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## **HIDDEN CURRICULUM IN EFL TEXTBOOKS: THE CASE OF GENDER**

### **Diplomski rad**

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**Abstract:**

The present thesis discusses the hidden curriculum in EFL textbooks, focusing primarily on its influence on EFL students.

The first part of the thesis provides us with a theoretical background of major research areas connected to the topic of the hidden curriculum, covering the problems of defining the term, as well as its historical background, its present-day importance for both teachers and students, and finally its manifestation in EFL teaching.

The second part of the thesis describes the study conducted on four EFL textbooks from four different countries, namely, Croatia, Russia, South Africa and the UK.

*Keywords:* hidden curriculum, EFL textbooks, Russian textbook, English textbook, Croatian textbook, S. African textbook, gender representation, sexism

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In this diploma paper, we discuss the concept of the hidden curriculum in teaching the English language. In doing so, we concentrate on textbooks aimed at teaching English as a foreign language, namely EFL textbooks.

We start by determining and defining the concept of the hidden curriculum, its historical background and its importance for learners today. We emphasize the importance of the awareness of the hidden curriculum and try to answer the question that many teachers and educators ask themselves: what should we do with the hidden curriculum if/when we identify its existence?

Our primary aim was to determine the ways in which the hidden curriculum manifests itself in different EFL textbooks, taking into account the influence of the culture and country in which they were written and published. For this reason, we decided to conduct a study on EFL textbooks written and published in four different countries, namely, Croatia, Russia, South Africa and the UK. We concluded that this would provide us with more heterogeneous results and would allow us to compare the development of EFL textbooks, as well as the awareness of the hidden curriculum in different parts of the world.

In the study itself we focused on the following important areas: gender representation, i.e. the in/equality in the presentation of the sexes in present-day EFL textbooks, as well as gender portrayal or the difference in the attitude toward males and females and their depiction (if there are any). On the one hand, we tried to determine the aspects of hidden curriculum in each individual textbook; on the other hand, we conducted a comparative analysis in which

we determined the similarities and differences between the hidden curricula in these textbooks. In this way, we tried to explore how much of it is culturally conditioned, and how much of it is 'universal', i.e. cross-cultural.

Our aim was to show that the hidden curriculum, to a greater or lesser extent, exists in any context. However, within a certain culture, context and even classroom, we should expect a different set of ideas and topics instilled in the learners, at least to a certain extent. As logical as it is to expect that a textbook would provide the basis for a hidden curriculum, much of it also depends on the teacher, classroom, the students themselves, and a number of other factors. This is what makes the hidden curriculum such a complicated and unique topic, hard to detect and even harder to define or remove from a certain context.

In the end, we tried, taking into consideration the changes in the manifestation of the hidden curriculum up until this point in time, to predict the upcoming changes and manifestations of the hidden curriculum in order to make it easier for educators to deal with it in the future.

## **2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 What is the hidden curriculum?**

Although not by its current name, the concept of the hidden curriculum has been discussed for almost a century, starting from John Dewey's *Democracy and Education*. Many definitions have been proffered since then; however, a clear and comprehensive definition of the hidden curriculum is still hard to come upon, while most of the existing ones—some of the most popular of which define the hidden curriculum as the “by-products of schooling” or “non-academic outcomes of schooling” (Martin, 1976, p. 135)—fail to cover the whole concept of the hidden curriculum.

When deciding on the definition of the hidden curriculum, one has to take into consideration all of the different contexts and settings in which the hidden curriculum may occur, as well as the different forms it may take. The definition that best suits the study presented in this paper is the following: “those learning states of a setting which are either unintended or intended but not openly acknowledged to the learners in the setting unless the learners are aware of them” (Martin, 1976, p. 144). This definition of the concept in question will help us build our arguments and, hopefully, make them clear to the readers of this paper. Although there are a great number of definitions, most of them, quite expectably, fail to cover the whole concept. Before proceeding to the central part of the study, let us briefly describe some of the problems we faced while selecting the most appropriate definition of the hidden curriculum that will serve the aim of this paper.



The biggest problem that occurs when defining the hidden curriculum concerns the negative connotation that usually goes hand in hand with the term, i.e. viewing the hidden curriculum as a means of social control. As Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis explain, “the structure of the educational experience is admirably suited to nurturing attitudes and behavior consonant with participation in the labor force” (2011, p. 9), some of the most significant promoted values being punctuality, obedience to authority, perseverance, dependability, deferring gratification, tact, and predictability (*ibid.*, p. 37).

This way of understanding the term, however, is deeply rooted in the historical understanding of the concept. Elizabeth Vallance in her article “Hiding the Hidden Curriculum: An Interpretation of the Language of Justification in Nineteenth-Century Educational Reform” touches upon this very same notion; taking a look at the history of schooling in the USA, she divides public education in the USA into three periods: prior to the 1830s, from the 1830s to the Civil War, and the Post-Civil War period. However, instead of focusing only on the educational system, she links it to the development of society in general and the prevalent process of urbanization. Thus, the first period is marked by a desire to create a homogeneous and more stable society. Schooling, that is, the educational system, is seen as a perfect means of creating a conformed society which could be ruled over easily (1973 – 1974, pp. 9-10). Moreover, the main goal of education as a social stabilizer is explicitly stated. The second period, although considered to be the beginning of public education, justifies the existence of education “more as a means of social control than as an instrument of individual betterment” (1973 – 1974, p. 12). Even in the third period, the main purpose of the educational system was to impose the ruling system and teach citizens to obey and respect the authority. Only in the turn of the century can we see, as Vallance skilfully puts it, the process of the hidden curriculum going underground, and there emerges the process of changing the role of education or its influence on an individual—what was secondary became primary, and

what was primary, i.e. the imposition of a social system and values, is removed from the focus of an individual. Vallance points out that the aim of education in terms of social control and unanimity has not changed, but just “shifted its visibility as the goals of education came to be phrased in terms of individual development *within* the social context” (1973 – 1974, p. 18).

Taking this into consideration, it is no wonder that the hidden curriculum is perceived as a means of social control—these are the grounds on which schooling per se has been established, claims Vallance. The only difference is that for the first hundred or so years, no one opposed this aim, finding it useful for society in general. However, what we have to keep in mind is that this historical construction of the hidden curriculum may and does impact learners in positive as well as negative ways. We should keep in mind that the sole question of positive and negative outcomes is subjective. Consequently, what one might perceive as a useful outcome, as is the case with obedience to authority, others will find to be a negative outcome, bordering on the implementation of a conspiracy.

The second problem that we encounter when searching for a valid definition of the hidden curriculum concerns the scope of the concept. This involves different aspects:

- 1) the contexts in which the hidden curriculum occurs,
- 2) the different forms it assumes,
- 3) the degree of hiddenness,
- 4) the values it transfers.

Thus, if we review the work of Margaret LeCompte and her article “Learning to Work: The Hidden Curriculum of the Classroom”, we see that she discusses the subject and conducts research concentrating only on teachers instilling and generating work- and class-related values and behaviours (1978). Ivan Illich adopts a similar approach in his book *Deschooling Society* (1995). And although this is a big part of the hidden curriculum and its manifestation,

it is a narrow understanding of the concept and it does not cover its whole scope. Vallance, on the other hand, is aware of this issue, but in the end defines the hidden curriculum as “those nonacademic but educationally significant consequences of schooling that occur systematically but are not made explicit at any level of the public rationales for education” (Vallance, 1973 – 1974, p. 7). This definition is not an invalid one, but in our opinion, it does not cover the whole concept either; we shall explain our reasons in the following paragraph.

First of all, although most of the occurrences of hidden curricula nowadays consist of non-academic topics, hidden curricula can include academic facts and ideas as well, for example, additional facts from a text in an English textbook. And although this might seem as an irrelevant subject, the fact is that the subject of a hidden curriculum can be relevant as well as irrelevant, just like it can be planned or unplanned. Jane Martin in her article “What Should We Do with a Hidden Curriculum When We Find One?” discusses the very same notion, claiming that, besides the typical and most common understanding of the hidden curriculum and what it teaches, it can also consist of “cognitive states such as believing or knowing, states of readiness or of skill, emotional states, attitudinal states, or some combination of those and other sorts of states” (1976, p. 137). Martin even goes a step further, disconnecting the hidden curriculum from schools and schooling, and rather perceiving it as a part of informal education, and through it, learning in general.

Secondly, a hidden curriculum does not have to occur systematically; a teacher's comment on the current political situation during an English lesson is not a systematic type of teaching, yet, for those students who will remember this and possibly even base their later political attitudes on it, it does belong to the hidden curriculum.

Thirdly, Vallance claims that the hidden curriculum is not made explicit at any level of the public rationales for education. We disagree with this claim as well, and we will once

more refer to Martin, who establishes two types of hiddenness (if we understand hiddenness in the context of the hidden curriculum existing in terms of a relation). Namely, a hidden curriculum can be hidden to everyone, thus conforming to Vallance's definition. However, a hidden curriculum may as well be hidden only in relation to a student or a group of students. In other words, "something can be hidden from one person or group but not from another" (Martin, 1976, p. 142). If a particular group of educators, parents, or even students, are aware of a hidden curriculum in a certain setting, this may still remain a hidden curriculum for a student or a group of students from a different setting who are not explicitly aware of it.

To conclude, the hidden curriculum appears in a much larger scope than many educators are aware of. From the point of view of the topic of context, it can appear in both official and unofficial contexts, as well as in both academic and non-academic ones. It can be both intended and unintended. The sources of the hidden curriculum for a particular learner can vary from a textbook, to a teacher or even other learners. The degree of hiddenness may vary as well, making something a part of the hidden curriculum for a whole group of learners, for one part of them, or for an individual learner. This may include educators and parents as well. It can transfer positive, neutral or negative values and the 'positiveness' of these ideas is not an objective characteristic of the hidden curriculum.

## **2.2 A brief historical overview of the hidden curriculum**

One of the most interesting questions connected to the topic of the hidden curriculum is the following one: when did the hidden curriculum first appear? The trap we have to avoid is the identification of the term and the concept. The term itself was reportedly coined by Phillip W. Jackson in 1968. The concept, on the other hand, has been discussed for a far

longer period of time, going all the way to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, this still does not answer our question about the origins of the concept of the hidden curriculum.

In the previous section, we discussed and agreed upon a working definition of the hidden curriculum. The definition covers both intended and unintended consequences of schooling, both official and unofficial settings of learning, and both academic and non-academic outcomes. Taking all of these factors into consideration, what exempts the ancient Roman or Greek schooling from having hidden curricula? Was there no hidden curriculum in ancient China? In other words, we believe that the beginnings of the concept should be sought in the beginning of education as such. Moreover, when we say education, what we have in mind is not just an official educational setting; rather, it refers to any educational setting, any instance of knowledge acquisition. Thus, we conclude that the hidden curriculum appeared with the first unofficial educational setting, i.e. the first transfer of knowledge, which makes it almost as old as the human race.

However, what most people have in mind when they think of the hidden curriculum is connected with modern-age education, namely, with the impact of widespread literacy. To be more precise, the properties of the hidden curriculum that were discussed and perceived as constituting the concept from the earliest times are the ones covered in the works of John Dewey and George Counts. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, these educational theorists criticized the existing system that inhibited the learners' ability to think critically and make informed uninfluenced decisions. Although not defining or naming the concept of the hidden curriculum, they were aware of its significance and influence:

Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is that a person learns only the particular thing he is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, maybe and often is more important. ...For these attitudes are fundamentally what count in the future. (Dewey, 1963, p. 48)

From a chronological point of view we can say that Dewey and Counts belong to the first set of educational theorists who discussed the topic of the hidden curriculum. The second one was led by Talcott Parsons and Phillip J. Jackson in the 1960s. Though using different terminology, Parsons and Jackson both focus on the three most important properties of the hidden curriculum: creating a homogeneous group of students through a set of undifferentiated tasks, the polarization of power between the teacher and students, as well as the award-and-punishment system practiced by the authority, i.e. the teacher. They were the ones who paved the way for Ivan Illich in the '70s and the third set of radical critics who discuss the topic mostly in the context of modern-day USA.

Ivan Illich provoked passionate reactions in 1972 with his book *Deschooling Society* and introduced the topic to a wide audience. In the book, he strongly criticizes schools because of their role as “the main social instrument for conditioning individuals toward passive, consumerist behaviour” (Latta, 1989, p. 483). Schools teach us how to conform to a dehumanized, consumerist way of life and the role of the hidden curriculum is, from his point of view, to “transform [...] learning from a satisfying and voluntary activity into the compulsive pursuit of a commodity for which the school itself monopolises the market” (King, 1972, p. 239). By deschooling society, he does not have in mind the termination of education, but of the institution of school; for him, deschooling would “put [...] an end to passivity”, and “produce people with the courage to act for change” (Latta, 1989, p. 484). Illich was one of the most prominent critics of the hidden curriculum and the educational system, and he popularized the topic of the hidden curriculum and opened up the way for modern critics of the institution of school.

Nowadays, the hidden curriculum has the biggest importance in the context of the USA; most researchers of this topic and all of the aforementioned authors either come from the USA or have lived and worked there. The reason for this should be sought in the

American political system and the complexity of the structure of their society. Richard M. Merelman in his text “Democratic Politics and the Culture of American Education” emphasizes that the two values that are of particular importance for Americans are popular sovereignty and political equality (1980, p. 326). What he has in mind is preventing the concentration of power by means such as public election and free press, and the distribution of political power among ordinary citizens. This directly contradicts the system of schooling in its foundations, it being based on the hierarchical system (the teacher’s power over students, for one thing). Merelman argues that, rather than it being a feature of American education, it is a feature of the USA as a whole:

But the school is not the only place where this cultural strain manifests itself. Comparable problems emerge in the family, where a structure of traditional authority confronts the child's demand for equality (Henry, 1963, pp. 127-47), and on the job, where the traditional power of the boss confronts the skilled worker's demand for greater power. Thus it may be that in this article we have stumbled upon a cultural strain intrinsic to the entire American political enterprise. (p. 331)

We should keep in mind that, no matter how little researched or discussed the topic of the hidden curriculum might be in a certain country, in practice it exists just the same, and becoming aware of this phenomenon might help reduce the negative effect it might have on our learners.

## 2.3 English and the hidden curriculum

With an on-going process of globalization, the need for a linguistic means that would allow communication worldwide became an imperative. For this reason, as well as for the political imperialism of the English-speaking world, namely the USA and the UK, English has become a *lingua franca* and the use and knowledge of English is becoming essential. English is now the language most widely taught as a foreign language and in most countries it is emerging as the chief foreign language to be encountered in schools, often displacing another language in the process (Crystal, 2003).

Consequently, the publication of EFL textbooks has experienced sudden and exponential growth, both in English-speaking countries aimed at EFL learners in general, as well as in individual countries where English is taught. The new textbooks take into consideration the rapidly changing theory of language teaching and instil new values and approaches, which makes them quite heterogeneous. Language-teaching methodology has changed significantly in the last century, starting from the grammar-translation method, the direct method, the audio-lingual method, the audiovisual-global structure method, and moving further to the communicational, the cognitive and finally the intercultural approach (Andraka, 2014). This is one of the reasons why hidden curriculum research in EFL textbooks might be more fruitful than in textbooks from other areas whose theoretical groundwork is more firmly established, both from the point of the subject itself and the teaching practices it employs.

However, the main difference between teaching foreign languages and teaching other subjects is contained in the nature of language itself: it exists for the purpose of communication and serves as a means of conveying ideas and thoughts. As such, it becomes the perfect means of transmitting a hidden curriculum. While topics in other textbooks are set



by the curriculum, topics in English textbooks may vary considerably. Consequently, not only does this give the authors the freedom to choose, but in a way it forces them to come up with a set of topics and ideas, to choose what it is that they want to teach their learners and, equally important, what it is that they want to leave out. And that is precisely why FL textbooks provide such fertile soil for the development of the hidden curriculum, as well as its analysis.

In accordance with the abovementioned, some research has been done that covers the topic of the hidden curriculum in FL textbooks, though not as much as one would expect. Most of the research still covers the topic from a general, theoretical point of view, since the theory of the hidden curriculum is still undergoing a lot of change and the groundwork is still being laid. This includes works by William F. Pinar & Chet A. Bowers, Theodore J. Czajkowski & Melon King, and Jane R. Martin. Some of the works concern only one aspect of the hidden curriculum, such as “Putting the Hidden Curriculum of Grading to Work” (Lewis, 1975), “Making Inequality: The Hidden Curriculum of High School Tracking” (Dimaggio, 1978) and “‘Feminine Pedagogy’ and Feminization of Teacher’s Profession as Factors of Hidden Curriculum” (Jukić, 2013). Some of the research deals with the topic of the hidden curriculum in the context of a certain country, such as “Problems of Reforming Educational Systems in Post-Communist Countries” (Pastuović, 1993), “The ‘Hidden Curriculum’ of a West African Girls’ Boarding School” (Masemann, 1974), and “A Hidden Curriculum in Language Textbooks: Are Beginning Learners of French at U. S. Universities Taught about Canada?” (Chapelle, 2009). Moreover, some of the works cover a similar topic or a part of the topic that is being discussed in this thesis, namely Marija Andracka’s “Culture and Intercultural Aspects in Croatian Primary Coursebooks of English” (2014), Porreca’s “Sexism in Current ESL Textbooks” (1984), Cochran’s “Gender and the ESL Classroom” (1996), Paul L. Hartman and Elliot L. Judd’s “Sexism and TESOL Materials” (1978), and Rifkin’s “Gender Representation in Foreign Language Textbooks: A Case Study of Textbooks

of Russian” (1998). However, we have not come across research that would deal with the subject from a comparative point of view, and that would include the analysis of EFL textbooks on a cross-cultural level.

### **3 THE STUDY**

#### **3.1 Aims**

The purpose of the study was to address the following questions:

- a) In which ways does the hidden curriculum manifest itself in modern EFL textbooks?
- b) What are the main differences concerning the hidden curriculum between different textbooks, i.e. EFL textbooks used in countries/cultures?

To be more precise, we were interested in how particular topics, namely gender representation and gender depiction, have been presented in modern EFL textbooks. Our aim was to answer the following questions:

- 1) Are both genders equally represented in the textbook?
- 2) Is there any difference in the attitude towards genders and the portrayal of males and females, and how does the difference manifest? Are there instances of sexism in any of the textbooks?

#### **3.2 Sample**

The study was conducted in October and November 2014, on four different EFL textbooks: Croatian, English, Russian and South African. We chose textbooks which are most widely used in those countries, which allowed us to conduct a comparative analysis of the hidden curriculum in EFL textbooks on an international level. Several factors played a role

when deciding on our choice of countries: firstly, and most importantly, we paid attention to cultural and linguistic diversity, as far as our personal knowledge of languages permitted. As a Croatian native speaker and a student of English and Russian, the knowledge of languages, cultures and histories helped with the analysis of these textbooks. Moreover, it made it possible to account for the differences in recent history, namely, the social systems, which might have left a trace in the hidden curriculum as well. Secondly, our choice was based on the sociolinguistic categorization of speakers of English and our decision to represent all of the groups. Andraka (2014) explains Kachru's categorization from 1985 where he classified all English speakers into three categories: inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle. The inner circle covers the countries where the English language is spoken by the native speakers, the outer one covers countries in which English is used on a daily basis as a second language, and the expanding one covers countries where English is taught as a foreign language. In our study, the English textbook covers the inner circle, the South African one covers the outer circle, and the Croatian and Russian ones represent the expanding circle.

Moreover, all of the textbooks have been sanctioned by the governments of the aforementioned countries and have been in use in both state and public schools (the English one has been sanctioned for use in Croatia, as well as many other countries worldwide). We paid special attention to the authors of these textbooks, choosing textbooks written by authors native to the countries where the textbook is used. The first problem we encountered was selecting a textbook that would cover approximately the same level of English and the same age: for example, learners in Russia start learning English later than learners in South Africa. In this matter, we were led by their age, choosing textbooks that might cover slightly different language levels, but that refer to approximately the same age group of learners. The second problem occurred when we tried to find books published at approximately the same time. Finally, we decided that the most important criterion in this matter was choosing the

textbooks that are currently in use in different classrooms, but nonetheless those which were published in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Our Croatian textbook is called *Way to Go 5* and is intended for eighth graders; it was written by Biserka Džeba and Maja Mardešić and published by Školska knjiga in 2001. As our English textbook we selected *The New Headway Pre-Intermediate Student's Book* by John and Liz Soars, published by Oxford University Press in 2007. As our Russian EFL textbook we selected a textbook called *English Language* by O'ga Vasil'evna Afanas'eva and Irina Vladimirovna Miheeva; it is a textbook intended for grade 9 and 5<sup>th</sup> year of learning English and was published in 2009 by Drofa. Finally, our S. African textbook is called *Successful English Learner's Book* by R. Hugo, D. Paizee, M-L. Peires and T. Buthelezi. It is a textbook for grade 8, published by Oxford University Press South Africa in 2013.

### 3.3 Procedure

Our study was a content-based qualitative study. When selecting what to analyse in our textbooks, we first consulted the results of previous research on the topic and recorded the most often encountered topics that had been analysed in connection to the hidden curriculum in EFL textbooks. Having gone through our research material, we decided to focus on the following elements: the equality in the representation of males and females, and the portrayal of genders and the depiction of genders from the point of view of possible existence of sexism in EFL textbooks.

When analysing the representation of males and females we covered both texts and illustrations. In illustrations, we counted all of the depictions of male and female characters. In some instances the sex of the individual characters could not be determined easily; these

ambiguous individuals were categorized as 'not clear'. In 1977 Nilsen analysed children's books and found that in illustrations there were 267 men and only 33 women depicted in books for younger children, and 310 men as opposed to 96 women depicted in books for older children. Porecca (1984) discovered that the ratio of males to females in illustrations came down to 1.97:1.

Moreover, modelled on Coles' research from 1977 and Hoomes' from 1978, we examined the occurrence of male and female characters in the text and the ratio in which they appeared. According to Coles' study that was conducted on five sets of adult educational materials, men outnumbered women by a ratio of 3:1. Hoomes' study covered 28 high school literature analogies and got a similar ratio of 3.5:1. Our results have been compared to theirs in the discussion. As a further matter, the occurrence of female vs. male names in the textbooks was counted. Famous male and female individuals were counted separately, as we considered them from the point of view of their role as indicators of success. This was done to test Porecca's results on the depiction of females who "rarely engaged in any 'demanding, interesting, or successful' activities, while male roles represented a broad range of occupational options" (1984, p. 707).

In the text analysis we examined the use of male vs. female personal pronouns, i.e. he/his/himself vs. she/her/hers/herself, with clear reference to humans. In his 1975 study, Graham counted the use of the pronouns he and she (although he included male and female animals as well) and got a ratio of male to female pronouns of about 4:1. Furthermore, we examined the number of male and female characters in the text. Porecca's results on this point were 1.77:1 in favour of men. Moreover, we examined the use of masculine pronouns and the noun 'man' as generic, as well as occupational titles where man is used as a part of the title, such as sportsman and chairman. When discussing this point, Hartman and Judd stress that "a consistent use of generic terms for people is largely mythical, and 'man' is often used to refer

to humankind in one breath while excluding women in the next” (1978, p. 388). Porecca’s study of the subject (1984) emphasizes that “many studies have shown that people, including textbook writers, rarely conceptualize females when hearing or reading masculine generic nouns and pronouns” (1984, p. 708). Porecca also points out that the use of the word ‘man’ meaning ‘male’ as opposed to the same word used in a generic sense and denoting ‘human’ is clear from the context (1984, p. 708). Her results show the average of 25 instances of masculine generic usage per textbook. Other than that, the use of the following word pairs that describe women and men has been observed: man-woman, mother-father, husband-wife, lady-gentleman, Mr-Miss-Ms-Mrs. The choice of the observed noun pairs was based on Graham’s study from 1975, which discovered that there were as many as seven times more occurrences of the word ‘man’ than ‘woman’. The only word pair in which the female form occurred more often was the pair mother/father, which they thought emphasized the mother’s parental role. Porecca’s 1984 study also singles out mother/father, as well as lady/gentleman and husband/wife as word pairs in which the female form exceeds the male one in use. Another important linguistic instance that we paid attention to was the use of instances of firstness, “the number of times that males or females were presented first in exercises, examples, or sentences” (Hartman and Judd, 1978, p. 712). In regard to this aspect, Porecca provides us with a ratio of 2.96:1 in favour of men in her research conducted on 15 textbooks.

The next part of our analysis covers the depiction of genders and the different aspects of sexism. Firstly, we counted the number of male and female characters depicted in an occupational role. In his study from 1977, Coles discovered that the total number of men depicted in any occupation outnumbered women by more than half, and Arnold-Gerrity in 1978 found that men were portrayed in four times as many paying occupations as women. Porecca’s results are the most radical ones with the ratio of 5.87: 1. Secondly, we counted the different occupational roles in which males and females were portrayed, based on Porecca’s

study in which she got a similar ratio as with the total occupations depiction (she does not provide us with the exact data). Arnold-Gerrity found that women were most frequently depicted as housewives, whereas textbooks contained a wide variety of occupations for men. We have singled out some of these professions and jobs as stereotypical for either gender. In doing so, we do not want to claim that the genders do not often comply with them, but, just like Hartman and Judd, emphasize that “the true variety of human characteristics, which do not depend on sex but on individual inclinations, is not being reflected” (1978, p. 385). In the end, we examined the textbooks and singled out some of the most dubious sentences or lessons where different sexist views are transmitted as part of the hidden curriculum.



### **3.4 Results of the study**

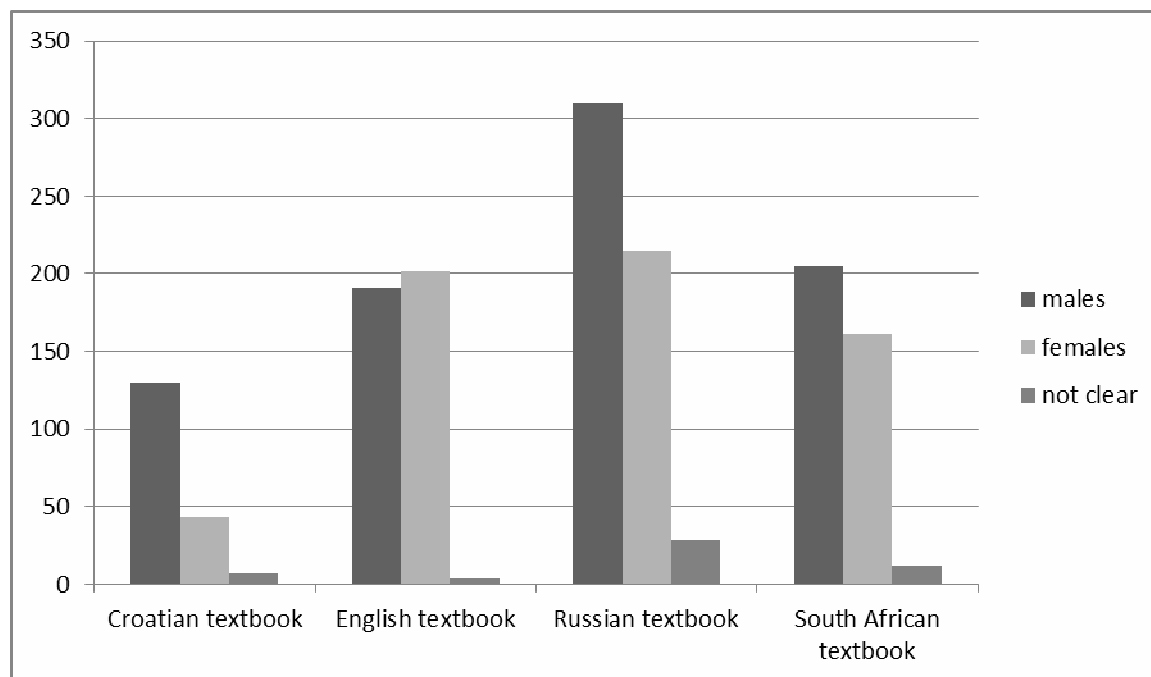
Data was collected for each element for each textbook separately and presented as belonging to a certain category together with the same data from other textbooks, for the sake of comparison. Results are provided in the order of topics:

- 1) firstly data connected to the in/equality in gender representation,
- 2) secondly data connected to the differences in the portrayal of genders and the topic of sexism.

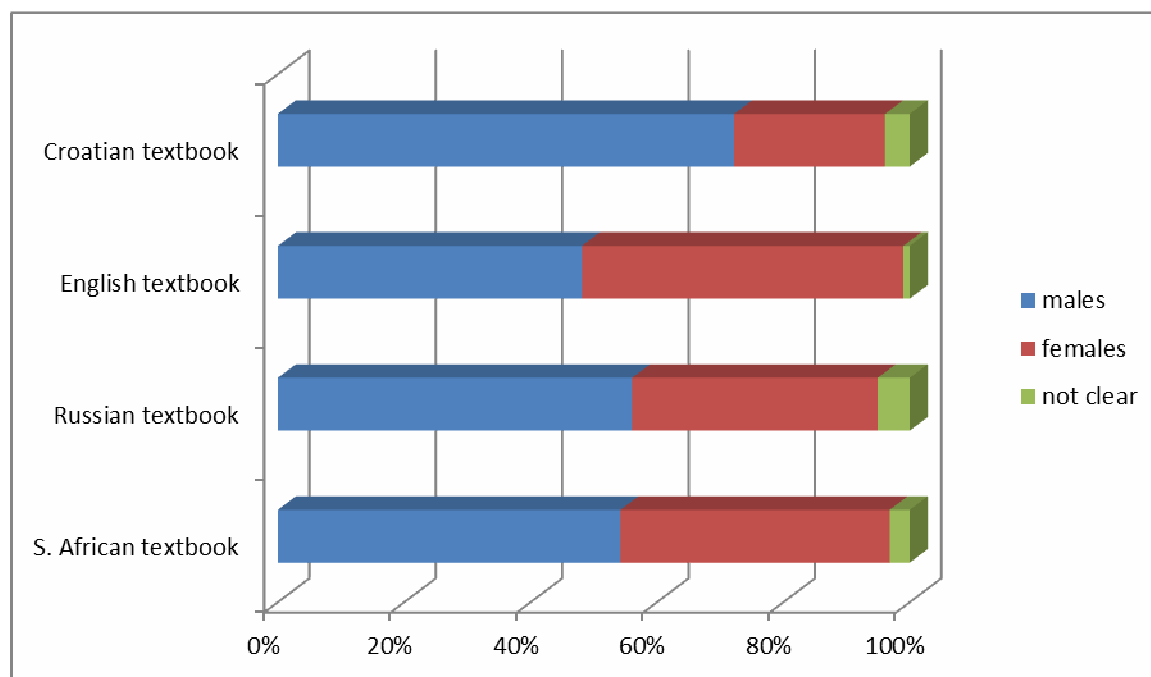
#### **3.4.1 Representation of genders**

We started our study by analysing all of the illustrations in all of the textbooks and categorising the depicted individuals as ‘males’, ‘females’ or ‘not clear’. In cases where the same illustration was shown twice, as was the case in some repetitive exercises, the characters were counted only once. The textbooks differ in their volume and in the number of illustrations and depicted individuals; the ratio of illustrations to text is bigger in English and Russian textbooks than in the Croatian, and especially the S. African one.

We should now have a look at Figures 1 and 2, the former showing the number of males and females depicted in each of the textbooks, and the latter showing the same data in the form of a ratio.



**Figure 1: Gender representation in the textbooks' illustrations**

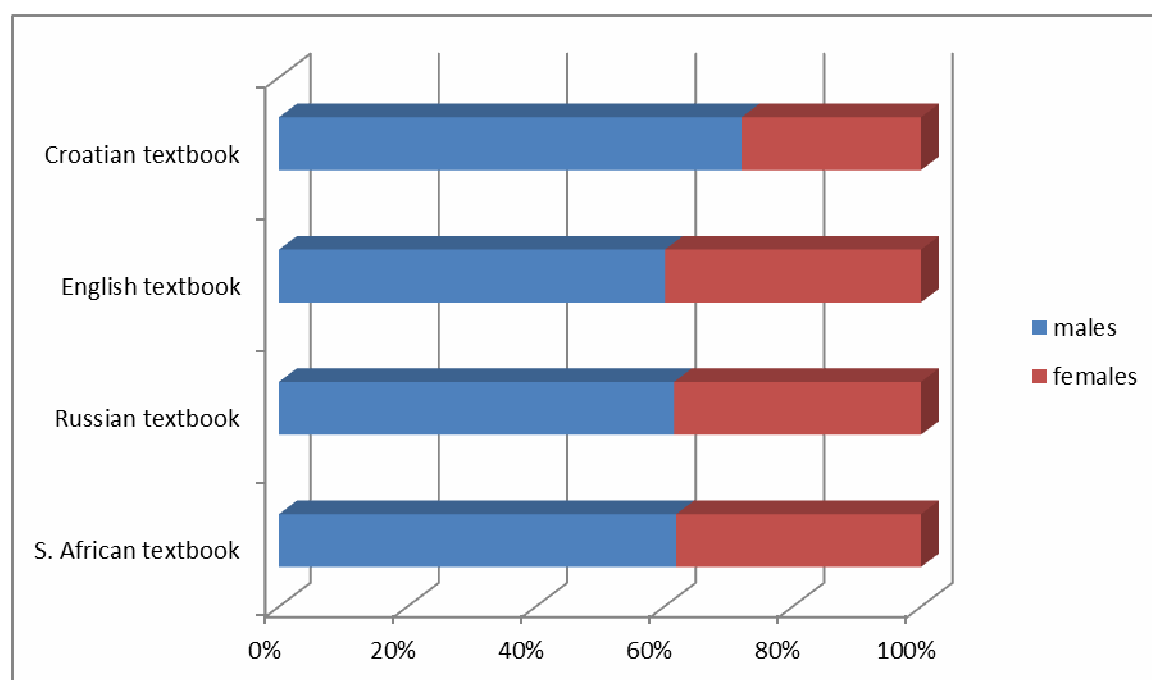


**Figure 2: Gender representation in illustrations expressed in the form of a ratio**

As we can see from Figures 1 and 2, in every textbook, with the exception of the English one, males outnumber females in the pictures. In the Russian textbook the total number of individual characters is the biggest, 553, 310 of which are male and 215 female. It

is followed by the S. African textbook at 378, of which there are 205 male and 161 female characters. The English textbook, with the total number of 397 depicted humans, has the smallest difference between the number of males and females, namely, 191 and 202 respectively. It is the only textbook in which the number of depicted females surpasses the number of depicted males. The Croatian textbook has both the smallest number of depicted individuals in total, 180, and the biggest difference between males and females depicted, namely 130 males and 43 females. If we take a look at the same data presented in the form of a ratio, we can see that the ratio of males to females in the Croatian textbook is 3.02:1, while the Russian and African textbook with their 1.44:1 and 1.27:1 have very similar ratios of men to women in their pictures. In the English textbook, the ratio of male to female characters is 0.95:1.

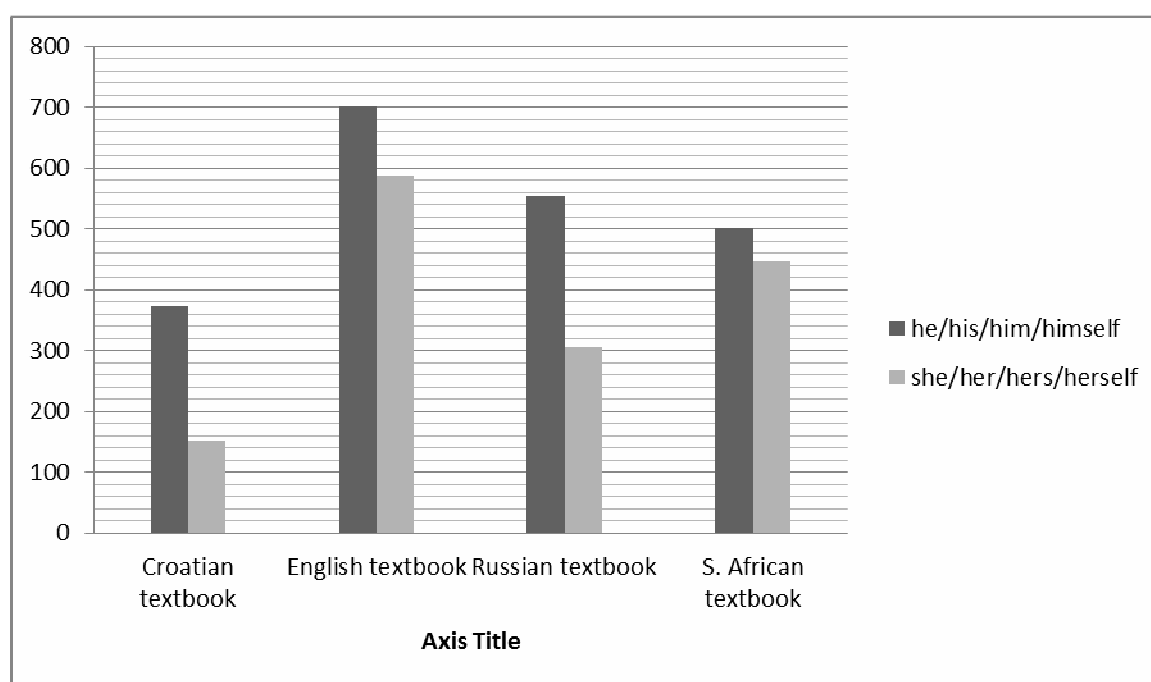
Moving on to the analysis of texts from the position of gender representation, we analysed the number of female and male characters in the text. The obtained results are presented in Figure 3.



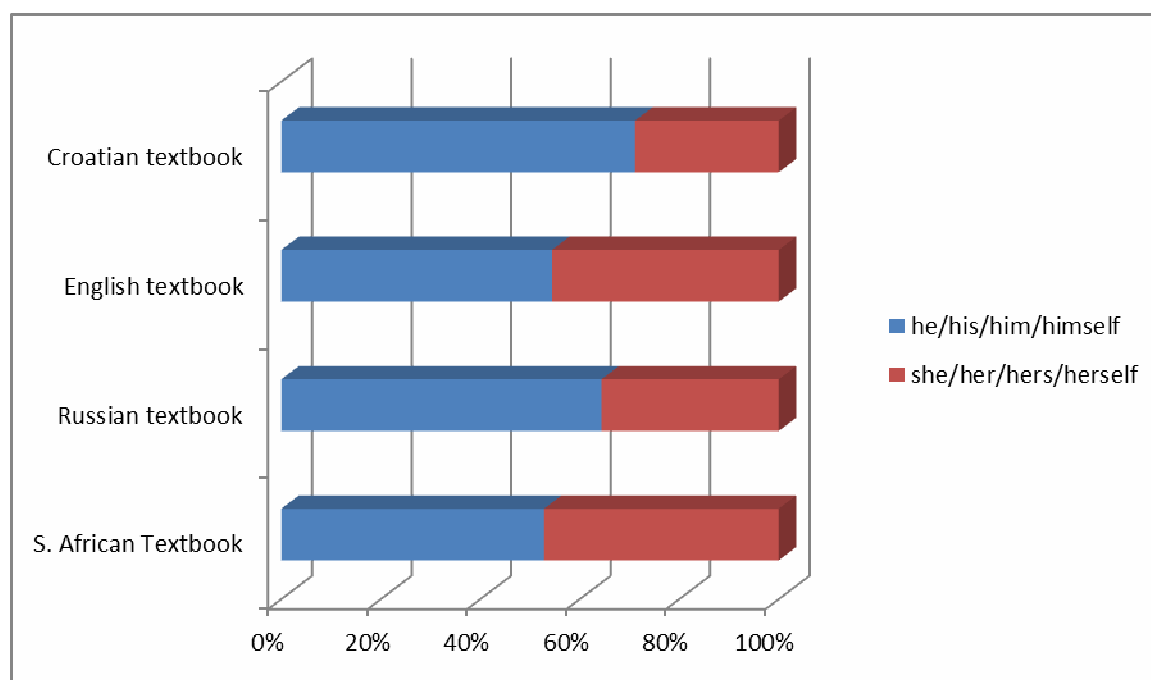
**Figure 3: The number of male and female characters in the text**

As is visible from Figure 3, the ratio of males and females in all of the textbooks is quite homogeneous, with the exception of the Croatian one, which has a slightly bigger difference between male and female characters in favour of men. Nonetheless, they all move between 2.52:1 (the Croatian textbook) and 1.51:1 (the English textbook).

Moreover, we analysed the use of male and female personal pronouns. We counted the number of male and female pronouns (he, him, his, himself/she, her, hers, herself) in each textbook and the results are presented in Figures 4 and 5.



**Figure 4:** The ratio of male to female personal pronouns in the textbooks



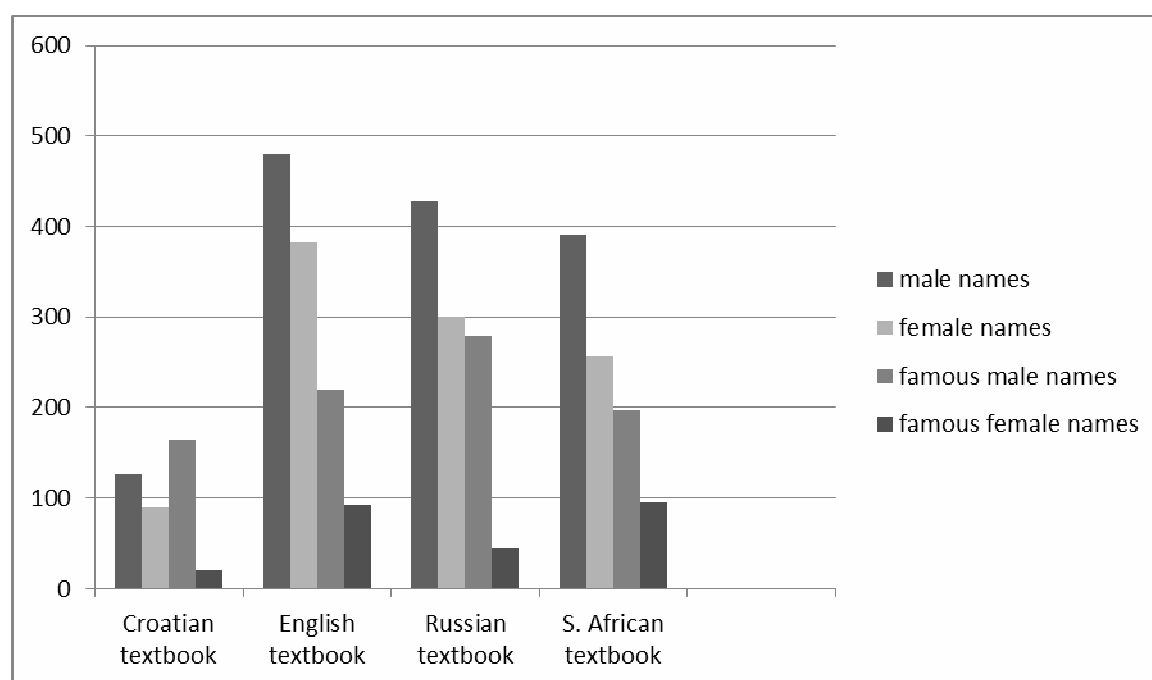
**Figure 5: The percentage of male and female personal pronouns in the textbooks**

Figure 4 shows us the number of male and female personal pronouns used in each textbook. The English textbook, although not the biggest book in our corpus, contains the most male and female personal pronouns, 1288, out of which 701 are male and 587 are female. It is followed by the S. African textbook, the biggest one in terms of the number of pages, which mentions 948 male and female personal pronouns, 501 out of which are male and 447 female. In the Russian textbook we found 859 examples of male and female personal pronouns, 553 of which are male and 306 female. In the Croatian textbook we found the smallest number of pronouns in general, 523, as well as the biggest difference between male and female personal pronouns used, 372 male as opposed to 151 female ones.

As is visible from the data presented in Figure 5, the minimum difference between the use of male and female personal pronouns can be found in the S. African textbook, where this ratio is 1.12:1. The results showed a very similar ratio when analysing the English textbook, in which the same ratio is 1.19:1. The other two textbooks differ to a greater degree, with the

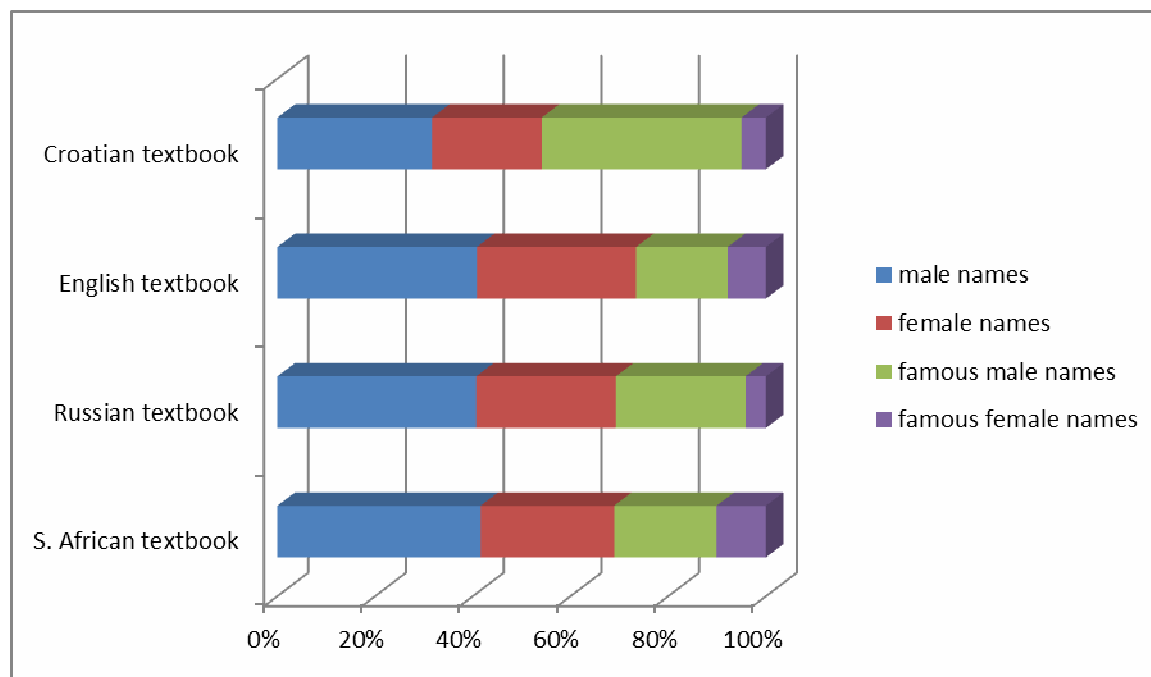
Russian textbook's ratio being 1.81:1, while the Croatian textbook has the biggest ratio between male and female pronouns at 2.46:1.

The following two figures refer to names mentioned in the textbooks, both female and male. In our analysis we included both first names and last names if they had a title which undoubtedly referred to one's sex (Mr, Miss, Mrs, Ms). We categorized famous people separately, again differentiating between male and female individuals.



**Figure 6: The ratio of male to female names and famous male to female names in the textbooks**

We can once again see how the English textbook, although not the biggest book in our corpus, contains the most male (600) and female names (475); however, the African one has the most instances of famous female names (95). The Croatian textbook has the smallest number of names in every category, which is to be expected since the book itself is the smallest in our corpus. In all textbooks, the number of male names, famous as well as regular names, exceeds the number of female names.

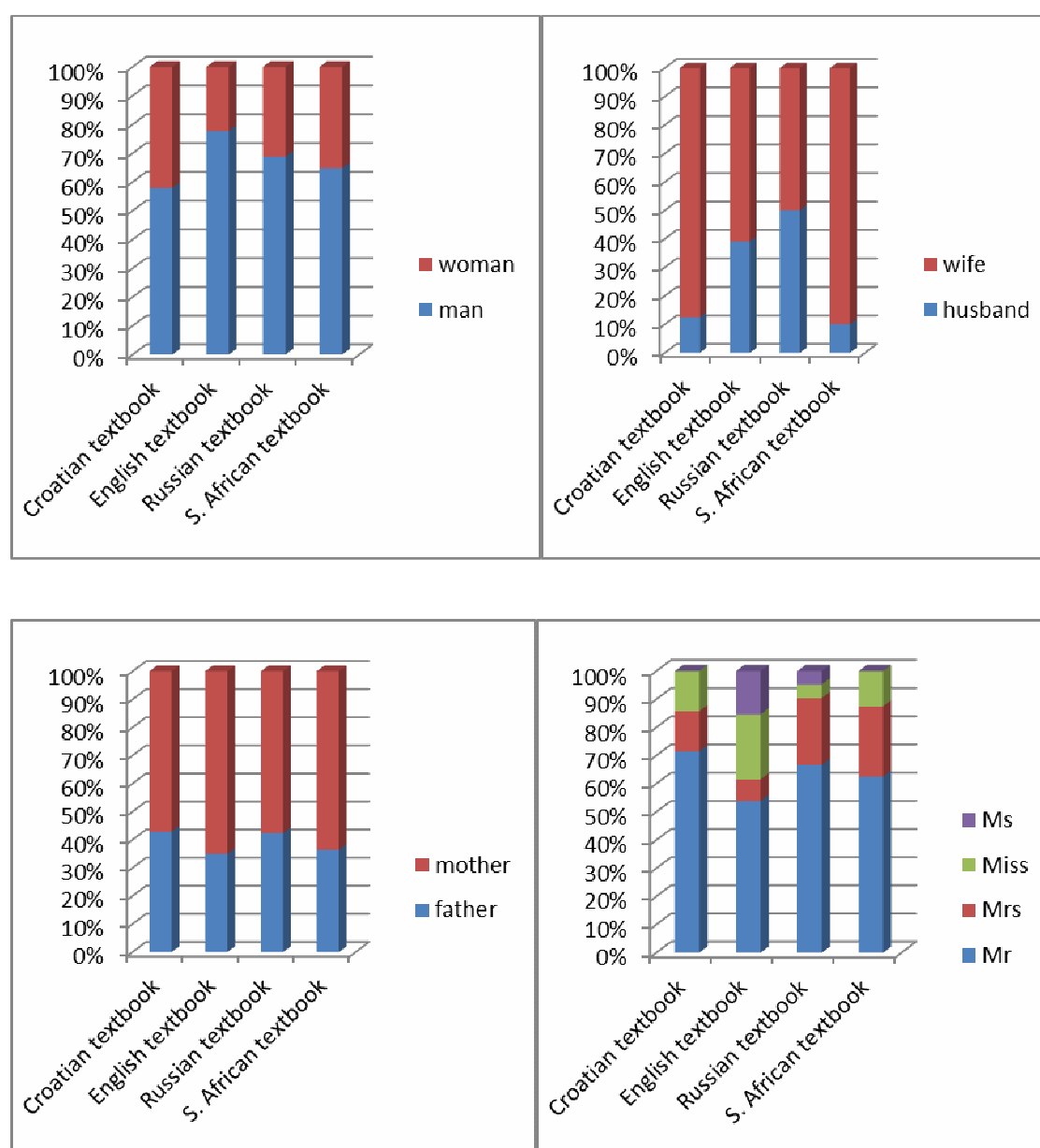


**Figure 7: The percentage of male to female names and famous male to female names in the textbooks**

From Figures 6 and 7 we can see that the Croatian textbook is the only textbook in which the number of famous male names surpasses the number of unspecified male names (the ratio between them being 1:1.29). In all of the other textbooks the ratio of male names to famous male names exceeds 1.5:1 in favour of unspecified male names. Other than that, the results in our textbooks are pretty similar, with the ratio of male to female names moving between 1.47:1 in the English textbook and 2.05:1 in the Russian one. There is also a noticeably bigger ratio of famous male names to famous female names in the Croatian textbook than in the rest of them (8.2:1, as opposed to 6.34:1 in the Russian textbook, 2.39:1 in the English textbook, and only 2.07:1 in the S. African one).

As part of the text analysis we analysed the following instances as well: the use of the generic masculine in textbooks, and the use of certain words and their word pairs, i.e. titles or descriptors that refer to parallel or complementary roles in each gender. When analysing the generic masculine we noted the use of masculine pronouns and the noun ‘man’ used as

generic, as well as occupational titles where man is used as part of the title, such as sportsman, chairman etc. In the Croatian textbook we found 7 instances of the generic masculine, in the English one we found 6 instances, in the Russian one 12, and in the S. African one 9. In neither of the textbooks did we find any instance of the feminine generic. As far as the use of word pairs is concerned, we observed the use of the following word pairs: man-woman, mother-father, husband-wife, Mr-Miss-Ms-Mrs. The results are presented in Figures 8-11.

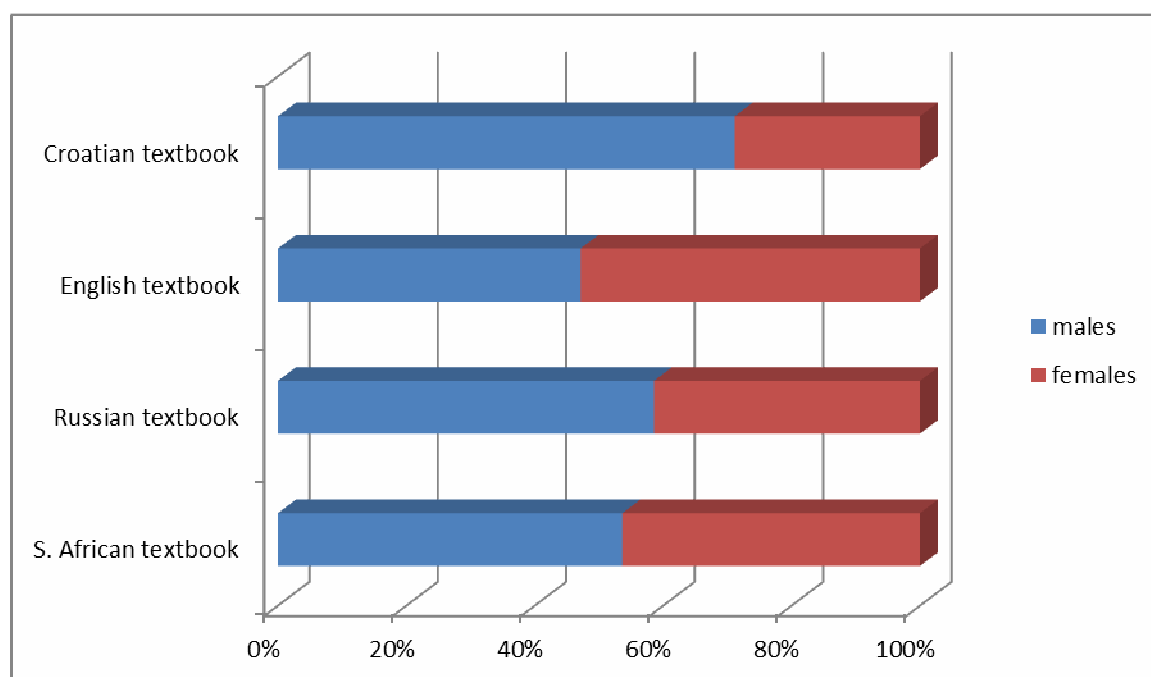


**Figures 8-11: The ratio of word pairs in the textbooks – comparative analysis**



From the figures above it is evident that the use of word pairs is consistent with the existing results and follows the same pattern through all of the textbooks: the words ‘mother’ and ‘wife’ are used more often than their word pairs ‘father’ and ‘husband’ in each textbook. Only in the Russian textbook is the ratio between ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ 1:1, whereas in the other textbooks it ranges from 1.56:1 to 9:1. The results for the word pair ‘mother’ and ‘father’ are more homogeneous and in all of the textbooks the ratio ranges from 1.87:1 and 1.33:1. On the other hand, ‘man’ and ‘Mr’ are used more than their pairs ‘woman’ and ‘Mrs/Miss/Ms’. The ratio of ‘man’ to ‘woman’ moves from 1.38:1 to 3.5:1, while the ratio of male to female forms of address ranges from 1.17:1 to 2.5:1. The neutral female form of address, Ms, was found only in the English textbook.

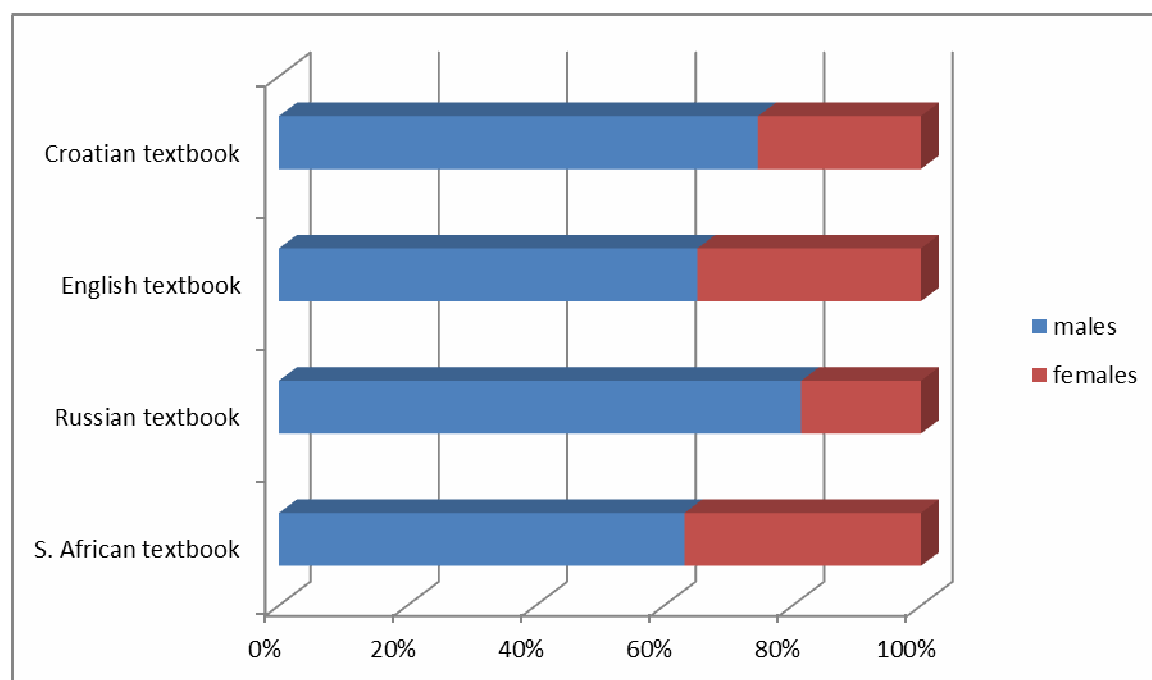
The last element we analysed in that part of our study deals with instances of firstness. The results are shown in Figure 12. We can see from the Figure that the English textbook is the only one in which the feminine form is depicted as the first one more often than the masculine one, with the ratio of 0.89:1. In the other textbooks, the ratio ranges from 1.16:1 to 2.47:1.



**Figure 12: Instances of firstness**

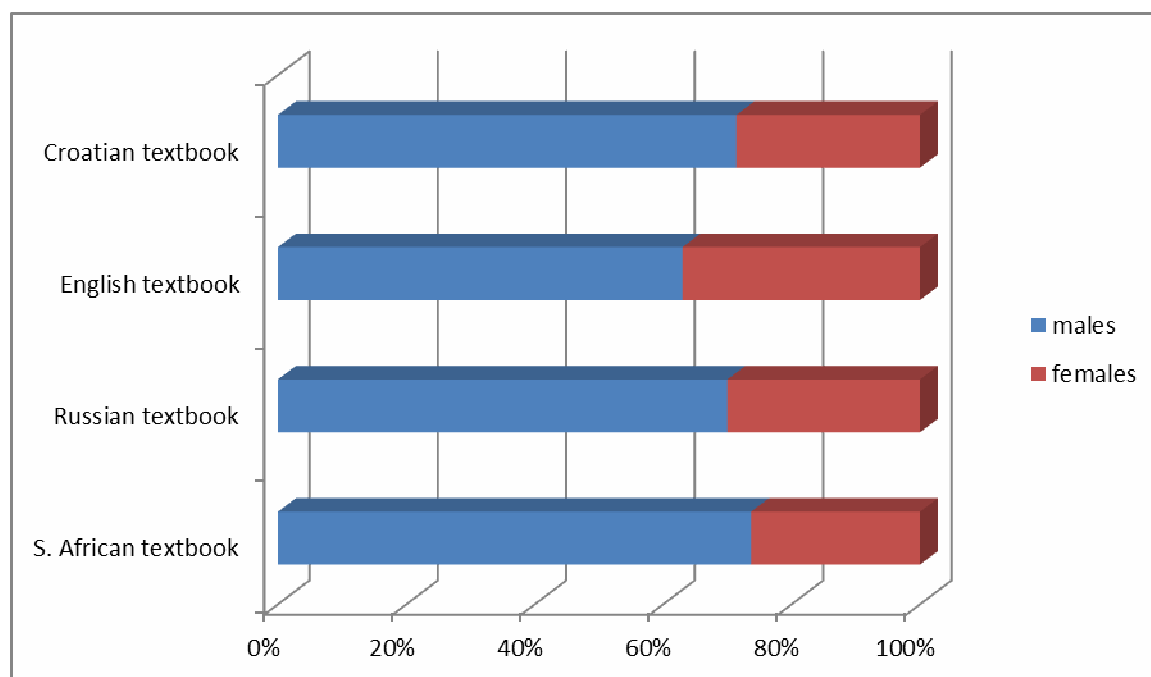
### 3.4.2 Portrayal of genders

When analysing the differences in the portrayal of genders, we started from the analysis of male and female characters depicted in an occupational role. We covered both the number, that is, the proportion of females to males depicted in any occupation, as well as the variety of occupational roles in which each gender was depicted.

**Figure 13: The proportion of male and female characters depicted in an occupational role**

From Figure 13 we can see that not only does the Russian textbook have the biggest number of occupations mentioned, but also the biggest difference in the ratio of male to female individuals depicted in an occupational role, namely 4.36:1. The Croatian textbook is a

close second, with its ratio of males to females at 2.94:1. The English and S. African textbooks constitute the second group, with ratios 1.87:1 and 1.71:1 respectively.



**Figure 14: The proportion of various occupational roles in which males and females are depicted**

In Figure 14 we should take note of the Russian and S. African textbooks, where we can see the biggest divergence compared to Figure 13. In the Russian textbook the ratio of various occupational roles between sexes is 2.33:1 in favour of males, whereas in the African one it is 2.8:1. This tells us that although we find a considerably larger number of individual males than females depicted in an occupational role in the Russian textbook, the ratio between the various occupations connected to each of the two genders is not that big. On the contrary, in the S. African textbook the difference between individual mentions of males and females in the context of an occupational role is not as big as the difference between male and female occupational roles mentioned, which tells us that although not many professions are tied to women in general, they are more often depicted in the ones that are tied to them; men, on the

other hand, have a broader range of occupational roles, but there is a lesser number of individual males depicted in these individual occupations.

We also tried to pinpoint all of the most important instances of sexism and anti-sexism in the textbooks. It should be noted that in three out of the four textbooks (all of them apart from the Russian one) sexism is explicitly discussed, namely there is a text or activity in each of them discussing sexism, its existence and manifestation.

In the Croatian textbook, on page 119 within the lesson entitled “Career choices”, learners are supposed to list the jobs that are traditional career choices for men and women, discuss sentences such as “Men get better jobs than women.”, and in the end they are given a text in which a 14-year-old boy is complaining about having to do more housework than his 11-year-old sister. The purpose of this text is to encourage learners to think about gender equality. In the same lesson, however, we encountered this sentence: “My dad doesn’t do much at home and I don’t see why I should” (2001, p. 120). In addition to this, in other part of the textbook we noticed a bigger emphasis on the physical appearance of women (e.g. “Blue eyes, long blond hair, she was so pretty I couldn’t take my eyes off her” (2001, p. 9).), and men depicted in roles of football fans and sports fans in general, whereas women find football “stupid”.

In the English textbook, in Lesson 8 called “Do’s and don’ts”, we came across a text entitled “Jobs for boys...and girls”, which depicts a female plumber and a male nanny (2007, p. 67). The text presents genders in occupations which are normally strongly tied to the opposite gender and encourages readers to think outside of their existing frames of reference. In the pre-reading and post-reading activities, typical male and female jobs are discussed and a discussion on this topic is being encouraged. Other than that, we found expressions such as ‘drama queen’ referring to women, women more often depicted in the kitchen or with a small

child, and sentences by female speakers such as ‘I hope I’m interesting enough for him.’ (p. 107), or ‘Of course, one day I hope to marry and have children.’ (p. 116), whereas men are once again depicted as football fans. However, we also came across women painting the walls and men baking cakes and buying groceries. There is an obvious effort to show genders as equal.

In the S. African textbook, as part of “Unit 12: Looking into the past and the future“, there is an activity entitled “Language structure and conventions: Bias, prejudice and stereotypes“ in which the learners are encouraged to discuss stereotypes related to men and women, such as women who are bad drivers or women who recklessly spend their husbands’ money. The topic is not discussed as thoroughly as in the previous two textbooks. Moreover, two other texts are relevant for the topic of sexism: one is a poem called “Gossip“, and the accompanying pre-reading activity raises questions such as: “Do you think girls and boys both gossip? Give reasons for your answer.” (2013, p. 192) The picture that comes with the poem shows three girls who are gossiping. The other text is a description of a family where the father is depicted as the president, and the mother is in the role of the deputy and the minister of finance (p. 23). However, another activity (on page 66) is connected to the topic of gender depiction, and in it different types of families are depicted in the accompanying pictures. Among the many different types of families one can find a lesbian couple with two children, as well as a single father and a single mother with two children. Moreover, on pages 247-248 there is a text about unplanned pregnancy and in the post-reading activities students are encouraged to discuss the topic. The topic ends with the sentence: “Unplanned pregnancies can impact on a learner’s life and affect their studies. If this happens to you or a friend, make sure you speak to an adult who can help you.” (2013, p. 249) Finally, on page 331 there is a text that deals with attempted rape of women. Although the term rape is never explicitly used, it is quite clear from the text (“NO!” she had screamed, remembering her grandmother’s

words of advice: “Your body is not like a car, my child, that can be fixed easily. Sometimes things take a very long time to heal. So don’t let others hurt you.” (2013, p. 331)), and as a post-reading activity students are supposed to answer questions such as: “What do you think this man wanted from Mary?”

As far as the Russian textbook is concerned, there is no text directly referring to the question of sexism; there is, however, a text on page 286 entitled “Are Girls Cleverer Than Boys” in which there is a whole range of sentences such as “Boys make more trouble while girls are usually well-behaved.” (2009, p. 286), “In the modern world girls are becoming a lot more ambitions [sic].” (ibid., p. 287), “For example, boys spend a lot of time playing computer games and watching action films on television because they live in a world of their own fantasy” (ibid.). The text divides boys and girls into clear-cut categories, and the differences between them are based solely on their gender.

The text that we found particularly interesting was the one entitled “What We Watch”, an excerpt from which is provided here:

Men traditionally watch sports programmes and never fail to see important football matches. If they want to watch a film, they choose a comedy, a thriller, or a crime film. Women may watch serials, comic series, pop-music concerts, lyrical [ˈlɪrɪkəl] comedies and melodramas [ˌmeləˈdraːməz]. Both men and women watch the news, talk shows and quizzes. (2009, p. 32)

Hartman and Judd came across similar results in one of the textbooks they researched: “The sexes even read newspapers differently, the men reading the sports pages while women enjoy the fashions, homemaking sections, and advertisements” (1972, p. 386). As they emphasize, the stereotypical nature of this text becomes more apparent if we try and imagine the same text with switched roles for males and females.

### 3.5 Discussion

We will now discuss the obtained results, thus answering the questions formulated at the beginning of the study. Before proceeding, we would like to emphasize two important facts: firstly, we selected only one textbook from each of the four countries, and decided to focus on gender and sexism related issues, as important and widespread aspects of the hidden curriculum. The reason for that was the scope of the study, which in turn defined the size of our sample. However, we have to be aware of the fact that a single textbook cannot represent the overall trends in including social attitudes and worldviews in textbooks in a particular country; although it might give us a clue about the most obvious differences between hidden curricula in these countries, we have to be aware that research of a much larger scope would have to be conducted to obtain more reliable results. Secondly, we want to emphasize that the manifestation of a hidden curriculum and the quality of a textbook are not in direct correlation; the overall quality of these textbooks as EFL materials cannot be judged by the results obtained from this study.

From the results obtained in this study, we can conclude that the representation of genders, as well as sexism (since the two tend to be interconnected), are still a significant problem from the point of view of the manifestation of the hidden curriculum in EFL textbooks. We should emphasize, however, that it is very hard to draw any firm conclusions on this point, since there is a multitude of elements that enter the equation of gender equality in particular cultures/countries. If we start with the assumption that there is gender inequality present in a particular country or society, this might mean that the textbooks only reflect the already existing inequality. Therefore, if the authors were to depict genders as equal, that

would still be instilling ideas in our learners, even if such values are considered virtuous in modern Western society, and thus they would constitute a hidden curriculum as much as instilling 'bad' ideas would. This is important to stress because we are not discussing the values of a 'good hidden curriculum', nor whether it should appear in EFL textbooks, in this way influencing the learners for the better; our only goal was detecting and categorizing the hidden curriculum in the selected textbooks.

In gender representation, we started with the analysis of the illustrations, counting the number of males and females depicted. Porecca's study from 1984 shows the proportion of males to females in illustrations to be 1.97:1, and if we present our results for four textbooks in one proportion, we get the ratio of 1.67:1 in favour of men. Next, we examined the occurrence of male and female characters in text. Compared to Coles' and Hoomes' study, in which the ratio of male to female characters was 3:1 and 3.5:1 respectively, our overall results show the ratio of 1.68:1 in favour of men, almost identical to the ratio of genders in illustrations. We can conclude that, although there is still obvious inequality in the representation of women and men (both in illustrations and in texts), it is slowly decreasing. Moreover, we analysed the occurrence of male and female names, another indicator of male domination in the textbooks. We also analysed separately the occurrence of famous men and women in the textbooks. If we compare the two results, the ratio of regular male to female characters is 1.37:1, whereas the ratio of famous males to females is 3.14:1. We find that to be an indicator of gender inequality as well, since men are represented as more successful and important than women.

Next, in regard to the use of personal pronouns, our overall ratio for all four textbooks is 1.43:1; this is significantly lower than Graham's results from 1974, where the ratio of male to female pronouns was 4:1. This might be seen as another indicator of decreasing gender inequality. Furthermore, we examined the use of the generic masculine. Porecca's results



show the average of 25 instances per book, whereas the results we obtained show an average of 8.5 per textbook, again significantly lower than in Porecca's study.

If we take a look at the results that are related to word pairs, we will once again see that they correspond with the ones from Graham and Porecca. However, according to Graham, 'man' was used seven times more than 'woman', whereas in our study there is a significantly lower ratio: 2.05:1. Just like in Porecca's study, mother/father and husband/wife are word pairs in which the female form exceeds the male one in frequency of use. The reason for this could be found in the representation of women in a familial role and accentuating their function as mothers and spouses, as opposed to their depiction in an occupational role. Moreover, Porecca's results on instances of firstness show a ratio of 2.96:1 in favour of men. The results from this study show a ratio of 1.34:1. This data indicates an effort on part of the authors to achieve gender equality in their texts, often using instances which might sound 'unnatural' at first, having in mind that we are used to the firstness of the male form.

If we compare our results to the pre-existing ones on the number of individual depictions of genders in an occupational role, we can observe a similarity to the ones from Coles' study; namely, the ratio of overall male to female individuals depicted in an occupation in all of the textbooks is 2.76:1. Compared to Porecca's 5.87:1, our results indicate a much more favourable situation in regard to gender equality. Her research showed similar results for the ratio of males to females in various occupational roles; the ratio in our study was 2.23:1. The difference between male and female occupational roles is reduced by more than half.

Lastly, as far as gender representation is concerned, the Russian textbook stands out as the one with the most obvious instances of sexism, as well as the most obvious differences in the depiction of genders. From the ratio of both the individual mentions of genders in occupational roles and the number of different occupations connected to men and women, we

can see that there is a big difference between the representations of gender in the Russian textbook. Furthermore, the Russian textbook is the only one in our corpus in which sexism is not explicitly discussed, and the text “What We Watch” serves as the most obvious example of gender inequality.

## 4 CONCLUSION

In this thesis, we tried to answer certain questions concerning the hidden curriculum, focusing primarily on its manifestation in EFL textbooks. In order to do that, we conducted a study which gave us some clues as to the current state in that field. The main issues we tried to address regarded the origin of and general attitude towards the hidden curriculum, different manifestations of the hidden curriculum in EFL textbooks, and its influence on learners. However, we focused primarily on the differences between the hidden curriculum in the chosen textbooks and countries, paying special attention to the equality in gender representation and the differences in the portrayal of genders.

Our findings suggest that the hidden curriculum exists in each one of them, though it manifests in different ways and to a greater or lesser extent. We decided that it is the most strongly manifested in areas connected to the representation of genders and sexism, which are the areas we covered in our study. Both the hidden curriculum and the attitude towards the hidden curriculum have changed significantly over the years. But the fact is that the hidden curriculum in textbooks follows global social changes. Several decades ago the question of gender equality was not as widely discussed as it is now; as changes began to happen in the overall attitude towards women, these changes slowly penetrated the textbooks and so the hidden curriculum has changed accordingly. Scholars who study the topic of the hidden curriculum also cover the topic from the point of view of the currently discussed and important topics. We believe that that is where the biggest problem lies: the hidden curriculum consists of ideas that are left out as much as of those that are included in the text. Minority groups, such as sexual minorities and people with special needs, are some of the

topics that are still left out by most textbooks (in our study, only one textbook, namely the African textbook, covered both of these areas in texts and illustrations).

However, there are many more important and taboo questions that are left out; some of the most important might be major ecological problems, the global distribution of wealth, issues in developing countries etc. The fact is that there is no universal law as to what constitutes an important topic or ‘a good hidden curriculum’; religious topics might be a good example of a hidden curriculum that is considered good by some educators and bad by others. The decision to include them in textbooks rests with the authors, but in which way and in which amount the learners will be exposed to the hidden curriculum depends on the education policy of each country as well as individual teachers, at least in practice. In any case, we would like to emphasize that the most important issue here is not the existence, but the awareness of the hidden curriculum. As Hartman and Judd observed:

Language learning is necessarily a culture-learning process. In fact, a traditional rationale for foreign language learning has been the expansion of the individual's cultural horizons, the development of tolerance for cultural diversity, and the acquisition of more data for deciding where one fits in the world. It is neither possible nor desirable to separate the linguistic aspects of a language from its surrounding culture; on the contrary, the presentation of culture in language classes is usually set forth as an explicit goal. (Hartman and Judd: 383)

To conclude, the hidden curriculum will probably always exist, if in no other form, simply because of the topics and ideas left out of the classroom. As long as educators are aware of the hidden curriculum, they are welcome to discuss it explicitly or to turn it into ‘a positive hidden curriculum’.

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