuals, since its goal is not only to transmit knowledge, but also to cultivate in students a series of values and attitudes that are in harmony with the perceptions of society (Blackledge & Hunt 2004:9-41).

A particularly important role in this process is played by gender representations, which are found in school textbooks, since the latter, like the Curriculum, constitute the institutional educational texts that have been compiled by the official state to teach students all the prescribed subjects. In this context, children come into contact for several hours a day, both at school and in their home study, with the content of school books, in which various gender representations are recorded (Editor 1, 2021; Editor 3, 2024).

For this reason, in this study I examine gender representations as they are presented in school textbooks for the Modern Greek Language course in Greek primary schools. In particular, I focus my interest on the language textbooks of the 2nd grade, which consist of three volumes, occupy the most teaching hours per week and are taught from 2006 to the current year of the research (2024-2025).

Therefore, the investigation of gender representations in school textbooks constitutes an examination of the language and the ideology expressed by it, since the discourses of school textbooks construct gender identities through the association of specific behaviors with one of the two sexes (Fragoudaki 1987:12-16, Deliyianni-Kouimtzi 2000; Maraki 2011).

For this reason, the present research differs, in terms of methodology, from the majority of existing research, which has examined gender representations mainly through Content Analysis. This is because this study attempts to combine Content Analysis with the Critical Discourse Analysis approach, since the purpose of this research is not only to record the projected gender representations, but also to investigate their type and, at the same time, to highlight the reasons that structure them in the school textbook, also examining the ideology on which they are based.

LITERATURE

Content Analysis Research on textbooks from international and Greek literature

International and Greek literature has dealt with the issue of gender representations in textbooks over time. The first studies at an international level are found by Trecker (1971), who examined the perspective of gender in US History textbooks, by Lobban (1975) in the books taught in England and by Giroud (1976), who investigated gender representations in French Primary Education textbooks. In Greece, respectively, Fragoudaki (1979:13) proceeded to analyze the

reading books of the period 1954-1974. A key common point of the above research was the study of gender roles, establishing a stable connection of women with domestic work and men with everything related to the public sphere of action, while the reproduction of a patriarchal ideology was also established, especially in what concerned the family environment (Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada and Ross 1972; Stern 1976).

Moving forward into the 1990s, a multitude of international studies are recorded (Gupta & Yin 1990:29-50; Rignault and Richert, 1997; Jassey 1998:87-93; Evans and Davies, 2000:255-270), as well as studies concerning school language textbooks in Greece, which were published in 1982 and were taught until 2006. Regarding the results, a clear categorization of the roles of individuals emerged not based on their interests and inclinations, but according to traditional representations of the two sexes, since men are presented as the dominant individuals in the public sphere (Xanthakou & Kaila, 1988:71-78; Lambropoulou, Georgouleas & Freiderikou 1995; Deliyianni-Kouimtzi 1999:147-170).

Continuing with research concerning the new language textbooks taught in Greece from 2006 up to the year of the preparation of this research (2025), a multitude of studies that applied Content Analysis are identified, through which the reproduction of traditional gender representations was established, especially in activities of public life, such as the professional occupation of individuals, with which the male sex is particularly strongly associated, since women are shown to be absent from the workplace (Maragoudaki 2007; Maraki 2011; Kapetsonis 2012; Editor 1 2018:642-662).

Finally, examining the most recent international studies of the last decade, an unequal representation of the two sexes in textbooks was recorded, since men are presented as more competent in everything related to new STEM technologies, but also in everything related to their career and professional development (Vervecken & Hannover 2015; Kalogeratos & Pierrakeas, 2022; Crawford, Saintis-Miller & Todd 2024; Editor 3 2024; Fruehwirth, Heilemann & Stoeger 2024; Kalogeratos & Pierrakeas, 2024).

Research on Critical Discourse Analysis in Primary School Textbooks from the International Bibliography

CDA is an approach that has not been widely used for the analysis of school textbooks, although it is extremely useful, since it studies the text as a whole, connecting it with the social environment and highlighting its connection with specific ideological bases.

Starting chronologically with the Greek bibliography, a limited number of research studies are identified, the first being that of Stamou, Chronaki and Zioga (2007:63-89) in the school student magazine Euclid. Through the research, it is concluded that the discourse used maintains patriarchal patterns, such as the dominance of male figures, their connection with various professional roles and the attribution of family roles to female figures.

Equally interesting is the research of Pangourelia and Papadopoulou (2007:605-613), who, through the combination of CA and CDA, found in the language textbooks of the 3rd grade of primary school a reproduction of traditional gender representations, which maintain older models of the previous textbooks of 1982. Next, we find the research of Bonidis (2009:86-122), through which it was noted that the hierarchies and roles of individuals in the family, in society and in power are presented according to the sex of individuals, as naturally distributed.

Further interesting studies are those of Mustadenagic (2010), Gungor and Prins (2010: 170-176), Xiong and Qian (2012:75-32) and Aoumeur (2014:13-22), where an attempt was recorded to soften traditional gender representations, while maintaining a clear stereotyped character, which is confirmed through the gendered division of labor of the characters, but also the connection of men with public life and women with private life.

Finally, two more interesting studies are those of Fafiti-Vlachodimou (2014:137 - 139) and Editor 2 (2022:257 - 274), where through the combination of CA and CDA, an attempt was found to reduce male presence, but at the same time a clear reproduction of traditional gender representations, since men continue to abstain from housework and to be active in public life with dynamism, boldness, ingenuity and leadership characteristics towards the female sex.

METHODOLOGY

The present study concerns the investigation of gender representations in school textbooks taught from 2006 onwards in Greece up to the year of the present research (2025). Although various studies have been carried out on these school textbooks, the need to re-examine this specific teaching material is necessary, through the combination of different methodological approaches, which are likely to highlight different aspects of gender representations in school textbooks. The vast majority, moreover, of existing research studied primary school language books mainly text-centrally, through the CA, in which they focused on a specific range of axes of analysis, leaving aside the ideology behind the gender representations and the communicative context of each described situation.

The main difference of this research is that it explores the representations of the two sexes through the combination of two research methods of text and discourse analysis: Content Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis.

Sample

The discourse analysis was carried out on the student's book of the language textbook of second grade in Greek primary school (three issues) with the aim of investigating the first books with which a student comes into contact in the first grades of primary school. Regarding the choice of the cognitive subject, it was made with the criterion that the language course covers the largest part of the weekly timetable compared to the other subjects and at the same time the texts included in it cover a wide range of people's social life (narratives, descriptions, fairy tales, texts from the internet, posters, etc.). Thus, in the abundance of teaching hours, it is possible that young students receive significant influences from language textbooks in the process of their socialization and by extension in the formation of their gender identity. Finally, it is important to note that the texts selected and examined were written by the authoring groups of the textbooks and represent 52% of the total texts of the second grade language textbook. In this way, contemporary texts were investigated, written by the same authoring groups, and texts created in other historical periods were excluded.

Methods of Analysis

Content Analysis

The present study was conducted in two phases: in the first phase, CA was carried out and in the second, the CDA approach was applied. Regarding CA, it is a method that has been applied over time for the examination of any form of communication material (Weber, 1990: 9) and at the same time it is a widespread method of analyzing school textbooks (Krippendorp 2004:40; Mayring 2000:271).

Its implementation was carried out through a checklist of four axes of analysis, which examined the frequency of occurrence of gender representations (quantitative analysis), but also the way in which the two sexes are presented within fields of action where the appearing characters move and act (qualitative analysis) (Robson 2007; Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:476-483). As a unit of analysis, thematic or semantic analysis was adopted, where individual words are not taken into account, but the meaning of entire phrases or groups of words, which are classified and placed in the categories of the axes of analysis. Specifically, the axes of analysis through which gender representations were examined are the following:

- 1) Total male / female references
- 2) References to family roles of male/female persons
- 3) References to roles and abilities of male/female persons in the professional/social environment
- 4) References to occupational roles of male/female persons

Finally, for each axis, individual categories of analysis were established, which comprehensively examine the gender perspective, exploring gender representations at three levels: those considered traditional, non-traditional and neutral in terms of society's existing standards and perceptions of gender roles.

Critical Discourse Analysis

In the second research phase, the CDA approach was applied to indicative texts of the textbooks. This specific research choice was made, not only ancillary, but also collaboratively with CA, since as Phillips and Hardy (2002) emphasize, CA analyzes the language and meanings of the text par excellence in a quantitative way through a system of axes of analysis, based on the thematic fields of the research. On the other hand, CDA attempts to reveal the role of ideology in shaping the relationship between linguistic and social structures and practices by examining lexicographic and syntactic elements, as they are integrated into the respective sociocultural context of the texts (Fairclough 1992; van Dijk 1995:17-18; Barker & Galasinski 2001; Chalak & Ghasemi 2017).

The present study used the three-dimensional analytical framework proposed by Fairclough (1992, 2003), which is divided into three levels: the micro-level of text analysis, the meso-level of discourse practice and the macro-level of social practice. Initially, at the micro-level, Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (1994) was applied, which is linked to CDA, since it aims to investigate the concepts constructed through language (lexico-grammatical and grammatical-syntactic choices). Therefore, the linguistic records found in school textbooks are constructions located in the respective social conditions. More specifically, Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (1994) utilized the ideological function of language, which highlights the causality of discourses, and more specifically, an analysis was carried out based on the system of transferability. According to this, linguistic choices are interpreted in terms of processes that represent society and the modern world.

At the meso-level of discourse practice, the ways in which the grammatical and syntactic choices in the textbook analyzed at the micro-level construct traditional, non-traditional or neutral gender representations were examined.

Finally, this process was completed with the macro-level analysis of social practice, where the lexical, grammatical and syntactic features detected in the micro-level text analysis, together with the emerging gender representations identified at the meso-level, are correlated with society's existing perceptions of gender roles and their degree of relevance or distance from them is examined (Stamou 2013).

RESULTS

References to male and female characters

The first category investigated in the language textbook of the second grade of primary school is the references to male and female persons in any action or condition (Table 1.). From the CA, a total of 734 references to human persons were identified, of which 53% (391 references) concern male persons and 47% (343 references) female persons. From the above findings it appears that men have a small, but clear advantage over women. However, this specific, not particularly large advantage of male persons is reinforced by the number of male characters in the language textbooks of the second grade. This is because a series of many and different male persons are identified, compared to a limited range of female characters. Therefore, through the plurality of identified male figures, students who are taught this teaching material come into contact with a multitude of male figures, who, as is obvious, carry many and different individual characteristics, abilities, skills and initiatives, taking part in various family, professional and social roles.

Table 1.Total references of individuals

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| References to male persons (indicatively are listed the findings from the third issue) |
|--|
| Loukas (p. 8), Arben (p. 8), teacher (p. 12), writer (p. 12), classmates (p. 13), George Seferis (p. 14), heroes (p. 18), Giannis Makrygiannis (p. 18), Georgios Karaiskakis (p. 18), George Marinos (p. 19), Asimakis (p. 21), Kolokotronis (p. 21), Turks (p. 24), fighters of 1821 (p. 24), doctors (p. 28), volunteers (p. 28), newsboy (28), salesman (p. 29), students (p. 30), firefighters (p. 31), Marios Nikolopoulos (p. 35), Anestis (p. 35), Dimitrios Pittas (p. 35), Vasileios (p. 35), Giannis (p. 36), Mr. Pantelis (p. 39), ice cream maker (p. 39), shopkeeper (p. 39), ice seller (p. 39), shoemakers (p. 40), |

watermen (p. 40), chairmen (p. 40), priest (p. 44), ancient Greeks (p. 49), Persians (p. 49), Chinese (p. 49), to our friends (p. 49), dad (p. 59), Lakis (p. 59), grandfather (p. 60), Aristophanes (p. 61), Karagiozis (p. 61), kings (p. 61), jesters (p. 61), Karagiozis lawyer (p. 62), Dinos Theodoropoulos (caricature player, p. 62), Minas (p. 63), grandfather (from the magazine published by Minas' class, p. 64)

References to female persons (indicatively are listed the findings from the third issue)

(p. 66)

Chara (p. 8), Galini (p. 8), teacher (p. 12), Manto Mavrogenous (p. 18), Chariklia (p. 35), Eleni Karra (teacher, p. 35), grandmother (p. 44), Aunt Eleni (p. 44), sister Louka (p. 46), the child (refers to a girl, p. 50), Little Red Riding Hood (p. 60), cousin Mina (p. 63), Arben's grandmother (p. 66)

References to professional roles

Moving on to the next axis of analysis, the professional activities of the individuals were studied and the type of professional choices that the individuals appearing were shown to be pursuing were investigated. Initially examining the references to occupations practiced by men and women (Figure 1), 104 total references from individuals of both sexes are identified, of which 73 (70%) concern men and 31 (30%) concern women.

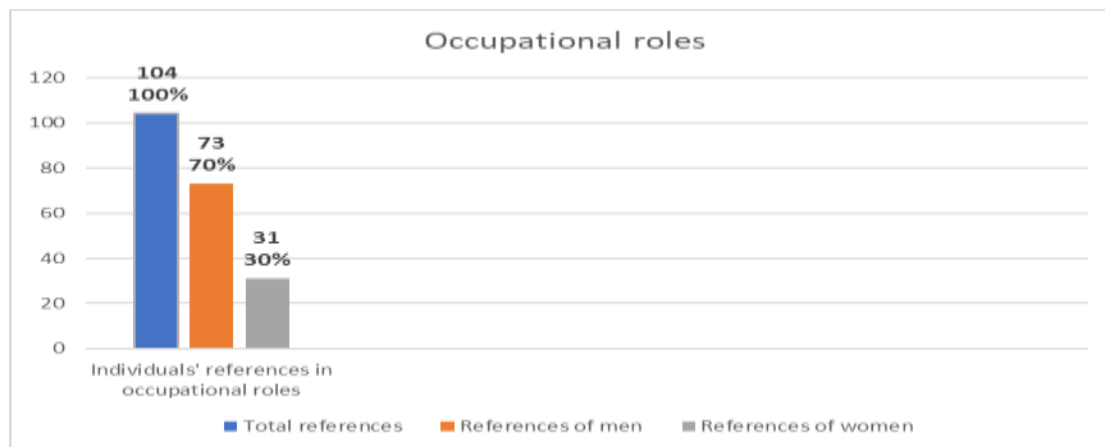


Figure 1. References in occupational roles

This specific finding, as shown in Figure 1 above, confirms the traditional connection of men with the public-professional field of action, in which they excel, since they work, are paid, provide the necessary material goods for the people in their family environment and often advance to higher positions in the professional hierarchy.

The above finding is highlighted and confirmed more fully through Critical Discourse Analysis, since it was established that male persons are presented in professional roles mainly through verbs of material processes (“The firefighters arrived. They carried the hoses, rushed to the school and did what they could to put out the fire. [...]”, issue 3, p. 31) and less often identifying verbs, showing a more active and vibrant profile, but also their certain position (identifying processes) in specific workplaces, through decisive speech acts that declare this stability [(meaning the firefighters) “Then, they stood on the steps of the school building”, issue 3, p. 31]. Thus, even with non-material verb processes, male persons show that they take on a leading role within the public field of action, since in this specific example they subsequently proceeded to a verbal process, taking care to explain to the children and teachers various elements regarding extinguishing the fire through a directive speech act, in order to convey clear instructions to them [(meaning the firefighters) “they explained to us how to put out a small fire with the fire extinguisher”, third issue, p. 31]. Additionally, taking into account Fairclough’s three-dimensional model, we observe a series of verbs that particularly actively show male persons and speech acts that reinforce their dynamism and guiding role (micro level). Through these, traditional gender representations that place men at the center of public life (middle level) emerge, given that it is in line with existing perceptions of society about the leading role that men have in public life and especially in the workplace, where they are considered more capable than women in professions that require physical strength, in tasks related to the common good and in positions of responsibility.

More specifically, male characters were identified in job positions that require physical strength, manual skills and are related to the natural environment, such as the profession of grape presser, craftsman and camel driver. Furthermore, a series of references to male characters in positions of responsibility, who undertake the governance of a state and the management of the fate of an entire people, were recorded. Thus, we have the presence of men in the role of the king of a state or the mayor of a city, through which they manage complex issues, showing leadership skills.

Moving forward with the analysis, it is important to examine the references related to the presentation of female figures in professional activities. These specific representations include a particularly small range of professional choices, as through them a very small number of female professional roles are identified, as emerged from the CA. However, CDA highlighted the type and characteristics of female representations in professional positions, since it was established that female figures have a traditional role, projected into the working position of a flight attendant (“Listen to the flight attendant,” my mother told me”, first issue, p. 57) or an employee of a folklore museum (second issue, p. 52) who represents how weaving is done on a loom and embroidery. These representations constitute traditional professional activities of women in public life (the

airplane or the museum), where, however, they carry out actions similar to those they carry out in their private lives and are traditionally associated with their gender (taking care of and feeding people, embroidery and weaving). According to Fairclough's three-dimensional model, we observe that women are projected through verbs of material and mental processes, in the present tense, to take care of other people (micro level). This reference reproduces the traditional representation of the woman who is responsible for the care of the other people around her and mainly for the upbringing or care of children (meso level). Thus, the image of women in the professional world through the school textbook is analogous to the perceptions that modern society has of them in the workplace, since they excel in positions related to the care of other people (e.g. flight attendants, maids, beauticians), and in particular, of children, since they are considered to reproduce the maternal model in their professional roles (e.g. kindergarten teachers, babysitters, teachers of younger elementary school classes).

References to family roles

Next, references to representations of the two sexes within the family sphere of action were investigated. From the research process, it was observed that 86% of the references are related to family roles and abilities undertaken by female individuals, 9% concern family roles on behalf of male individuals and 5% are related to references to family roles independent of the gender of the individuals. From the above data, the first picture given confirms the traditional representations of the two sexes, according to which the female persons are the one traditionally associated with the private sphere of action, responsible for undertaking all household chores or raising children and distant from what is developing in public life.

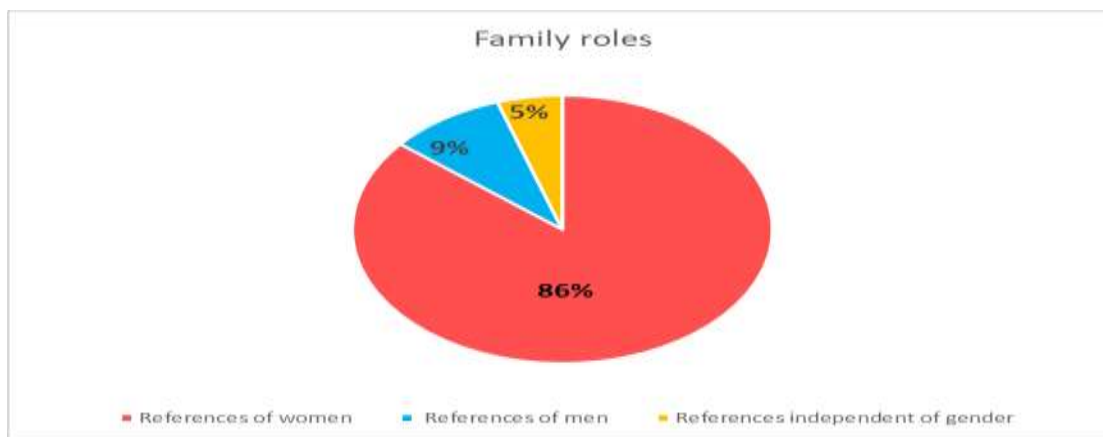


Figure 2.References in family roles

Through the critical analysis, it was also found that in addition to the numerical superiority of female representations in the domestic environment, a connection of the two sexes with traditional family roles is also recorded. Therefore, both the abundance of female representations and the few references to male persons reproduce a traditional image of the two sexes in the private sphere.

For example, a characteristic point is where a boy, by making directional speech acts, through a verb of material processes, conveys a request to buy a musical instrument to his father, confirming the traditional representations of the two sexes (“Dad, buy me a drum to play!”, third issue, p. 59). This is because, while in the family environment women have traditionally been associated with the daily care of children, when it comes to issues related to financial transactions or public life, the responsibility is assumed by men, who are considered responsible for securing the financial resources required to maintain a family.

On the other hand, by critically analyzing the type of activities and responsibilities undertaken by women, the traditional connection of the female persons with the upbringing of the children of a house and daily care was established. For example, we observe that children leave notes at home addressed to the mother, as evidenced by Luke's note, where they inform her of their daily life with assertive speech acts ("Mom, I'm leaving for school. Grandma has arrived. The afternoon will pass.", first issue, p. 51). Accordingly, women generally take care of the health and safety of children at home, since Arben uses material verb processes and declarative speech acts to present the actions his grandmother took regarding the baby tooth she pulled out (“My grandmother took it, threw it on a rooftop and said: take the old one and bring a new one”, first issue, p. 33). Taking into account in this analysis and Fairclough's tripartite model, initially at the micro level, verbs in the Present tense are identified both by children addressing their mother or grandmother and by the women of the house speaking to them. From these data, the representation of the traditional connection of women with the care and upbringing of children emerges, while at the same time the children themselves traditionally recognize this role in the women of the family (meso level). Therefore, this particular traditional representation of women also confirms the broader perceptions of society regarding child rearing. Certainly, in modern society men participate more in childcare compared to the past, however, the traditional perception that women are responsible for child rearing still holds true, since the female persons are traditionally associated with this role (macro level).

References to the public sphere

The next axis of analysis that was put under examination concerns the roles assumed by individuals of both sexes, as well as the abilities they demonstrate within their professional or wider social

environment. From the data collected, we observe that a total of 74 references to men and 62 recordings of women in the public sphere were identified (Table 2.).

The picture through the above findings of the CA, seemingly shows an equal projection of male and female characters within the public sphere. However, through the investigation of the type of activities, a traditional representation of persons is observed, since both men and women are placed in actions and roles traditional to social representations. In particular, 95% of the male representations recorded are related to roles that project the male sex into traditional roles and abilities within their professional and broader social environment, thus reproducing traditional gender representations in this field of action. In fact, this finding is additionally reinforced by the weak projection of male persons into non-traditional male roles (5%), an element that reveals an almost exclusively traditional projection of men in public life.

Table 2. Gender representations in the public environment

| | |
|---|----------|
| Total gender representations in the public environment | 136 |
| Total male representations in the public environment | 74 |
| Traditional male representations | 70 (95%) |
| Non-traditional male representations | 4 (5%) |
| Total female representations in the public environment | 62 |
| Traditional female representations | 56 (90%) |
| Non-traditional female representations | 6 (10%) |

By subsequently studying the roles that female figures present in their professional-social environment, the findings are almost the same as those concerning the male sex. More specifically, 90% of female representations are related to traditional roles-abilities of female figures and only 10% concern non-traditional representations of women in this field of action, thus also highlighting women in actions that have been traditionally associated with their gender. In particular, in the third issue, only 3 references to women in the public space are identified, an element that promotes the absence of women from this specific field of action. Therefore, the presence of the female gender arises mainly through the second issue, where several actions on the part of women are recorded, due to their joint trip with the boys to Chocharoupa (which is an unknown country). Therefore, the quantitative increase in the percentage of women is certainly significant, but it is not accompanied by autonomous actions of women in public life, so that their autonomous activation in the public field of action is equally evident.

The reproduction of traditional gender representations through the references to persons in the public field of action is particularly highlighted through critical analysis, where with a first general

impression, male persons are presented in various material verb processes and more often proceed to directional speech acts, thus showing a more energetic and active profile, while women are associated with mental and identification processes. Indicative of these elements is the reference to the adult man who does not allow the little girl to pass on the bus if she does not speak to him in the way he considers correct (adult gentleman: To the adults, speak with “you” and with “yours” [...], first issue, p. 21). Through this specific example, it appears that the male figures in this space are presented with the traditional representation of the strong, powerful and strict masculine character.

Furthermore, the male gender is presented as particularly active socially, since it moves in various social environments, presented as even bringing the element of adventure, even reaching unknown parts of space, presented with a high degree of sociability, towards strangers and inhabitants of this new place (“I travel in space. I arrive on a distant planet and meet the aliens. They are very friendly and greet me. I greet them too”, first issue, p. 31).

Additionally, this intense social life of men also pushes them to participate in actions related to the current political situation and the common good of the entire society, possessing dynamism and interest in political developments and the public good of all, which is none other than the restoration of democracy in the country (second issue, p. 12). Thus, the father is presented, who “turned on the radio and listened thoughtfully” to the developments in the National Technical University of Athens area (or as it is called Polytechnio). This intense interest of the father in public developments is further revealed through the words of the child, who emphasizes through two verbs of mental processes that she had never seen her father so upset, highlighting through a recorded epistemic modality her feeling for her father's specific upset (“I think I have never seen him so upset before!”, second issue, p. 12). From the above example, verbs and determinations are recorded that show the duration of the father's interest in the events of the Technical University uprising (micro level). From these grammatical and syntactic choices, the representation of the male person who is involved and interested in politics, the developments surrounding it and is generally involved in public life (meso level) is reproduced. This specific representation is linked to the existing traditional perception of society, that men are more capable of public life and are involved in it systematically by participating in political life (macro level).

Certainly, in recent years, women have entered politics, but their presence is weak. This is because the basic idea that prevails in society regarding who is capable of dealing with public affairs is limited to men, as confirmed by the overwhelming majority of men in parliament, the cabinet and local government.

In addition, through the research process, a reproduction of traditional representations of the two sexes emerged, through the presentation of male figures in manual work that requires physical strength, such as that of the grape presser, the swordsmith or the water carrier who is obliged to carry large quantities of water to serve his customers.

Continuing the investigation of the representations of the two sexes in the public sphere, it is interesting to examine the references related to representations of female figures in roles related to public life. Initially, it is important to note that through CA, it emerged that 90% of all female references are linked to traditional roles and abilities in this field of action. Thus, through this finding it is obvious that the projection of women in the public sphere does not propose a dynamic and energetic character, but reproduces traditional gender roles.

Studying all of these recorded traditional references, initially the confirmation of the traditional representation based on which female persons are considered to have a greater degree of bookishness compared to males, but also a strong interest in reading. An indicative example of this finding is the example of little Galini, who on the eve of her departure for Chocharoupa, reads a story with farewells before going to bed (first issue, p. 54).

CDA confirms the effort to project a more active female role model within society, without however being identified in subversive actions or leading roles. More specifically, Chara “waiting for the bell to ring, sits on the bench in the yard and reads a fairy tale”. At this point, through the verb form of this active participle, we have another indirect action of the girl, who in this short period of time does not remain idle, but seems to “sit” (associative categorical process) on the bench and decides to proceed with the activity of reading [“reads a fairy tale” (mental process, with Chara as the actor and the book as the recipient) waiting for “the bell to ring” (material process)].

On the same wavelength when Loukas takes the floor, who states that he “likes” fairy tales too, but only in the case that he does not read them himself, as the actor of this action, but listens to their development as a listener and recipient-target of this action on behalf of others (“I like it when others read them to me”). This is a confirmation of the traditional representations of the two sexes, where female characters are presented as studious and diligent, having pursuits, through the field of Theoretical Sciences, for which male persons, and specifically here Lucas, is not as willing to follow voluntarily.

Continuing the study of the findings of this category of analysis, another interesting fact that was identified concerns the traditional representation in which women proceed in their social life to buy gifts for their loved ones, thus assuming the responsibility of maintaining good relations with

their friends within the framework of their social life. The example of Galini, who through a verb of material processes bought a gift for her friends (“Happiness bought her friends a book as a Christmas gift”, second issue, p. 42).

Furthermore, through the Language textbooks of the second grade of Primary School, Chara is identified as keeping a diary, just as her mother did in her childhood. Specifically, with the application of the CDA, Chara is identified as the actor of a series of material processes, who “asked to read” the diary (goal) that her mother “kept”, who is also projected in turn as the actor of a material process. Thus, both of these female characters are presented in an activity that is traditionally associated with the female gender, since in the diary, the moments of everyday life are recorded along with the accompanying emotions of the individuals, with which women have a direct correlation, since they are considered more tender and more expressive of what they feel, in contrast to the traditional profile of a tough male character (second issue, p. 6; second issue, p. 12).

Finally, the non-traditional roles of women in their professional-social environment were examined, which account for 10% of the total reports of female persons in this field of action. Their presence, regardless of the low frequency of their recording, is significant, but in no way balances or negates the low degree of participation by women in leadership positions, in various professional activities or more generally in multiple fields of public life. In addition, the type of non-traditional actions is not so subversive nor are female persons recorded in male-dominated roles and positions in public life. For example, the presence of a little girl is identified who speaks in a sharp, inelegant and rude manner towards an unknown, adult man in a public place, and he makes a remark to her, responding with directional speech acts (girl: You, let me pass further! adult gentleman: Adults should be addressed with "you" and "yours" first issue, p. 21).

DISCUSSION

Investigating the gender representations in the Language textbook for the 2nd grade of primary school, which includes three volumes in total, at a first level an attempt to equalize the presence of male and female persons is recorded. Thus, it seems that the writing teams that wrote the textbooks in 2006 - 2007 made an attempt to equalize the two sexes, but only in the total quantitative number, as revealed by the Content Analysis method. This is a first interesting finding, which contrasts with the findings concerning the language textbooks of earlier periods in Greece that are taught in primary school. More specifically, examining the research of Fragoudaki (1979:13), which studied the textbooks taught in the period 1954 – 1974, as well as a series of research carried out in language books from the period 1982 – 2006, an unequal representation of the two genders is identified, with a clear overrepresentation of males (Xanthakou & Kaila,

1988:71-78; Lambropoulou, Georgoulea & Freiderikou, 1995; Deliyianni-Kouimtzi, 1999:147-170)

However, both through a more thorough study of the second grade school textbook in additional categories of analysis, as well as through the application of the Critical Discourse Analysis approach, an explicit traditional representation of male and female characters was identified, in the background of the gender references. In this context, through the study of the type of identified gender representations, a multitude of male persons emerged, compared to a particularly smaller range of female characters. Consequently, the quantitative recording of the frequency of appearance of male and female persons does not highlight their essentially unequal projection and representation.

The above conclusion is reinforced by the investigation of gender representations in subsequent categories of analysis, where a traditional projection of the two sexes was recorded, both through their quantitative and qualitative examination. In particular, while in the totality of the characters appearing, a small quantitative advantage of men is identified, studying the individual axes of analysis reveals that men have a particularly high percentage of appearance in roles related to the public sphere of action, while women in actions and responsibilities related to the family environment. This is a particularly interesting finding, which should concern the writing teams that are preparing the next school textbooks in this period of time (2025), in order to create teaching material free from traditional gender norms and to achieve a substantially and not pretentiously equal approach to the genders.

More specifically, by utilizing combined tools of CA and CDA, in the language textbook of the second grade of primary school, a traditional representation of male characters emerged in roles and actions that place them in public life, as individuals who are particularly capable, active, energetic and often possess modern knowledge (e.g. in ICT) and leadership skills. This specific representation was confirmed both by the verb processes that were recorded and by the speech acts, since male persons are identified in public life as actors in a series of material processes, decisive speech acts that confirm their position and also directive acts through which they exercise a guiding role either in female persons or in the wider society.

On the other hand, female representations reinforce the traditional character of the language textbook studied, since women on the one hand have a particularly low level of participation in public life, where they appear with a passive profile, and on the other hand they maintain a clear lead in the family field of action, as responsible for household chores and raising children. For this reason, as CDA has also highlighted, women in the public field are projected as recipients and

targets of the material processes with which men are associated, while at the same time they are presented as acting with mental actions and emotional means. Furthermore, the main field where they take an active role is the domestic space, in which they are projected in material processes as actors, with the aim of completing actions that have children as recipients.

Another interesting conclusion that emerges is the unequal visibility of women in the workplace, where they are placed in a limited range of professional roles, away from manual work, positions related to new technologies, but also roles of either leadership or high social prestige. This is a particularly important finding, which is in contrast to modern social reality, since women have gained several rights in the professional arena, work and even often take on positions of responsibility compared to previous decades.

Furthermore, through the conduct of this research, the need to utilize a combined and complex methodological process (such as the combination of Content Analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis) is highlighted, with the aim of comprehensively investigating the perspective of gender in school textbooks and simultaneously highlighting the ideology behind any representations. This is because they do not deal with gender representations restrictively and statically on a unilateral quantitative and superficial level, but act collaboratively, with the first quantitatively identifying gender references (Galasinski & Marley, 1998:573) and the second approach highlighting the ideology that covertly maintains and reproduces them within society and, by extension, in school textbooks (Chalak & Ghasemi, 2017). Thus, the above findings are more reliable, valid and well-placed, since they are not simple records, but through them all aspects of each gender representation are highlighted (Barker & Galasinski, 2001).

Thus, it is important that the first one precedes, in order to map all possible gender references of a text and that the second approach follows, with the aim of examining the text comprehensively, through the analysis of its grammatical, syntactic and lexical choices, from which the respective ideology underlying these representations is subsequently highlighted.

Furthermore, with regard to the perspective of gender in school textbooks, the present study highlights the need for an equal representation and approach to gender identities in the school curriculum and by extension in the school textbooks that are written and shaped according to it. Thus, a framework of equality can be created and transmitted to future adults, who are the children who are taught the books, thus changing the long-term inequality deficit of society. This particular conclusion is particularly timely in a period when the next school textbooks are being written and prepared, in order to be taken into account by both the official state and the writing teams themselves.

Finally, I hope that the above findings will have an impact on the broader context of the school community, where it is important for all those involved (e.g. teachers, parents, etc.) to be aware of gender issues. Especially, as far as teachers are concerned, the egalitarian approach to gender representations in school textbooks will have a particular impact on the educational practices of the teachers themselves, since research has shown that they largely follow the content and standards exactly as presented in the school textbooks during their teaching. The latter result has been found in a study by Editor 1 (2021) where the same sample of teachers changed their educational practices towards the approach of gender representations, depending on the content of the teaching material they had at each time.

Implication to Research and Practice

It is necessary to raise awareness in the field of education on gender equality issues more broadly, especially in a period of time when the public debate has shifted beyond the traditional dichotomy of male and female, which concerned the present study because this is how gender identities are represented in the textbook of the sample. However, it is important to mobilize the entire educational field, starting from the political leadership of education and moving on to the writing teams that prepare the next books, to teachers, education executives, university professors and parents themselves. This is because, as demonstrated by both the present study and previous ones (Lampropoulou & Georgalidou, 2017), in Greek society it seems that traditional discourses are still being reproduced to describe the position of individuals within the family and public spheres of action, within a framework of overt (and/or covert) sexism.

CONCLUSION

From this study, the main conclusion is the essential need to include the gender perspective in the school curriculum, starting from the textbooks, with which students, teachers and parents come into contact during their home study. In addition, the need for educational activities in the school community is highlighted so that its members are informed about a new goal regarding gender equality in society, which also passes through the field of education. Furthermore, an equally important conclusion concerns the research community regarding the methodology for investigating and examining gender representations in teaching materials, since this research highlighted the need for synergy and Critical Discourse Analysis, in order to comprehensively illuminate not only gender references, but also the ideology that is identified in them and the reasons that structure gender representations. In this way, there is not a simple recording of gender references and their distinction into traditional and non-traditional, but through linguistic

structures, the way in which the models are projected, the roles they assume (e.g. as actors of actions) and the ideology that creeps in is seen.

Future Research

This study highlights the need for expanding research into textbooks and curricula at all levels of education, with the aim of highlighting the type of gender representations. It is important that this effort be comprehensive and combine both the written word and the images of the textbooks through the combination of methods and approaches that will fully highlight gender norms and will provide the opportunity for the reshaping of new curriculum.

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