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*Functional Analysis of Reading Learning Texts of the Hungarian Alphabet Reading Book in
Vojvodina from the Point of View of Interest in Reading for 6-8-year-old Hungarian-speaking
Children who are Studying Hungarian in Vojvodina*

Ph.D. Thesis



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INTRODUCTION

Much research on reading sociology observes that Hungarian-language learners do not like to read (Ábrahám, 2006; Bereck, 2009; Gombos, 2013; Gombos - Hevérné - Kiss, 2015; Péterfi, 2017). According to the 2016 PIRLS survey, fourth-grade pupils have sufficient reading skills; yet, one-fifth of Hungarian pupils do not like to read, and 46 % do not like reading at all (Balázsi - Balkányi - Vadász, 2017). The number of five- to six-year-old students who think of reading with excitement usually decreases in the third grade of elementary school (Bárdos, 2009). What can we do if pupils have the proper reading skills and a positive attitude about reading, but develop a negative reading attitude by the end of the first grade? This negative attitude also affects the cognitive and affective functioning of pupils' interest. The question arises: what tools can we discuss when it comes to influencing the positive reading attitudes of pupils and their cognitive and affective functioning?

Six- to eight-year-old children who are in the first grade will first come across a textbook as a reading aid. In their case, the textbook, or more specifically the alphabet reading book, is the first book that this age group brings to the first reading experience. It is the first book from which these children are no longer read by adults, but which they use to have an independent reading experience. Therefore, the alphabet reading book plays an important role among 6-8-year-olds. Pupils form a chain of hypotheses about reading from the experience gained from reading alphabet reading books and reading texts. This is why, among other things, it is important to deal with the content of the texts from the reading book in question.

In order to be able to examine the reading attitudes of 6-8-year-old pupils and the content of the textbooks in question, it is essential to examine the historical development of reading, the development of Hungarian reading, as well as reading methodology and the process of raising interest. It is important to examine what forms of text and text content arouse the interest of novice readers to read and the motivation to read, while strongly influencing the development of reading skills, in addition to developing appropriate reading skills and applying the appropriate teaching method. More specifically, there is an asymmetric relationship between reading development and reading motivation (Józsa, 2007; Szenczi, 2012). If the learner has the right level of motivation, this may also lead to the development of reading skills, but a learner with good reading skills may not be motivated to read (Szenczi, 2012). Because interest is nurtured by intrinsic motivation (Bandura, 1986; Boekaerts - Boscolo, 2002), it is important to focus on research that has a positive influence on the development of intrinsic motivation among pupils. Thus, we can talk about reading interest, motivation, and, last but not least, positive attitudes towards reading when pupils come across literary texts that match their interests (Ainley - Hidi, 2002).

In order for pupils to develop a minimum level of interest in reading, it is primarily worthwhile to find topics that, when first encountered with the text, encourage them to deal with the text in front of them, not just for reading purposes. To this end, it is worthwhile to examine and apply topics that, through the effectiveness of some educational goal, have a decisive impact on the reader's interest in reading – or which, besides developing reading skills, have a developmental effect on the pupil's personality development (Nagy - Katsányi, 2002; Steinberg, 1974). Further research confirms that well-chosen reading content and topics contribute significantly to the development of interest (Hidi, 2001). Since 6-8-year-old children are most interested in fairy tales, the focus of the dissertation is on the function, content, and characters of the fairy tale (Bettelheim, 2011; Kádár, 2012; Propp, 1999).

The dissertation attempts to develop and implement a method of empirical research, the results of which will aid in the investigation of an important educational science paradigm that focuses on student interest. In this context, if reading the texts in an alphabet reading book are not of interest to pupils, they will be reluctant to read the book. If they cannot read based on their knowledge of the alphabet, they will not practice reading; thus, they will not be able to fully master the technique of reading, which will make it difficult for the upper classes – not only for subjects related to the mother tongue, but all other activities that require reading. If pupils learn to read from an alphabet reading book with texts that are of interest to them, they will be more motivated to read. If they become more motivated, they will develop a positive reading attitude, which will make them eager to grab a book that they will read for the purpose of reading. The results of the dissertation's empirical research will be used in the future to develop a collection of reading books, so the age group involved in reading acquisition can learn to read with texts that will continue to interest them.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Perspectives on textbook research

From the aspect of the functional approach of the textbook, it is possible to determine all the functions expected of the textbook, and, from these functions, the elements that play a greater role in the analysis must be selected. Within the functional components, the dissertation focuses on the functions of the alphabet reading book (for example, the functions that influence reading learning methods, including the function of reading learning texts). From the perspective of the evaluation criteria system, the paper is focused on motivation and, more specifically, on its capacity to arouse interest (Kojanitz, 2007: 117).

In order to theoretically embed the dissertation, Chambliss and Calfee's (1998) three principles of textbook examination have been used. According to the authors, the content of the book that is unknown and less interesting to pupils should be represented in the textbook in such a way that pupils find as many points of reference as possible between the content and the students' existing knowledge. These should be interfaces that intersect with pupils' vocabulary, personal experience, and, of course, their prior knowledge. In addition, the authors also emphasize that this type of content should arouse the pupils' interest and make them curious (Kojanitz, 2007).

If we design an alphabet reading book based on the three-dimensional model of Chambliss and Calfee (1998), the properties of the reading book again become an essential element. This includes familiar and interesting content, but equally important as an analytical factor are the words and the nature of sentences and texts. The dissertation examines the function of reading learning texts within the Hungarian alphabet reading book used in Vojvodina with special attention to the function of raising interest.

Textbook researchers now distinguish between textbook analysis and textbook examination. Textbook analysis is based on expert knowledge and experience, while textbook examination uses quantitative analyses and measurements to characterize, compare, and evaluate the textbook under examination (Kojanitz, 2002, 2004, 2005; Nyitrai, 2010). In this context, Kojanitz (2002) also includes the length of sentences, the frequency of new vocabulary words, the pedagogical functions of the textbook, and the measurement of the proportion of diagrams and tasks. In addition to the above-mentioned approaches, this method can be used

to determine the textbook's comprehensibility and readability, as well as its capability to arouse interest. Textbook analysis can be used to measure the frequency-analysis, contingency-analysis, room-analysis, and value-analysis of topics. Most textbook research in the traditional sense uses textbook analysis and textbook examination together; yet, in the field of textbook research, there are no quantitative results that determine the level of interest for pupils in reading through textbook analysis. Within the textbook research process, research already deals with the study of reading books (social picture, reading development, and gender representation in reading books); nevertheless, quantitative research on reading books is still unknown to us (Nyitrai, 2010).

Research perspectives on interest in reading

Reading topics contribute significantly to the level of interest and the pupils' attachment to the task (Hidi, 2001). In the study by Schraw et al. (Hidi, 2001), they found that pupils who found the topic of the text that they were reading more interesting read more as well. Schiefele and Krapp (1996) also report similar results (Hidi, 2001). According to the authors, interest not only contributes to the amount of text information recalled, but also strongly influences the effectiveness of learning. That is, in the study, interest in the topic motivated readers to move beyond the superficial structure of the text and focus on the main ideas and their basic characteristics. The researchers pointed out variables that determine the nature of the reader's experience (Hidi, 2001). These variables included textual features such as novelty, intensity, and ease of understanding. Other variables included modifying different types of learning environments and individual self-regulatory activities. Post-reading, these variables could result in changes to cognitive, affecting, and behavioral functioning. Schraw et al. (1990) highlighted various text-based situational interest triggers for developing interest in reading (Hidi, 2001). Examples include texts that are easy to understand, texts that rely on pupils' prior knowledge, and texts that are related to each other to stimulate reader engagement.

In order to arouse and maintain interest in pupils, Ainley - Hillmann - Hidi (2002) considers it important to understand pupils' individual and situational interest, in addition to the role of these two psychological states in solving practical issues. For example, the issue of situational interest may be important for educators dealing with pupils who have no individual interest, since pupils with little or no interest may only have a situational interest (Ainley - Hillmann - Hidi, 2002).

If one takes into account that the four phases of interest go from situational interest to individual interest (Hidi - Renninger, 2006), this factor is attenuated by two real-life considerations: (1) there are first-grade pupils whose interest is merely situational, and (2) it is difficult to engage individual interests at school. In this case, it is preferable to consider situational interests initially (Hidi, 2001) and investigate the pupils' interests in general when educating new readers.

When it comes to reading interest in the 6-8-year-old age group, the primary difficulty is that this group does not have sufficient reading and literacy skills yet, so we can only conduct a verbal survey. An additional difficulty in the study is the fact that we tend to assume that this age group has nascent or undeveloped interests. However, authors Renninger and Wozniak (1985) have shown that, although special interests vary widely among children, they still have strong, stable, and relatively well-focused individual interests (Hidi, 2001). Actually, we need

not discover concrete characters in the interest of arousing situational interest and raising children to be readers. In order to develop interest in reading, it is of primary importance to find topics that, when first encountered within the text, encourage pupils to engage with the text for more than just reading. In order to do this, it is worth focusing on topics that have a decisive impact on the reader's interest. Through the effectiveness of an educational goal, they can indirectly understand their place and role in society.

From research on interest as a psychological condition, Hidi and Renninger (2006) collected a variety of interest development methods, including the Model of Domain Learning (MDL) and the Person-Object Theory (POI). Model of Domain Learning (MDL) is a learning model of an activity or subject that aims to align interest in development, processing, and acquisition of knowledge. In most cases, the model focuses on situational interest and focuses on content-specific areas (such as the interaction between the individual and his or her environment). Person-Object Theory (POI) focuses on individual interest in the interaction between an individual and his or her environment, which emphasizes the relationship between an individual and an object, thus utilizing the essence of positive emotions.

From a reading pedagogical perspective, both Model of Domain Learning (MDL) and Person-Object Theory (POI) can contribute to interest in reading. If we consider learning to read and text comprehension in the scope of Model of Domain Learning, then interest in reading based on the Person-Object Theory could be facilitated by something that provokes positive emotions in the primary school setting. In this case, that object can be the alphabet reading book. If there is a positive relationship between the object (the alphabet reading book in this context) and the learner, one may assume that the pupils develop a certain level of situational interest. (The learner likes the alphabet reading book, and the topics in it correspond to actual events in the environment; hence, the object is of interest.) This primitive situational interest (also part of MDL theory) empowers motivators who will be able to help the students practice reading texts. It also makes texts easier for pupils to understand, thus triggering a certain level of interest in the activity, which is expected to induce a positive reading attitude.

Researchers dealing with children's fairy tales agree that children in their sixth, seventh, and eighth years – that is, in their first grade, just beginning instruction in reading – are most interested in fairy tales (Koppár, 2012; Mérei - Biné, 2012; Szilágyiné, 2008; Tancz, 2009). Therefore, in the context of 6-8-year-old children's interest in reading, there was good reason to focus on fairy tales, as well as the elements, acts, and heroes featured in the fairy tales. The dissertation placed special emphasis on the developmental function, the structural units, and the characters in fairy tales, in addition to the characters' powers, in order to get an idea of the structural and functional units that make up fairy tales.

following assumptions: 1) that Hungarian pupils have appropriate reading skills and negative reading attitudes; 2) that enthusiasm for reading is strongly influenced by interest; 3) that these children are mainly interested in fairy tales, fictional characters, and animated films; and finally, 4) that the functional role of the textbook includes motivation and raising the interest of the pupils, the dissertation establishes the following hypothesis:

H₁: The content of the texts in the reading textbook used in Vojvodina is not suited to the interests of 6-8-year-old Hungarian children studying Hungarian in Vojvodina.

In order to test the hypothesis, the primary focus was to develop an empirical research method capable of measuring the interest level of the given age group. In this case, it had to be taken into account that 6-8-year-old pupils' reading skills were not yet sufficiently developed to be able to participate in a questionnaire survey. In addition to these obstacles, it had to be taken into account that this age group cannot yet classify its favorite reading according to the genre of the tales described above. Two empirical studies found while researching the historical development of fairy tales and storytelling [namely, work by László Nógrády (1917) and Béla Tóth (1967), covered in Vass (2016)] contributed significantly to the development of the research methodology.

The dissertation undertook two pre-research and three central research processes in order to test the hypothesis, as outlined below.

Primary research: a) general textbook analysis of the Hungarian alphabet reading book used in Vojvodina; and b) sampling and collection of primary data, which helped to determine the analytical parameters.

Central research: a) examination of reading texts, fairy-tales, types and functions of Hungarian-language alphabet reading books used by Hungarian-speaking 6-to-8-year-olds studying Hungarian in Vojvodina; b) thematic conversation with 6-to-8-year-old pupils studying Hungarian in Vojvodina; and c) interview about reading texts, story types, and types of fairy-tale characters, as well as their function in Hungarian-language alphabet reading books used by Hungarian-speaking pupils studying in Vojvodina, including a comparative study of the results.

Sample

The study was conducted in the spring of 2016 with first-grade pupils aged 6 to 8 with Hungarian as their mother tongue in Hungarian classes held in Vojvodina during the 2015/2016 school year. For this particular school year, 1,521 pupils were enrolled by their parents in the Hungarian class in the fall of 2015 (Bödő, 2017). When looking for schools, the workload of pupils, parents, and teachers was taken into account. Thus, they were contacted after the winter break, and the study was conducted after the spring break. The request was primarily sent by e-mail to the principal, who, along with his consent, received statements of consent from children's parents by mail (Annexes 1 and 2). A total of twenty towns responded, out of which fifteen town administrators sent positive responses. With the help of the educators, a request (containing detailed information regarding the research subject, its purpose, and confidentiality) was sent to the parents of each first-grade child, asking them to allow their child to participate in the survey. Of the statements of consent that were returned, 157 pupils from 15 institutions were allowed to participate in the collection of data – that is,

17.8% of the 1,500 sample. The collected data was coded and analyzed using SPSS® 20. The data is still kept in sealed envelopes and is strictly retained. The conversation was held in the same tone with each student. Thanks to the personal appearance, answers were not influenced by anyone's pre-formed opinions of the children, nor were their responses anticipated or influenced by the teacher or the parents. Talking with a student took about 30-35 minutes.

RESULTS

Reading attitudes

According to the study sample, 64.4% of the pupils in Vojvodina did not have any experience with fairy tales in their family, and 0.4% could not answer this question. It is assumed that this 0.4% did not get an experience of fairy tales at home, but the student did not say so. According to the relative frequency, more than half of the pupils did not listen to tales at home. Most pupils who had an experience of fairy tales in the family (34.1%) were rarely part of the action. Based on the results of the study, we can say that 34.1% of the pupils from Vojvodina have rarely had an experience with fairy tales, and in most cases this happened some time ago. That is, the majority of six- to eight-year-olds no longer listen to fairy tales at home. As a result, most pupils were able to experience storytelling for the first time during kindergarten education and, at worst, never had any experience with fairy tales. This means that pupils in the latter situation first encountered reading with an alphabet reading book. The majority of pupils read per syllable or per word, and more than half of the sample participants read correctly at the end of the first grade. Most pupils read at home without assistance, but so far more than half prefer reading aloud. In spite of having the appropriate reading skills, the majority of the participants in the sample prefer watching animated films to reading.

According to the survey results, pupils are most interested in animal tales and stories (36.3%) and magic tales (26.3%). There was a significant difference between boys' and girls' interest in magic tales ($p < 0.001$), warrior and adventure stories ($p < 0.05$), and encyclopedias ($p < 0.004$). Boys preferred warrior and adventure stories (15.0%) and encyclopedic entries (14.0%) over girls; while girls more often preferred magic tales (37.2%). Animal tales and stories about them are popular with both genders (36.3%). Stories about children's lives (10.3%), poems (7.6), and other readings (6.1%) were liked the least. The results of the study revealed that the most popular readings for pupils aged 6 to 8 were animal tales and magic tales, of which there was a significant difference in the relative frequency of interest in magic tales. Of course, these results do not yet provide a relevant answer as to what reading topics these pupils' stories actually address, or what characters and stories they actually like the most. The reason for this is that this age group only selects from the tales, readings, or stories they have heard. Since most of them (64.4%) have never listened to a story in the family, they probably do not know many stories. For this reason, it is necessary to point out that this age group prefers fairy tales and fairy-tale subjects (41.9%), while 34.5% (2.5% of boys and 2.7% of girls) could not answer the question. There is a relatively low percentage of pupils who read the reading topics (7.9%), real-life stories (7.5%), and mixed-topic stories (5.6%). These test results suggest that pupils really prefer magic tales, fairy tales, and animal stories. If we observe the gender differences in taste, we can confirm the interest in the popular readings, since in this case we also found a significant difference in the girl's liking for magic tales ($p < 0.01$). According to the students' own admission, they prefer to read stories previously named as favorite reading or topic because of their aesthetic appeal (40.4%). They are only secondarily liked the above stories because of the activity of the creatures in it (27.0%). The

prevalence of motifs related to emotion and emotional motivation is 18.7%, which means that pupils are less concerned with the intellectual and emotional quality of the characters and the story. Characteristics of the characters (7.9%) have the least influence on their attraction to stories. The relative frequency of liking motifs is supported by the relative frequency of sympathetic motives for preference; as the students, by their own admission, choose their favorite stories based on age, gender, appearance, and financial status (40.1%). That is, if the story is about an animal or a fictional being; then, in terms of the previous motive for liking (aesthetic attributes), they referred to the characters' age, gender, appearance, and financial status. Half the number of respondents mentioned intellectual and moral qualities (21.0%) compared to the relative frequency of the previous category, and 12.7% of the pupils liked the reading / story on account of the character's education. There is no significant difference in the taste differences between the genders. Of the motives for disliking a hero (and, consequently, the associated reading), pupils were most likely to dislike heroes who had some form of educational deficiency (47.2%). This percentage is consistent for age, gender, and external motives (28.5%), and the dislike of the character is least influenced by heroic disability (22.5%). We cannot speak of a significant discrepancy in the taste differences between the genders. Most pupils want to laugh (54.5%) while listening to or reading a fairy tale or story, followed by a lower percentage who enjoy when a story is exciting (19.2%) or thought-provoking (17.3%). In the other category, the answers included to celebrate, to have an adventure, and to dream. In addition to these emotions, two pupils stated that they did not like to feel anything. One student stated that he did not like to read, and one student stated that he liked to "practice reading". There is no significant difference in the relative frequency of emotional motives between the genders.

Based on the pupils' answers, three groups emerged to categorize the hero's function: (1) a folk hero, (2) a hero outside a folk tale, and (3) a folk hero with a new attribute. The first group includes heroes that can be found in folk tales – such as the beautiful royal lady, the good fairy, the traveling crock full of crispy scones, the evil dragon, the cute fox, the evil wolf, and the three wishful goldfish. The second group includes heroes that are not found in folk tales, either in appearance or function – such as a schoolgirl or schoolboy, dinosaur, vampire, death, cake, coffee, pancakes, etc. The third category includes heroes which appear to be folk heroes on the outside, but they have a function far removed from folk tales on the inside – such as the hysterical princess, the luminous goldfish, the kind-hearted dragon, and so on. An important factor was the student's ability to choose multiple folk heroes – those removed from more folk tales and those with more new features. There is not much difference in the incidence of heroes in the three categories. Students chose a folk hero 38.3% of the time, a non-folk hero 33.6%, and a new type of folk hero 28.0%. There is no significant difference between the needs of the genders. For this reason, there were seven subcategories within both the folktale hero and the non-folk hero and heroes with new characteristics categories that took into account animal and fictional responses as a separate group. These results showed a difference for the girls, as the boys cited tales in the animal stories category as their favorite. Within the subcategory of folktale hero types, the most frequently chosen character types are in the category of fictitious creatures (44.8%), followed by the category of wild animals (29.7%). Significant results were also found for pet sympathy (<0.01), which was also favored by girls (53.4%). Both genders often preferred wild animals (boys 50.4% and girls 46.6%). Among the heroes that can be categorized as far removed from the folk tale type, based on the cumulative responses, pupils re-chose fictional character types (65.9%), followed by the wild type (48.3%). Again, there is only a significant difference (<0.01) in interest in fictional beings between the genders in this category, but fictitious characters far removed from folk tales are more preferred by boys than girls, given that 55.5% of girls and

88.4% of boys chose these characters. Of the heroes that fall into the category of heroes with new features, based on cumulative responses, pupils re-chose fictitious beings most often (63.3%). Just as in the previous two categories, there is a significant difference (<0.02) between boys and girls. 56.2% of boys and 69.2% of girls prefer fictional creatures with new traits. The second most frequently chosen hero type was again the wild animal (39.3%).

Animated film attitudes

According to the survey sample, 100% of the pupils in Vojvodina watch some kind of animated film at home. (2.6% of the respondents could not answer these questions.) Most of these pupils also watch cartoons frequently (74.1%), and only 25.9% watch it rarely. 94.4% of these pupils watch cartoon frequently during the school years as well, and 5.6% have only looked at it in the past. The activity is most often done alone (49.1%), meaning that 87.7% of these pupils do not watch animation with their parents.

Based on the cumulative responses, pupils talked about animated films that most closely matched warrior and adventure stories (35.3%), followed by their interest in children's life stories (2.17%). In cartoon categories, animal stories and magic tales are only favored by 18.0% and 15.0%, respectively. There is a significant difference between movies favored by girls and boys. Boys prefer (<0.01) warrior and adventure stories (55.4%), while girls prefer films about magic tales (22.6%) and children's lives (29.5%). Pupils are most interested in fairy-tale themes and fairy-tale figures (62.9%). Interest in fairy tales is high in both genders (60.3% of girls and 66.1% of boys). Based on the results regarding animated films so far, we can conclude that boys like cartoons or fairy-tale cartoons about some kind of fight or adventure, while girls prefer stories about the lives of children that feature fairy-tale characters, as well as tales that suit their interests. In addition to stories about the lives of children, they may also love stories based on magic. Pupils are interested in the animated films they mentioned, because the activities of the heroes captured their attention (63.7%). 21.3% of these pupils said they liked the story because it was "funny". Students are most likely to decide which animation hero they will be interested in based on age, gender, external appearance, and financial situation (40.8%). They gave the reasons like "girl", "strong", "beautiful", "tiny", "skinny", "princess", "fast", "bracelet", "beautiful clothes", and "have a car". The other category (25.5%) included answers that described an act: "buy", "eat", "tell jokes", "protagonist", "lonely", "intimidate", etc. Intellectual and moral qualities (24.3%) cover answers that included the character's knowledge, dexterity, attempts to fight evil (e.g., "save the world" and "zombie killer"), courage, cunning, etc. Yet, little was mentioned by children (7.5%) about education. Those who feel sympathy for a character because of their education highlighted the character's kindness, love for animals, and skill. Most of the pupils had no sympathy for the heroes who were well educated but evil, lazy, naughty, and so on. 44.6% of the pupils feel dislike for actors. In addition to these three adjectives, pupils stated that they did not want to identify with a hero because they "malign", "steal", "yell", "cheat", "sneak", "kill people", "always want to be better", or are "not funny". In addition, 28.1% of pupils have a dislike for heroes with whom they cannot identify in terms of age, gender, or appearance. Students said that they liked cartoons that made them laugh at a 58.8% relative rate, and that they liked exciting stories at a relative rate of 22.5%. Relatively few answered that they watch animated films very little (7.5%), or feel afraid (5.2%) and cry (1.5%) while doing so. Under the other category, the following questions were classified: "soothing", "nothing", "eat", "celebrate", "be with family", and "daydream".

Reading Textbook

The alphabet book contains mostly pictures, words, sentences, and short texts about animals (37.93%), children's lives (22.06%), and other things (28.27%). Animals are mostly animal tales, and texts about children's lives are intended for speech development, set in a marketplace, a classroom, a schoolyard, or a zoo with visitors. The other category includes sound, font, and reading call images – words and sentences where, in a single task, an animal, an object, a plant, etc., are present without any logical connection. There is a 10 % incidence of magic tales. More specifically, the proportion of key pictures, words, sentences, and texts associated with it are 5.51%, but this is on account of illustrations of a dragon and a dwarf. Despite the fact that the alphabet book is mostly focused on reading, it should also address speaking. Only 4.82% is comprised of poems. Warrior and adventure stories and encyclopedic entries are used in the alphabet book only 0.68%. Of the last two cases, the only one referring to a fight is a key image on page 95, where the book tries to refer to a warrior with a spear; and there is one entry, on page 59, with the lower-case and upper-case “ü” and the key image of a spaceship.

In contrast, the reading book contains poems with a frequency of 60.31%, most of which are related to weather such as snowfall, frost, Easter, sleigh, etc. It includes 23.80% animal tales and stories such as “Fox and Duck”, “Raven and Fox”, “Cheese-Sharing Fox”, “Lion and Mouse”, “Samuel the Hedgehog and Lizard”, etc. These animal tales also deal with similar topics (e.g., the fox is cunning and evil and wants to trick the crab, the raven, or the bears). There is little reading learning text that corresponds to magic tales (1.58%) or warrior and adventure stories (0.00%). Of the magic tales, there is only one reading, “King Vain”. However, it has to be kept in mind that this text counts as the reading literacy of many first-grade children.

Based on aggregate statistics, the two books with reading images, words, sentences, and texts were 33.65% for animal tales and stories, 21.63% for poems, 20.67% for other, and 18.75% contained a reading picture, sentence, or text that corresponded to children's life stories.

According to the study, 65.45% of the alphabet book has no specific reading topics. These texts only randomly include the words and images that correspond to the letter to be learned and do not focus on a specific reading topic. There are 17.72% animal related topics, including texts at the end of the book – namely, “Wolf and Hedgehog”, “Fox and Mushroom”, “Wild Pigeon and Ant”, “Three Ants”, and more. In addition, the proportion of people of different ages and occupations is even lower. In this case as well, the call images on the first few pages of the textbook mostly include speech and vocabulary development pictures about school, the school yard, the market, and pet feeding. Since the alphabet book contains only a small percentage of readings corresponding to a magic tale (5.51%), there is obviously a low percentage (4.54%) of readings on fairy tales and fairy-tale characters.

The reading book also has a low percentage of reading topics about fairy tales and fairy-tale characters, even though it already contains ready-to-read texts. The topics are the same as in *The Alphabet Book*. There is a zero percentage of real-world topics, and 5.88% of fairy tale and fairy-tale reading topics – including texts from the well-known tales by Erzsi Rich, *Ákombákom* by Zoltán Zelk, the afore-mentioned “King Vain”, and “The Carrot”. There is the same percentage (32.35%) of animals and people of different ages and occupations. Like the topics in *The Alphabet Book*, you can still read about children's lives and everyday activities.

The theme of animal tales and stories is similar to that of the alphabet book. Mixed topics are also present with similar frequency (29.41%), but in this book they no longer appear as mere words or phrases. Mixed-themed reading texts are usually about a holiday (e.g., Viktor Eftimiu's "Nervous Little Pine Tree") or weather conditions (Erzsi Rich's "The Snow Is Falling", Zoltán Zelk's "Snowman", and Géza Gárdonyi's "March"). The textbook package contains mixed topics with a frequency of 51.68%, with animal topics (23.03%) and people of different ages and occupations (20.22%) present at half the frequency. Both textbooks are completely devoid of fairy tales and fairy-tale subjects. Based on the cumulative results, the two textbooks have the fewest (1.4%) folk tales with new traits, followed by the percentage of non-folk heroes (39.7%) with the highest relative incidence of folk tales present (58.9%). The latter category includes animal characters that fulfill folk-tale functions: cunning foxes, insane bears, zealous ants, evil wolves, etc. Among the hero types far removed from the folk tales, I have listed all the heroes that arise in everyday circumstances. These include moms, dads, school kids, market salesmen, little girls and boys, and so on.

Based on the combined statistical results of the alphabet book and the reading book, they most often make use of call images, words, phrases, and texts (about heroes removed from folk tales; that is, everyday people) to practice reading and develop speech. Also prominent are the call images, words, phrases, and texts about beasts, which practically correspond to folk heroes. All other character types appear relatively less frequently, which indicates that the two textbooks use considerably similar figures for reading practice.

Comparative study

There is a significant difference between the pupils' favorite readings and favorite movies (that is, the reading's theme and the movie's genre), insofar as their favorite reading material is animal fairy tales (36.3%) or magic fairy tales (26.3%), stories (36.3%), and children's lives (21.7%). There was no significant difference between the pupils' favorite reading and their favorite movie motifs, with both the reading theme and the movie theme being related to fairy-tale characters (42.1% for reading and 62.9% for film) and animals. They love stories (34.5% for readers and 15.4% for movies). However, there was a significant difference between the appeal of the readings and the animation motifs, since reading books and their subjects are favored on account of some aesthetic effect (40.4%), while films are preferred because of the actors (63.7%). We can speak of book illustrations being analogous to visuals in an animated film; still, in the case of animation, the learner can identify more easily with an activity, because it is evident that a text is much more difficult to interpret than a moving image. However, we must not ignore the activities portrayed in reading texts and animation where characters may fly, have special abilities, etc. Nonetheless, examination of this requires a separate analysis in the future. Based on the results of the comparative study, there is no significant difference between the pupils' sympathy and dislike for the hero in their favorite reading or animated film. In both cases, it is based on the hero's age, gender, and appearance. There is also no significant difference between the emotions evoked by reading and watching an animated film. In both cases, the pupils show interest towards stories that make them laugh (54.5% for reading, 58.8% for animation) or are exciting (19.2% for reading, 22.5% for animated films).

The textbook contains, at a relatively low frequency, reading learning texts that have the same characters as cartoons. For example, while textbooks contain most of the folk tales beasts (48.2%), and 59.6% contain texts using people removed from folk tales, fictional creatures

most often appear in animated films. There is a significant difference between each hero category. Based on the cumulative responses, pupils are fondest of animal stories (36.3%) and magic tales (26.3%); however, the textbook overwhelmingly features appropriate readings from other categories (20.67%), in addition to poems (21.63%). If we examine preferences from a gender perspective, the tastes of girls (who favor magic tales and stories at 37.2% relative to animal tales and stories at 33.8%) are not reflected in the type of texts contained in the textbook. The amount of poetry and other types of texts doesn't satisfy the boys' tastes either, with boys stating that they like warrior and adventure stories (15.0%), encyclopedic entries (14.0%), and magic tales (12.0%) the best. In this case, we can say that the readings in the textbook do not correspond to the pupils' interests. The textbook favors 65.45% relative reading texts on mixed topics, which means that reading topics do not suit the pupils' interests. If we look only at the response rates of girls and boys separately, we can still state that the texts in the textbook with a high proportion of mixed topics do not satisfy either girls' or boys' interests. The differences between boys and girls showed that there is no significant difference between boys' and girls' chosen reading topics, since both girls and boys prefer reading topics about fairy-tale characters and animals. Based on the results, we can conclude that the topics in the reading textbooks do not correspond to the pupils' interests.

The textbook contains 58.9% of folklore heroes and less (39.7%) of heroes removed from folk tales, employing folklore heroes with new traits at very low rate of frequency. Based on the results of the study, the most significant discrepancy between pupil interest and textbook hero types appeared in the case of folk tale heroes with new traits. In the case of traditional folk heroes or protagonists removed from folk tales, there was no significant difference between student interest and textbook content. Based on the results of this examination, the hero types contained in the textbook partially meet the pupils' expectations. Of the folk tale heroes, 44.8% of pupils liked fairy-tale creatures best; however, the textbook featured wild animals in this proportion, whereas fairy-tale creatures were present a mere 9.6%. Thus, we find a significant discrepancy between the pupils' interest in fairy-tale creatures and their presence in the content. Students prefer 55.55% of the folk tale figures with new features, while the textbook employs only 1.11% of the characters of this type, instead using wild animals (28.9%). Hence, from this point of view, the textbook does not satisfy the pupils' interest. Interest in fairy-tale creatures showed an even higher percentage than heroes removed from folk tales, with 68.13% of pupils favoring fairy-tale heroes, while textbooks employ a similar percentage (59.62%). In this case, the relative frequency of animal stories removed from folk tales also declined (13.46%). There is a significant difference only in the proportion of fairy-tale creatures and people, which means that the textbook does not meet the pupils' interest in this case either.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that the pupils' interest in terms of reading category, reading topic, and folk hero type is not the same as the reading categories, reading texts, and hero types featured in the textbooks. Based on the cumulative results, twelve pupils (12.12%) who had their favorite reading in the textbook also had experience with fairy tales at home. Thirty-one pupils (18.45%) who had a favorite reading in the alphabet book had experience with fairy tales at home. Correspondingly, 87.87% of pupils did not have a favorite reading in the textbook and did have experience with fairy tales at home, while 81.54% of pupils did not have a favorite reading in the textbook or experience with fairy tales either. Based on the results of the study, having listened to stories at home does not significantly affect interest in readings from the textbook. Whether or not pupils have had experience with fairy tales, most of their favorite readings were not found in the alphabet book or the reading book.

Because the majority of pupils (63.3%) do not like to read, and since 16.53% of pupils find their favorite readings in the textbook, these results are accompanied by data, according to which the student's interest in readings found in the textbook is not influenced by experiences with fairy tales in the family setting. Thus, we may establish that the pupils' sphere of interests is actually oriented to themes, motifs, and heroes featured in animated films. On the basis of the results, we have obtained an answer to the hypothesis. Students' favorite reading and favorite movie category, or reading theme and favorite film theme, are significantly different from the themes and characters in the reading texts found in the alphabet reading book.

There is no significant difference between the pupils' interest in the heroes presented through illustrations and the heroes most frequently featured in animated films. Pupils are most interested in fictional fairy-tale creatures, and these types of heroes appear most often in animated films. The textbook does not conform to the students' sphere of interests. After all, in the textbook, poetry (21.6%) and readings with miscellaneous themes (20.6%) turn up most. Fictional fairy-tale creatures appear less frequently. Among folk tale heroes, the largest proportion is wild animals (48.2%), whereas people (protagonists removed from folk tales) are featured at a rate of 64.6%.

There is a significant difference between the reading topics of the textbook and the pupils' favorite reading topics. For example, pupils cite a high percentage of fairy-tale creatures (44.8%), but the textbook contains 48.2% of wildlife reading texts, corresponding in frequency to the stories and themes of animated films that have been repeatedly highlighted.

Based on the cumulative responses, a total of 16.53% of the readings that the students mentioned to me at the time of the interview could be found in the textbook. Because the results of the study did not include many pupils who had experience with fairy tales at home, the study found that pupils who did not have experience with fairy tales in the family setting also had favorite readings from the textbook. Still, they preferred watching cartoons.

Because the majority of pupils have not had experiences with fairy tales within the family, and most of them prefer cartoons to reading; pupils say they prefer stories, themes, motifs, and character types that can be recognized in cartoons. Hence, we find that the reading book does not suit the interests of six- to eight-year-olds, that six- to eight-year-olds prefer cartoon to reading, and that their preferred heroes are more likely to be cartoon heroes. For this reason, we can state that interests in this age group formed and developed as a result of the media. (Based on this research, we can only assume that we are talking about situational interest, but that is not substantiated by this work).

In terms of gender differences in taste, most of the time there are differences. There was a significant difference when it came to interest in reading, cartoons, and heroics; yet, none of the textbook's topics, motifs, or heroes showed any clear difference in the level of interest.

The hypothesis is validated. The content of *The Alphabet Book* (for the purpose of reading instruction in Vojvodina) does not reflect the tastes of Hungarian-speaking pupils aged 6 to 8 who study Hungarian in Vojvodina. There is a low proportion (20.6%) of fairy-tale (fictitious) creatures. Wild animals (48.2%) are the most prominent among folk-heroes, whereas protagonists far removed from folk tales (everyday people) are present at a rate of 64.6%. There is a significant difference between the reading topics in the textbook and the pupils'

favorite reading topics. Indeed, it does not satisfy the sphere of interests held by either the boys or the girls.

As the results of the study did not find many pupils who had had experience with fairy tales at home, the study also found that pupils who did not have experience with fairy tales in the family had favorite readings from the textbook. They also favored watching cartoons. Because the majority of pupils did not have experience with fairy tales in the family, and most of them prefer watching animated programs to reading; pupils say they prefer stories, themes, motifs, and character types that can be recognized in cartoons. Thus, we can conclude from the results that the alphabet book and the reading book do not meet the interests of six- to eight-year-olds. For this reason, we may also conclude that the interests of six- to eight-year-olds come from the media.

In terms of gender taste differences, there is a significant difference in most cases in terms of the level of interest in reading, cartoons, and heroics between girls and boys. Still, none of the topics or motifs showed enough of a difference to be called significant.

In the case of the examined textbook and the examined pupils, it can be concluded that the content of the reading texts in the Hungarian-language alphabet reading book used in Vojvodina does not correspond to the tastes of the children whose mother tongue is Hungarian and who study Hungarian in Vojvodina. (See Figure 2).

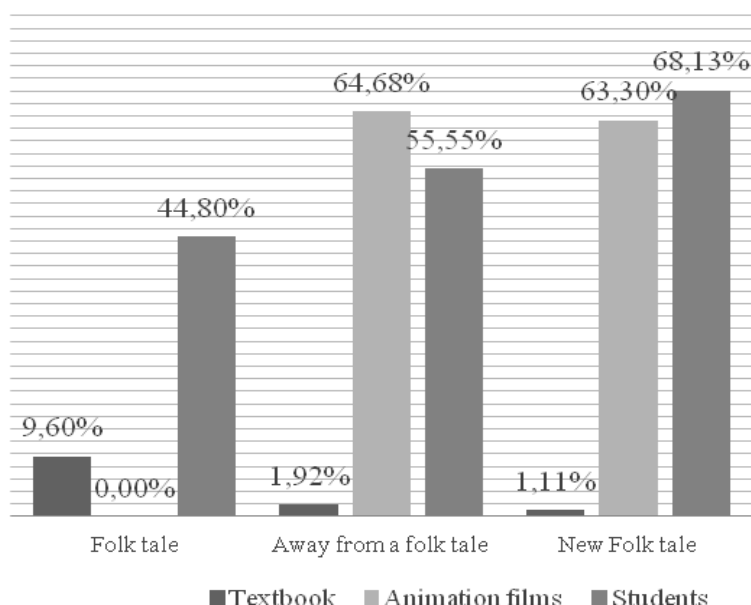


Figure 2: Frequency of textbook and cartoon fictional creatures within three heroic categories and comparative study of pupils' interest in fictitious creatures within three heroic categories. (author's diagram)

The results of the research call for the rethinking and redesigning of reading instruction texts for first-grade alphabet books and reading books. An alphabet reading book has a much more complex pedagogical mission. In addition to teaching one how to read, it maintains or increases the pupil's interest in reading. When designing and editing an alphabet reading book, it can have a much greater positive impact on the readers' development if we keep in

mind the interests of students when carefully selecting a reading method, reading texts, aesthetics, and competency-enhancing illustrations.

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