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**GENDER IN KEY ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS**

**MA thesis**

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**TARTU**

**2014**

## **ABSTRACT**

Previous studies of coursebooks published in Estonia have identified gender bias. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to analyse the representation of gender in KEY English 7-9 coursebooks, which were published in 2008-2012 to find out whether the situation of gender balance has improved. To achieve that, the thesis studies the number and roles of males and females both in text and pictures. In analysing the visibility of males and females, a distinction was made between unique characters and the number of times each character appeared (respectively, 'type' and 'token'). This was done to see how many unique characters there are and how much they are being talked about. The roles were divided into five major categories: 'male-monopolised', 'male-dominated', 'female-monopolised', 'female-dominated' and 'gender-shared'. The sample consisted of three units from each coursebook and workbook.

The introduction of this thesis discusses the importance of gender equality and the impact of education on the beliefs and values of a young person. The first chapter gives a chronological overview of the previous research done on gender in coursebooks around the world. It is divided into four periods from the 1940s to recent years. Additionally, the studies conducted in Estonia are discussed. The second chapter introduces the KEY English series and methods used. The third chapter discusses the findings for each coursebook and for the whole series. The conclusion sums up the research.

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## INTRODUCTION

According to the definition by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (n.d.), gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female. In other words, gender is the social meaning given to biological sex. Gender is a construct which concerns everyone as we are all gendered already from early childhood. Moreover, as the UN document cited above argues, gender equality is a precondition for sustainable development as it contributes to a maximal use of human resources in the society. It is an issue of human rights and social justice which concerns society at large. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to pay attention to the issues concerning gender equality.

For these reasons, gender equality has been a focal topic for many laws and institutions in the Western world. It is one of the human rights stated in the International Bill of Human Rights (1948). Another important international document promoting equal rights for women is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted by United Nations in 1979. CEDAW defines discrimination against women as follows:

...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. (Part I, Article I)

In addition, CEDAW reinforces women's equal opportunities in public life and suggests national action to end discrimination against women. In Estonian context, the document was ratified in 1991 (Riigi Teataja 1995: para. 1). In the EU, the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) declared the promotion of equality between men and women a fundamental task of the EU. In addition to the international documents gender equality in Estonia is protected by the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia (Riigi Teataja 2011a: chapter 2, sect. 12)

and the Acts of Equal Treatment (2009) and Gender Equality (2013). The latter highlights the need to promote gender equality in Estonian society as a human right and public good (chapter 1, sect. 1) and education (chapter 1, sect. 2.2).

However, the laws and regulations do not invariably determine society's beliefs and values about gender equality. The Gender Empowerment Measure of Human Development Report of 2009 ranks Estonia in the 40th position out of 182 countries; we still have a long way to go if we want, for example, to reach neighbouring Finland, who have the 12th position (Human Development Report 2009: 186). There are many problematic issues in our society. The gender wage gap and the lifespan of males are two immediately noticeable issues. Some of these subjects are discussed in Gender Equality Monitoring 2009, carried out by the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs to map attitudes, opinions and experiences about the equality of men and women (Vainu et al 2009: 5). The results show stereotypical views on the division of labour at home: men are seen as breadwinners and women are more likely to be held responsible for household chores (Vainu et al 2009: 160-161). Public attitudes help to explain the low representation of women in politics and in top positions in other spheres of life (Vainu et al 2009: 159; 163). Yet, positive developments in attitudes towards gender equality were also reported; amongst these were support to the role of women outside home, including in leadership positions, and the role of men inside home (Vainu et al 2009: 6).

We might expect young people to acquire their gender behaviour patterns from home. However, one cannot forget the influence of the whole society and especially education. Kuurme (2010) argues that genders are not balanced in education as the majority of the teachers are female, the majority of the students in secondary education are female, yet the school continues to promote patriarchal attitudes and values. This contributes to the schools not being supportive for the development of neither boys nor

girls because though there are many women in schools, patriarchal norms and values are still reproduced (e.g., focus on success and achievement). This has a negative influence especially on boys and can be seen as one of the reasons of the high school dropout rate of boys from basic school in Estonia. Girls stay at school, but have more health problems. In addition, Kuurme writes that the feminisation of schools means that not enough conscious attention is paid to the development of boys and girls as a whole. More dominating boys might receive more attention than quiet and diligent girls; furthermore, they might be seen as more talented and more probable to achieve success in the future. This also affects boys who are not very dominating; they might not get enough attention and girls learn to be on the background which can be seen as a basis to accept lower wages and routine work in the future. However, there is far too little research on gender and education in Estonia to draw further conclusions (Kuurme 2010: 135).

Young people spend a considerable amount of their time in schools. Vainu (2009) found that students in Estonian schools do not seem to sense inequality towards girls. Rather, they have experiences of favouring both boys and girls (Vainu et al 2009: 50). However, the study also revealed that the opinions about skills that should be part of education are quite stereotypical: technical skills and skills needed for public life for boys; cooking and home-management for girls (Vainu et al 2009: 50).

In contrast to these findings one should not forget that the Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools states that gender equality is one of the core values of basic education (Riigi Teataja 2011b: chapter 2, sect.3). Although we have laws on several levels that stress the importance of gender equality, people's attitudes do not seem to have become supportive of this public good and school does not yet offer balanced opportunities for all boys and girls.

What, then, could be the reasons behind the clash between what we want our schools to teach about gender equality and what studies show to be the widespread attitudes? The clash still exists though gender equality has been stated as a core value the curriculum. Is the core value stated in the curriculum not practiced in schools then? Some answers could be sought with the help of the notion of the hidden curriculum, which has received less attention than the explicit one. Vic Kelly explains that the hidden curriculum means those things the students learn

Because of the way in which the work of the school is planned and organized but which are not in themselves overtly included in the planning or even in the consciousness of those responsible for the school arrangements. (Kelly 1983: 8)

The hidden curriculum consists of covert messages conveyed to the student and it influences the students' norms and values. It could be argued that biased views on gender and gender roles could stem from the hidden curriculum in school.

Coursebooks tend to have a central role in education. According to Tyson-Bernstein and Woodward (1991), 90 percent of instructional time is structured around a coursebook or other similarly printed instructional material (cited by Tietz 2007: 461) What is more, Baldwin and Baldwin (1992) argue that the average teacher uses textbooks for 70% to 90% of classroom time (cited by Blumberg 2007: 6). Thus, it is essential that the materials used would not be biased. Already Schau and Scott (1984:189), who reviewed studies in the 1980s, associate gender-biased materials with increased gender-biased views of school children. In her major study for UNESCO, Blumberg (2007: 4) identifies gender bias "as one of the best camouflaged – and hardest to budge – rocks in the road to gender equality in education". In the light of these facts it seems essential to ensure that the coursebooks used in schools would not be gender biased and the problem of gender bias in coursebooks



has received considerable attention in the English speaking world in the past 50 years. The next chapter will discuss these studies at length.

There have been some previous studies of coursebooks published in Estonia which have been dedicated to gender bias. A thorough analysis of these will follow in the next chapter. So far, however, there has been little discussion in Estonia about recently published coursebooks. Therefore, the aim of this study is to take a look at the relatively new KEY English series (the series was published in 2008-2012) and compare whether the situation of gender balance has become better in KEY English than, for instance, in Step 5 (analysed by Richards in 2002, Salakka in 2006 and Lehiste in 2013). Lehiste analysed the gender of the agents of dialogues in Step 5, Salakka and Richards the hidden curriculum. This thesis will analyse the number of males and females both in text and pictures and their roles to get a more comprehensive picture about the representation of gender in the KEY English series. Although the textbooks first appeared in Finland, several of the authors of the Estonian edition are Estonians and for this reason, the series might reflect the attitudes of Estonian society. The thesis aims to find out how balanced the representation of gender is in KEY English textbooks. In addition to overt bias, the thesis will also look for indirect clues of gender differentiation.

The thesis has four chapters, in addition to this introductory chapter. The first chapter gives an overview of previous research on the topic of gender in textbooks. It is divided into four periods from 1940 to recent years and discusses studies from all over the world. Then, studies on gender in Estonian textbooks are discussed; the focus is on foreign language textbooks but other textbooks studied are included to give a better overview of the situation in Estonia. The second chapter introduces the KEY English series and describes the methods used. The analysis concentrates on the number of male, female and gender-neutral characters both in text and illustrations and takes a look at the social roles,

which are divided into five major categories: ‘male-monopolised’, ‘male-dominated’, ‘female-monopolised’, ‘female-dominated’ and ‘gender-shared’. Finally, the third chapter discusses the findings of this study and the conclusion gives a brief summary of the thesis.

## **1. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This literature review aims at giving a short overview of the history of gender-aware textbook analysis. The first part looks at studies of gender bias in coursebooks (GBIC) around the world and is divided into four periods from 1940s to recent years. The second part of this literature review looks at Estonian studies of GBIC dating from recent 2000s to recent years.

### **1.1 Chronological Overview of Research on Gender Bias in Coursebooks**

#### **1.1.1 1940-1960**

As far as the thesis could establish, Child, Potter and Levine (1946) were among the very first to analyse the role of women in textbooks and their study has been quoted in many sources afterwards. However, the specific objective of the study was the analysis of the world of ideas which confronts children in the process of education, from the point of view of the probable effect of that content on their behaviour. For that purpose, central characters in coursebooks were analysed and among other classifications, the characters were divided into males and females and very significant results emerged.

The study sampled 914 stories in 30 readers for the third grade which were published between 1930 and 1946 in the US. Since the goal was to analyse what effect the readers had on children, the authors chose content which showed characters in action (Child et al 1946: 1-2). They also studied how many of the characters were boys or girls and what their behaviour was (objectless behaviour, behaviour primarily in relation to things and events, altruistic social behaviour, egoistic social behaviour and avoidance behaviour) (Child et al 1946: 4-5). The primary focus was personality development, not gender.

However, Child, Potter and Levine brought out the differential treatment of girls and boys as “perhaps the most striking single finding” (Child et al 1946: 49). This differentiation is visible in the frequency with which boys and girls appear among the characters of the texts. 72% of the central and anti-social characters were males and 28% females. The same tendency appeared among characters who were objects of, or co-operators in the satisfaction of the need of the central characters: 63% were males and 37% females. Female characters were more frequent among those displaying affiliation, nurturance and harm avoidance and less frequent among characters who displayed activity, aggression, achievement, construction and recognition. In addition, the persons nurtured by a central character were also mostly women. In contrast, the persons who supplied information to central characters seeking knowledge were predominantly men. Therefore it can be said that women were shown as sociable and kind, but also inactive, unambitious and helpless, whereas men were shown as the bearers of knowledge and power (Child et al 1946: 47-48).

Keeping in mind the time period, the portrayal of women is not very surprising. As Child, Potter and Levine (1946: 48) put it, “it may indeed have a certain validity as of our society of the present time”. However, there are some surprising differences as well. As the authors of the study state, it is striking that the study shows knowledge suppliers to be men because the readers are for children and most probably the most important adults who supply knowledge to children in real environment are their teachers, who are mostly women. Another important implication for the authors was the evidence that education is not the same for boys and girls in the USA, though the common assumption had been that the education for boys and girls is virtually the same. In connection with this, Child, Potter and Levine (1946: 49) highlight the ratio of men and women among characters as the most striking result of their study. They state that there can be no excuse for this greater

attention to men because the implication for girls is that being a girl is unfortunate and only men are worth writing about. The authors state that girls might develop an inferiority complex as a result of this.

### **1. 1. 2. 1960-1980**

Most of the studies that could be found of gender in coursebooks from this era are from the USA. At least in the first half of the period, the prevalent research topic concerning coursebooks seems to be race, African-American history and the representation of minorities (for example, Stamp et al, 1964; Clark, Conroy, 1968; guidelines by Michigan Education Association, 1970). Still, influenced by the women's rights movements, studies of gender bias in coursebooks appeared too.

U'Ren's (1971) study played an important role in the development of the field. U'Ren (1971: 218; 222) claimed that although different social and racial backgrounds are starting to appear in coursebooks, gender bias has remained. She studied stories in 30 at that time recent textbooks adopted or recommended for second- through six-grade use in California. She found that 75% of the stories' main characters were male. The page-by-page calculation showed that the average coursebook devoted less than 20% of its story space to women.

Many books devoted only 15% of their illustrations to women. Women tended to appear as background figures, whereas the illustrations on book covers or at the heads of chapters were invariably male-dominated. The study highlights a significant imbalance: where a photograph of an everyday scene would yield a normal mixture of men and women, a drawing in the textbook would show far more men (U'Ren 1971: 224).

Many of the stories were centred on a male figure and included no women. The stories which were centred on women included several men with whom the women

interacted. The author concludes here that “apparently the male world is more readily taken as complete in itself, while the female world is dependent upon male support and interest” (U’Ren 1971: 218). Furthermore, most stories about girls were shorter than the stories about boys. U’Ren also found the stories about girls to be less interesting because female interests were typically restricted to domestic settings: while girls were associated with family and rarely received community recognition for their achievements, boys were allowed greater freedom of movement and choice. Indeed, the adventures of boys often stretched the limits of probability and place; they were given freedom that few parents would be willing to grant to children (U’Ren 1971: 218).

These findings are illustrated with some examples. In one account, there is a story about Stone Age, where the men go hunting and women stay in caves and do daily chores. The women, one girl especially, look up to the men; one girl is especially interested in hunting and starts counting the prey they bring home. She receives no recognition for discovering a method of counting. This story is the only story in the textbook which is centred on a girl and it is hard to see how school girls of that time would identify themselves with the story (U’Ren 1971: 219). In another case, Marie Curie appears to be “a little more than a helpmate for her husband’s projects”. The illustration for the text shows Marie Curie peering mildly from behind her husband’s shoulder. Her husband and another important looking gentleman are in the foreground, engaged in serious conversation (U’Ren 1971: 222).

U’Ren reasons that the coursebook writers are not consciously conspiring to keep women out of their books, but cultural stereotypes get in the way. If women are mostly depicted as mothers and professional fields are reserved solely for men, girls do not understand that being a housewife is only one of many possibilities in life. Such coursebooks do not direct and inspire people to make the most of their particular abilities.

The problem is not so much that girls are not told something they cannot do; they are not told something they can do (U'ren 1971: 224-225).

U'ren's findings have important implications for developing the field, because they set the scene and large numbers of studies quickly follow. Yet, the depiction of gender in textbooks did not become more balanced immediately (Blumberg, 2007: 12). New legislation changed the scene considerably. In 1972, Education Amendment Acts were passed in the USA, of which "Title IX" is the best known. It prohibited sex discrimination in any U. S. government-funded education program or activity. Though it did not specifically address gender bias in coursebooks, it did prohibit gender stereotypes in career counselling and the corresponding materials. Women's Educational Equity Act (1974) provided funding for research and training to help schools overcome gender bias (Blumberg 2007: 13). These changes made gender bias in coursebooks an important research topic.

O'Donnell (1973) studied whether there were gender differences in images in primary social studies textbooks. Primary social studies prepare citizens for effective social lives and therefore are especially important from a gendered perspective. The sample of this study consisted of six books from 1971-1972 from the approved textbook list of a large suburban school district with over hundred elementary schools near Washington, D.C. (O'Donnell 1973: 137-139).

40 random pictures were selected and O'Donnell's research group analyzed them in the following categories: dominant or central figure, no central figure, not applicable and occupations. 73% of the pictures contained men as central figures, 27% women. In occupations, 83% of the characters depicted were men and 17% women. Stereotypical occupation patterns for women were found, such as housewife, nurse, secretary, teacher,

waitress, librarian and stewardess. There was just one woman in a highly paid and prestigious occupation. Occupations which require skill, intellect, bravery and leadership (for instance, scientists, musicians, politicians, judges etc.) were reserved for men (O'Donnell 1973: 139-140).

The author concludes that as the publishing industry of that time period had realized the changing society and rapidly included minority group members in pictures and stories, it would most probably soon re-evaluate gender roles in textbooks as well. The author believes that the images presented to elementary-school students should help them fulfil their whole potential. Textbooks with limited role models for girls affect their goals and aspirations (O'Donnell 1973: 140).

Amyx (1974) argues that the biggest problems with textbooks are invisibility, stereotyping and inferiority. This includes a great emphasis on male characters and general absence of females from textbooks (Amyx 1974: 1316-1317), stereotypical roles for women such as stay-home mother (Amyx 1974: 1318) and showing women as inferior; for example, showing women as lazy twice as often as men, showing girls as incompetent, incapable of independent thought and direct action (Amyx 1974: 1322).

Amyx also analyses the impact of "Title IX", which brought some hope for eliminating gender bias from education:

In their current version, the regulations do not apply to textbooks or other curriculum materials because the department had concluded that specific regulatory provisions in this area would raise grave constitutional problems concerning the right of free speech under the First Amendment. (Amyx 1974: 1328)

The regulations were directed towards schools, not publishers. Moreover, as the regulations did not specifically prohibit gender bias in coursebooks, they were of limited use in eliminating gender bias from schools (Amyx 1974: 1329).



The biggest problems identified in the studies published in 1960-1980 are most characters being male, both in text and illustrations and the invisibility of women. In addition, female interests were identified stereotypically: domestic settings, occupations such as a nurse or a teacher. Males were given greater freedom, independence, bravery and intellect in coursebooks, suggesting the inferiority of females. The authors of the studies concluded that coursebooks do not contribute to equal education and the gender roles in coursebooks have to be re-evaluated.

### **1. 1. 3. 1980-2000**

As Sadker, Sadker and Zittleman (2007: 144) report, both coursebook publishers and professional associations issued guidelines in the 1980s and 1990s for nonracist and non-sexist books, suggesting how to include and fairly portray different groups in the curriculum. As a result, textbooks became more balanced in their description of underrepresented groups; but problems of biased instructional material persist (cited by Blumberg 2007: 15).

During this period, gender and gender bias in coursebooks were studied in a more varied setting: different fields were viewed. For example, gender bias was studied in human anatomy textbook illustrations (Giacomini et al 1986). Their hypothesis was that female and male bodies are equally represented in human anatomy text illustrations. They studied all of the textbooks catalogued under Anatomy in the libraries of major US west coast medical schools, published between 1973 and 1983. They studied only illustrations, not photographs. Their findings showed that in standard anatomy, males were greatly overrepresented in the textbooks: they accounted for 64% of the total illustrations, while females were depicted only in 11% of the illustrations. 25% of the illustrations were gender-neutral. In gender-specific anatomy, males and females were represented

approximately equally: 45% females, 48% males and 7% neutral or equal representation (Giacomini et al 1986: 414-417).

The results are significant because they show the male as the standard human body. The authors also conclude that the overemphasis of men may also result from the social attitude that male is normal and female is a special, exceptional case. They compare this to applying *he* or *man* generally to human beings. Furthermore, while the finding that men and women are nearly equally represented in reproductive chapters might appear fair, the net effect is that in the context of the entire textbook, women appear to be emphasized in the reproductive chapters. The implicit message is that a man's body has the important features for any human activity whereas a woman's body is there to enable her to perform the specialized and limited functions of a sexual partner and mother. The study suggests that human anatomy texts support traditional roles assigned to women (Giacomini et al 1986: 417-418).

Hall (1988: 431-432) reviewed 36 introductory sociology coursebooks published between 1982 and 1988 and looked at the total number of references to "female", "feminine", "male dominance", "sex role" and the actual amount of space devoted to women. The study showed that the average amount of information about women was less than 5% of one coursebook. Furthermore, most of the information about women was ghettoized into a chapter on gender that contains most of the information on women and women are treated minimally in other chapters. The topics traditionally associated with women were family and socialization. Most of the basic sociological topics, such as theory, culture or structure, rarely included women or women's issues. As Hall (1988: 440) put it, "measured by the amount given to women and women's issues throughout these textbooks, the message seems clear: there is general sociology, and then there are women". These findings indicate the continuing problem of the invisibility of women.

As Jones, Kitetu and Sunderland (1997) report, there is a relatively extensive literature on gender bias in language textbooks, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks (for instance, Rees-Parnell, 1976; Hartman, Judd, 1978; Hellinger, 1980; Porecca, 1984 and Talansky, 1986). These studies report frequent gender bias, both relative visibility and occupational and personal stereotyping of females (Jones et al 1997: 469).

While older studies had taken a look at overall gender bias on coursebooks, now more specific items were analysed. Jones, Sunderland and Kitetu (1997) analysed gender bias in dialogues in English as a Foreign Language coursebooks published in 1987, 1993 and 1994. They used quantitative methodology, counting the number of males and females who played roles in the dialogues, the number of times females and males initiated dialogues and also turns taken and words spoken by males and females. The authors also analysed occupational and social roles by gender for each book (Jones et al 1997: 476, 478, 485).

Their findings showed that the gender differences were too small to be significant. The results suggest that the authors and publishers gave consideration to social roles, language use and gender. One of the factors that contributed to the raising awareness was Guidelines for Materials Writers in EFL (1991) issued by Women in EFL Materials. The study also suggested that the reason for the relative gender balance in these discourse roles may lie in the distribution of occupational and social roles. Neither females nor males seemed to have a much greater range of roles. The study concluded that one way to ensure gender fairness in discourse in dialogue roles is to ensure a fair gendered distribution of occupational and social roles. Furthermore, textbook dialogues should provide comparable speaking opportunities for students (Jones et al 1997: 481-483).

Other language textbooks are also studied during this period (e.g. Rifkin 1988). Also, as could already be seen from Jones et al, research on gender bias in coursebooks is no longer limited to the USA. Studies about different countries emerge (for example, Gonzalez-Suarez, 1988; Gupta, Lee Su Yin 1990; Wang, 1998 and Regueiro, 2000.)

During this period, the problem of gender bias in coursebooks received a lot of attention and guidelines were issued to eliminate gender bias in coursebooks. Research on gender bias in coursebooks became more varied. In addition to the studies analysing lower-level school readers, different fields (such as anatomy, sociology) and age groups (university level) emerged. The field also became more international. Gender bias in EFL materials becomes one of the focal research topics. A great deal of the research is mostly quantitative (counting males/females in illustrations or dialogues or counting citation of women in the index), though there are also qualitative analyses (analysing discourse roles).

#### **1. 1. 4. Recent Years**

The topic is still relevant and the literature on gender bias in coursebooks is growing. In the first half of 2000s, some studies looked back on previous decades, for example, Clark et al (2004) reported that women in history textbooks received less attention than men in 1960s, 1980s and 1990s but the mentions of women increased over time. Yet, other authors, for example Manza and Schyndel (2000), argue that mainstream sociology textbooks continue to contain inequality in gender, race and class.

In recent years, many studies from the developing countries and countries where the position of women is problematic have appeared, such as Gungor and Prins, 2011; Ullah, Skelton, 2012, reporting the reinforcement of stereotypical gender roles. For example, a study in Uganda analysed a secondary school textbook published in 2004, with focus on gender in the context of language. A quantitative analysis was done to map out

the gender representation in the text, complemented with critical discourse analysis (CDA) of semi-structured interviews with teachers and lesson observations (Barton, Sakwa 2012: 176-178).

The results of the quantitative analysis showed that 35.7% of the people represented were female, 64.3% male. When females were the central character of a unit, they tended to be portrayed in stereotypical ways, for example, trying to find a husband or dominating in the kitchen. Men held 73% of the occupations, women only 27%. Masculine forms dominated in the instructions of the textbook and when the sex of a character is unstated, the male pronoun was used frequently. Females were mostly described as emotional connected to domestic and/or marriage (Barton, Sakwa 2012: 178-183).

The CDA of interviews with teachers who use this textbook showed that the teachers did not ignore the gendered inferences in the text and sometimes invited their students to analyze them. However, they also seemed to believe that the way males and females are presented in textbooks is not important as the focus is not gender but language learning. The study suggests that teacher education in Uganda does not address gender issues and does not encourage teachers to reflect on the content of the resources they are using (Barton, Sakwa 2012: 184-187).

However, it is not just developing countries that continue to struggle with gender-bias in coursebooks. A large-scale study in Australia reports that the full equality of men and women in coursebooks has not yet been achieved (Lee, Collins 2009: 353). For this study, the sample consisted of ten coursebooks and the following aspects were examined: the ratio of female to male characters, social settings, domestic roles, visual representation, generic constructions and firstness (Lee, Collins 2009: 358).

The findings showed that though there are more women in Australia than men, the latter outnumbered women in coursebooks. In total, 57.5% of the characters were men and 42.5% women. Men also occupied a wider range of social roles: there were 45 male-monopolised roles as opposed to 15 female-monopolised roles. Traditional stereotypes could be found, such as women appearing as a fashion designer, pensioner and a salesperson whereas men had the roles of a criminal, a farmer, a pilot or a politician. Though there were occasional, non-stereotypical portrayals of women as an astronaut, a boxer or a manager, men tended to be involved in physically demanding jobs. As for domestic roles, both men and women had traditional roles (for example, mothers and fathers). Some coursebooks explicitly mentioned the changing roles of women and commented on stereotypes concerning them (Lee, Collins 2009: 359-361).

56.9% of the pictures depicted male characters only, 19.2% female characters only. The content of the pictures reinforced traditional gender roles: there were more women than men engaging in household chores and caring for children (6 women versus 0 men) and the only other category in which women outnumbered men was studying and school activities. For all other activities, there were more male than female characters performing them (Lee, Collins 2009: 362).

Still, there was significant evidence that coursebooks writers use some strategies to avoid gender bias; for example, generic *they* appeared in the coursebooks studied. Additionally, symmetrical phrases that include both men and women were used. However, in the order of appearance, men tended to be mentioned first, fortifying the male-first phenomenon. The study concludes that in spite of the positive developments found there is still much room for improvement (Lee, Collins 2009: 364-366).

Another study looked at 12 introductory textbooks of American government and politics. Each was read from cover to cover to find every reference to women in the text and the page numbers with references to women were then counted. Women on the images, tables, graphs, figures and sidebars were also counted and the context of each reference or appearance of women noted. The percentage of pages with in-text references to women was, on average, 9.73%. The overall average of images including women was 30.86%, the average percentage of women on figures, sidebars, graphs and tables 17.25% (Olivo 2012: 134-136).

The women counted on the pictures also included wives standing by the side of their husbands, women in the crowd etc. The fact that women appear more frequently on images, sidebars, figures, tables and graphs than in in-text references indicates that women are left out of the main narratives in these textbooks; the message is that women have not been and are still not a part of U. S. politics (Olivo 2012: 134-136).

All in all, it seems in the beginning of 2000s some authors questioned the success of the previous eras combating GBIC. During this period, many studies from developing countries appeared which showed that the problem still exists; however, studies from the USA and Australia also show the problems of GBIC. A considerable part of the research done is still quantitative, but qualitative methods, such as CDA, are used too.

## **1.2 Gender in coursebooks in Estonia**

This chapter gives a chronological overview of the previous research done on gender in coursebooks in Estonia. Mostly, it concentrates on foreign language textbooks but discusses some other fields too to give an overview of the situation in Estonia.

Mikk (2002) gathered studies on gender in different Estonian textbooks (history, civics, family studies, EFL textbooks) from 1996-2001. In almost all of textbooks studied,

males were found to dominate both in text and pictures. In only one case, there were fewer men than women in the illustrations (Säälk 2002: 32). Sadam (2002: 48) concludes that the results of the quantitative analysis were “surprising”, because there were practically no women. All authors found evidence of gender stereotyping. Men’s activities were more varied (Järviste 2002: 11) and they often had socially important roles (Säälk 2002: 32) or more prestigious roles (Sadam 2002: 48). Women, on the other hand, were found to be passive and dependent (Hiieväli 2002: 65), or domestic (Säälk 2002: 32) and often only mentioned, whereas men are described in a detailed way (Järviste 2002: 11).

In Civics and Family Studies textbooks analysed men were found to have a higher status in society both in text and illustrations. The number of illustrations of men and women was more or less equal, though there were more pictures with men only. Although there were units which presented both men and women in favourable light, the greater emphasis was on men (Toom 2002: 99-105). The textbook analysed also presented some stereotypical views on gender roles: girls’ play involved being a mother and at home whereas boys’ play included building huts and business. Both men and women were shown as successful; however, women tended to be successful as homemakers and men outside of the home (Kukner 2002: 107-113).

The readers analysed showed both unbalanced depiction of genders and positive developments. A first grade reader depicted men as more important than women (Männik, Piirimägi 2002: 153); in the second grade readers, there were more men than women and men were also more active (Värs 2002: 161). However, boys and girls were also presented as equally successful (Värs 2002: 162). The third grade readers showed stereotypical role division but also new gender roles (Sula 2002: 214). Still, men dominated in the texts and had active roles outside home, whereas women were depicted as homemakers (Pöldme 2002: 224).



Male dominance was found in English textbooks *Step 5* (1997, Estonian authors) and *TipTop 5* (1996, British authors). Male characters dominated in both coursebooks followed by gender-neutral characters and females constituted only 11% and 9% of the total characters in *Step 5* and *TipTop 5*. Generic *he* and *man* appeared in both textbooks. Furthermore, the roles and activities for males and females differed. Women were under-represented in leisure activities (reading, media consumption, computer use etc) and excluded from some fields (e.g. sports, learning and education in *Step 5* (Richards 2002: 238-241).

*Step 5* had a very traditional view on household activities (women as homemakers and men active outside the family) but some progressive ideas (both fathers and mothers working; the father serving food while the mother is reading) were found from *TipTop 5*. In both coursebooks, women were portrayed as passive and dependent, their emotions emphasised. Women were given a high status in family and school; therefore, men and women were found in positions of power. Still, men were shown as more intellectually inclined and adventurous (Richards 2002: 242-248).

All in all, *Step 5* was found to be traditional and conservative whereas *TipTop 5* was more progressive, although not always successful in depicting both genders equally. A suggested reason for the differences found were the contrasting social and political climates of Estonia and the UK (Richards 2002: 246-248).

Salakka (2007) analysed *I Love English 5* (2004, Estonian authors) and *Enterprise 2* (2000, English authors) using the same methods as Richards. Salakka (2007: 63) reports that though males were depicted more frequently both in text and pictures, her results differed from previous studies because the number of male and female characters in the textbook was almost equal. 61% of the characters in *I Love English 5* were gender-neutral,

46% in *Enterprise 2* giving more gender-neutral models than were found in *Step 5* by Richards.

Richards found stereotypical roles in *Step 5*; in contrast to this, the results of Salakka show that the roles and activities of males and females did not differ and their activities were not strictly traditional though the variety of roles given to males was larger. The most favoured role for women in *I Love English 5* was related to creativity or culture; for men, being a student. In *Enterprise 2*, the most popular role for women was being a tourist, a friend, a wife or a housewife; males, somewhat untraditionally, were shown in need of help (Salakka 2007: 63-64). The results differ from the findings of Richards because they show some positive developments in the number of male and female characters and the roles given to characters are not strictly traditional.

In 2008, Chris-Evelin Luik analysed gender roles in the illustrations of Estonian language textbooks *Keeleõpetus, Pesapuu* for grade 5 and *Keeleõpetus, Keelekillud* for grade 6 in her MA thesis to find out whether there are more males or females on the illustrations and what their activities are. There was also a questionnaire for students to see whether they notice gender inequality in the pictures. The results showed that there were more males in three of the coursebooks studied. Both positive and negative stereotypes were found: women were depicted as politicians, men involved with the family, both genders were working. However, criminals were mostly male; females cooked and took care of children; in domestic settings, men were interested only in media consumption (Luik 2008: 86). The questionnaire for grade 6 students showed that they noticed gender inequality in all of the pictures. For most of the pictures at least one student said that he or she cannot identify with the person on the picture because the person is of the opposite sex. For students, the most noticeable gender inequality was on the picture where only a mother was walking with a baby carriage and students would add the father to the picture. Students

also noticed breaking a gender stereotype on the picture with a female politician (Luik 2008: 87). Luik's results show that in Estonian language textbooks, noticeable gender inequality could still be found but also that students are increasingly aware of the differential treatment of genders.

A recent study looked at two English textbooks: *English Step by Step 5* (published 2008) and *I Love English 5* (2008), focussing on the dialogues in the textbooks. In *English Step by Step 5* (ESBS), there were 5 dialogues between males only and 5 between characters of mixed gender; there were no dialogues between women only. *I Love English 5* (ILE) had only 2 dialogues between men and 5 between women. Gender-neutral characters made up the largest part in ILE (Lehiste 2013: 31-32). In ESBS, two male students were the main characters and therefore, dominated in all aspects analysed and were spoken most of. The only expert roles in the book were two teachers, one male and one female. Both men and women were talked about more as active doers than passive receivers; nevertheless, as there were more men, they dominated in both categories. The proper names analysed showed a difference between the male and female teacher: from the name Mrs. Wilson we know the marital status whereas Mr. Rowan remains neutral in that sense (Lehiste 2013: 63-64).

In ILE, females as a whole spoke more than others and also talked most about others, mostly about people in general. Therefore, they also used a large variety of language functions. Similarly to ESBS, more people were spoken of as active, not passive. ILE had a large number of social settings and roles; experts were mainly gender-neutral. The large number of gender-neutral characters gave both male and female students a chance to practice (Lehiste 2013: 64-65).

In conclusion, ESBS gave male students more practice opportunities as the main characters were male; ILE featured a larger number of females and gender-neutral characters thus giving quite equal practice opportunities. The study proposes changes to be made in the dialogues to make them more equal regarding the representation of gender by having a larger number of different characters which reduce considering certain qualities, interests or activities to be related to a person's gender (Lehiste 2013: 65-67).

All in all, the majority of the textbooks studied between 2002- 2013 are for basic school. Many results from the studies discussed show that there is gender bias in these textbooks. In many cases men are depicted as more active than women, they have a higher status in the society than women have. Women are shown as passive, dependent, homemakers. Males tend to dominate both in text and pictures. On the other hand, there are positive developments too. Toom (2002:105) reports that the number of men and women in the illustrations in a Civics textbook is almost equal. Similarly, the number of males and females is almost equal in *I Love English 5* (Salakka 2007: 63) and there are equal practice opportunities for boys and girls in *I Love English 5* (Lehiste 2013: 65). Furthermore, boys and girls are shown as equally successful in some cases (Värs 2002: 162).

The coursebooks for the research discussed here are published from 1996-2008. Their findings showed both gender stereotyping and positive developments. Those recent developments have led to the question whether they continue in recently published textbooks or not: is the number of male and female characters balanced? How many gender-neutral characters are there to give balanced opportunities of practice for students? Is there a difference in social and domestic roles given to men and women? This paper seeks answers to these questions.

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **2.1 Materials**

Key English series 7-9 was published in 2008-2012 by TEA. The original textbooks and workbooks were published in Finland by WSOY in 2003-2007. The authors of the series published in Estonia include several Estonians and for this reason, the series might reflect the attitudes of Estonian society, not just those of Finnish society from which the original comes from. From each coursebook and workbook, the first unit, one unit from the middle and the last unit were analysed. The units are:

KEY 7, total number of units 8. Units analysed 1, 5 and 8.

KEY 8, total number of units 10. Units analysed 1, 5 and 10.

KEY 9, total number of units 9. Units analysed 1, 5 and 9.

### **2.2 Methods**

Two approaches are used to identify whether there is gender bias in KEY English series or not. Firstly, the visibility of males and females is analysed counting the number of males and females both in text and pictures. The aim of the analysis is to see, whether there is as notable an imbalance as recorded in previous research. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows giving an overview of the whole KEY series and gives a starting-point for more detailed analysis. Secondly, the roles of males and females will be looked at to see whether men still appear active and women passive.

#### **2.2.1. The Visibility of Males and Females**

In this part, the number of male, female and gender-neutral characters was counted both in text and illustrations. In parts written in Estonian, only names were counted. Following the system Jones et al (1997: 476), a difference is made between unique

characters and the number of times each character appeared, using the distinction of ‘type’ and ‘token’. This was done to see how many unique characters there are and how much they are being talked about. For instance, Greg is one of the main characters of the unit and a unique character. Greg as a type counted once in the data. The total number of appearances of Greg in the text is a token (in the case of Greg, it was 19). This only applied to cases where it could be made sure that the textbook talks about the very same character; for example, cases where e.g. *brothers* were mentioned could not be counted as such. All characters were counted on pictures, except for the pictures where the character was not fully shown and therefore it could not be ensured whether it is a male or a female. Pictures where the character was fully shown but the gender was doubtful were labelled as gender-neutral.

### **2.2.2 The depiction of males and females in different social settings**

In addition to counting the number of males and females, the study will analyse what the males of females do. Here, Law and Chan’s (2004) classification has been followed and the social roles are divided into five major categories: ‘male-monopolised’, ‘male-dominated’, ‘female-monopolised’, ‘female-dominated’ and ‘gender-shared’. If there are only males in a social role, it is classified as ‘male-monopolised’. If there are more male representatives in a social category, it is categorised as ‘male-dominated’. The same categorising applies to the roles females have. Gender-shared roles are those performed by men and women equally.

The roles of the textbook characters were elicited from what kind of functions they were given (e. g. being a teacher) and what they did (e. g. preparing a salad) in the coursebooks. If possible, the categories of the roles were derived from the way characters were introduced in the book (e. g. young people from different nations, kids on the move). In other cases, generalised categories were used (e. g. occupations). For roles, only types of

characters, not tokens were counted. For example, James Bond was counted as a famous/historic person. He had the same role in the workbook and therefore, was not counted for the famous/historic people category there. Roles which had only one representative were summarised into the category of random roles.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this part, KEY 7, 8 and 9 are firstly addressed separately and secondly the whole series is discussed. For each part, the number of characters in text and pictures is discussed first and then, the roles.

#### 3. 1. 1. KEY 7, Characters in Text and Pictures

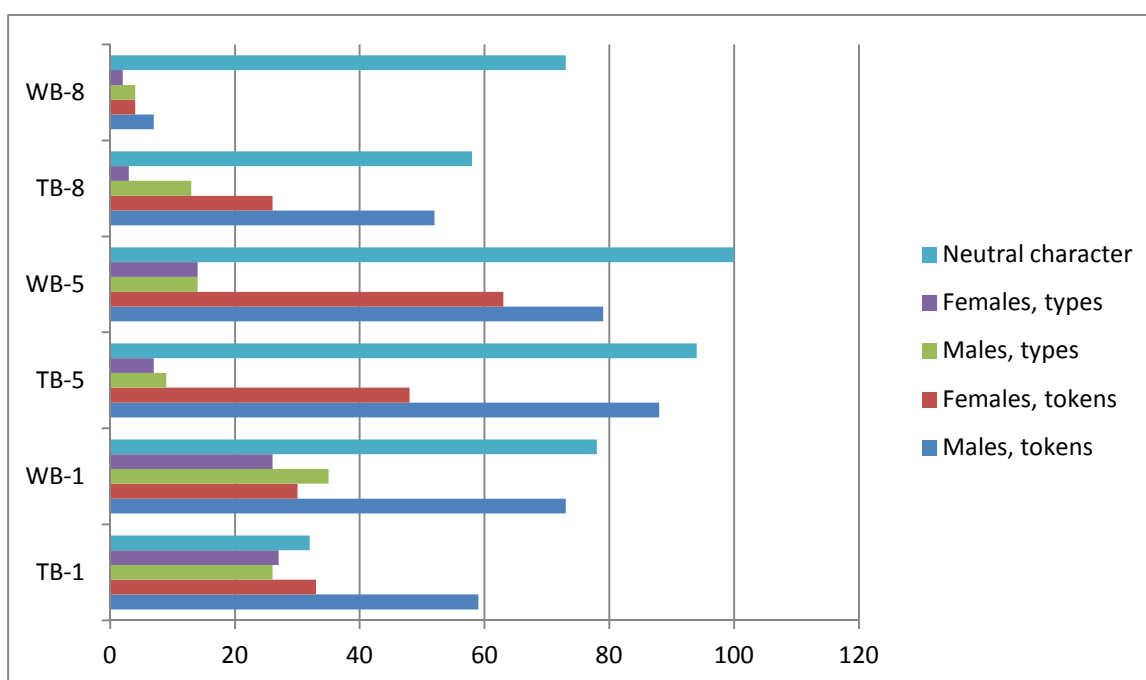
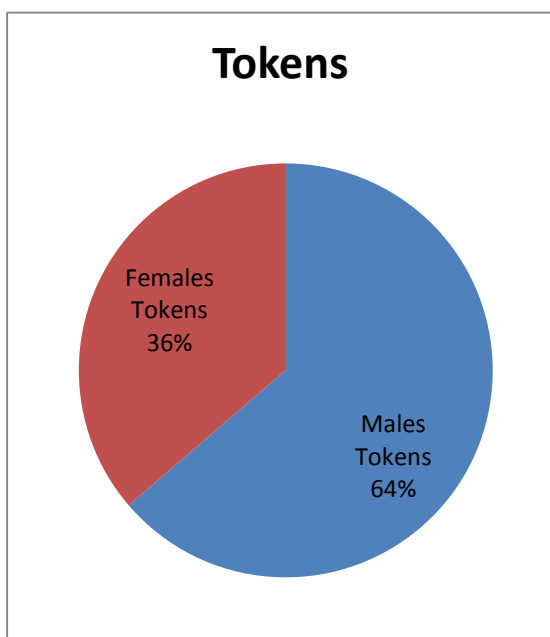


Chart 1. Characters in KEY 7, text.

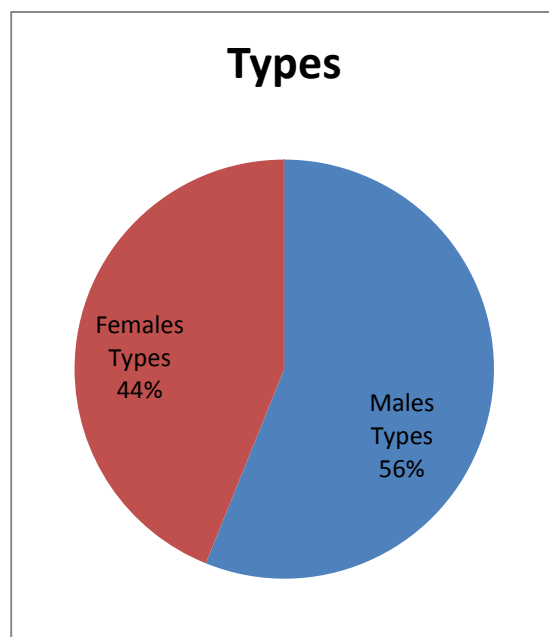
The topics of the units analysed were as follows: Unit 1 *Here and now*, Unit 5 *You are what you do* and Unit 8 *You are what you eat*. As can be seen from the chart, the number of gender-neutral characters is quite high in all of the units. The characters were mostly mentioned only once or twice; for example, *a local teacher, an Estonian student, parents, best friend, teenagers, a reindeer, kids, the British, youngsters* etc. The number of male types tends to be greater than the number of female types (WB-1, TB-5, TB-8 and WB-8). However, there are cases when the number is equal (WB-5) or the number of females is greater (TB-1). Although mostly the main characters of each unit seem to be



carefully chosen because there tends to be an equal number of boys and girls in all of the chapters, the number of unique male characters still tends to be higher than the number of unique female characters. The number of male tokens is considerably higher than the number of female tokens in each unit, meaning that there is more talk about men than women. The balance between male and female types and tokens is further illustrated in the next charts:



*Chart 2. Tokens in KEY 7*



*Chart 3. Types in KEY 7*

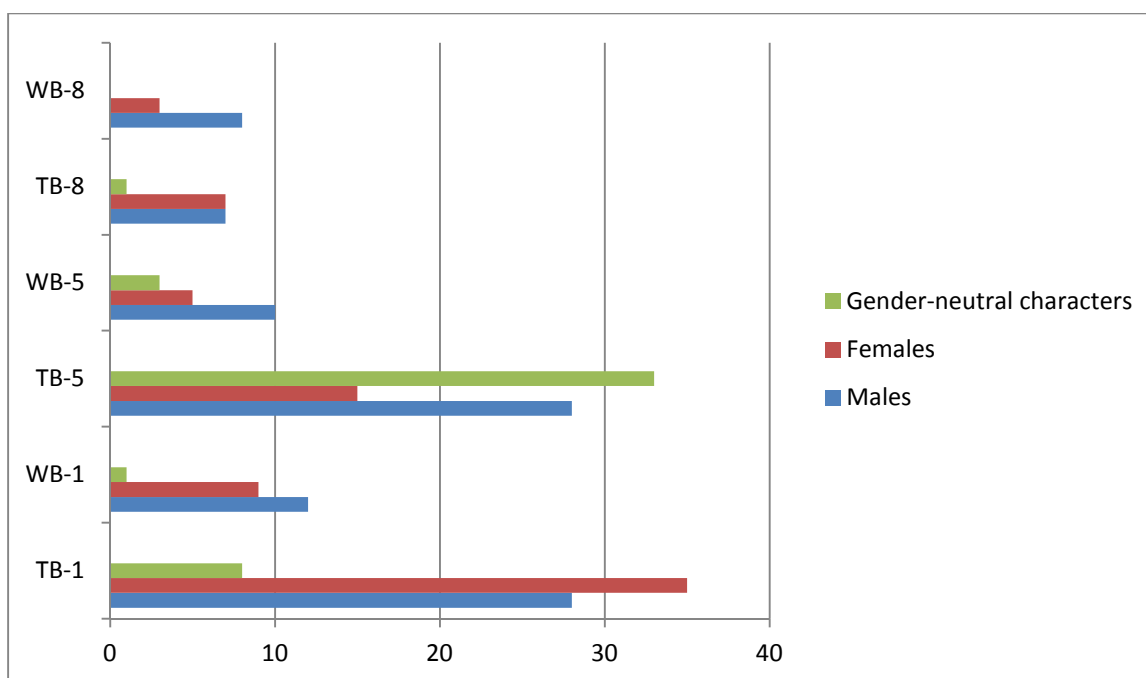


Chart 4. Characters in KEY 7, pictures and illustrations.

There were 216 characters on the pictures, 44% were males, 34% females and 22% gender neutral characters. The cover of the book plays a great role in making the first impression and the picture there shows two girls and one boy. Some interesting trends could be found in the pictures. In Unit 1 of the coursebook, girls tended to hold either pencils or books (KEY English 7 2008: 7, 8) suggesting perhaps that they like reading and studying. There was nothing similar on the pictures with boys. The noteworthy pictures of the boys showed an active boy (holding a skateboard, page 11) and one boy with a piercing (page 10). A part in this unit introduced the vocabulary for different home activities with pictures (page 18). They had more girls than boys and it is worth mentioning that the one for *do your homework* also depicted a girl, further strengthening the idea of a well-behaved schoolgirl. Still, it is positive that the picture for *play computer games* has a girl on it, trying to break the stereotype that only (young) men spend their time playing computer games.

It is interesting that boys tend to be alone on the pictures (KEY 7 Workbook 2007: 6, 7, 8 21, 26) and girls and women are depicted as family members (pages 7, 14). There is one significant picture of a girl playing football (page 13). On the pictures of Unit 5 girls also participate in active, outdoors sports such as football, rock-climbing (page 70) or playing chess; however, for example, ballet dancing has only female representatives (pages 70, 71). The workbook is similar. Though Unit 8 in both books has more boys than girls on the pictures, no interesting trends emerged.

### 3. 1. 2. KEY 7, Roles

6 female-dominated, 5 male-dominated, 1 male-monopolised, 0 female-monopolised and 2 gender-shared roles emerged. The exact roles can be seen from the following table.

Role	Males	Females	Category
Student	3	5	Female-dominated
Family members	27	32	Female-dominated
Kids on the move	4	0	Male-monopolised
Strangers	9	3	Male-dominated
Neutral characters	23	17	Male-dominated
Random roles	1	1	Gender-shared
Relationships	2	1	Male-dominated
Occupations	2	4	Female-dominated
Young people of different nations	5	5	Gender-shared
Teen Secrets advisor	1	2	Female-dominated

<b>Diary/letter writer</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Female-dominated</b>
<b>Band members</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Male-dominated</b>
<b>Historic/famous people</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Male-dominated</b>
<b>Friends</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Female-dominated</b>

*Table 1. Roles in Key 7.*

The female-dominated roles were students, family members, occupations, teen secret advisors, diary/letter writers and friends. The male-dominated roles were strangers (people to introduce yourself to, to practice polite introductions; interestingly, there were three times more males in this category than females), neutral-characters (mostly people from the example sentences), relationships, band members and historic/famous people. The male monopolised role was kids on the move (these were the main characters of the unit who moved house). The gender-shared roles were random roles (the representatives were a director/member of Red Cross and a cyberfriend) and young people of different nations (these were the main characters of one unit).

The pictures of the first unit of KEY 7 showed many females interested in studying. Therefore, it is not surprising that females also dominate in the role of students here. Females also dominate in the roles of Teen Secrets advisor and diary/letter writer and friends. Further examination reveals some typical roles among female-dominated ones, as females dominate in the category of family members (though not very significantly, as there are 27 male representatives and 32 females). In the previous studies women tended to dominate only in domestic areas; however, here occupations is a female-dominated category. Female characters here include several nurses and counsellors; male characters a head chef and a teacher. Although there are some traditional roles here (female nurses and male head chefs), there is some variety too (a male teacher).

Men dominate heavily in the field of famous/noteworthy people. The male representatives here were James I, Guy Fawkes, Tanel Padar, Dave Benton, Paul Shipton, Michael Jackson, Kalev etc. The only female representative here is Linda, the Estonian mythological figure.

### 3. 2. 1. KEY 8, Characters in Text and Pictures

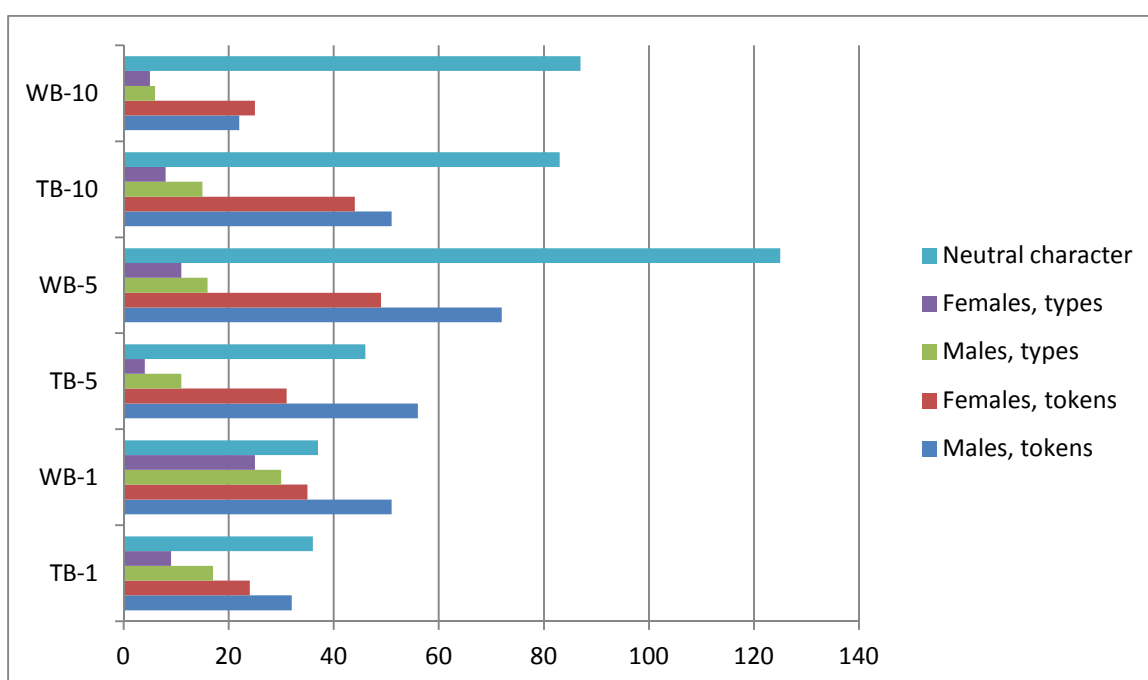


Chart 5. Characters in Key 8, text.

The topics of KEY 8 units are: Unit 1 *Europeans*, Unit 5 *The fall- some like it cool* and Unit 10 *In your eyes*. Similarly to KEY 7, the number of gender-neutral characters is high. It is especially high in Workbook, Unit 5 because there are many neutral characters such as *students*, *players*, *Americans* and *friends*. The total number of male tokens is higher in all of the units except for Unit 10 in the workbook, where there are 25 female tokens and 22 male tokens. The reason behind this might be that in Unit 10, the main characters are females; still, there are more male tokens in the coursebook. Types are not

very different from tokens: there are more males for each Unit. This is also visible from the following charts.

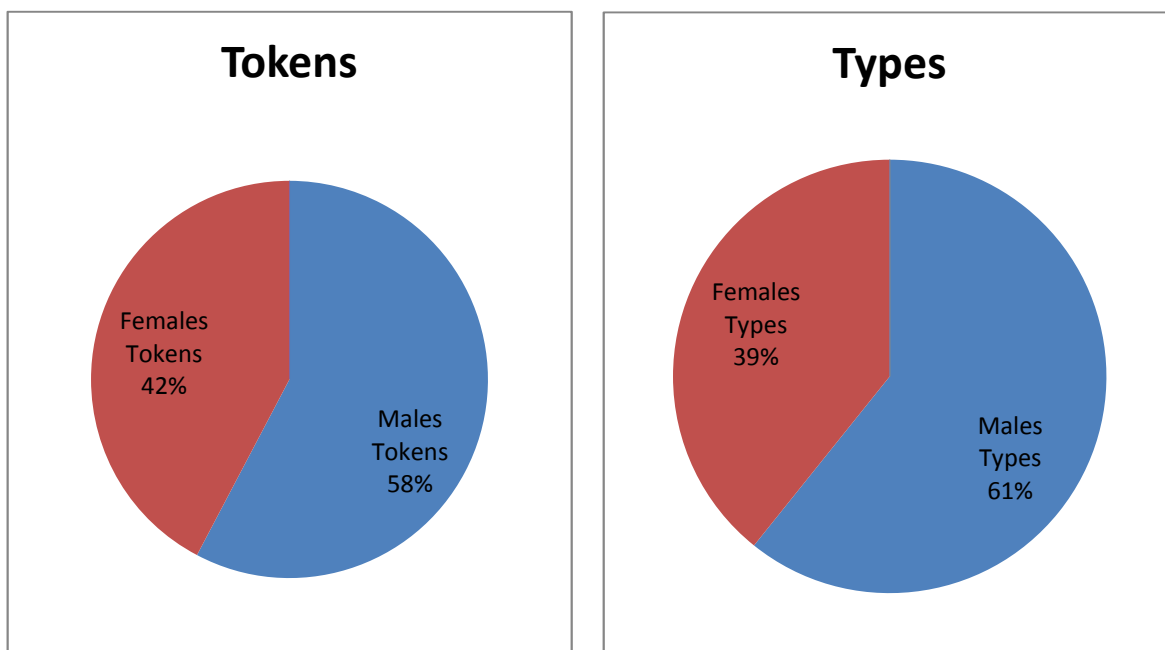


Chart 6. Tokens in Key 8.

Chart 7. Types in KEY 8.

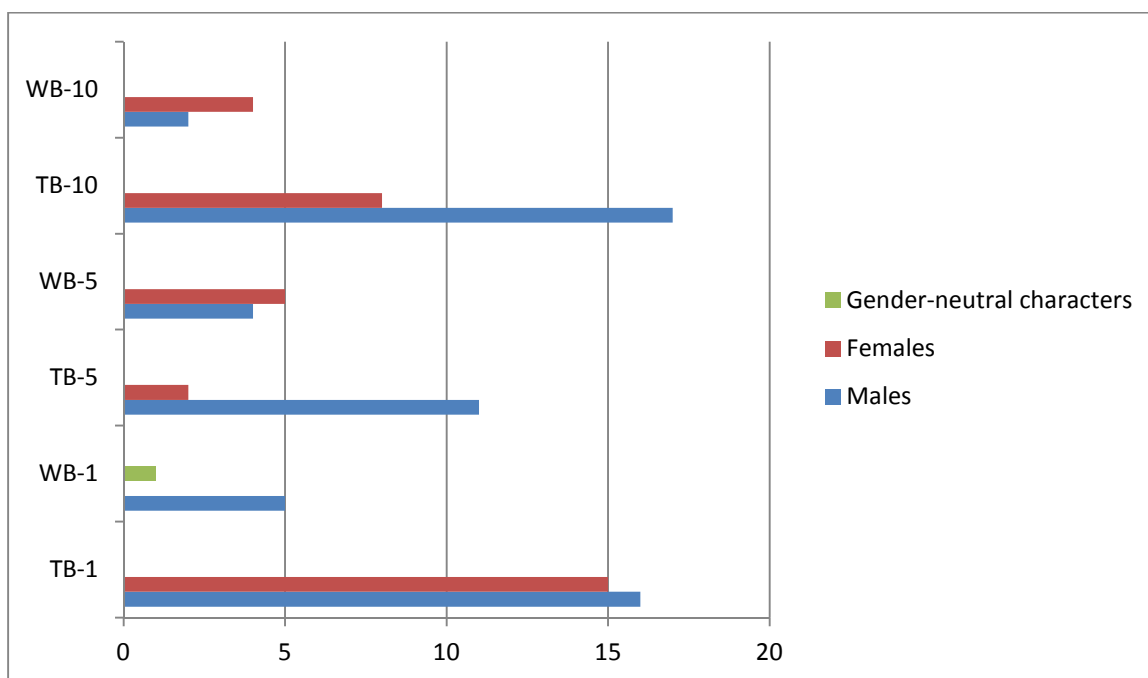


Chart 8. Characters in KEY 8, pictures and illustrations.

In total, 90 characters were found on the pictures. 61% were male, 38% female and 1% gender-neutral. The high proportion of males comes from the fact that in one unit (WB-1) there are no females on the pictures though the topic of the unit -*Young Poets*- does not set any gender limits. Additionally, in half of the units (TB-1, TB-5 and TB-10) there are more males than females. In TB-1, the main characters are divided into boys and girls equally and therefore, the number of boys and girls is almost equal on the pictures too. The same is true about the cover of the book: there are two boys and two girls. However, in TB-5, the main character is a boy and other people on the pictures are mostly sportsmen; still, in WB-5 there are pictures of girls playing ballgames too (page 96) and there are more girls than boys on the pictures. The same is true about WB-10. In TB-10, the high number of males is due to some pictures where there are many males (for instance, fire-fighters, page 119).

### 3.2.2. KEY 8, Roles

There were 5 male-dominated, 1 male-monopolised, 1 female-monopolised, 2 gender-shared and no female dominated roles in KEY 8.

Role	Males	Females	Category
Young European	9	9	Gender-shared
Neutral character	53	38	Male-dominated
Historic/famous people	24	7	Male-dominated
Family members	27	22	Male-dominated
Students	8	6	Male-dominated
Young poets	3	3	Gender-shared
Occupations	11	3	Male-dominated

<b>Random roles</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Male-monopolised</b>
<b>Hero of the unit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Female-monopolised</b>

*Table 2. Roles in Key 8.*

The high number of male-dominated roles can be explained with the total number of male tokens, which is higher than the number of female tokens in all of the units except for Unit 10 in the workbook, where there are 25 female tokens and 22 male tokens. The reason behind this might be that in Unit 10, the main characters are females; still, there are more male tokens in the coursebook.

Similarly to KEY 7, males dominated among neutral characters and historic/famous people. Some examples from the representatives of historic/famous people are Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln, John Lennon, Gerd Kanter, David Beckham, Tanel Padar, St Martin, Princess Diana, Kristina Šmigun, Madonna, St Catherine and Queen Isabella. Males dominate less in the categories of family members and students. However, there are considerably more male representatives for different occupations. Men in this category are inspectors, photographers, a songwriter, radio DJ-s and women teachers and a waitress. Men have a much wider range of occupations whereas the female representatives are very typical (teachers) and hold low-paid jobs (waitress).

The male-monopolised category is random roles (being a penfriend or just friends). The female-monopolised role is the hero of the unit; the unit discussed real heroes, contrasting pop-stars to people who have witnessed terrorist attacks. Still, in many units the main characters are carefully chosen to maintain a balance between boys and girls and the gender-shared role, young poets, is an example of this.



### 3. 3. 1. KEY 9, Characters in Text and Pictures

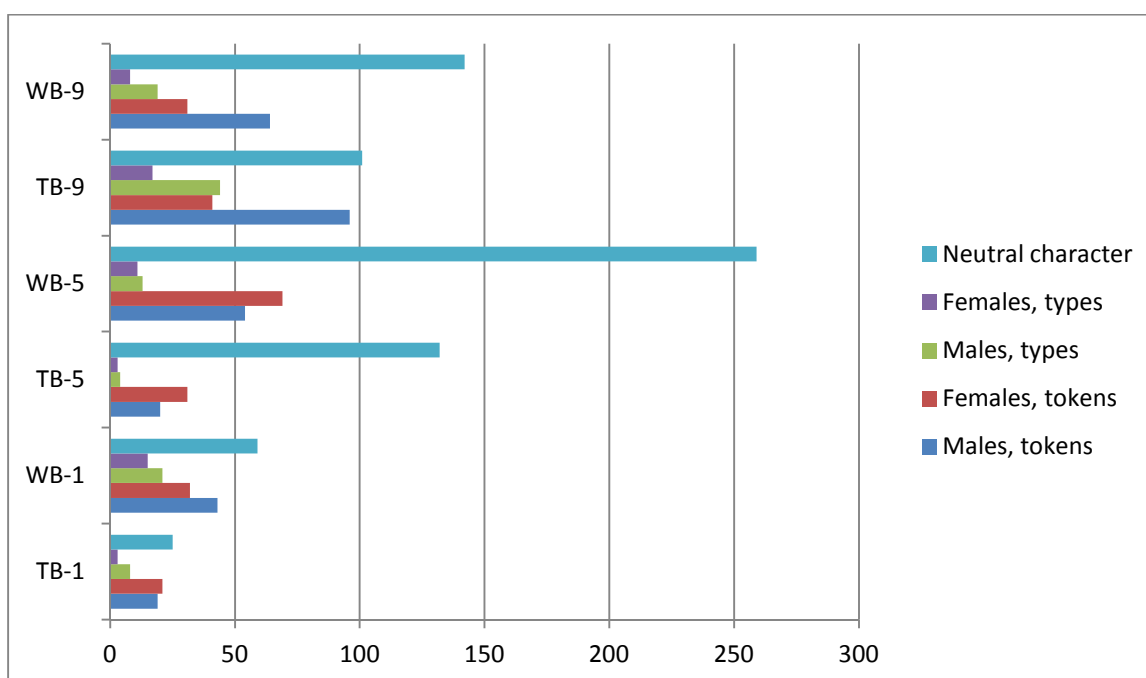


Chart 9. Characters in KEY 9, text.

The topics of KEY 9 units are Unit 1 *Getting to know you*, Unit 5 *Work* and Unit 9 *Culture*. KEY 9 is similar to KEY 7 and 8 in the high number of neutral characters. This number is especially high in units 5 and 9 (both books) due to the topics of the units (*Work* and *Culture*) as many different occupations are mentioned. The gender neutral characters are, for instance, *writers, a composer, a musician, a singer, patients, doctors* etc. There are more male tokens in four of the units analysed because the number of male types is greater in all of the units, too. Still, similarly to KEY 8 WB-10, in TB-5 and WB-5 there are more female tokens. The reasons might be that both in TB-5 and WB-5, the number of male and female types is almost equal (4, 3 and 13, 11 respectively). The unit differs from others because there are two female main characters of the unit (a web designer and a life scientist) versus one male main character (a nurse).

The balance of male and female types and tokens in KEY 9 is visible from the following charts.

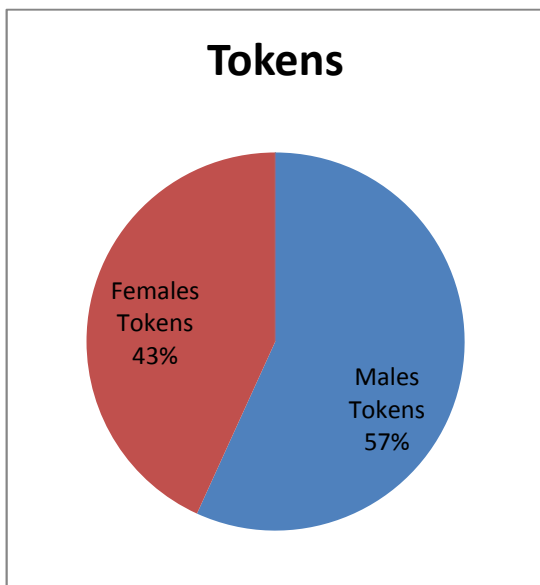


Chart 10. Tokens in Key 9.

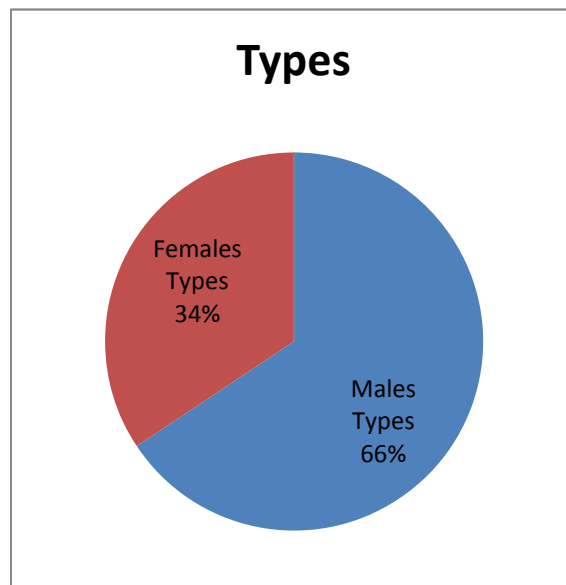


Chart 11. Types in KEY 9.

The number of characters on pictures in KEY 9 can be seen from the following chart.

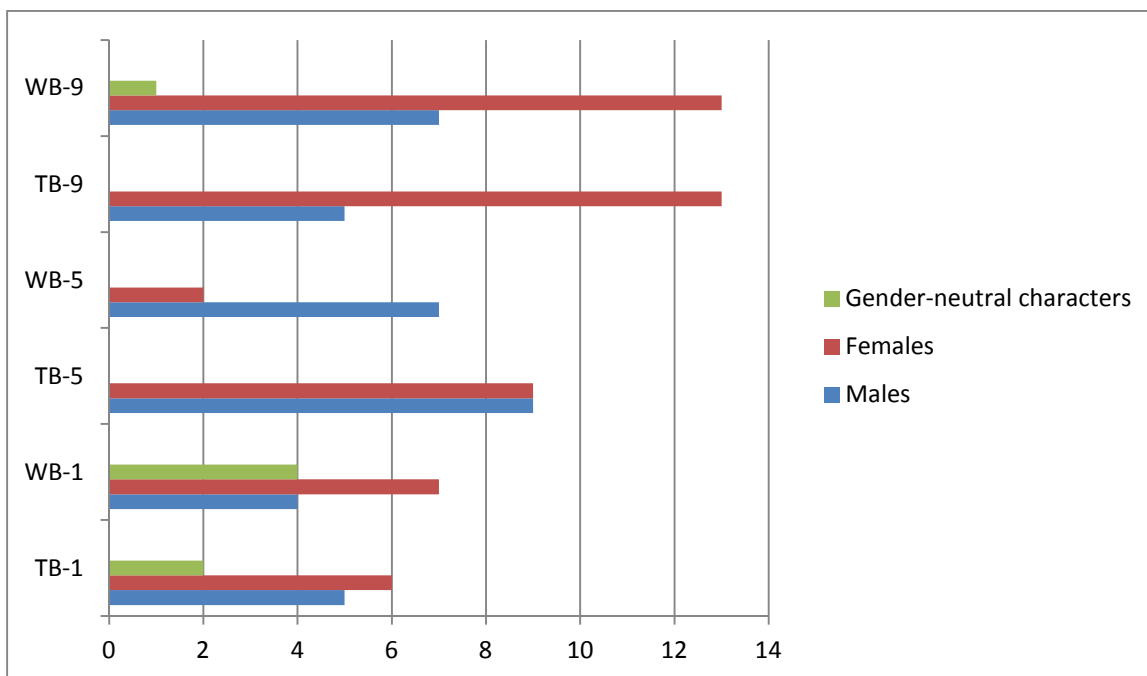


Chart 12. Characters in KEY 9, pictures and illustrations.

KEY 9 has a different illustrator than the other KEY books. In contrast to KEY 7 and 8, KEY 9 has more females than males on the pictures (50 and 37, respectively). In four of the units, there are more females than males (TB-1, WB-1, TB-9 and WB-9). Though the first unit had more male tokens in the text, there are more girls on the pictures. Unit 5 is about working and though an equal number of males and females appear in the coursebook, there are more males in the workbook (the imbalance mostly comes from the part *Jobs for the Future*, where there are 4 males and 1 female). Unit 9 speaks about culture and has more women than men on the pictures. Similarly to tokens, it has famous women on the pictures, such as Tove Jansson and J. K. Rowling.

### 3.3.2. KEY 9, Roles

In Key 9, there were 4 male-dominated, 1 gender-shared, 1 female-monopolised and 1 female-dominated role.

Role	Males	Females	Category
Students, exchange students	9	11	Female-dominated
Random roles	0	1	Female-monopolised
neutral characters	41	25	Male-dominated
Family members	12	12	Gender-shared
historic/famous people	48	14	Male-dominated
Occupations	14	8	Male-dominated
Commentator	4	3	Male-dominated

Table 3. Roles in Key 9.

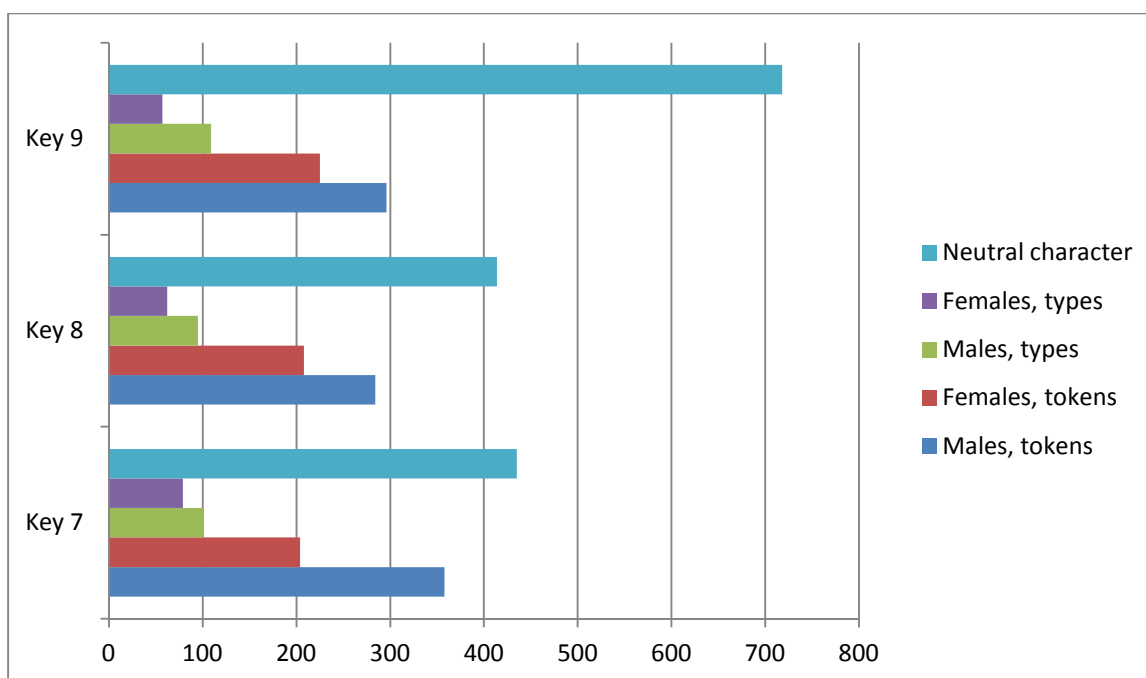
Similarly to other KEY textbooks, males dominate among neutral characters and historic/famous people. Some examples of historic/famous people are Walt Disney,

William Shakespeare, Luciano Pavarotti, Hamlet, J. R. R. Tolkien, Charlie Chaplin, Goldilocks, Kiri te Kanawa, Carmen, Anne Frank and Agatha Christie. The representatives are varied for both genders; however, there are over three times more males. Males also dominate in the category of occupations, but the difference in the numbers of representatives is not that great. Some representatives for males are cameramen, blue-collar workers, a nurse, an artist; for females a web designer, a life scientist, a teacher, a store manager. Differently from other KEY textbooks, there is a variety of occupations for both genders. The positions given to both genders are diverse: though there is a female-teacher, there is a male nurse and a female web-designer, too.

Commentator's role (at the beginning of one unit where young people express their opinions about culture.) is a male-dominated one, too. The role of family members is gender-shared (which, in KEY 7, was female-dominated and, in KEY 8, male-dominated). Similarly to KEY 7, women dominate in the category of students. Females monopolised the role of a camp leader, which has only one representative and is therefore categorised as a random role.

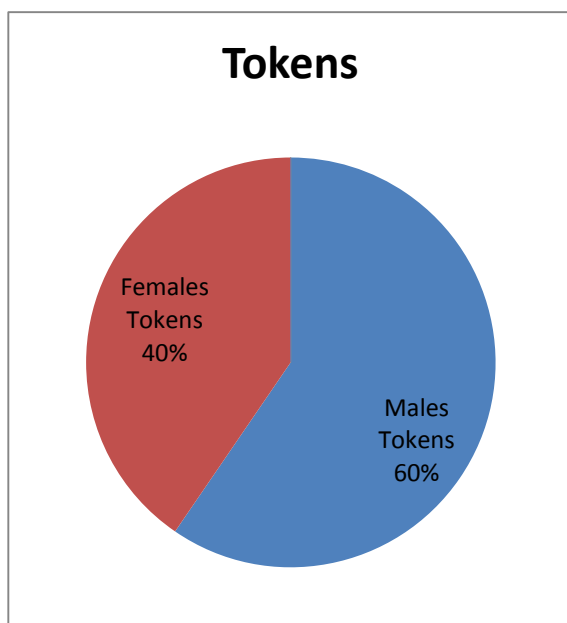
### **3.4 KEY Series**

Here, an overview of males and females in text and illustrations in the whole sample is given. Chart 13 gives an overview of characters in text.

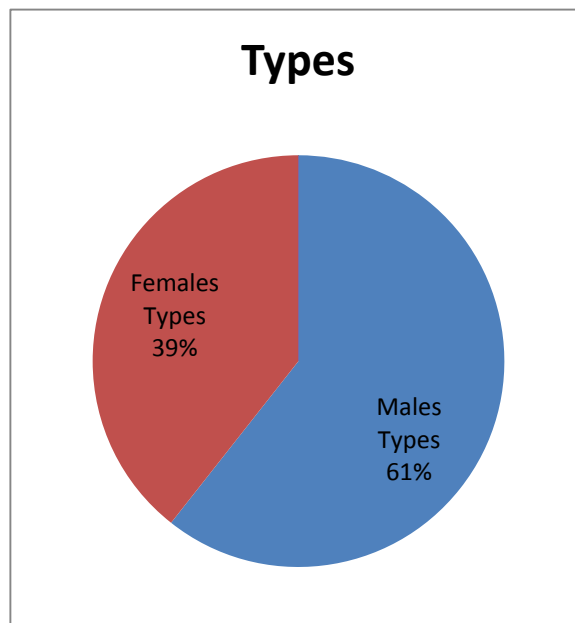


*Chart 13. Characters in KEY series, text.*

As can be seen from the chart, the number of gender neutral characters in the series was the biggest, 1567 (75%), followed by male types 305 (15%) and female types, 198 (10%). The number of gender-neutral characters was especially high in units about hobbies, travelling to America, working and culture (respectively, KEY 7-5, KEY 8-5 and KEY 9-5 and 9) giving students neutral practice opportunities. In all of the units analysed, there were more male types and tokens. This is further illustrated in the following charts.



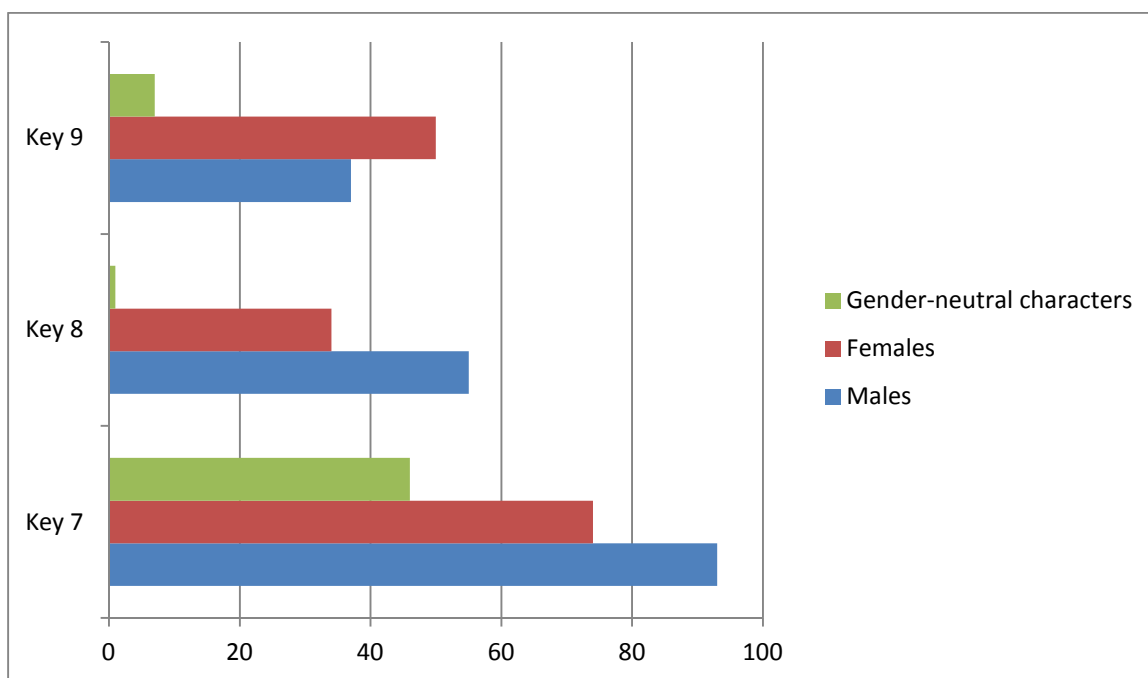
*Chart 14. Tokens in Key series.*



*Chart 15. Types in KEY series.*

In total, there were 938 male tokens, 637 female tokens, 305 male types and 198 female types. Slightly more than half of the gendered characters in the whole series were male. The ratio of male and female types and tokens reveals that though the number of males is higher throughout the units analysed, the ratio of the male and female types is more or less the same, meaning that both males and females tend to be discussed in depth, contributing to the visibility of both males and females. For many units, the main characters were boys and girls equally (for instance, KEY 7, Units 5 and 8; KEY 8, Units 1 and 5). For some units, the main characters were male only (for example, KEY 7, Unit 1) and in some units, they were female only (KEY 8, Unit 10 and KEY 9, Units 1 and 5). Interestingly, even if the main characters are female only, the number of male types and tokens is still higher (only KEY 8 Unit 10 has slightly more female than male tokens). On the one hand, the ratio of male to female types is not very imbalanced; on the other, even if the main characters are female, males outnumber them.

There are also more males on the pictures, which is visible from the following chart.



*Chart 16. Characters in KEY series, pictures and illustrations.*

Although there were two girls and one boy on the cover of KEY 7 (KEY 8 had 2 girls and 2 boys) and KEY 9 has more girls on the pictures, altogether there are more males; nevertheless, the imbalance is not as big as it was in the text. The total number of males on the pictures was 185 (47%) and females 158 (40%). 54 (13%) of the characters were gender neutral. Some trends emerged from the pictures: girls like studying (KEY 7), boys as sportsmen (KEY 8) and men as examples for future jobs (KEY 9). When in text the characters are carefully chosen to be gender neutral in KEY 9 Unit 5, the pictures still depicted more males than females. However, keeping in mind how females are depicted, for example, in the field of advertising, the depiction of boys and girls on the pictures of KEY series seems quite well-balanced.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
<b>Female-dominated</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Male-dominated</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Male-monopolised</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Female-monopolised</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Gender-shared</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Total number of roles</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 4. Roles in Key series.*

Table 4 indicates that the whole KEY series contained 30 roles. There were more males in the textbooks and therefore it is not surprising that almost half of the roles are male-dominated (47%). 23% of the roles are female-dominated. The corresponding figures for gender-shared roles are 16%, male-monopolised roles 7% and female-monopolised roles 7%.

Further examination uncovered the perpetuation of the traditional roles associated with males and females. While there were many gender-neutral characters, the category of neutral characters (the characters in example sentences) is male-dominated in every coursebook analysed. The same is true about historic/famous people. Though there are female representatives too, males dominate heavily in every coursebook analysed. Hopefully, more examples of women for this category are added to coursebooks in the future to give recognition to the contribution of females to our society throughout history and to avoid seeing only males as such role models.

The category of occupations is male-dominated in KEY 8 and KEY 9 and female-dominated in KEY 7. While there were some stereotypical patterns (many female teachers,



nurses; men as engineers, photographers, radio DJs), some non-stereotypical portrayals were found too (a male nurse, teacher; a female web-designer, life-scientist). Another male-dominated category was strangers; when students using KEY 7 are practising introductions, they encounter 3 times more male characters.

In the roles previously discussed, the male representatives outnumbered females significantly. In other male-dominated categories, the imbalance is less extensive. The category of family members, for example, is male-dominated only in KEY 8; in KEY 7 it is female-dominated and in KEY 9 gender-shared; being part of family and domestic roles are not reserved for women exclusively. The other male-dominated categories are relationships, band members and commentators; in all of these, there are slightly more male representatives than female ones.

In KEY 8, males dominate in the category of students; in KEY 7 and 9 females dominate in this category (an image of a studying girl also emerged from KEY 7 pictures). In KEY 7, there were some other female-dominated roles: being a Teen Secrets advisor, writing diaries or letters and being a friend in which the number of boys and girls was almost equal.

There is an equal number of male-monopolised and female-monopolised roles. Almost all of the representatives of the monopolised roles were the main characters of units. In many units, the main characters are boys and girls equally (almost all representatives of gender-shared roles are the main characters of the textbooks); however, the monopolised roles show that even when they represent one gender, it is not males exclusively.

### 3. 5. Findings in the Light of Previous Studies

Throughout the years, the numbers of male and female characters in coursebooks have changed significantly. In 1950s, Child et al reported that 72% of the central and anti-social characters were males (1946: 47). In the 1980s, U'Ren found that 75% of the analysed stories' main characters were male (1971: 218). In recent years, Barton and Sakwa (2012: 178) indicated that 64% of the characters in textbooks analysed were male. In Australian coursebooks, 57% of the characters were male (Lee, Collins 2009: 362).

There are some similarities with the results of Estonian studies. While Richards (2002: 238) found that only about 10% of the total characters in *Step 5* and *TipTop 5* were females, Salakka (2007: 9) reported that males outnumbered females only by 9% in *I Love English 5* and *Enterprise 2*. Lehiste (2013: 32) showed that in *Step 5*, more practice opportunities were given to boys as there were more male main characters of the dialogues. The trend in Estonia seems to be the same as in other parts of the world: the imbalance of male and female characters is not as prominent as it has been in the past; however, it still exists. Although the analysis of KEY English is a case study and broad generalisations cannot be made, comparing the results of counting characters in text in KEY series to earlier studies seems to indicate that the trends emerged continue here because in KEY series, 61% of the gendered characters were males (types) and 39% females.

Gender-neutral characters constitute about a third of the characters in Richard's analysis (2002: 238) and make up the majority in Salakka's thesis (2007: 63). In KEY series, gender-neutral characters make up 75% of the unique characters in the sample giving both boys and girls practice opportunities.

The situation with illustrations has changed too. O'Donnell (1973: 139) found that 73% of the pictures contained men as central figures, 27% women; Giacomini et al (1986:

417) wrote that males accounted for 64% of the total illustrations, while females were depicted only in 11% of the illustrations. Lee and Collins (2009: 362) found that 56.9% of the pictures depicted male characters only, 19.2% female characters only. Luik (2008) reported that there are more male characters in the illustrations of Estonian language textbooks. In KEY series, the characters on the pictures are quite balanced as 47% are males and 40% females.

In 1971, U'Ren (222) reported how in readers, the role of Marie Curie is belittled because she is shown as her husband's helpmate. The KEY Series' treatment of famous or historic women is not balanced either. In the sample of KEY series, there are 83 famous/historic males and 22 females. The overall numbers of gendered characters showed some imbalance; however, it is more important what characters do than how many of them there are. Omitting female examples in the category of famous/historic people can have a negative effect on students and the category should be more balanced.

In O'Donnell's (1973: 139) analysis, in the category of occupations, 83% of the characters depicted were men and 17% women and stereotypical occupation patterns were found for men and women. Lee and Collins (2009: 360) also reported how men tended to occupy traditionally 'male' roles and women stereotypical jobs. Richards discusses how in *Step 5*, women are often depicted as homemakers and in *TipTop5*, both parents work (2002: 244). In *I Love English 5* and *Enterprise 2*, no stereotypical occupation patterns emerged (Salakka 2007: 64). The results of this thesis show that both men and women are given a range of occupations though the jobs men hold are more varied. There are some typical patterns such as teachers being mostly female but occasional portrayals of women as scientists, designers and men as nurses, too. However, compared to some older coursebooks, the situation has definitely improved.

An interesting trend emerged from the study of Australian coursebooks. The only category in which women outnumber men was studying and school activities (Lee, Collins 2009: 362). There are some similarities from Estonian studies (with an exception is the study of Richards (2002: 241) according to which women are almost totally absent from activities connected to learning and acquiring education) and KEY series. Salakka (2007: 63) found that women were most often depicted in roles that have to do with education and culture. In the KEY series, women are most often occupied as teachers; in fact, the majority of teachers in Estonia are female. In addition, being as student is a female-dominated role and studying girls appear often in KEY 7 pictures, too. The feminisation of schools is further strengthened with this. Keeping in mind the high dropout rate of boys from basic schools in Estonia, this portrayal of mainly girls as students could be reconsidered in coursebooks.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Children and adolescents spend a considerable amount of their daily lives in schools. The influence of education on young people's beliefs and values cannot be underestimated. In addition to the National Curriculum of Estonia, students are also influenced by the hidden curriculum - the covert messages, which stem from the way in which work is organised in school even if not overtly included in the curriculum conveyed to students. Gender questions can be seen as a part of the hidden curriculum. As gender equality is one of the key issues for the development of Estonian society gender in study materials is worth analysing to see whether they support the development of both boys and girls equally.

Coursebooks play a central role in schools. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to find out whether English textbooks are teaching more than English to our students. The studies conducted in the past have shown that the representation of men and women in coursebooks has changed considerably both abroad and in Estonia. Studies on gender in coursebooks started appearing already in 1940s when Child, Potter and Levine analysed coursebooks and found that most of the characters in coursebooks were boys, who were shown to be active, aggressive and oriented to achievement whereas girls displayed affiliation, nurture and harm avoidance (Child et al 1946: 47-48). The same trends continued in the 1960s and 1980s. For example, U'Ren (1971: 218) studied readers for schools and found that 75% of the central characters were male and only 15% of the illustrations were devoted to women and female interests were typically restricted to domestic settings. The biggest problems identified in textbooks in this period were invisibility, stereotyping and inferiority (absence of female characters from textbooks, stereotypical roles for them (e.g., homemaker) and showing women as inferior to men (Amyx 1974: 1316-1332).

In the 1980s to 2000s, guidelines were issued for a fair depiction of different groups in curricula. The textbooks became more balanced, though some problems with biased materials persisted. Still, there were considerable improvements. For example, Jones, Sunderland and Kitetu (1997: 481) in their quantitative study on gender in coursebooks show that the gender differences were too small to be significant. Though these results are encouraging, the results from other recent studies still show some problems with gender bias.

The studies conducted in Estonia are similar. For example, Richard's (2002) main results showed great male dominance in the coursebooks analysed: women constituted only about 10% of the total character and had different roles and activities than men had. However, the results of Salakka (2007: 9) suggest an improvement as there was no significant difference in the roles of men and women and male characters did not dominate the coursebooks as they did in Richards' study. Lehiste (2013: 66-67) found that though the dialogues of one of the coursebooks studied gave boys more practice opportunities, the other coursebook featured a large number of gender-neutral characters giving both boys and girls practice opportunities.

Similarly to the studies conducted in the past, this thesis also concentrated on the number of men and women in the text and illustrations of KEY English series and their roles. The Key English series 7-9 was published in 2008-2012 by TEA and three units from each coursebook and workbook were analysed. In the number of boys and girls, a distinction was made between unique characters and the number of times each character appeared ('type' and 'token') to find out how many unique characters there were and how much they were talked about.

The results of the whole sample from the series showed that the number of gender neutral characters in the series was the biggest, 1567 (75%), followed by male types 305 (15%) and female types, 198 (10%); there were 938 male tokens and 637 female tokens. The large number of gender-neutral characters gives practice opportunities for both boys and girls. The results show that though slightly more than half of the gendered characters in the whole series were male, there is no drastic imbalance as found, for example, by Richards or other earlier studies. Furthermore, the ratio of the male and female types is more or less the same, indicating that neither males nor females tended to be mentioned only once and were discussed in depth, contributing to the visibility of both males and females.

The trend of a relatively balanced numbers of males and females also emerged from the pictures and illustrations of the KEY series. The total number of males on the pictures was 185 (47%) and females 158 (40%). 54 (13%) gender-neutral characters appeared. Although there are some differences in the portrayals of boys and girls, the depiction of different genders is quite balanced on the illustrations of the series.

The depiction of boys and girls in different social settings was analysed following the classification of Law and Chan (2004), dividing the roles into five major categories: ‘male-monopolised’, ‘male-dominated’, ‘female-monopolised’, ‘female-dominated’ and ‘gender-shared’. The roles of textbook characters were elicited from the functions they were given in the textbooks; if possible, the categories of the roles were derived from the way characters are introduced in the coursebook.

As there was a greater number of boys in the text and illustrations, it is not surprising that the majority of the 30 roles in the KEY series were male-dominated (14 roles). There were 7 female-dominated roles, 5 gender-shared roles and 2 male-

monopolised and female-monopolised roles. The roles in KEY series did not create the opposition of caring women at home and active men at work found in the earlier studies. Both men and women were shown as members of family and holding different occupations. Some typical occupational patterns could be found, though, as women were often shown as teachers; however, there were portrayals of male nurses and teachers, too.

The greatest imbalance in the social roles was found in the category of famous and historic people. Here, men outnumbered females significantly in every coursebook analysed. Together with the fact that there are overall more males, this contributes to the picture of males being perhaps more important and influential than women. Another issue which could be reconsidered is the depiction of students as mainly girls because there is a high dropout rate of boys from basics schools in Estonia and perhaps an encouraging depiction of boys as students would be needed.

The results of this research support the idea that coursebooks are not as biased as they used to be in the depiction of gender. However, because of the small sample size, the findings are not generalizable and the study should not be seen as representative of all coursebooks in Estonia. However, although limited, the present study contributes to the development of the field by showing the development of gender-awareness in Estonian foreign language textbooks. The study did not find a perfect balance of boys and girls, but such perfection is difficult to achieve and we should not aim at numerical balance. What is necessary is that boys and girls both appear in a range of roles and activities. The second major finding showed an imbalance between men and women as influential people in history and should be reconsidered to highlight women's social achievements and encourage girls to take an active role in society. It is recommended that further research be undertaken to look into the detailed roles boys and girls have in the coursebooks and assess the impact of coursebook characters on students.



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## RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL  
INGLISE FILOLOOGIA OSAKOND

**Roosi Talvik**

**Gender in KEY English Textbooks/ Meeste ja naiste kujutamine KEY English õpikutes**  
**Magistritöö**

**2014**

Lehekülgede arv: 66

Annotatsioon

Õpikutel on klassiruumis keskne roll. Eelnevad uuringud soorollidest õpikutes on näidanud, et Eesti õpikutes esineb soolist kallutatust. Seetõttu on käesoleva magistritöö eesmärgiks analüüsida soo kujutamist KEY English 7-9 õpikutesarjas (välja antud 2008-2012) ja võrrelda, kas meeste ja naiste kujutamine on varasemate uuringutega võrreldes tasakaalustatum.

Eesmärgi saavutamiseks töö analüüsib mees- ja naissoost isikute arvu nii tekstis kui ka illustatsioonides ning nende rolle. Eristatakse unikaalseid tegelasi ning iga tegelase esinemise sagedust, et näha, kui palju on eri soost unikaalseid karaktereid ja kui palju neist räägitakse. Karakterite rollid on jaotatud viide kategooriasse: mees-monopoliseeritud, mees-domineeritud, nais-monopoliseeritud, nais-domineeritud ning võrdselt meeste ja naiste poolt esindatud. Magistritöö valim koosnes kolmest peatükist igast õpikust ning vastavast töövihikust.

Töö sissejuhatus tutvustab soolise võrdõiguslikkuse tähtsust ning haridussüsteemi mõju õpilaste väärtushinnangutele. Esimene peatükk annab kronoloogilise ülevaate eelnevatest rahvusvahelistest uuringutest soorollidest õpikutes ning on jaotatud nelja perioodi alates 1940st kuni viimaste aastateni. Samuti analüüsitakse Eestis läbi viidud uuringuid. Teine peatükk tutvustab KEY English õpikutesarja ning kasutatud metoodikat. Kolmas peatükk annab ülevaate töö tulemustest ning kokkuvõtte annab ülevaate tööst.

Töö tulemustest selgus, et valimis oli kõige enam sooneutraalseid tegelasi (75%). Järgnevad meessoost tegelased (15%) ja naissoost tegelased (10%). Kõikidest soolistatud tegelastest olid mehed 61% ja naised 39%. Meeste ja naiste mainimissagedus on korrelatsioonis unikaalsete tegelaste arvuga. Piltidel on mehi 47%, naisi 40% ja sooneutraalseid tegelasi 13%. Õpikutesarjas esines 31 rolli ning kuna meessoost tegelasi on õpikutes rohkem, ei ole üllatav, et 47% rollidest olid mees-domineeritud. Rollide analüüsist selgus, et mehed domineerivad eriti tugevalt neutraalsete tegelaste ning kuulsate ja ajalooliste isikute rollides.

Kokkuvõtvalt võib öelda, et kuigi töö tulemused ei näita täielikku tasakaalu poiste ja tüdrukute arvus, on olukord ometi, võrreldes eelnevate uuringutega, paranenud. Siiski, kuna mehi on ülekaalukalt rohkem kujutatud ajalooliste ning kuulsate isikute rollis, on KEY English õpikutesarjas veel arenguruumi poiste ja tüdrukute kujutamises kuna numbriline tasakaal ei ole nii tähtis kui see, kuidas poisse ja tüdrukuid õpikus kujutatakse.

Märksõnad: Soorollid õpikutes, inglise keele õpikute analüüs, sooline võrdõiguslikkus koolis.

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Mina Roosi Talvik (isikukood: 48804072716) annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihtlitsentsi) enda loodud teose *Gender in KEY English Textbooks*, mille juhendaja on Raili Marling,

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Tartus 16.05.2014

Roosi Talvik