

Aspects of gender education through textbooks in Albanian education

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Abstract:

Education has a direct impact and plays an important role during the life of an individual. It conveys experience, and reflects the evolution and the values of society. It is also the main instrument of society through which the social change can be achieved. The increasing of the educational levels of quality require the recognition and the objective assessment of the current achieved levels, as well as the proper and efficient use of the existing capacities and opportunities.

Gender equality issues are at the center of social policies as a democratic requirement and necessity in itself. In this perspective, gender education as part of the general education is included in the school curricula in the last two decades, without leaving it only under the influence of society. For the treatment of topics related to gender education, there are defined some evaluation criteria for school alter texts, where the authors and publishers should show care by referring to the "Alter text information package".

The aim of this study is the integration of gender education through an analysis of the alter texts in this perspective, the suggestion and the use of opportunities to increase the sensitivity of teachers and pupils, as partners of the education process. To achieve this goal, we use the method of studying the existing literature; a detailed analysis of the content and illustrations used in the textbooks of the core curriculum as well as the obligatory choice curriculum; the management of the subjects' curricula in high schools.

Key words: sensitivity, integration, curriculum, textbooks, gender education.

Introduction

The education is the main factor which determines the life quality of an individ and the future of whole society (Fullan 2002). Curricula directly affects in education process through its components.

Achieving high quality in education through curricula and teaching process, always have been and still remain a target of constant improvements. Gender equality, is one of the promotions in improvement of school programs; “National strategy for genders equality-violence against woman and violence in family 2011-2015”, (MPCS 2011) proclaimed as a priority in education process. Have been taken, training sessions to implement the recommandation of this strategy, with authors, publishing house’s staff and actors interesting about the aim.

Watching from gender perspective, the review of curriculum, requires the attention from authors of texts. Drafting of texts by preserving gender equality, is one of the selection criteria for textbooks alternatives, approved by MAS. Regadless all, care be require by teachers using various methods, with the scope of gender education.

Analysing the existing data and literature, we can note a new perspective in the treatment for gender education in our textbooks. The illustrations are not yet in a fairy balance according appearance, the genders schemes are still present.

Goal of the Study

The scope of study is to analyze the appearance of gender in textbooks in upper secondary education, through themes, illustrations and data situations, which affect gender equality

in education. The study was undertaken in support of educational polikitive to eliminate gender stereotypes, which affect the education of children. The impact of the hidden curriculum and assessment of specific needs for the implementation of gender education, gender relations becomes evident through the figurative illustrations in textbooks.

Objectives:

- Interpreting the opportunities that curriculum offers regarding integration of gender education.
- Identifying proportion of gender illustrations in textbooks.
- Analyzing situation given in textbooks, under gender perspective.

Methodology

The study of literature:

- Information and data from previous and current, valid for data analysis.
- Detailed analysis of the content and illustrations in alternative texts level X-XII.

Sampling: Intentional sample selected for the study is related to requirements such as:

- a. maintaining gender equality illustrations,
- b. content and messages that follow the texts written situations,
- c. the language used.

There have been analyzed 48 textbooks between nine subjects, extending along in secondary and high level of education: Albanian Language and Literature, Education in Career,

Citizenship, History, Arts, Economics, Cultural Heritage, Psychology and Sociology.

Coding: Coding was used for anonymity, grouping texts by subject as well as group of authors for each class.

Theoretical aspect

The study is based on theories as well as socializing factors: Gender development theories; Social learning; Cognitive learning; Gender scheme theories.

According to theory of gender roles, represented by Talcott Parsons, specifically stereotypical roles ,determined in society respectively for both gender. These stereotypes are acquired by women through socialization, meanwhile protected by the men as well. Social trends are normative standards that balancing social relations between men and women. The role of gender theory has been widely used as "theoretical language of feminist reform" (Connell 1987, 34).

Eliminating gender stereotypes can not be done only under the influence of social factors, furthermore, gender education affects the development of society for achieving gender equality (Golombok 1994, 36). If people feel conscious that their needs would be completed meanwhile they change stereotypes and not while they maintain the same, it will be a great motivation for changing the stereotypes (Hewstone 1989, 208).

Researchers believe that gender stereotypes, derived till from childhood. Therefore, they argue that "prohibiting" the development of gender stereotypes, the needs to control their effects in later life is being reduced. Early interventions appear to be more successful than trying to control the emergence of stereotypes in the later stages (Zemore 2000, 108).

Efforts to eliminate stereotypes in general and gender stereotypes in particular, should start in childhood. That's why

the changes need time and cost. Efforts to take under control the appearance of stereotypes have seriously cost, so better starting in early life (Eckes 2000, 234).

Regarding cognitive development theory, there are three stages throughout preschoolers reaching gender sustainability: 1. gender labeling, 2. gender stability, 3. gender sustainability (Kohlberg 1966, 95). According to this theory, kids obviously use from textbooks, characters which involves masculinity and femininity to develop their gender perspectives.

It has been noticed by various authors, a period of gender intensification that occurs during adolescence. This phenomenon occurs in both sexes, furthermore girls than boys deviate from gender stereotypes during middle childhood (Berk 2003, 378).

Referring the curriculum, Zemore, Fiske & Kim (2000), emphasize that children which are less exposed to gender stereotypes, seems to be less supportive than children living in more traditional environments (Zemore 2000, 210). Giving children the chance to have an open mind and knowledge on gender, enabling them to become agents of change towards a world without gender differences (Berk 2003, 532-533).

Outcomes of the study

Statistic datas for the propotion of gender illustrations, taken from the analysis of 48 textbooks in high education level X-XII, presented graphically as follows:

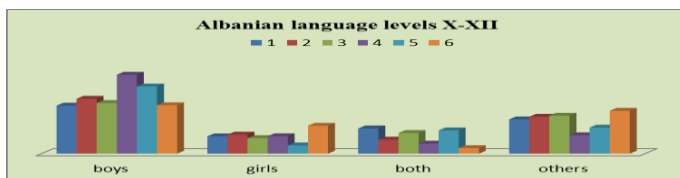


Chart 1: The ratio of genders in textbook design of “Albanian language and Literature”, levels X, XI, XII

Graphic presentation regarding illustrations, shows not a fairly balance according on gender equality on each twelfth Albanian language and literature textbooks. Boys dominated on illustration towards other groups. Furthermore they are represented more than girls in a ratio eleven to one textbooks. Respectively reports 16.40% more than girls in one of 6-th textbook till to 49.33% in the group 4. The predominance of boys, comparing both sexes together, preserves reports that range doubly in group 1, till 7.8 times more in group 4. Girls maintain equal account appearing both sexes together. Other images appear more than girls and both sexes together, with percentages ranging from 14.71% in group 4 to 34.31% in group 6.

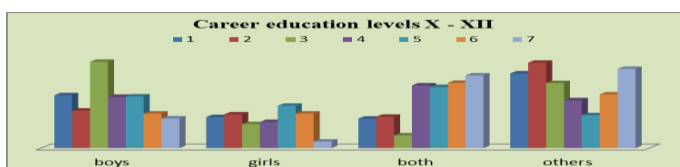


Chart 2: The ratio of genders in textbook design of “Education for career”, levels X, XI, XII

Boys appear more than girls in all seven texts of the "Education for career". This ratio ranges from 2.05% to text 2, up to 5 times more in text 7. Only in text 6, numerical presentation of girls and boys is equal. Boys appear more compared to the two genders together, from 3.33% more in text 2 up to 6.6 times more in text 3. Meanwhile both genders appear more than boys, 1.2 times in text 5 up to 2.5 times in text 7. Girls, comparing both gender preserves report that range from 0.83% in the text 1 up to 2 times more in favor of girls, text 3.

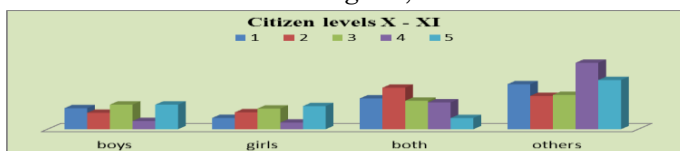


Chart 3: The ratio of genders in textbook design of “Citizen”, levels X, XI

Eight civics textbooks for levels X-XI are represented in five groups according to the authors. In total, illustrations occupying 30.80% in group 2 and 61.43% in group 4 compared to the three groups of illustrations. Both genders dominate in 4 of the 5 groups, appearing 10.34% in group 6 up to 38.40% in group 2. Comparing both genders shows the appearance of girls with a small percentage of 0.42% more than boys in group 2. Meanwhile the domination of boys in four other texts shows the most significant dominance in percentage, which runs from 1.43% in groups 4 and 5, to 9.05% in group 1.

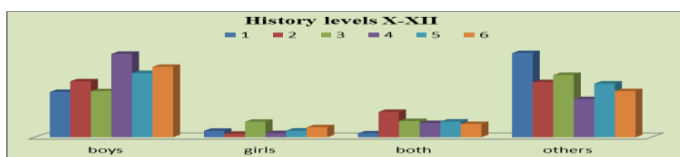


Chart 4: The ratio of genders in textbook design of “History”, levels X-XI

Boys dominant position in three of the five books of levels X-XI presented 40.00% in the text 2, up to 52.33% in the text 4, meanwhile in two other texts dominate other figures in 36.72% in text 3 and 60.19% in the text 112. Reports between genders represent more boys than girls in the text 3 with 22.66% up to 44.56% in text 4. Meantime, both genders are represented less than boys, 21.88% lower at 2 and 3 texts up at 40.88% less text 4.

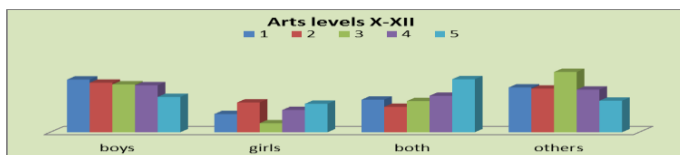


Chart 5: The ratio of genders in textbooks design of “Arts”, levels X, XI, XII

In the case of the arts, the boys appear in reports by 1.2 times more in text 3 up to 5.2 times more than girls in text 1.

Comparing with the introduction of both genders, reports goes in favor of boys 1.2 times more in text 134, up to 3.4 times more in text 1. Boys dominate in relation to girls 1.3 times in the text 3 up to 5.3 times in the text 1. Introducing both genders, boys dominate 1.3 times in text 2, up to 2 times more in text 1. Genders appear more than girls, the ratio ranges from 1.6 times more in text 3 up to 3.5 times more in text 1.

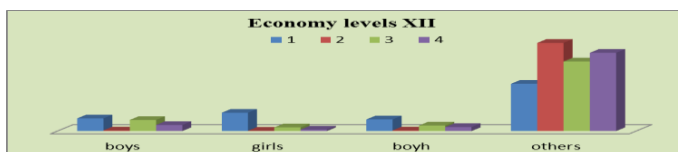


Chart 6: The ratio of genders in textbook design of “Economics”, level XII

Four texts of level XII in economics, show high percentage dominance of other figures, which appear in many indicators tables and graphs for economic concepts. This percentage goes from 52.59% in the text 1 up to 98.04% in the text 128. Only in text 1, girls dominate with 6.30% more than boys and 7.41% more than the two genders both. Meanwhile, genders appear equal numerically presented from 0.78% in the text 2, compared with girls appearing by 0.39% more. These percentages are lower because 98.04% of designs occupied other figures. Boys appear to 8.22% more than girls and 6.17% more than both genders in text 3. Text 4 retains dominance 5.05% boys more than girls and 2.25% more than both genders together.

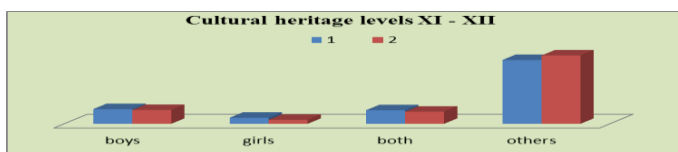


Chart 7: The ratio of genders in textbooks design for “ Cultural heritage”, levels X-XI

Dominance of other figures in both texts of cultural heritage appears in high level, with 64.97% in the text 1 up to 69.52%

much more in the text 2, just because appearing objects, places, countries which are evidence of the country culture or area. Gender relations show domination of boys, compared with girls and both genders. Boys appear 8.76% more than the girls and 1.13% more than both genders in the text 1 and 9.87% more than girls up to 1.71% more than the two sexes in the text 2.

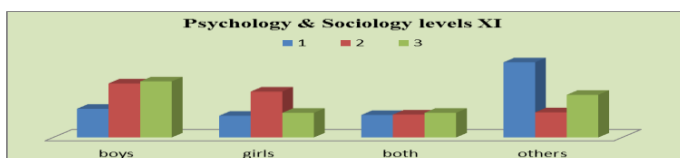


Chart 8: The ratio of genders in textbooks design for "Psychology" and "Sociology", levels XI.

Psychology and sociology texts preserve the dominance of boys in high percentage in two of the three texts. So it seems to be 36.50% in text 2 up to 37.88% in text 3. Other images dominate 50.79% in 1 text, which maintains fair equal reports comparing with two other texts in this case. Gender comparison shows dominance of boys, in three texts with 4.70% in the text1 up to 21.21% in text 3 more than girls. Only in text 2, girls appear to 15.50% more than both genders. In the text 3 girls appear in the same percentage of both genders with up to 16.67% in each text.

Discussions

The findings proved the presence of gender stereotypes in content and reports, identified the dominant relationship between the boys and girls characters, and highlighted the presence of a unilateral gender language in textbooks which affects the lexical and word features, mainly the Albanian language names and pronouns.

In Albanian language textbooks and literature, seems to be analysing characters of men who have dominated the world. During this analysis, illustrations represent schemes of

dramatic effects on drama and movies where most characters are men. Regardless in the case of civic education, specific topics on gender issues, boys are steps ahead in domination in their role in family and society. The predominance of boys appear and in three of four texts of the economics, for the simple reason that men dominate the economic and business field.

Greater sensitivity to gender education is observed in civics textbooks and career education compared with other texts. In the content of the text are given situations where students are invited to discussion, but we see that they are oriented on a gender reasoning. When it comes to healthy eating, the situations describe girls/women, but when discussing about security boys/men are presented. "Your mother is overweight. She loves food and cooks very well. She fills your plate because she thinks you should eat to be able to learn and grow properly.

Your mother is very careful when it comes to food. She hears the TV guidelines for a healthy nutrition (text 1, 37). The letter of a child with foetal alcoholism syndrome to pregnant women draws the reader's attention, emphasizing the role and responsibility women should have to protect the health of children who are victims of neglect shown by their parents (text 1, 70).

Topics on sexuality and sexual identity provide information on social and gender roles, and the discussion of ideas required the students to tell about themselves on these aspects, as well as the role of parents for education, because discussions on such topics with children can be taboo: "Have you spoken to your parents about issues related to sexuality? Do you think you should talk in your families about these issues? Are men and women equal in our society? Why? What should be changed?". Typing through characteristics that are historically seen on girls and boys

requires reflection on them, emphasizing that they are seen as contrasting features (text 1, 94, 95).

Gender hidden scheme emerge when discussing about careers. Individuals work, occupation and education don't match, and this affects their impossibility of having a career.

To illustrate these concepts, men appear in professions such as: painter, teacher, artist, musician, mechanic in a vehicle production department, while concerning volunteer and community work is given the picture of Mother Teresa (text 3, 10-13). The authors do not always show care with the language they use and only in some teaching subjects a linguistic gender equality is maintained.

The gender reasoning is also showed when discussing about professions associated with personality traits, for example: "A researching personality can become a biologist, chemist, physicist, geologist, etc. An artistic personality on the contrary prefers works as musician, stage director, actor, writer, photographer (text 3, 57). Themes on gender roles, gender segregation of occupations, sensuality and sexuality provide information about each class and positive attitudes to eliminate gender stereotypes are kept.

The gender influence in the selection of the profession: "The gender role influences the experience of most of the boys in activities regarded as masculine (science) and girls experience the in activities regarded as feminine (social activities).

In this way they seal themselves prematurely some choices, because they have not learned to love them".

As an alternative solution can be putted forward for discussion the following question: "Why do some people have removed gender roles that society has imposed and have tried to create a new one? Would you do the same? (text 3, 63) Or : "In the work market, important professions like: miner, builder, some work in agriculture, can't be carried out by women, but performed only by men. The same reasoning is

associated with fashion works, selling in fashion stores etc. that are preferred by women" (text 4, 56).

In different historical periods are mentioned the following women symbols: "Maria Theresa of Russia, that gave to the peasants the right of inheritance and declared religious tolerance (text 4, 37). Elizabeth I, which had a general culture, was very energetic and very committed. During her period England became a great naval power and a center of literature and world culture (text 4, 43). Queen Victoria made the monarchy's popularity grew again, was simple and respected parliamentary laws" (text 2, 86).

The women efforts to gain their rights have done a long way: "Although all the great changes in act, most of the population was still illiterate and scientific activity generally remained the monopoly of the male sex, while woman was almost excluded from these areas. Even when women did medical services she remained an assistant of the male doctor (text 4, 22). In '50 -'60 women were engaged in trade union and political life, but being under-represented in parliament and political parties, they exercised too little management functions.

The feminist movement started with the slogan: "The woman is beautiful", which expressed proudly the feminine values decoration that had always been underestimated by the dominant nature of man" (text 3, 152).

In the economic field women appear through situations displaying hidden stereotypes: "Irena, a housewife with a degree in economics, who cared for her family, started working with a good salary", "For this reason she took a woman that helped her with the house and she paid her ...".

Also the language used by the authors shows a gender underestimation, a woman that makes career and a woman with a lower status that cares about the home (text 1, 146). As an example of frictional unemployment is given: "Vjollca left her job, because her boss insulted her. She has about a month

to find another job, because she hasn't got informations about jobs”.

Artan, after finishing his studies at the Faculty of Economics, is searching for a job from three months, but has not yet started because the work that was offered him seemed not appropriate (text 1, 147).

"Mandi's father was a turning, but after the economic changes he remained without a work, and now he expects to start as a night guard. His brother has finished the Faculty of Law with very good results and he is seeking for a work near a prominent lawyer or near any wide office activity. His mother worked as a nursery school teacher and now she is unemployed. She searched for a less paid work, but didn't find nothing, and now she is searching no more” (text 1, 149).

So, for a woman it takes time to be employed, while the man has the opportunity to choose the work that he desires.

Only at text1, page 172 there is some care about the language used: "A lawyer and her/his helper helps to print documents ...".

Men are “more capable and brave” in opening private businesses; that's what comes out through situations that are offered for discussion: “Your father is thinking about leaving his job and opening the business that has always been his passion. He red that 9 people among 10 fail, so he decided to retire. What would be your advice?” (text 3, 54).

Most of the works that have different cultural values preserve men authorship: the statue of "the prehistoric thinker” (text 3, 11), male sculptures that decorated the Pantheon (text 3, 24), and the cathedrals (text 3, 35), the designer of the Austria Semmering Railway (text 3, 52), sculptors and painters who show spiritual features (text 1, 67). Men are presented by figures from the cycle of legends heroes (text 1, 83), playing typical musical instruments of the Albanian folk (text 1, 87), in the presentation of the culture of wood craft paper, stone carver, copper worker (text 2, 157). While the girls

and women figure is presented through artistic works: the tradition of embroidery by Croatian women (text 2, 75), folk dance dancers (text 2, 83), in musical activities for the European Day of Tourism (text 1, 138).

Gender differences are reported as a part of the studies conducted on a certain number of individuals involved in criminal acts and highlight the role of mothers in children's education: "In developed industrial societies men commit more crimes than women. In Albania girls and women stand far from deviant and criminal behavior. Women, especially mothers, give significant help to educate the younger generation with the more advanced values of Albanian culture in order to keep away "the infection from the epidemy" of deviant and criminal behavior" (text 3, 89).

The male gender remains a value for the features that characterize an individual, but the opposite happens if the female gender is used for an assessment: "In the traditional Albanian society, even in its northern "segments", nowadays a woman is very estimated if she is called "burrnesh" ("man-like).

On the other hand for a man is offensive the comparison with a woman. This shows that women and men have different statuses, even subordinated" (text 3, 103). Evolution psychology emphasizing the gender psychological concept, connects it with the evolution of behavior: "According to studies conducted, men prefer physically attractive qualities that define youth and good health to women, whereas women prefer income or material resources and social status" (text 1, 35).

Conclusions and recommendations

1. Analysis of textbooks shows that gender education remains stereotypically in its perspective.
2. The content of teaching situations and illustrations observed gender stereotypes, which affect the formation and strengthening of gender identity of students.

3. Domination of male factor, related to women and the presentation of both sexes regarding the illustrations of texts analyzed.
4. Curricula between subject programs creates opportunities for gender education.
5. Lack of specific measuring instruments for assessing gender mainstreaming in the texts.
6. To suggest treatment of gender modules in Higher Curriculum Education at the Faculty of pedagogy.
7. Increasing sensitivity and inclusion of teacher preparation through continuous training regarding gender education.
8. Application of interactive teaching methodologies according gender equality, using other curricular elements.

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