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### Abstract

School textbooks are media of communicating a large amount of knowledge and teachers rely their teaching practices and schedule their instructions upon them. Except for knowledge on school subjects, textbooks also promote various ideological messages, including gender representations. This study explores gender representations in the Greek primary school language textbook addressed to the first grade, which is currently being taught. For this purpose, Content Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis are employed in synergy, as Content Analysis on its own is insufficient to fully explore gender representations and the ideologies of school textbook discourse. The results showed clearly that traditional gender representations are reproduced in the particular textbook, by presenting men dominating in the public sphere, and leading women's lives and their families.

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### Introduction

Several studies have indicated that students use school textbooks to a large extent as a basic learning tool, whether during school time in their classroom, or individually during their homework (Horsley & Lambert, 2001; Hedrick, Harmon & Linerode, 2004). Teachers employ a similar practice, especially in Greece, where they heavily rely on school textbooks when it comes to teaching school subjects (Sahin, 2020, p. 458-460). In light of this, the content of school textbooks has been investigated since the 1970's, for they include not only knowledge about a subject, but also constructions of social reality (Becker, 1978, p. 15-17; Alahiotis & Karatzia-Stavlioti, 2006, p. 119-147). Therefore, traditional gender representations, which have been found in the teaching material in numerous studies, are a field that has been put under scrutiny (Brugeilles & Cromer, 2009; Chionas & Emvalotis, 2021, p. 117-120; Woods, Wendt, Barrios & Lunde, 2021, p. 589-590).

This study explores gender representations included in the Greek primary school language textbook addressed to the first grade (children of 6 to 7 years old), which is currently being taught and consists of two volumes. The textbook is designed for the course of the teaching of Greek as a first language and occupies the most of the teaching hours of the weekly timetable of the Greek primary school (consisting of six grades in total and addressing children from 6 to 12 years old). This is the reason why investigating gender representations included in this textbook is considered especially crucial, since it might shape young students' perspective on gender roles (Kagan, 1992; Jones & Myhill, 2004). Meanwhile, it is hoped that this study will contribute to a wider discussion

about the initiatives that need to be taken by the Institute of Educational Policy concerning textbook changes and establishing training measures for all educators teaching in public schools in Greece.

Moreover, it is important to note that this study is differentiated in terms of methodology in relation to previous relevant research. More specifically, the majority of previous studies on the subject have investigated gender representations in school textbooks mainly through Content Analysis (Evans & Davies, 2000; Chick & Altoona 2006; Maraki, 2011; Ullah, Ali & Naz, 2014, p. 134-141). Instead, in our study, we attempt to synthesize Content with Critical Discourse Analysis.

In what follows, firstly, previous studies which have investigated gender representations in school textbooks through Content Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis are presented both in the international and the Greek context. Next, a description of the methodological framework adopted in this research is made, and then, the results from both Content and Critical Discourse Analysis in the school textbook are presented. Finally, the major conclusions of the study are drawn, as they emerged from the synergy of Content Analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis.

## **Literature Review**

### **Previous Research on Gender Representations in School Textbooks through Content Analysis**

School textbooks are not only a source of knowledge on a school subject (e.g., language, mathematics, history), but also a source of ideas about social reality (Bonidis & Hodolidou, 1997, p. 188-224; Wachholz & Mullaly 2001, p. 51-76; Mainali, 2019, p. 227; Chionas & Emvalotis, 2021, p. 117-120). In particular, they are considered a medium of maintaining and reproducing dominant gender representations, as it has been shown in studies conducted since the 1970's (Trecker, 1971, p. 249-260). More specifically, Cairns' and Inglis' (1989, p. 221-226) research was conducted in the late 1980's via Content Analysis and it investigated ten history textbooks of primary schools in Scotland. What was observed was a total exclusion of female activity that eliminated any female participation in history and social activity.

The following year, a study by Gupta and Yin (1990, p. 29-50) was concerned with gender representations in EFL primary school textbooks in Singapore. It was followed by a research by Osler (1994, p. 219-235), who investigated gender representations in history school textbooks taught in Britain in the 1990's. One of the most important conclusions drawn by both studies is the female invisibility in textbooks, as women appear less and in more implicit ways than men. Another interesting study by Rignault and Richert (1997) investigated all school textbooks in France with regard to gender representations and it was detected that traditional representations of genders were still maintained, in spite of efforts towards the opposite direction since the early 1980's.

A more recent study is that by Evans and Davies (2000, p. 255-270), who investigated reading textbooks by the leading U.S. publishers Macmillan McGraw Hill and Silver Burdett Ginn. The researchers found that there was a connection of male characters to aggression, competitiveness, and independence. On the contrary, women were connected to affection, kindness, and emotionality. Another interesting research was conducted by Povey (2004,

p. 157-178) about the initiative taken by Great Britain (Inner London Education Authority), for teachers to create their own material and shape school textbooks themselves. This procedure showed that teachers hold traditional perceptions about genders and they reproduced them in their materials (Garza, 2022, p. 135-138).

More recently, Lee and Collins (2008, p. 127-137; 2009, p. 353-370) investigated the English language textbooks taught in Hong Kong and Australia. By applying Content Analysis to thirty books, it was detected that characters were positioned in activities that are traditionally linked to their gender. Women were represented as teachers, fashion designers or saleswomen, while men were represented as farmers, firemen, pilots, politicians, soldiers, or even criminals with delinquent behavior.

Researchers' interest in more recent years has been expanded to Asian and African countries. It has been detected, through a series of studies, that school textbooks of these geographical areas tend to represent genders in conventional ways too, including Mirza's (2004) studies on textbooks in Pakistan; Shoeman's (2009) study on history textbooks in South Africa since 1994; Jin, Vivian, Tong, Ling and Tarmizi's (2013, p. 115-127) research on the EFL textbooks taught in Malaysia; Shahmohammadi's (2013, p. 426-430) study on textbooks in Iran; Elmiana's (2019, p. 613-628) research on Indonesian senior high school EFL textbooks; and studies by Rosemberg, De Moura, and Silva (2009) on Brazilian textbooks.

As long as respective studies in the Greek educational context are concerned, the first studies take place in late 1970's and mostly in the early 1980's. These studies investigate gender representations in school textbooks for all subjects that were used in primary schools since 1954 until today. Yet, researchers' interest has been mostly focused on primary school language textbooks (Mosxovakou, Hardalia, & Ioannidou, 2008, p. 32-33). Regarding the textbooks taught in Greek primary education since 2006-2007 until today- a series of studies has been conducted. Chrysanthakopoulou's study (2006) examined the textbooks for the third and sixth grade. She concluded that traditional gender representations are still maintained, as a prevalence of the male gender both quantitatively (e.g., name distribution) and qualitatively (e.g., leading positions) was observed. In a similar vein, Maragoudaki's (2007) and Mavrououdi's (2007, p. 4-5) studies investigate language textbooks for the first, fifth, and sixth grade, drawing also attention on males' greater visibility in social activities and professional roles. Finally, two studies that were conducted more recently is the one by Maraki's (2011), who explored gender representations in the fourth, fifth and sixth grade language textbooks, and the other by Gouvias and Alexopoulos (2018), who put under scrutiny the third grade language textbook. In both studies it was concluded that a reproduction of traditional gender representations was made through a linking of women to the private sphere in contrast to men being connected with the public sphere.

### **Previous Research on Gender Representations in School Textbooks through Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis has not been widely employed as an analytical resource for the exploration of gender representations in school textbooks, even though it is extremely useful (Majdedin, Taghinezhad, & Nabizadeh, 2014). This is because Content Analysis quantifies a text or identifies specific elements of its content, without highlighting the existing ideology through linguistic forms. At this point, the contribution of Critical Discourse

Analysis is considered necessary since it focuses on linguistic forms of texts that embody social/gendered meanings, and thus, it may connect textual evidence with representations of social reality. One such study is that by Mustedanagic (2010) on a diachronic analysis of EFL textbooks in Sweden, who found that the more recent textbook (written in 2000) contains less traditional gender representations compared with the older ones (written in 1984). The researcher, applying the Critical Discourse Analysis, examined the gender roles through the main and the secondary appearing characters, trying to study what kind of language is used; a gender discriminatory or a gender sensitive language. Other research drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis includes the studies by Gungor and Prins (2011, p. 170-176) on Turkish language textbooks, who disclosed a traditional distribution of labor with respect to the characters represented, and the study by Aoumeur (2014, p. 13-22) on Algerian language textbooks, who concluded that the textbooks examined leave the impression that they are not contemporary, but rather designed in the past. Basic purpose of these studies, was to highlight the textbook's transmission of gender ideologies and the depiction of identities of men and women. So, in this context it was useful to apply Critical Discourse Analysis in order to analyze how gender roles and identities were portrayed in reading passages.

Meanwhile, Greek literature counts also a limited number of similar studies. Stamou, Chronaki and Zioga (2007, p. 63-89) examined a school mathematics journal and showed that mathematics is constructed as a 'male' subject though a perpetuation of patriarchal views, such as the connection of men with numerous professional roles, and women's assignment with family roles. On the other hand, Bonidis (2009, p. 86-122), who examined a wide number of school textbooks on various subjects, pointed out that gender hierarchies through the discursive construction of family and social roles are represented as being naturally distributed. Finally, very few studies, like Pagourelia and Papadopoulou's (2009) and Fafiti's (2014), attempted a combination of Content with Critical Discourse Analysis for the examination of third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade primary school language textbooks.

## **Method**

### **Research Sample**

The main purpose of this study was to explore gender representations in the primary school language textbook of the first grade. The textbook consists of two volumes and is being taught since 2006-2007 until today. The texts selected for analysis were all written by the authorial team of the textbooks, while texts written by other authors (e.g., extracts from literary texts written often in older periods of time) were excluded. In this way, the authorial team's views about gender roles in contemporary society could be revealed in a clearer way. Besides, the majority of the texts belong to the authorial team, that is, 57 out of 72 texts found in the textbook (80%).

### **Content Analysis**

As a first step, Content Analysis was employed, which aims at studying any message/text, by focusing on texts from secondary sources, meaning that they have not been produced for research purposes, like media texts, advertisements, school textbooks, curricula. The main goal is to record the number of the words and phrases that appertain to specific thematic categories, by converting qualitative data to countable, quantitative ones (Berelson 1952; Vamvoukas, 2007, p. 266-268; Ryan, 2020, p. 570; Kartika, Budiarto, & Fuad, 2021, p. 51-52).

Following the stages of Content Analysis as defined by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007, p. 476-483), words and terms were selected as units of analysis. A system of fifty analysis categories was constructed, based on previous studies, which have examined gender representations both in Greek school textbooks (see, e.g., Maragoudaki, 2007) as well as in textbooks from other countries, such as Japan (see, e.g., Jasey, 1998), the U.S.A. (see, e.g., Evans & Davies, 2000) and Australia (see, e.g., Lee & Collin, 2009).

A central theme emerging from research on gender representations is the roles men and women undertake in their private and public lives (Thorton & Bricheno, 2000, p. 187-206). In light of this, categories were constructed cutting through the opposition between the private and the public life. Moreover, for each category, possible traditional, non-traditional, and neutral representations of both genders were examined.

The following are some indicative categories, through which, gender representations in the Greek language textbook were examined, and whose results are presented below:

- Total gender references
- References to leading roles of both genders
- References to family roles of both genders
- References to roles and abilities of both genders in the professional/social environment

To sum up, Content Analysis analyzes language and meanings in the text in a quantitative way, specifically through a system of categories that analyze the data, based on the research's topic and aims (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007, p. 475-476), Content Analysis aims at quantitative analysis of any written data. Therefore, as a first step, gender representations were analyzed via Content Analysis. Obviously, the results that are presented in this paper involve only a small part of the categories applied to the textbook.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

When describing the Content Analysis above, it becomes obvious how essential it is to complement this method with a linguistic analysis of the textbook, in order to explore in depth how gender representations manifest themselves in linguistic form. According to Anderson and Arsenault (1998, p. 101-102), Content Analysis focuses on specific meanings of the text that is examined, without the linguistic features that realize those meanings.

In light of this, the texts analyzed through Content Analysis were also examined through an additional research approach, Critical Discourse Analysis. In particular, Critical Discourse Analysis examines the relationship between language, society and ideology, by studying the ways in which language affects society, and also how well - established ideas about the world are reflected in language use (Stamou & Paraskevopoulos, 2008; Karagiannaki & Stamou, 2018, p. 222-242; Diaz, 2021, p. 199-211). From this perspective, discourse is a field of underlying ideological messages, by operating as a medium of power exertion and social inequality reproduction (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk 2001; Fairclough, 1992, 2003). Consequently, it is obvious how important

it is to use Critical Discourse Analysis when detecting gender representations, by focusing on the discourse itself of the textbook under study. As the authorial team of the textbook, decides on the lexico-grammatical selections of the texts produced, they construct particular versions of the (gendered) world (Fairclough 1992, p. 31; van Dijk, 2001, p. 353; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Mogashoa, 2014; Beiki & Gharaguzlu, 2017).

This paper employs the three-dimensional analytical framework proposed by Fairclough (1992, 2003), which consists of the micro-level of text, the meso-level of discursive practice, and the macro-level of social practice. More specifically, the micro-level textual analysis was accomplished by applying the Systemic Functional Grammar by Halliday (1994), which is compatible with Critical Discourse Analysis, since it aims at the study of social meanings that are constructed through language, via the lexical and grammatical choices employed. Therefore, Hallidayan linguistics sees language as a network of options amongst which speakers make selections according to social circumstances, assuming that choices of forms construct different versions of the world.

Particularly, analysis was focused on the ideational function of language (Halliday, 1994). This function is realized through the system of transitivity, which reveals how causality and responsibility of actions are linguistically constructed. This is an analytical area that has developed extensively within Critical Discourse Analysis, because it is 'at the heart of the expression of ideology' (Trew, 1979, p. 123). More particularly, transitivity involves the interpretation of experience in terms of 'processes', 'participants' and 'circumstances'. Moreover, the type of processes used for representing the world must be determined (e.g., material, mental, relational). Another crucial element of transitivity is to consider which participant has an active role in the process (i.e. the 'actor' of a material process, the 'sensor' of a mental process) and which participant has a passive role in the process (i.e. the 'goal' of a material process and the 'phenomenon' of a mental process). Meanwhile, through the model of transitivity, the 'circumstances' (e.g., of time and place) under which the (male and female) participants perform their actions in the language textbook are examined. through the prepositional and adverbial phrases used.

In addition, this paper also examined the interpersonal function of language, which, according to Halliday (1985), concerns the relationships between the speakers in every situational context. Particularly, two speech acts were explored in the samples of the textbook, which, according to Halliday (1985), are the assertive speech act and the directive speech act. More analytically, through those speech acts, people express their assertiveness towards their listener (assertive speech acts) or they direct and urge them to a series of actions, holding a degree of power over them (directive speech acts).

In the meso-level of discursive practice, the ways the grammatical and syntactic options in the textbook analyzed in the micro-level construct traditional, non-traditional or neutral gender representations were considered. Finally, this procedure was completed with the macro-level analysis of social practice, whose aim was to explain the detected gender representations and relate them to the existing social structures and ideas (Stamou, 2013). In this stage, discourse is connected with society, which, as it has been mentioned above, is an integral part of this approach. More specifically, lexical, grammatical and syntactic features detected by micro-level textual analysis, along with the emerging gender representations determined in the meso-level analysis, are put under investigation, in order to relate findings with Greek society's ideas on gender roles. To sum up, this methodological approach

supports the idea that discourse is an expression of ideology that exercises power in contemporary societies (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

## **Results**

### **References to Male and Female Characters**

The first category concerns the frequency of appearance of men and women respectively in various roles and actions. Content Analysis showed that out of the total of references to characters, references to men reach a 57%, while references to women reach 43%. Hence, a higher frequency is observed in references to men compared with women. Besides, male dominance is also reinforced through the various roles and actions they undertake. In contrast, the female characters are recycled in the same roles and actions, so that the range of female characters is even smaller as it is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. References to Male and Female Characters

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References to male characters
Aris, Orfeas, Samber, grandfather, man (in the garden), knights, Greek folk cultural heroes, pasha, pastry cook, king Fire, Wind, uncle Paul, Sun, Pinocchio, dwarf, grocery seller ( <i>1st volume</i> )
Aris, Samber, teacher, Giorgos, Petros, Orfeas, fisherman, uncle Paul, post office clerk, old sailsman, old sailsman, three workers, track driver, Mr Nickolas, Damianos, Yannis, Konstantinos, Samber's father, fishermen, Angeliki's father, sailsmen, Tritonas, god Poseidon (Neptune) ( <i>2nd volume</i> ).
References to female characters
Marina, Ioanna, Aris' and Marina's mom, Orfeas' mom, Fani's grandmother, Sinnefenia, Hionenia, fairy, Little Red Riding Hood, beautiful young women ( <i>1st volume</i> )
Maria, Ioanna, Marina, Eirini, Samber's mom, Ioanna's mom, Angeliki, Katerina, librarian, Eleni, Fotini, Christina Mela, Orfeas' mom, goddess Afroditi, mermaids ( <i>2nd volume</i> )

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Looking at Table 1, it becomes evident that male characters are connected with traditional male roles, such as dynamism, physical abilities and undertaking of socially distinguished roles, by which they manage affairs of the public sphere. Some examples are the male characters who have manual occupations (e.g., three workers), knights that are responsible for public safety, the powerful mythical god Poseidon (Neptune), and king Fire, who governs a country. On the contrary, female characters come from fairytales or are defined by their family role, confirming



a traditional gender representation, where women are connected with the private sphere (e.g., Orfeas' mom, Fani's grandmother, fairy, Little Red Riding Hood).

### References to Leading Roles of Both Genders

The gap is clearly wider in this category, since male characters in the language textbook seem to dominate in leading roles related to the fields of both private and public life. Specifically, it was found that in this category 58% of references are associated with men in leading roles, while 42% concern references to women in leading roles. Therefore, males are connected with traditional representations of both genders, since they are presented as the 'stronger' gender, taking initiatives, solving problems, and having, in general, a leading role in many fields of human activity.

Besides, Critical Discourse Analysis revealed supplementary aspects relevant to the leading roles of men and women, through an exploration of the roles assigned to the two genders in linguistic terms. More specifically, men are mostly represented as actors of material processes or they position others in their discourse in actor roles. For example, Aris takes the initiative to invite other children to participate in collective public action (*'We are going', 'Come'*), like going to the theatre, while uncle Paul gives instructions to his little niece, through which he directs her through material processes. [1st volume, p.46 (suggesting to Marina a shadow puppet show): *'Hold a huge sword. It has a basket too. Are we going to the theatre?'*, 2nd volume, p. 34: *'Now choose. The green package or the bag?'*]. Moreover, it is important to note that undertaking a leading role is realized by means of material processes and the performance of directive speech acts, through which the leading role of their gender is confirmed.

With respect to women's positioning in respective roles, besides the quantitative gap mentioned above, which was recorded via Content Analysis, exploring the same category from a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective included examining the type and qualities of actions that women initiate. A conclusion emerging from the Critical Discourse Analysis findings is that even when women undertake a leading role, they appear as less powerful, since their initiatives are taken in a softer way, since they concern minor affairs of everyday life and they do not determine anyone's life, freedom, or autonomy in any way. Particularly, women are put in leading roles when caretaking children or dealing with domestic affairs. One such example is the representation of Aris' and Marina's mom, which takes the initiative and calls her children to come back home, so being responsible for their everyday schedule (p. 22: *'Aris, Marina! Come! Let's go.'*). Specifically, the mother performs a directive speech act (*'Come!'*), calling the children to leave the beach and follow her, in a collective action, which is expressed through a material process (*'Let's go'*). Respectively, in another extract of the textbook, a little girl, Marina, undertakes a leading role, by reproducing the leading role of her mother mentioned above. She takes the initiative and calls her friends to return home through a directive speech act (p. 65: *'It's getting late. Time to go home!'*). From this perspective, the traditional occupation of women with the upbringing of children and caretaking in general is confirmed, since they undertake leading roles which demonstrate a responsibility of children's safety and return at home.

## References to Family Roles of Both Genders

Regarding the references to the male and female characters who are attached to the family environment, results from Content Analysis show an almost equal amount of references of both genders in the domestic sphere, which, at first glance, promotes an equivalent presence of both genders in that space.

More analytically, as it appears in Table 2, 46% of men are found to be undertaking traditional family roles, such as manual work in the garden. In parallel, 2% of men are found in references of non-traditional gender roles within the private sphere. For example, a fisherman is constructed as finding himself in a dilemma, as to whether it is better to catch a lot of fish or to make a successful marriage, demonstrating a non-traditional imagery, since his preoccupation is about his marital status (a stereotype usually attached to women) rather than his professional development (1st volume, p. 26: *'He was thinking. What should I wish for? Always fishing lots of fish? Marrying a good woman?'*).

Moreover, it was found that, equally to men, women are also represented as being engaged with a social space traditionally linked to their gender. One such example is a mother, who gives directions to the workers of a transport company, in order to complete a house moving, that is, depicted as the leader of domestic activities (2nd volume, p. 44: *'A big truck stopped outside the block of flats on Sunday[...]Please, take them to the first floor, a woman said.'*).

Table 2. References to Family Roles of Both Genders

	Traditional representations	Non-traditional Representations	Neutral representations
Male references	46%	2%	6%
Female references	46%	0%	0%

Finally, it is worthwhile to comment on the 6% of male neutral representations, since they are not classified either to traditional or to non-traditional gender behavior. For example, the grandfather wants to feed a pet parrot or decides to tell a story to children, proceeding like this to two activities which are related to family, but which are not traditionally linked to any of the two genders (1st volume, p. 26 (Grandfather): *'Parrot, do you want some melon?'*, 1st volume, p. 40: (Ioanna to grandfather): *'Grandpa, grandpa! Tell[me] a story. [...]*' (Grandfather to Ioanna): *'Once upon a time there was a hippopotamus...'*).

Proceeding to Critical Discourse Analysis of the textbook, the abovementioned findings are differentiated up to a point, if a more thorough linguistic investigation of gender representations is made. Specifically, looking more carefully on the processes linked to each gender, it appears that men preserve 'traditional' roles to their gender even in the family environment. One characteristic example of this is a grandfather's involvement with small

children in the house. However, he is not concerned about everyday childcare issues or other domestic activities (e.g., preparation of food), of which women are still only charged. Rather, he positions children as sensors of a mental process and urges them, through a directive speech act, not to be afraid of lightings and darkness. Moreover, he performs an additional directive speech act, using a material process (*'bring'*) and positioning one of the children (Ioanna) as the actor of the process (p.68: (children) *'Oh! Darkness! And horrible lightings.'* (Grandfather) *'Don't be afraid! Ioanna, bring the flashlight.'*). Consequently, this reference reinforces the reproduction of traditional gender representations, since it is found that the family role undertaken here by a man has the goal of providing security, and therefore, it confirms a traditional leading profile.

On the other hand, the Critical Discourse Analysis of female representations in family roles confirmed their traditional connection with traditional roles within the private sphere. Their main role is the everyday care of young children, and the special emotional bonding they develop with them. For example, when the princess Synnefenia is kidnapped by the Wind, expresses her wish, in an very emotional manner, to see her daughter, through two mental processes (p. 72: *'I want to see my daughter.'*) demonstrating that she does not pursue her freedom, because it is an unnegotiable right of every human being to be free, but mostly because she is away from her child. Meanwhile, a traditional representation of genders is also taking place, since the individual freedom of Synnefenia depends on the will of a man, the Wind, who decides about her life and her future. Moreover, the traditional connection of women with the upbringing of children is reproduced, since the kidnapped Synnefenia prioritizes the consequences that might emerge from this situation for her child. She demonstrates, therefore, that the person about whom she cares the most is her daughter, not, for example, herself or her husband, who is also in danger in that moment.

### **References to Roles and Abilities of Both Genders in The Professional/Social Environment**

With respect to the gender representations related to roles and abilities undertaken in the public sphere, from the Content Analysis results, it becomes obvious that men are actively participating and have a more frequent presence in that social space. Specifically, references to men reach 52% versus women's references, which reach 30%. It is important to note that the remaining percentage (18%) concerns neutral representations (for example, a man or a woman who tells a story to children).

Proceeding to a more detailed analysis of the content categories that were used to explore genders' presence in public actions, the above results are reinforced. The reason is that men appear twice as much in traditional representations (43%), presenting themselves as more active in comparison to women, and they are doing so through their traditional gender roles. On the contrary, women appear half the times men appear in their respective traditional roles in the public sphere (20%), confirming a traditional representation of their gender, according to which they have a limited role in public activities and fields. At the same time, when non-traditional representations of both genders are explored, it is clearly detected that these references are lower in percentage for both genders (9% for men, 11% for women). It is concluded, therefore, that characters act in traditional ways regardless of gender.

Consequently, Content Analysis shows that men prevail over women in the public sphere, being represented mostly in traditional roles in the examined language textbooks, such as their association with powerfulness and physical strength, which allows them to be occupied with manual work (2nd volume, p. 44: *'Three workers were carrying stuff up and down the stairs. One fridge, one cooker, [...] flowerpots, boxes...'*). On the other hand, women participate half as much as men in public activities, and even when they do so, they act according to the traditional roles of their gender, like care taking of young children (2nd volume, p. 71: *'In that moment, Orfeas' mom is coming -Children, watch your step! Don't mix the sand with anything else!'*).

The above results are strengthened from Critical Discourse Analysis' findings, since, a series of material processes with men as actors in various activities in the public sphere were detected, whereas women appear to have a limited role and clearly being less active, expressed through mental or relational processes along with traditional gender roles. A representative example is Aris' (a little boy) help to Angeliki (a little girl) to carry her bicycle successfully into her family's apartment, since she struggles to complete this action. More specifically, Aris expresses, first, through a material process, his intention to help Angeliki carrying the bicycle, by holding its back wheel (2nd volume, p. 46: *'I'll hold the back wheel.'*). Next, Aris shows Angeliki all the necessary steps in order to move the bicycle back home. Therefore, in the next sentence, Angeliki is positioned by Aris as the actor of one material and as the senser of one mental process, through two directive speech acts he performs (2nd volume, p.46: *'You hold the steering wheel. Be careful not to knock the mirror on the wall.'*).

Another example is Smaros' (a little girl) reaction towards the pirates that arrive in the island she lives. Although she takes an initiative within the public sphere, she does so through a mental and not a material process, since she prays for divine intervention, specifically for the enemies' ship to set in stone, in order to prevent the worst case scenario for her island (2nd volume, p. 39: *'-God, if they are enemies, let their ship be set in stone, Smaro wished.'*) Therefore, this female representation confirms her gender's traditional representations, since she uses mental and emotional means to find a solution in the public sphere, a feature which is traditionally linked to women.

## **Discussion**

Exploring through Content Analysis gender representations in the language textbook of the first grade taught in Greek schools, it is disclosed that the writing team depicts both genders rather in equal terms on a quantitative level. Since these textbooks were written quite recently (2006-2007), it is assumed that they were written under the pressure to be updated with more contemporary gender meanings. This is because through a variety of research on previous language textbooks, a strong traditional representation of both sexes has emerged.

A first study was conducted by Fragoudaki (1979), who, examining the elementary school textbooks of the period 1954-1973, found a reproduction of the patriarchal family model, projecting the woman rarely as a worker, as she is associated almost exclusively with household responsibilities. In addition, similar results emerged from many studies conducted in subsequent language textbooks, which were taught from 1982 to 2006. More specifically, Proskolli (1990) identified in them a very low incidence of female faces, since they project almost entirely male characters, especially in public roles. In addition, the results of the research of Kantartzi (1992) and Freiderikou

(1995), which confirmed a traditional connection between the two sexes with specific roles, are placed in the same context. Thus, women are presented in household chores, such as cooking, while men are active in the public sphere, working and having a strong social presence. Therefore, the traditional representation of the two sexes in the previous textbooks (1982 - 2006) should mobilize the writing teams of the new books taught up to the year of this research (2021), to create a teaching material free from gender stereotypes.

Although in content analysis categories the quantitative difference regarding the genders was small (e.g., in the total of references to men and women) there was a quantitative prevalence of male characters even in fields traditionally linked to women (e.g., family roles). Applying Critical Discourse Analysis further highlighted traditional gender representations detected through Content Analysis. Hence, men are represented clearly as more active, either as being constructed as actors of material processes or as positioning women as actors in material processes, through the performance of directive speech acts.

On the other hand, women are represented as less strong or active than men, either by being constructed as sensors of mental processes or as goals of material processes, in which men are actors. From this perspective, women are represented as acting through emotional means, demonstrating themselves as being less capable than men in a wide range of activities, such as manual occupations, while they are presented as weak enough to not oppose to men's will, even when their personal freedom is at stake.

On a methodological level, we propose a synergy of Content Analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis, as Content Analysis on its own is insufficient to fully explore gender representations and the underlying ideologies of school textbook discourse. Hence, both approaches mutually support each other in a complementary way when gender representations in school textbooks are studied. In particular, the synergy of these approaches is considered useful, because conclusions drawn from both of them are able to give prominence to traditional gender representations in a complete, reliable, and valid way through confirming converging findings, but also through highlighting each of them different data and aspects (Barker & Galasinski, 2003; Garza, 2022).

Particularly, a series of previous studies has proven the validity of this methodological synergy, in order to explore the same text through a different perspective (Galasinski & Marley, 1998; Stamou & Padeliadu, 2009). According to Galasinski and Marley (1998, p. 573), Content Analysis examines in quantitative terms the degree of convergence or divergence of every text from the content of every category that this methodological tool has employed. On the other hand, Critical Discourse Analysis uncovers the ideology behind meanings which are probably detected via Content Analysis and meanwhile highlights the linguistic means through which meanings are expressed (Titscher, Meyer, Wodak & Vetter, 2015; Chalak & Ghasemi, 2017). Therefore, Content Analysis may precede Critical Discourse Analysis, since it is able to map all the basic meanings of the text under examination, and then Critical Discourse Analysis can follow, in order to examine the text more thoroughly, by delving into the linguistic forms manifesting those meanings.

Regarding the implications of this study, a change in the ways the two genders are represented in the Greek language textbook is considered necessary, according to the requirements of the school curriculum. This could

have a positive impact on teachers' educational practices, as it has been shown that teachers heavily rely on the textbook. In particular, in another study of our research group (Alexopoulos & Stamou, 2021), we observed a sample of first grade teachers when teaching a textbook extract containing traditional gender representations compared with teachers' practices when teaching a textbook extract involving less traditional gender representations. Results showed a differentiated stance on gender issues, depending on the textbook extract teachers used. However, this particular change might probably be more successful if combined with a series of further training for teachers on gender issues, in order to raise their awareness and thus utilize their teaching materials in a more efficient way. Besides, the systematic integration of gender mainstreaming in university curricula would lead to a better qualification of future teachers, who would show a greater sensitivity towards gender equality, and hence, who would attempt to challenge traditional gender representations during their teaching practices.

Finally, it is important to raise the awareness of the wider school community (e.g., parents), by organizing events on gender issues, in order to address gender inequality in a more organized and effective way. Although in the public sphere the discussion on genders has been shifted beyond the traditional dipole 'male' vs. 'female', comprising issues of sexual orientation as well, the topic of the present study, that is, the unequal representation of men and women would be seen rather 'obsolete', as relevant research has attempted to explore more latent sexist discourses (see, e.g., Cameron, 2003; Sunderland, 2004; Mills, 2008 on this important subject, Chionas & Emvalotis, 2021). Yet, it seems that traditional and overt sexism is still at stake, at least in the Greek sociocultural context, as confirmed by the present study and other ones (Lampropoulou & Georgalidou, 2017).

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