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Addressing disability representation in EFL textbooks used in Hungarian public education

Nikoletta Gulya *, Anikó Fehérvári

Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), 23–27 Kazinczy Street, Budapest 1075, Hungary

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ABSTRACT

Textbooks can play an important role in shaping the image of a particular social group by means of its textual and visual representation. A realistic and unprejudiced image of people with disabilities should be an important part of the curriculum in public education institutions in order to help students understand the needs and reality of those living with a disability.

The goal of the present research was to identify and critically analyze disability as curriculum content in English as a foreign language (EFL) textbook used in Hungarian public education. A content analysis of texts and images from sample books was performed by applying coding based on categories used in similar studies, complemented with additional categories to meet the requirements of the present study.

In the case of all the examined textbooks, we found that the presentation of people with disabilities in the texts and visual materials was extremely limited. Representation focused on the distinctive aspects of disability. People with disabilities were mostly depicted participating in a minimal variety of segregated and elite activities, while there was a marked lack of images of people with disabilities involved in everyday situations, as individuals, integrated into society, and as part of a given sociocultural environment.

Introduction

Inclusive education has been emerging as a value in international education policy since the Salamanca Statement, which emphasised that inclusion has to be the norm (UNESCO, 1994). As a result of this change, students with special educational needs (SEN) have been able to attend mainstream education and learn together with their majority peers. In Hungary, there is also a growing number of SEN students in mainstream education. 72% of students with special educational needs participating in public education receive integrated education (HCSO, 2022).

Inclusive education would greatly benefit students with disabilities by giving them the opportunity to spend most of their time being schooled with their typically developing peers. It would also promote greater social acceptance of difference and impairment. However, there is consistent evidence that being placed in mainstream educational settings does not guarantee that children with disabilities will be accepted, valued, and integrated into the classroom (Martinez & Carspecken, 2007; Lindsay & McPherson, 2012; Schiemer, 2017). Researchers have found that, despite having several opportunities in the course of a day to interact with peers with disabilities, most of nondisabled children ignore peers with special needs (Rillotta & Nettlebeck, 2007; Tavares, 2011; Mammas et al., 2020) and have negative attitudes towards them (Grütter et al., 2017). Researches also highlighted that this negative attitude is one of the main barriers of the inclusion of people with disabilities in society (Schwab, 2017; Alnahdi, 2019).

In light of the research results, inclusive classrooms do not guarantee that nondisabled students will form friendships with students who have disabilities, or that students with disabilities will be accepted by their non-disabled peers. Educators, therefore, need to take steps to promote the acceptance of children with disabilities. Textbooks are a readily available resource that teachers can use to help their students learn about disability if these textbooks have the appropriate content.

Conceptual framework

Disability is a broad term, the definition of which has been subject to many interpretations. The different definitions can be traced in the disability models (Forstner, 2022). Since the end of the last century, the conceptualization of disability has undergone a significant change

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: gulya.nikoletta@ppk.elte.hu (N. Gulya).

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(Whiteneck, 2006).

In our analysis, we use the disability definition that reflects the interpretation of the third generation of disability conceptual models (Forstner, 2022) and originates from the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps (ICIDH) reform process. In this perception, disability is not only a health problem, but a complex, multi-layered and controversial concept, with political, medical, ethical, and psychological implications (Shakespeare & Watson, 2010; WHO, 2011; Waddington & Priestley, 2021). This definition is primarily rooted in the concept of the social model of disability, according to which disability is a specific form of social oppression (Olkin, 2002). In this model, disability is interpreted as one of the characteristics of a person's specific identity, and the primary cause of disability is the mismatch between the disabled person and the environment, the lack of accessibility. From this perspective, it is primarily the environment that creates disability and barriers, not biological differences. This interpretation emphasises the responsibility of society to create appropriate environmental (physical and social) conditions for people with disabilities (Shakespeare & Watson, 2010).

We have chosen this model as the conceptual framework for our research because education should create opportunities for the young generation to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards people with disabilities. In this way, they might be able to create an environment in which people with disabilities can meet social acceptance and opportunities for independent living.

The role of textbooks

The importance of textbooks in the education of children between the ages of 3 and 14 is unquestionable. Nowadays, many of them have been available in digital form, their content has remained unchanged. Hungarian public education has traditionally made use of learning tools, thus textbooks have a significant influence on teaching (Sinka et al., 2014).

Textbooks are an integral part of school education, and students spend most of their time using these materials (Blumberg, 2007). Olson (1989) claimed that students may read at least 32,000 textbook pages during their studies and spend 75% of their time engaged with textbook content.

Textbooks are a staple in school curricula worldwide, presenting official knowledge of school subjects as well as the preferred values, attitudes, skills, and behaviors of the given society (Shannon, 2010). As social constructs, textbooks can be an important source of cultural elements, besides providing linguistic and topical content (Wen-Cheng et al., 2011). They reflect the prevailing values, norms, and attitudes of a society (Pogorzelska, 2016) and represent relationships that are considered natural and appropriate (Sleeter & Grant, 2003). Textbooks can thus play an important role in shaping the image of a particular social group by means of its textual and visual representation (Hodkinson & Ghajarieh, 2014).

Inclusive curricula

Over the past two decades, inclusive curricula have acquired special significance in terms of increasing the visibility of different minority groups (Nind, 2005). As a result, the representation and acceptance of social diversity have become required elements in educational curricula and other learning materials, as powerful tools for overcoming discrimination. ~~In other words,~~ Mainstreaming disability-related content could be a means of shaping education that promotes respect, diversity, inclusion, and equality (Alves & Lopes dos Santos, 2013).

Disability-related content in the general curriculum and learning materials can create a favorable inclusive learning environment for all students. Such content allows students with disabilities to relate to characters who are similar to them and can help nondisabled students to learn about disability and the importance of valuing individual differences (Ferguson, 2006). The infusion of disability-related content into the general curriculum represents a preventive approach to reducing negative attitudes and overcoming barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities (Browning & Cagle, 2017; Knoll et al., 2017), as well as preparing all students to adopt the ethical and moral principle of valuing individual differences (Alves & Lopes dos Santos, 2013). Learning materials that support inclusive attitudes can help students to discover, discuss, and reinterpret their own stereotypes of disability (Erevelles, 2011; Symeonidou, 2019).

English as a foreign language

English is a global language, with approximately 508 million speakers in the world. It serves as the lingua franca in many areas of life, including education. A considerable number of people worldwide learn English as their second language (Hellinger et al., 2001).

In Hungary, English language is a core subject studied in primary and secondary schools, thus it has an important role in Hungarian public education. Textbooks used for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) contain stories and communication tasks that simulate or reflect real life. These texts convey the attitudes and values of the dominant culture and provide frameworks for understanding everyday life. Since textbook content unquestionably affects learners, it is important to evaluate the quality of these materials.

Textbooks and disability

The analysis of disability-related content in primary and secondary school textbooks is closely related to inclusive education. Research on inclusive education has been carried out for almost half a century and has revealed the conditions necessary for the successful implementation of inclusive practice. One of these conditions is the use in classrooms of inclusive textbooks that contain lifelike representations of people with disabilities (Cameron & Rutland, 2006). In order to meet this criterion, it is necessary to analyze the content of disability-related curricula in current textbooks, to explore the disability-related bias they contain Beckett et al. (2010), and to remove such stereotyped content (Prater & Dyches, 2008).

Whilst gender and racial stereotypes have often been the subject of textbook content analysis, research on the disability-related content of primary and secondary school textbooks is sparse (Sleeter & Grant, 2003). Sleeter and Grant (2003) analyzed 47 textbooks (social studies, reading/language, art, science, and mathematics), applying picture and textual analysis to map disability-related content. Their research revealed that disability issues were seldom mentioned in the textbooks. Storylines ignored people with disabilities and failed to take advantage of opportunities to familiarize non-disabled people with the contributions that people with disabilities have made to society. The picture analysis revealed that people with disabilities were almost entirely absent, appearing in only a few pictures. Ruškus and Pocevičienė (2006) examined 27 Lithuanian language and literature textbooks and nine ethics textbooks for years 1 to 10. They found that although the definition of disability in the texts was neutral and informative, it tended to be associated with an indirect feeling of misfortune, especially when acquired disabilities were discussed. The textual analysis also revealed that the textbooks mostly presented negative stereotypes of people with disabilities, although there was some positive description. Based on the picture analysis, the researchers concluded that people with disabilities were quite underrepresented in the textbooks, with depictions limited exclusively to people with visual impairments. Nevertheless, the visual representation of people with disabilities could be regarded as positive: The few images that were presented were lifelike and showed people with disabilities actively involved with their nondisabled peers. Cheng and Beigi (2011) investigated depictions of people with disabilities in illustrations in seven Iranian EFL textbooks. The results of their research suggested that people with disabilities were underrepresented in the

analyzed textbooks, thus placing students with disabilities at a disadvantage and perpetuating their invisibility. Research by Táboas-Pais and Rey-Cao (2012) examined how images of disability in physical education textbooks for secondary schools in Spain showed people with disabilities participating in a limited range of segregated, competitive, and elite sports activities. There were no references to activities in the natural environment, physical conditioning exercises, games, or corporal and artistic expression, even though all these activities are included in the physical education curriculum (Táboas-Pais & Rey-Cao, 2012). Gonzales-Palomares and Rey-Chao (2020) examined the disability content of 6773 pictures represented in Spanish secondary physical education textbooks and compared their results with the previous studies. Their results were broadly in line with those of previous studies (Táboas-Pais & Rey-Cao, 2012; Vidal-Albelda & Martínez-Bello, 2017) i.e. people with disabilities are underrepresented, depicted in non-inclusive situations and basically participate in elite spots in the pictures in textbooks. However, some changes were detected compared to the results of similar, previously published research. The appearance of elite sports has decreased, giving way to more varied representation that includes artistic motor expression, physical fitness training, and physical activities in natural environments. The proportion of outdoor activities also increased in addition to the decrease in indoor activities. Pogorzelska (2016) explored the disability-related content in EFL textbooks used in Poland and Sweden. She revealed that the textbooks only partly contributed to the decategorization of people with disabilities, as they were typically shown separately rather than as an integral part of a peer group. Hodkinson et al. (2018) analyzed the visibility of disability in Iranian and English educational texts. Their results revealed that the representation of disability in the textbooks was limited, reflecting the social marginalization of people with disabilities in the two countries. Abu-Hamour et al. (2019) pointed out that people with disabilities were rarely represented in Jordanian school textbooks, even though the analyzed books (Arabic language, social citizenship, and civics) featured a considerable number of topics where disability-related texts and images would have been appropriate.

Material and methods

The goal of the present paper was to investigate the representation of disability in currently used EFL textbooks in Hungary and to use this knowledge to inform educators of areas they may wish to supplement.

In order to examine disability-related content in EFL textbooks in Hungary, the following research questions were posed:

1 To what extent is disability-related content included in EFL textbooks in Hungary?
2 In what social contexts are people with disabilities represented?
3 What major themes were found in relation to people with disabilities during the analysis?
4 How do the texts and images perpetuate or contradict negative cultural representations of disability?

Sample

In Hungary the Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education stipulates that from September 2013, the state will ensure that textbooks are available free of charge for pupils from the first grade in a phasing-out system, as well as in national minority education and special education (Sinka et al., 2013). However, the Public Education Act also states that schools can only choose from the textbooks listed in the catalog of approved textbooks for the National Curriculum framework subject in the subject of the school textbook ordering.

We began the study with a search for EFL textbooks in the list of approved textbooks for the academic year 2021 published by the Hungarian Government. We found 49 textbooks in the list that are used in Hungarian primary and secondary schools to teach English as a foreign language. All the textual tasks (4112) and pictures (5535) in these 49 textbooks were analyzed.

Content analysis

We used content analysis—that is, a systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics (Neuendorf, 2017) designed for the examination of message contents to elucidate "what they mean to people, what they enable or prevent, and what the information conveyed by them does" (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 2). As a qualitative or quantitative research method, it allows researchers to extract, analyze, and interpret the covert or overt messages of a given text by identifying the intersecting relationships between recurrent words or themes (Hoffman et al., 2011).

For the purposes of the present analysis, the basis of interpretation was provided by the recurring patterns, which were able to "reveal the more subtle messages embedded in a text read by a student in a classroom" (Hoffman et al., 2011, p. 28).

Textual analysis

As the first step in the analysis, we selected texts that included characters with disabilities or other content related to disability. These texts became the units of our analysis and were examined based on the coding system we compiled (Fig. 1). Each unit of analysis was coded independently by choosing one indicator from each of the categories. The theoretical basis for the development of the coding system was provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of disability, according to which disability is an umbrella term that encompasses the health status of a person with a disability, as well as the interaction of personal and environmental factors. In this complex interpretation, society has a major role to play in overcoming the barriers related to disability (World Health Organization, 2011). In this context, it is important to equip primary and secondary school students with relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes in relation to people with disabilities, because "only in this way will they be able and willing to change their environment into a place where people with disabilities will meet social acceptance that will also result in creating relevant facilities for them" (Pogorzelska, 2016, p. 29). Thus, our coding system focused on how relevant and lifelike the stories that featured characters with disabilities were, and the types of information that were provided to students about people with disabilities in the texts. Based on the coding system used for the analysis, the texts were classified according to two categories. One set of texts comprised stories about people with disabilities, while the other group comprised descriptive texts containing information about disability. With respect to the stories, we examined the plot and the characters. The plot indicators were "fictional" and "nonfictional." For this category, the operational definition depended on answers to the following questions: "What is the setting for the story?" "How realistic are the events?" and "Does the plot contain fantastic, fictional elements?" We examined four categories with respect to characters with disabilities: gender, age, lifelikeness, and social status. The indicators in the gender category were "male," "female," and "mixed group." The operational definition in this category was that the text contained one or more people with disabilities whose basic characteristics represented them as males or females based on their described physical attributes, their name, and other distinguishing characteristics. The indicators in the age category were "adult," "child," and "elderly person." The operational definition in this category was that the text contained one or more people with disabilities who were represented as an adult, child, or older adult based on their described physical attributes, clues about their age, or other distinguishing characteristics such as behavior, occupation, or role in the family (Fig. 1 *comes here*).

The category of lifelikeness contained two indicators: "fictional" and "nonfictional." The operational definition was based on whether there was anything supernatural in the description of the character in terms of

1. Stories
- **1.1. Plot indicators**
  - *1.1.1. Fiction*
  - *1.1.2. Nonfiction*
- **1.2. Characters with a disability**
  - *1.2.1. Gender*
    - 1.2.1.1. Male
    - 1.2.1.2. Female
    - 1.2.1.3. Mixed group
  - *1.2.2. Age*
    - 1.2.2.1. Adult
    - 1.2.2.2. Child
    - 1.2.2.3. Elderly person
  - *1.2.3. Lifelikeness*
    - 1.2.3.1. Fictional
    - 1.2.3.2. Nonfictional
  - *1.2.4. Social status*
    - 1.2.4.1. Elite
    - 1.2.4.2. Nonelite

2. Other
- 2.1. Texts with evidence-based information about disability

Fig. 1. Coding categories and textual analysis indicators.

1. Gender
- *1.1 Female*
- *1.2 Male*
- *1.3 Mixed group*

2. Age
- *2.1. Child*
- *2.2. Adult*
- *3.3. Elderly person*

3. Participation
- *3.1. Alone*
- *3.2. Together with other people with disabilities*
- *3.3. Together with nondisabled people*

4. Relation
- *4.1. Alone*
- *4.2. Close relation (family and friends)*
- *4.3. Distant relation*

5. Physical activity
- *1.1. Inactive*
- *1.2. Active: sport*
- *1.3. Entertainment*
- *1.4. Work*
- *1.5. Education*
- *1.6. Daily routine*

6. Level of physical activity
- *6.2 Elite*
- *6.2. Nonelite*

7. Type of disability
- *7.1. Visual impairment*
- *7.2. Hearing impairment*
- *7.3. Physical disability*
- *7.4. Cognitive disability*
- 7.5. *Mental health and emotional disability*

Fig. 2. Coding categories and image analysis indicators.

their appearance and abilities. The "social status" category included two indicators: "elite" and "nonelite." Elite characters were those people who were described as successful and popular, and who were famous for the activity in which they were engaged. The operational definition of the nonelite characters was that they were not famous and had an ordinary job.

Image analysis

In the first half of the analysis process, we reviewed all 5535 images in the 49 textbooks and selected those with disability-related content. These pictures became the analysis units and were coded independently by choosing one indicator from each category (Fig. 2). The coding system for the analysis was developed from previous code lists based on the literature review (Hum et al., 2011; Táboas-Pais & Rey-Cao, 2012; Vidal-Albelda & Martínez-Bello, 2017;) by selecting those codes that were relevant to our analysis. The coding scheme consisted of seven categories: gender, age, participation, relation, physical activities, level of physical activity, and type of disability (Fig. 2 *comes here)*.

The indicators for the gender category were "male," "female," and "mixed group." The operational definition in this category was that the picture contained one or more people whose basic characteristics represented them as males or females based on their physical attributes, hairstyle, makeup, clothing, and other distinguishing features. The indicators for the age category were "adult," "child," or "elderly person." The operational definition in this category was based on the character's appearance in the image according to their physical characteristics: gray hair and wrinkles for older adults, or clothing. The relation category contained the following indicators: "alone," "close relation," or "distant relation." The operational definition for these indicators was whether the person with a disability was alone or in company in the image, and how they were related to the people with whom they were pictured. We examined signs of the relationship, such as physical proximity, body language, and touch, as well as other characteristics that indicated the quality of the relationship. The physical activity category indicators were "inactive" or "active," and within the indicator "active" there were different domains (Fig. 2). The operational definition in this category was whether the person with a disability was active or passive in the picture, and, if active, the characteristics, location, and material conditions of the activity were decisive. The participation category indicators were "alone," "together with other people with disabilities," and "together with nondisabled people." The operational definition in this category was based on whether the character with a disability was seen in the image alone, in the company of other people with disabilities, or with nondisabled people. The level of activity category contained two indicators: "elite" and "nonelite." The operational definition in this category was whether the person with a disability was famous for their activity and/or whether a professional competition (Paralympic Games) or performance venue was recognizable in the picture. The last category in the image analysis was type of disability. It contained five different indicators, according to the main categories of disability type. The operational definition in this category was the presence of characters and devices that referred to certain types of disability, such as wheelchairs or guide dogs.

Procedure

Three independent coders, who were English teachers were prepared for coding, introduced them to coding rules and coding indicators. During the preparation, we used images and texts that did not come from the books analysed in the research. At the end of the training, the coders analyzed 30 randomly selected images, and 20 non-randomly selected images among which all category indicators occurred (Lacy & Riffe, 1996). We proceeded similarly to testing the text analysis, we tested 30 texts, of which 20 were randomly selected and 10 were selected according to the code categories. To be able to assess the agreement of the coders, inter-rater reliability statistic was calculated (Fleiss,). Fleiss Kappa of the text analysis ($K = 0.836$) and the picture analysis ($K = 0.807$) showed high inter-rater reliability.

The textual and pictorial analyses were performed using a content analysis method. As a first step, the coders tagged the images and texts in the textbooks in which the representation of disability was detected. The selected texts and images became the analysis units that the coders examined based on the coding system. The independent coders used a table containing the categories and indicators to carry out the procedure. The coders assigned a code to each unit of analysis (text or image) by selecting one indicator from each category according to the operational definitions. When the coding was finished, the coders compared the codes. Where there was disagreement, they discussed their opinions until they reached a consensus.

The codes were recorded and processed in the SPSS 26 statistical system. We calculated the frequency of each indicator within the categories and then performed a cross-tabulation analysis.

Results

Out of the 49 textbooks analyzed, nine textbooks contained content related to disability. Among the 4112 textual tasks, we found 19 disability-related tasks (0.46%), while only 17 of the 5535 images contained disability-related content (0.30%). Based on our examination of the entire sample, we can conclude that disability is rarely represented in the EFL textbooks used in primary and secondary education in Hungary.

Textual analysis

Among the texts with disability-related content ($n = 19$), three were descriptive and contained evidence-based information or presented sign language and modern tools to help people with disabilities. The other 16 texts presented detailed life stories. There were three fictional and 13 nonfictional stories. Among the nonfictional stories ($n = 13$), the main character in 11 stories was a person with a disability. In contrast, in two cases the protagonist was not disabled but was somehow related to disability in the story. One of the topics was fundraising for war victims, and the other was about the life of a boy who recovered from depression by working as a volunteer for a Paralympic basketball team.

The gender category included three indicators: "male," "female," and "mixed group." These indicators referred to the person with a disability in the story. The disabled characters in the stories ($n = 16$) comprised equal numbers of males (50%, $n = 8$) and females (50%, $n = 8$). There were no representations of any mixed-gender groups of people with disabilities.

In terms of texts dealing with types of disability ($n = 18$), the biggest proportion were related to people with physical disabilities (56%, $n = 10$). Texts related to visual or hearing impairments were found in equal proportions (16%, $n = 3$ in each case). The stories mentioned one person with a cognitive disability and one person with a mental and emotional disability (5% in each case).

With respect to the level of activity, two groups were distinguished. The elite group included people who were successful and well-known for their activities (famous actors, athletes, artists, and scientists). The other, nonelite group included characters who were not world-famous for their activities but who had ordinary jobs and lives. In the case of the three texts that did not feature any characters, we were unable to decide on activity level, thus we examined activity levels in 16 texts. In 75% of these 16 texts ($n = 12$), the characters included famous and popular people with disabilities, while four texts presented ordinary people with disabilities. With respect to the association between the variables, most of the people with disabilities who were engaged in elite-level activities ($n = 12$) were famous sportspeople (58%, $n = 7$). Apart from them, the group of famous people included three actors and a scientist.

Image analysis

Although most of the texts included images, we compiled a different coding system for the image analysis, as it was possible to examine the images from different perspectives compared to the texts.

Of the 17 images with disability-related content, 14 depicted people with disabilities. Three images had content referring to disability—the British Sign Language alphabet, an unauthorised car parked in a parking space for disabled people, and a high-visibility walking stick.

The 14 images of people with disabilities featured in the textbooks were first analyzed from a gender perspective. We found that 57.1% of the images depicted females, and 42.9% males.

In terms of the type of disability, our analysis showed that eight images were related to physical disability and four images were related to hearing impairment. In contrast, there was one image depicting a person with a cognitive disability and one image depicting a person with a visual impairment.

Our analysis of the pictures ($n = 14$) in terms of physical activity showed that people with disabilities were active in most cases (86%, $n = 12$). Nine pictures represented sporting activities, one depicted work, and two showed communication in sign language.

The images were also analyzed in terms of whether the people with disabilities represented in them were ordinary people or famous people. Of the 14 images depicting people with disabilities, 10 depicted a famous, popular person (71%). The contingency table showed that eight of these 10 famous people were athletes, one was an actor, and one was a musician.

Finally, the images were analyzed in terms of whether the person with a disability was alone or in company. In 64% of the images, the person with a disability was alone. In the six pictures in which people with disabilities were with other people, in most cases (83%, five pictures) they were depicted in the company of other people with disabilities. There was only one image in which a person with a disability was shown with nondisabled people.

Discussion

The extent of disability-related content in EFL textbooks

Our findings reveal that disability as curriculum content was present in the EFL textbooks, although it appeared to differing extents in the different sample books. In the case of all the examined textbooks, we found that the representation of people with disabilities in the texts and visual material was extremely limited. Some of the sample books presented a "cultural silence" (Crawford, 2004, p. 1), as they lacked any textual or visual representation of disability or people with disabilities. These results are consistent with textbook analysis research on disability representation in other countries (Cheng & Beigi, 2011; Pogorzelska, 2016; Hodkinson et al., 2018). The underrepresentation of people with disabilities indicates that the English language textbooks used in Hungary do not strive for inclusive content. They do not reflect the repertoire of the full society, as people with disabilities are invisible in these textbooks. As David Sadker notices, "the most fundamental and oldest form of bias in instructional materials is the complete or relative exclusion of a group" (Sadker, n.d.). Textbooks containing this type of bias can give students the impression that people with disabilities are not relevant in society (Hardin & Preston, 2001).

The social context of depictions of people with disabilities in the textbooks

Gender representation is balanced, although there are slightly more disabled women than men in the pictures. However, there is an imbalance in the portrayal of disability types. Both in the texts and in the pictures, there is a predominance of people with physical disabilities, most of whom are sitting in wheelchairs. Our findings are in line with those of many other studies, where people in wheelchairs appear in school textbooks as symbols of disability (Táboas-Pais & Rey-Cao, 2012; Vidal-Albelda & Martínez-Bello, 2017; Gonzales-Palomares & Rey Chao, 2020). The characters with disabilities in the texts and pictures of textbooks are thus portrayed from a very narrow perspective and do not represent the diversity of people with disabilities.

In terms of the social context of the representations, our analysis revealed that one common theme in most of the examined pictures and texts was that people with disabilities were typically represented as participants in prestigious sporting events. People with disabilities participating in elite activities (actors, scientists, and Paralympic sportsmen/women) were visibly overrepresented in the textbooks and were typically depicted as heroes. A considerable number of the titles used for the stories also referred to this concept, containing phrases such as "My special hero" or "My hero." Within the stories, descriptions of people with disabilities likewise included phrases such as "amazing," "tried hard and achieved a lot," "she never gave up," "he never looked back," and "it was a heroic struggle." These people's stories illustrate how they were able to achieve success and become famous despite their disabilities.

Textbooks and various disability awareness programs commonly inform students about disabilities by presenting them with descriptions of famous and successful people with disabilities (Táboas-Pais & Rey--Cao, 2012; Vidal-Albelda & Martínez-Bello, 2017; Gonzales-Palomares & Rey Chao, 2020). On the one hand, such descriptions can usefully serve as inspiring, positive examples, and also can challenge the stereotype that people with disabilities are passive, dependent, and helpless (Pogorzelska, 2016). On the other hand, they can easily lead to overestimation of people with disabilities. Presenting only one interpretation of an issue, situation, or group of people may perpetuate bias, as such accounts simplify and distort complex issues, and personalities by omitting different perspectives and situations (Sadker, n.d.). This depiction can often lead to stereotypes that make people with disabilities appear unnaturally heroic and positive, resulting in imbalance and selectivity in their representation (Coomer et al., 2017). Moreover, it does not give students the opportunity to learn about the everyday lives of people with disabilities and confront issues related to them.

Another common feature of the representation of people with disabilities is that they can be seen alone or with other sportspeople with disabilities, but rarely in the company of relatives and family members or with other nondisabled people. This portrayal, where people with disabilities only interact with people with disabilities, can also lead to bias by implying that they are isolated from other cultural communities. While this form of bias might be less harmful than omission or stereotypes, isolation portrays non-dominant groups as peripheral members of society (Sadker, n.d.)

Only a small proportion of the analyzed representations depicted people with disabilities in common, everyday situations. We hardly found no stories or pictures in which people with disabilities were with their families or spouses, or in the company of nondisabled peers.

Our analysis revealed only one text containing a typical, lifelike story. This concerned a teacher with a visual impairment. The story described a day in the teacher's life, how she taught at school, how she recognized her students primarily by their voices, how she used a guide dog, and how her husband helped her correct her students' tests. It was a genuinely inclusive story, in which a teacher with a visual impairment taught in a majority school. Her students loved and accepted her and helped her to overcome the barriers arising from her disability. By reading and studying such stories, students can develop a relevant image of people with disabilities and acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can help them to change their environment into a place where people with disabilities encounter social acceptance and are provided with appropriate facilities.

From the perspective of inclusive education, it would be necessary to rethink the content of these materials and to ensure that EFL textbooks feature stories about inclusion. At a time when teachers have to teach from centralised, prescriptive curricula and adapted textbooks, it is

imperative that curriculum materials and content standards reflect the diverse backgrounds, histories, and narratives of people in society (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 2005; Aronson & Laughter, 2015; Waitoller & Thorius, 2016).

Conclusion

The results of the present study show that the representation of disability in textbooks is limited and mostly confined to stereotypes. Depictions of people with disabilities in textbooks are mostly related to elite competitive sports. At the same time, there are no depictions of people with disabilities engaged in everyday, school, or leisure activities with friends and family. Although the medical depiction of people with disabilities as dependent and helpless is less present in the EFL textbooks used in Hungary than in those used in Iran (Cheng & Beigi, 2011), Poland (Pogorzelska, 2016), and Pakistan (Gulab & Khokhar, 2018), the depiction of people with disabilities by the use of positive stereotypes does not provide an adequate representation of people with disabilities. Both the underrepresentation of disability and the depiction of disability predominantly from one perspective prevent students from learning about people with disabilities and the discrimination that affects them.

Our findings further highlight the need to increase awareness regarding the disability-related textual and pictorial content in school textbooks and to overcome stereotypes of people with disabilities. In essence, textbook content related to persons with disabilities does not comply with the provisions of Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities, as the lack of representation and representations containing negative stereotypes do not promote the pursuit of equal opportunities in society, but rather may reinforce stereotypes about persons with disabilities.

A far more coherent and consistent approach to disability in EFL textbooks in Hungary is required, in which the everyday lives, perspectives and narratives of people with disabilities are presented. Greater attention to the conscious framing of disability concepts in EFL textbooks could increase the probability of textbook content enhancing students' positive attitudes toward their disabled peers in schools, and toward people with disabilities in society as a whole.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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