

AGENCY FOR AUDIO AND
AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA SERVICES

Gender in the Media 2019:

**Analysis of Gender Aspects in Children's Programmes Aired by the National Terrestrial
Television Channels**

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I. Introduction: Research Problem

In the popular idealized depictions, “childhood” structure is ascribed the meanings of carelessness, innocence, naivety and happiness. Nevertheless, look deeper under the surface of this idealized and simplified concept and one shall uncover meanings that do not always correspond with this idealized perception. The key discourse making configurations - the family, the formal educational structures and the *media* - often produce a normative imprint of what the role of men and women *should* be in the social domain, what the female body *should* look like, what the "objective" criteria about the dichotomous gender differentiation are, how girls *should* behave, and what *should* be the boys' behaviour, etc. In other words, they produce a normative gender discourse that is not always transparent or indisputable.

Since 2012, as a result of the special attention dedicated to raising awareness about gender issues and gender equality in the audiovisual services, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAAVMS), has initiated and published several studies and analyses. They focused on gender and gender role representation in the audiovisual programs, as well as on the presence of language and content that may lead to sex- and gender-based discrimination. The research study on Gender in the Media of 2019 is the latest in this series. The necessity for it, as is also the case of previous AAAVMS studies on the topic of gender, stems partly from the articles of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men¹. According to this Law the AAAVMS is obligated to conduct analyses in order to determine the fashion of portrayal of women and men in the programme contents (Article 17, Paragraph 3), and to establish the treatment of gender issues in the mass media (Article 17, Paragraph 4).

The question of the gender portrayal in the domestic children's programmes has not been studied comprehensively so far in the Republic of North Macedonia. This study focuses on precisely this issue. By using mixed research methods (*content analysis*, *discourse analysis* and *thematic analysis*), it analyses the construction of gender in the programmes for children aired on the Public Service Broadcaster as well as on the private TV stations, in a sample of their content and across all genre variety.

The media – more specifically, children's programmes – play a key role in the production and dissemination of normative notions of gender. Two main paradigms in the literature on the media effects focusing on the issue of children's television programmes may be crystallised (Aubrey & Harrison, 2004²): Cultivation theory and Social learning theory. The cultivation theory suggest there exists a positive correlation between watching television and the worldview that children develop over time - especially with regard to the construction of gender stereotypes. The social learning theory, on the other hand, claims that children tend to adopt gender-specific behaviour through observation and by imitating media content, and to transform information and structures

¹ A consolidated text of the Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men is available at: http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/zakoni/2017/precisten%20tekst%202015%20na%20ZEM_nov.pdf

² Aubrey, J. S., & Harrison, K. (2004). The gender-role content of children's favourite television programs and its links to their gender-related perceptions. *Media psychology*, 6(2), 111-146.

extracted from this content (and from other sources in the social context) into rules of conduct and concepts on which they then base their behaviour.

The regulatory authorities in the broadcasting sphere have a legal obligation to take care of the programme's impact on children's development, to provide equal opportunities for both women and men's representation in the media content and to promote genre diversity in the programmes of the domestic broadcasters. The issue of the content and quality of programmes intended for juvenile audiences consists of two regulatory aspects: (1) minors' protection from content that may harm their physical, mental or moral development – especially content involving pornography or excessive violence (Article 50, Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, hereinafter LAAVMS)³, and (2) protection of the 'interests' of minors as the programmes' users (Article 2 of the LAAVMS). This second aspect involves not only protecting juvenile audiences from the potentially negative effects of the television content, but it also involves a concern for the impact that media content, children's programmes in particular, may have on their mental development.⁴

The results of this study will allow the AAVMS to create the future regulatory policies. Also, these findings should be approached seriously by the production companies creating children's programmes as well, and by the media, when making editorial decisions on how to design their offer for the young audience.

³ The Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services is available at: <https://bit.ly/37Z2ZjX>

⁴ In this context, the Agency has adopted a Rulebook on Minors' Protection, which defines the rules for rating and marking the programmes depending on the age group of the audiences they are suitable for. Available at: https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Pravillnik_za_zastita_na_malloletnite_lica.pdf

II. Methodology

Research Objectives and Questions

Starting from the problem definition, this study aims to investigate the issue of gender equality and the construction of gender stereotypes in the programmes for children of preschool and early school age. This objective has produced two sets of research questions, which require different respective research strategies:

(1) *Quantitative strategy* – in the context of gender issues, it determines the frequency of occurrence of children's shows on the national television channels and the Public Broadcasting Service:

- What is the number of children's shows on the national television channels during the selected period?
- What is the genre distribution of these programmes?
- How many of the protagonists in these programmes are male and how many are female? How many are genderless?

(2) *Qualitative strategy* – to determine how gender issues are treated and how women and men are represented in the children's television shows:

- Who are the main protagonists in a children's programme?
- What role do these protagonists play in the narrative?
- What is the difference in the portrayal of male and female characters, respectively?
- What social roles do the characters of different genders take on?
- What discourse strategies are used in building the male and female characters, respectively?

Basic concepts

The topic of the research requires preliminary definition of several key concepts:

a. *Gender and gender identity*: The distinction between the concepts of "sex" and "gender" as the difference between the *biological determinants* and the *social construction* of the social roles' division is the fundamental locus of the feminist theories and is a response to the functionalist models of social organization. These essentially heteronormative theories derive the gender roles from the biological fact of sex-based difference (see Shapiro, 1981⁵; McGuinness & Pribam, 1979⁶)

b. *Gender equality*: According to the *Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020*,⁷ "gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations, needs of women and men, are respected, taken

⁵ Shapiro, J. (1981). Anthropology and the Study of Gender. *Soundings*, 446-465.

⁶ McGuinness, D. & Pribam, K.H. (1979). "Origins of sensory biases in gender differences." In Cognitive Growth and Development edited by M. Bortner New York: Brunner/Mazel.

⁷ 2013-2020 Gender Equality Strategy, available at:

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiHza61sNjnAhUFy>

into account, valued and supported in an equal fashion. This means that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities shall not depend on whether they were born as men or women. It is based on the principles of human rights and social justice. It is clear that gender equality and women's empowerment are essential to addressing the primary concern to poverty and insecurity and to achieving sustainable development with humans as the focus.” (GES, 2013:7).

c. Gender-based equal opportunity: According to the *2013-2020 Gender Equality Strategy*, “equal opportunity means fair treatment of both men and women, in accordance with their personal needs; impartiality especially with regard to their rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. Gender equity is concerned with the promotion of personal, social, cultural, political and economic equity for all (GES, 2013: 7).

d. Gender stereotypes: According to the Council of Europe's *2018-2023 Gender Equality Strategy*,⁸ “gender stereotypes are preconceived social and cultural patterns or ideas whereby males and females are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their sex. Gender stereotypes are both a result and a source of deeply rooted attitudes, values, norms and prejudices. They are used to justify and maintain the historically ingrained relations of power of men over women as well as the sexist attitudes which are holding back the advancement of gender equality” (GES, 2018: 16).

e. Age periodisation: This study uses the periodisation in child development suggested by Feldman⁹ (Feldman, 2009:6) according to which developmental psychologists divide humans' lifespan into eight general categories: (1) prenatal period (ending at birth); (2) infancy and toddlerhood (stretching from birth until three years of age); (3) early childhood or preschool age (from the third until the sixth year); (4) middle childhood or school age (from six to twelve years of age); (5) adolescence (from the twelfth year until the age of twenty); (6) early adulthood (from twenty to forty years of age); (7) middle adulthood (from forty to sixty-five years of age); and (8) third and fourth age/late adulthood (sixty-five and more). Of relevance to this study are the categories of (1) *preschool age (also known as the period of early childhood)*; (2) *middle childhood or school age*, and (3) *adolescence*.

RNM Regulation and International Documents Related to Gender Issues and Media Content

This study is a result of the obligations that the Macedonian regulations impose on the regulatory authority, i.e. the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS), the broadcasters and the state institutions. These stakeholders' obligations arise from the Constitution of the RNM, the domestic regulations (the Law on AAVMS, the Law on Equal Opportunities for

[aYKHcZ0AX4QFjAAegQIAhAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fmtsp.gov.mk%2FWBStorage%2FFiles%2Fstrategija_rodova_april.doc&usg=AOvVawIUIkNqYPBGTiFbO2w6mqFG](http://mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/strategija_rodova_april.doc)

⁸ 2018-2023 Gender Equality Strategy, available at: http://mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/strategija_rodova_april.doc

⁹ Feldman, R. S. (2009). *Development across the Life Span* (Fifth Ed.). Pearson Education International

Men and Women, the Law on Prevention from and Protection against Discrimination, etc.) as well as certain international documents (United Nations, Council of Europe).

The Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia¹⁰ as the first fundamental value of the State, establishes the protection of fundamental human and civil rights and freedoms recognized by international law (Article 8). "The Republic protects motherhood, children and minors in particular" (Article 42).

The Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services¹¹ sets an obligation for the Agency to "ensure the protection of minors" (Article 6) and to "ensure protection of the users' interests, minors in particular" (Article 2). To this aim, the broadcasters' obligations to protect juveniles laid down in the Law (Article 50), are covered by the Agency's mission to supervise the implementation of the legal provisions. In addition, the basic principles (Article 61) that are to be observed by all broadcasters also include the one about the equal freedoms and rights regardless of one's sex. The radio and television stations are also obliged to respect the prohibition against inciting and spreading discrimination, intolerance or hatred based on one's sex, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity (Article 48). The explicit prohibition of discrimination based on sex, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity poses an extremely important obligation for the broadcasters to adopt a subtle and careful approach to these issues, especially when it comes to children's shows. The Law, in its Article 110, which refers in full to the obligations of the Public Broadcasting Service due to its special mission and roles, states that the Macedonian Radio and Television "shall develop and plan a programme scheme in the interest of the general public, while the programmes [should] be intended for all the segments of society without discrimination". Further, it has an obligation to contribute to the promotion of basic human rights, here also including gender equality, and to ensure the protection of the minors throughout its programme. It has an obligation to inform and educate, but also to "create high quality entertainment programmes for all ages".

Other than prescribing an obligation for the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services to conduct analyses (Article 17, Paragraphs 3 and 4), **the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men**,¹² stipulates additionally (in Article 17, Paragraph 1) that mass media, here also including the broadcasters, have an obligation to "contribute to the development and raising of the awareness about equal opportunities, as well as the equitable participation of women and men in the creation of programme concepts and content". In this context, it should be borne in mind that the national broadcasters' programmes for children, which are the subject of this research, play significant part in constructing the social norms regarding the way the different sexes of the population act in the public and private domains and the expectations that they have in the process of individual transformation.

¹⁰ Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, available at: <https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Odluki%20USTAV/UstavSRSM.pdf>

¹¹ Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, available at: <https://bit.ly/37Z2ZjX>

¹² Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, available at: http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/zakoni/2017/precisten%20tekst%202015%20na%20ZEM_nov.pdf

Article 5 of the **Law on Prevention from and Protection against Discrimination**¹³ stipulates that “any discrimination based on race, colour of skin, social background, national or ethnic origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, belonging to a marginalized group, language, citizenship, social background, education, religion or faith, political or other beliefs, disability, age, family or marital status, wealth status, health status, personal traits and social status, or any other grounds – is prohibited.” In fact, this is a good example of harmonization in terms of the prohibited grounds for discrimination between this law and the explicit prohibition of discrimination laid down in the Law on AAVMS.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child¹⁴ of 1989, stipulates that children have the right to be provided with the conditions necessary to develop their full potential – education, access to information, entertainment, etc. In this regard, the media have an obligation to meet these needs.

Relevant literature

Using the selection of topics and the choice of methods as criteria, one may crystallise four research branches of gender-related investigations into media content for children. The division we shall present here corresponds, more or less, to the different epistemologies within which respective researches operate, but also, to the particularities of researchers’ different disciplines:

(1) Studies that analyse gender topics in children programming using the method of *content analysis*; (2) Research of the narrative structures in media content – a structuralist outlook; (3) a deconstructive research angle covering cultural and discourse aspects of the issue; and (4) interdisciplinary literature that deals with media influence, media effects and the use of media by the young audiences.

For the purposes of this study, a review was necessary of only the first two research branches, while the method of the third one, will be explained briefly in the section on the methods of data collection and analysis, as it takes up a small portion of the present study. Finally, the nature of the research questions defined in this study does not necessitate presentation of the main branches of the paradigm that deals with the media effects - this aspect should be the subject of another study.

First, probably the largest corpus of academic texts of the kind of literature that analyses media content and children's TV programmes, focuses on the problem of stereotypical presentation of

¹³ Law on Prevention from and Protection against Discrimination, available at:

<http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/zakoni/2019/27.5-Zakon%20za%20zastita%20od%20diskriminacija.pdf>

¹⁴ The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child UNICEF and Oslo <http://www.mediawise.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Oslo-Challenge.pdf>

gender and gender roles in media content by means of analysing large number of cases - Large N. (An integrated overview of this approach in the last decade may be found in Hermansson & Zepernick [eds.], 2018¹⁵; Gotz & Lemish (eds.), 2012¹⁶; Lemish 2010¹⁷). This literature, which is based primarily on the implementation of the Quantitative and (Summative) Qualitative Content Analysis (see Hsieh & Shannon, 2005¹⁸, Krippendorff, 2004 [1980]¹⁹), identifies the stereotypical representations, classifies their types and measures the frequency of their occurrence. From these data, this type of literature draws conclusions about the ways in which media simplify social reality, taking crucial part in the construction and reproduction of gender roles. Typically, this kind of literature does not measure the effects or the impact that this programme has on the target audiences. It rather refers to established communication theories, such as, for instance, cultivation theory, so that it would contextualise the findings from the content analysis of the media programme. Several groups of findings stand out from this kind of literature and they are distributed according to the type of programme and the audience group they aim at:

At the basic level of analysis, the research in this paradigm, measuring the frequencies of gender representation, shows that, quantitatively unequal gender representation in the media programmes for babies, children and adolescents, continues to be present in media programming worldwide. This trend has been consistent for decades (see Smith & Cook, 2008²⁰). In a study by Gerding and Signorielli (Gerding & Signorielli, 2014²¹), which analyses the content of two genre types in 49 editions of shows intended for the so-called "tween" generation²² in the United States, the female characters in the shows that can be classified as "action/adventure" – are underrepresented – relative to the total population of women in the United States. The study, however, suggests that within the genre that the authors refer to as the "teenage scene," the ratio between male and female characters corresponds to the gender distribution of the country's total population. One previous research, on content intended for pre-schoolers, which sampled programmes aired by the Disney Channel, Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon, found that 66% of the characters on these channels were male (Hentges & Case, 2012²³). And, finally, a global study of the trends in children's

¹⁵ Hermansson, C., & Zepernick, J. (2018) *The Palgrave Handbook of Children's Film and Television*.

¹⁶ Gotz, M. & Lemish, D., (eds.). 2012. *Sexy Girls, Heroes and Funny Losers: Gender Representations in Children's TV Around the World*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

¹⁷ Lemish, D., (2010). *Screening Gender in Children's TV: The Views of Producers Around the World*. London and New York: Routledge.

¹⁸ Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative health research*, 15(9), 1277-1288.

¹⁹ Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage. Krippendorff problematizes the validity of the distinction between the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the content, since, as he says "[U]ltimately, all readings of a text are qualitative, even when certain characteristics of the text are later turned into figures" (2004, p.16)

²⁰ Smith, S. L., & Cook, C. A. (2008). Gender stereotypes: An analysis of popular films and TV. In *Conference* (Vol. 208, pp. 12-23). Available at: https://seejane.org/wp-content/uploads/GDIGM_Gender_Stereotypes.pdf

²¹ Gerding, A., and Signorielli, N., (2014) "Gender Role in Tween Television Programming: A Content Analysis of Two Genres." *Sex Role* 70 (1): 43-56

²² 'Tween' refers to the population that is just coming out of the childhood period, but has not entered the more mature teenage years, i.e. the population between 8 and 12 years of age.

²³ Hentges, Beth, and Kim Case. 2012. "Gender Representations on Disney Channel, Cartoon Network, and Nickelodeon Broadcasts in the United States." *Journal of Children and Media* 7 (3): 319-33.

programmes, by Götz & Lemish, 2012,²⁴ offers strong arguments about the unequal gender distribution. In their research, conducted across 24 countries, on a sample of programme with at least 5% of the market share, they analysed a total of 22541 characters in the children's programmes. The analysis showed that 67% of the characters were male, while 30% were female. Very few of the characters had neither female nor male gender roles. There was also a large gap between the superhero characters – in this same global study, 32% were female lead superhero roles, while 68% were male (Götz, Neubauer & Winter, 2012²⁵).

The findings of this research corpus, as expected, also indicate there is consistent gender stereotyping of the male and female characters. Quantitative and qualitative content analyses in these studies suggest that the identity of female characters is marked by the meanings of emotionality, passivity, consumerism, physical beauty, etc. (Lamb & Brown 2006²⁶), while the male identity is marked by rationality, determination, physical strength, leadership, etc. (Brown et. al. 2009²⁷). Aggressive masculinization in male characters, has also been well documented. As in the previous decades (see Aubrey & Harrison, 2004²⁸; Barcus, 1983²⁹; Levinson, 1975³⁰) boys in children's programmes have been presented as more active, more capable, and more responsible, but also more aggressive, louder and more assertive/intrusive than the girls' characters.

Physical appearance and sexualisation are a subject of analysis in several studies in this paradigm (Lemish & Elias, 2018³¹; Gerding & Signorielli 2014³²; Götz & Lemish³³; Götz & Herche, 2012³⁴). For example, the analysis of the animated children's programme conducted by Goethe and Herch (Götz & Herche, 2012) identifies the depicted physical characteristics and body proportions of the characters. The authors, infer the measures of proportion for the coding framework, from certain social psychology research into which body constitution is considered as preferential and

²⁴ Götz, M & Lemish, D, (2012) Gender representations in children's television worldwide: a Comparative study in 24 countries

²⁵ Götz, M., Neubauer, G., & Winter, R. (2012). Heroes, Planners and Funny Losers: Masculinities Represented in Male Characters in Children's TV. *Maya Götz & Dafna Lemish (eds)*, 107-130.

²⁶ Lamb, Sharon, and Lyn M. Brown. (2006). *Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters from Marketers' Schemes*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

²⁷ Brown, Lyn M., Sharon Lamp, and Mark Tappen. (2009). *Packaging Boyhood: Saving Our Sons from Superheroes, Slackers, and Other Media Stereotypes*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

²⁸ Aubrey, J. S., & Harrison, K. (2004). The gender-role content of children's favorite television programs and its links to their gender-related perceptions. *Media psychology*, 6(2), 111-146.

²⁹ Barcus, F. E. (1983). *Images of life on children's television: Sex roles, minorities, and families*. New York: Praeger.

³⁰ Levinson, R. M. (1975). From Olive Oyl to Sweet Polly Purebread: sex role stereotypes and televised cartoons. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 9(3), 561.

³¹ Lemish, D. & Elias, N., (2018). Perpetuating Gender Stereotypes from Birth: Analysis of TV Programs for Viewers in Diapers

³² Gerding, A., and Signorielli, N., (2014) "Gender Role in Tween Television Programming: A Content Analysis of Two Genres." *Sex Role* 70 (1): 43–56

³³ Götz, M. & Lemish, D. (2012) Gender representations in children's television worldwide: A comparative study of 24 countries' in M. Götz and D. Lemish. *Sexy Girls, Heroes and Funny Losers: Gender Representations in Children's TV around the World*, 9-48.

³⁴ Götz, M., & Herche, M. (2012). 'Wasp Waists and V-shape Torso': Measuring the Body of the 'Global' Girl and Boy in Animated Children's Programs. *Sexy Girls, Heroes and Funny Losers. Gender Representation in Children's TV around the World*. Peter Lang, München, 49-68.

considered beautiful by the population (Little, Johnes & De Bruine, 2011³⁵, Zebrowitz, 2009³⁶, Singh, 1993³⁷). Subsequently they measure the characteristics of a sample of 102 female characters according to (1) the ratio of the width of their waists and hips, (2) the ratio between the width of their waists and shoulders, and (3) the ratio between the height of their lower and their upper body. The authors conclude that, according to the first two criteria, with the animated female characters, the extremely thin body is being "normalized", while, according to the third criterion, the extremely long legs are "normalized". Only 1/3 of female characters in the animated children's movies have vertical proportions that are possible to find in a real-life average body, while more than ½ of the female characters have leg length that is impossible to find in real life. The physical constitution of the male characters also differs dramatically from the constitution that can be found in "reality," although more male than female characters are being represented with average real proportions. With ¼ of the female and male characters, the physical characteristics are sexually marked – visibly masculinized or feminized.

Within this corpus, Lemish & Elias, 2018,³⁸ analyse the stereotypical gender representations specifically in the programmes for babies and children of up to two years of age – an issue of great importance for the early development, yet neglected by the communication scientists. The authors argue that, despite the recommendations of institutions such as the *American Paediatricians' Association*, which both in 1999 and in 2013 recommended that children under the age of two, should not be exposed to television programme at all, the media industry – in search for new audiences and more profit – has been producing and broadcasting programmes that are obviously intended for this population, as it uses minimal speech and it is based on elementary forms of narratives and concepts.

Additionally, according to research on the topics of gender roles and child psychology, children up to the age of two have the ability to ascribe gender markers to their environment and, thus, gender constructs in the media have the power to determine their future gender identity. Lemish and Elias (2018), point out that, according to this literature, babies in their first year are able to distinguish between male and female voices and characters (Bussey and Bandura 1999³⁹; Leinbach and Fagot 1993⁴⁰), while, in their second and third years, they demonstrate awareness of the gender

³⁵ Little, A. C., Jones, B. C., & DeBruine, L. M. (2011). *Facial attractiveness: evolutionary based research. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 366(1571), 1638–1659. doi:10.1098/rstb.2010.0404

³⁶ Zebrowitz, L. A., & Montepare, J. M. (2008). *Social Psychological Face Perception: Why Appearance Matters. Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2(3), 1497–1517

³⁷ Singh, D. (1993). *Adaptive significance of female physical attractiveness: Role of waist-to-hip ratio. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65(2), 293–307

³⁸ Lemish, D. & Elias, N., (2018). Perpetuating Gender Stereotypes from Birth: Analysis of TV Programs for Viewers in Diapers

³⁹ Bussey, Kay, and Albert Bandura. (1999). "Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation." *Psychological Review* 106 (4): 676–713. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295x>.

⁴⁰ Leinbach, M.D., and Fagot, J. B., (1993). "Categorical Habituation to Male and Female Faces: Gender Schematic Processing in Infancy." *Infant Behavior and Development* 16 (3): 317–32. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0163-6383\(93\)80038-a](https://doi.org/10.1016/0163-6383(93)80038-a).

stereotypes and may exhibit gender preferences (Ruble et al. 2006⁴¹; Eichstedt et al. 2002⁴²; Quinn et al. 2002⁴³).

The topic of this cluster of research is the construction of stereotyped character traits for the male and female characters. Thus, male characters are more often depicted as the ones who are louder and who threaten more often than the females (Aubrey & Harrison, 2004⁴⁴), as more ready to confront (Maccoby, 2004⁴⁵), as more capable of taking on more responsible positions than the females, or as rational (Baker & Raney, 2007⁴⁶). What is interesting in this cluster are the patterns and types of violence used by male and female characters in the children's TV programme. Findings reached through content analysis suggest that the "male" aggression of the characters in children's TV programme is more often presented as physical aggression and physical violence, whereas "female" aggression is presented in more subtle forms, as a tendency towards maliciousness, gossiping and plotting (Butovskaya, Timentschik, & Burkova, 2007⁴⁷; Underwood, 2004⁴⁸). Thus, in this sense, the study by Luther & Legg (2010),⁴⁹ explores the gender-based differences in representing the social and physical aggression in the animated children's films. Using a sample of animated films taken from the Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon and Toon Disney, the authors demonstrate a significant positive correlation between the male characters and physical aggression and the female characters and what the authors call "social aggression". Their study also found that both the "aggressor" and the "endurer of aggression" in the animated films on these channels are more often children or teenage characters, rather than adults. They also state that, in the majority of individual acts of violence, the characters who endure violence do not resort to retaliation or to defensive counter-action. This analysis uses a two-step coding framework, in which, at the first level, the analysts have encoded basic information about the animated film, while the individual instances of aggression have been encoded at the second, sub-narrative level. The authors point out that longitudinal analyses are needed, which will not include only analysis of animated films, in order to determine the trends related to the gender-determined types of

⁴¹ Ruble, Dianne N., Carol Lynn Martin, and Sheri A. Berenbaum. 2006. "Gender Development." In *Handbook of Child Psychology: Social, Emotional, and Personality Development*, edited by Nancy Eisenberg, William Damon, and Richard M. Lerner, 858–932. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

⁴² Eichstedt, Julie A., Lisa A. Serbin, Diane Poulin-Dubois, and Maya G. Sen. 2002. "Of Bears and Men: Infants' Knowledge of Conventional and Metaphorical Gender Stereotypes." *Infant Behavior & Development* 25 (3): 296–310. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0163-6383\(02\)00081-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0163-6383(02)00081-4).

⁴³ Quinn, Paul C., Joshua Yahr, Abbie Kuhn, Alan M. Slater, and Olivier Pascalis. 2002. "Representation of the Gender of Human Faces by Infants: A Preference for Female." *Perception* 31 (9): 1109–21. <https://doi.org/10.1068/p3331>.

⁴⁴ Aubrey, J. S., & Harrison, K. (2004). The gender-role content of children's favorite television programs and its links to their gender-related perceptions. *Media psychology*, 6(2), 111-146.

⁴⁵ Maccoby, E. E. (2004). Aggression in the Context of Gender Development.

⁴⁶ Baker, K., & Raney, A. A. (2007). Equally super?: Gender-role stereotyping of superheroes in children's animated programs. *Mass Communication & Society*, 10(1), 25-41.

⁴⁷ Butovskaya, M. L., Timentschik, V. M., & Burkova, V. N. (2007). Aggression, conflict resolution, popularity, and attitude to school in Russian adolescents. *Aggressive Behavior: Official Journal of the International Society for Research on Aggression*, 33(2), 170-183.

⁴⁸ Underwood, M. K. (2004). III. Glares of contempt, eye rolls of disgust and turning away to exclude: Non-verbal forms of social aggression among girls. *Feminism & Psychology*, 14(3), 371-375.

⁴⁹ Luther, C. A., & Legg Jr, J. R. (2010). Gender differences in depictions of social and physical aggression in children's television cartoons in the US. *Journal of children and media*, 4(2), 191-205.

aggression, and point out that, potentially, media content constructing gender-differentiated forms of violence encourages such types of behaviour in the formative years.

One of the important loci of gender construction and gender roles is the family. However, even the concept of “family” itself is media-constructed. Therefore, what is relevant for the focus of this research is the construction of gender roles in the context of so-called “family values” – a concept that may hide behind norms for the gender roles, i.e. the discourse-constructed imperatives according to which children of different sexes *should* behave. Some of the research in this cluster focuses on the constructions of the concept of *family*, which glorify and perpetuate the traditional heteronormative family order, in which there is a strict gender-based division of labour and in which the single-parent families or the families with same-sex parents are considered as a deviant phenomenon. In the research by Lemish, 2012,⁵⁰ a map was made of the depictions of (1) the family and (2) the adults, on a globally relevant sample of children’s programmes. The research identified the gender differences related to family life, which were presented to children. The results show that families are not a visible topic in children’s programmes because in 67% of the total sample had no content related to any concept of the family. Nevertheless, in the portion of programmes that include content about the families, in 85% of the cases it is about well-off families. The family structure in these depictions is described as traditional – depicted are exclusively heterosexual communities, without a single depiction of same-sex parents, or parents of adopted children or single-parent families. In 81% of the depictions, there is no indicator of the gender-based division of labour, but in the cases that do contain such an indicator, the division of labour tends to be traditional. In this cluster, research has been done regarding the issue of consumerism and gender (Chan, 2012⁵¹) and the ethno-cultural marking of the gender differences (Schlote, 2012)⁵².

Second, for the *content analysis* to analyse the content of children's programmes, it must read the elements it analyses within their context, and then extract them from it, quantify them, aggregate the data, and then present them as a decontextualized analysis of this aggregate of concepts. Relevant literature on gender roles in the programmes for children and adolescents, contains a corpus of research that start out from the assumption that each of the elements the programme consists of are contextual parts of a broader *narrative* and, therefore, the constituent elements must be traced along their structural position within that narrative. This assumption is used in the structuralist and functionalist researches that apply, for instance, thematic analysis, narrative analysis, semiotic analysis, etc. This corpus of research deals with the narrative structures in the content, as well as with the development of characters and their function within the narrative (Prinsloo, 2012⁵³; Spry, 2012⁵⁴)

⁵⁰ Lemish (2012) “Without a Family”: Representation of Families in Children’s TV around the World Lemi

⁵¹ Chan, K. (2012). Consumerism and gender in children’s television.

⁵² Schlote, E., (2012) How Diverse Are Superheroines? Ethnically Diverse Girl Characters in Globalized Children’s TV

⁵³ Prinsloo, J. Seductive little girls on children’s TV: Sexualization and gender relations’ in M. Götz and D. Lemish. *Sexy Girls, Heroes and Funny Losers: Gender Representations in Children’s TV around the World*, 69-90.

⁵⁴ Spry, D. (2012). Make her skinnier, make her curvier: Sexualised girlhood in Japanese cartoons. *En: Götz, Maya*, 91-106.

In Prinsloo's narrative analysis (2012), the focus is on the problem of constructing the hypersexualized *female*. More specifically, his analysis raises the question of whether the programmes intended for girls actually validate the sexualized behaviour by their way of representation. And how do they do this? Since the analysis should reveal the strategies of sexualisation, two programmes intended for girls have been selected, which are likely to contain more obvious forms of this kind of strategy. The semiotic and narrative structures of the shows were analysed, based on the five-stage transformative model of Tsvetan Todorov (Todorov, 1975⁵⁵) in which the narrative is transformed through the following stages: (1) equilibrium (balance), (2) disequilibrium (disturbance), (3) acceptance/understanding of the disorder created by the disturbance, (4) an attempt to create order and (5) creation of a new equilibrium. The author also uses the functionalist approach in her analysis of Vladimir Propp's folk tales (Propp, 1968⁵⁶), in order to determine the function of each of the characters within the broader narrative. The uncovering of the structural elements of the narrative in this analysis reveals what kind of drivers of the action are the different-sex characters and what are their motives for action? The author identifies female characters who play the role of heroines in the plot, but also concludes that the sub-narrative motivations for action of these key roles, which create a hypersexualized structure typical for the adult narratives, create a problem. In this way, narrative analysis reveals aspects and nuances that are important for the assessment of gender roles, which cannot be perceived through content analysis.

In this line of research, iconographic visual analysis (Spry, 2012)⁵⁷ deals with the Japanese animated (manga) films watched by audiences of different ages – both adults and children. The analysis is based on some of the premises of Roland Barthes' visual semiology [1968] (Rabaté, 2016⁵⁸) and is organized around several structural elements derived from the narrative: (1) introductions, (2) confrontations, (3) transformations, and (4) manifestation of emotions. Within each of these structural elements, the author finds both explicit and implicit manifestations of gender identity and sexuality – for example, in the structure of introductions, the main character manifests anti-authoritarianism and sexual manipulation. In this way, the analysis draws a multidimensional picture of the character's positioning in the plot. The research on masculinization of the characters in children's programmes in this paradigm can be found in the said study by Götz, Neubauer & Winter, (2012)⁵⁹.

⁵⁵ Todorov, T. (1975). *The fantastic: A structural approach to a literary genre*. Cornell University Press.

⁵⁶ Propp, V. (1968). Morphology of the Folktale, trans. Laurence Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 21.

⁵⁷ Spry, D. (2012). Make her skinnier, make her curvier: Sexualised girlhood in Japanese cartoons. *En: Götz, Maya*, 91-106.

⁵⁸ Rabaté, J. M. (Ed.). (2012). *Writing the image after Roland Barthes*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

⁵⁹ Heroes, planners and funny losers: Masculinities represented in male characters
Maya Götz, Gunter Neubauer and Reinhard Winter

Methods of data collection and analysis

Research techniques

The research questions and the type of programme covered by the analysis have imposed the use of several different methods for data collection and text analysis. The research is based on the methods of (1) *content analysis*, (2) *thematic analysis* and (3) *discourse analysis* (depending on the type of programmes selected for analysis in the third phase of sample selection).

(1) Based on the ontological understanding of what can be called “content”, Krippendorff (2004: 21⁶⁰) makes a distinction between three types of definitions of what should be understood as *content analysis*: (a) definitions that rest on the premise that the content is *inherent* in the text; (b) definitions that presume that content refers to the *condition or characteristics of the text source*, and (c) definitions according to which content *stems from the moment in which the analyst analyses the text* in relation to a particular context. A typical definition of the first type of ontology is Berelson's definition, according to which “content analysis is a research technique for objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifested content of communication” (Berelson, 1952:18⁶¹). The second type of understanding of the nature of content is related to Holsti's definition (1969), according to which “Content analysis is any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying the indicated features of the messages” (Holsti, 1969:14⁶²). Finally, according to Krippendorff, “Content analysis is a technique for drawing replicable and valid conclusions (inferences) derived from texts (and other content that produces meaning) and the contexts in which they are used” (Krippendorff 2004:18). It is obvious that all these definitions agree on the idea that the point of the analysis rests with the criteria of validity (of the measure concepts) and consistency – reliability (credibility) of these concepts to ensure replicability of the analysis. However, each of these is subject to criticism – for example, Berelson's definition focuses on the quantitative aspects of the analysis and perceives them as *decontextualized* manifestations of the text. Holsti's definition has been criticized for presuming that the author's intent (encoding) is closed within the text and that the reader identifies (decodes) what has been closed. Krippendorff's definition seemingly resolves the problems of the first two definitions by focusing on the relationship between the *text* and its *context*. The “context”, in this sense, opens before the researcher the meanings of the concepts and symbols being analysed – the understanding of the meanings, then helps the researcher quantify the qualitative features of the text and place them within the designed code frame. In this sense, what can be considered as “content” is defined as something that arises from the researcher's process of analysis, in relation to a specific context. Nevertheless, this definition has a problem as well, as here, “context” is understood as something less complex than the one in the qualitative approaches, such as that of discourse analysis which can be used to deconstruct complex ideological constructs and the power relations that fluctuate in the cultural and political landscapes, or that of the narrative analysis that

⁶⁰ Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

⁶¹ Berelson, B. (1952). *Content analysis in communication research*.

⁶² Holsti, O. R. (1969). *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley (content analysis)*.

observes the context as an extension of the narrative structure and transformation of the meanings through it, relative to the cultural matrices within which this transformation is taking place. It can be concluded that the method of content analysis, like any other method, has its limitations, but is most appropriate in conditions where there are many cases for analysis, which are impossible to systematically process by using methods that have a different epistemological basis.

(2) The *thematic analysis* is a popular qualitative technique aimed at identifying the topics that spring from the content analysed. Despite this popularity, there is no established or standardized way of implementing it, nor is there a consensus on what constitutes a particular topic (Bryman, 2009⁶³). For example, thematic analysis is an approach used by analysts who perform discourse analysis, grounded theory or narrative analysis. However, thematic analysis may also be part of what is known as content analysis. The topic, as a unit of analysis, is treated differently in different approaches – for instance, it can be considered as a network of different concepts that constitute some sort of consistency of meaning, but may also be treated simply as a code in terms of content analysis. This research adopts the first approach in the form in which this is done in the so-called *thematic networks analysis* (Attride-Stirling, 2001⁶⁴). This is one of the many possible approaches in this technique, but is the most suitable one for the needs of this research – it identifies topics at three semantic levels: (a) level of basic topics, (b) level of organizational topics and (c) level of global topics. The further elaboration of the levels of defining the topics constitutes networks of meanings that arrange the textual material and make it possible for it to be analysed.

(3) *Discourse analysis* in the broadest sense of the word is an analytical project of the social constructivists – a philosophical stance according to which there is no longer a given reality, but the "reality" is always already discursively constructed. Discourse in this broadest sense is language in its social practice. Post-structuralist discursive approaches to media content deconstruct the power relations that are superdetermined by the hegemonic cultural patterns. They deal with “power, dominance, hegemony, inequality, and the discursive processes of their enactment, concealment, legitimation, and reproduction” (Van Dijk 1993⁶⁵). Ruth Wodak (1996⁶⁶) summarizes the principles of *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)*⁶⁷ in several points. Quoted below are the ones that are fully applicable in this research⁶⁸:

- CDA is focused on the social issues. It is not preoccupied with language or speech in the narrower sense of the word, but with the linguistic character of the social and cultural processes and structures. Accordingly, CDA is an interdisciplinary approach.

⁶³ Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford university press.

⁶⁴ Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative research*, 1(3), 385-405.

⁶⁵ Van Dijk, Teun A. (1993) 'Editor's foreword to Critical Discourse Analysis', *Discourse & Society*, 4 (2): 1 3 1-2.

⁶⁶ Wodak, R. (1996) *Disorders of Discourse*. London: Longman.

⁶⁷ This research does not make a semantic distinction between *discourse analysis* and *critical discourse analysis* because everything that is said about CDA on this occasion also applies to *Discourse Analysis* as an approach applied by a number of post-structuralist authors, starting from Michel Foucault to Ernesto Laclau. We took out from our definition the references that suggest “scholarliness” in the approach – for example, when Wodak states, among other things, that CDA is understood as a social **science** discipline that makes its interests explicit.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Titscher, S., Meyer, M., Wodak, R., & Vetter, E. (2000). *Methods of text and discourse analysis: In search of meaning*. Sage. (pp. 146)

- Power relations are related to discourse (Foucault 2010⁶⁹, Bourdieu 1987⁷⁰), while CDA analyses power within the discourse and power over discourse.
- Society and culture are dialectically related to discourse: society and culture are common to discourse, but at the same time, they constitute discourse.
- The use of language can be ideological. In order to analyse this aspect, it is necessary to analyse the texts in order to analyse their interpretation, reception and social effects.
- Discourses are historical (constructed) and can be understood only in terms of their context.

Sample

The contents sample for analysis was made in three phases.

In the *first phase*, selection was made of (a) the television channels the programmes of which would be covered by the analysis, (b) the types of programmes that would be analysed and (c) the time frame that would be analysed:

(a) Given the powers of the regulatory authority, clearly defined in Article 6 of the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, “to ensure the protection of minors” and considering that the television channels broadcasted via a digital terrestrial multiplex have coverage over the entire territory of the RNM and are expected to have the largest production of programmes for children and hold most resources to produce these, selected as part of the sample were all television channels with national coverage (Alfa TV, Kanal 5 TV, Sitel TV, Telma TV and Alsat M TV in Albanian). The sample also includes the two channels of the Public Broadcasting Service (MRT 1 and MRT 2 – Programme in the Albanian language), as the latter has an additional obligation to provide a strong educational component within its programme, as underlined in Article 110.

(b) The time frame (period) of aired materials for analysis was selected. Given that September and October are months in which, after the school year has begun, broadcasters are expected to air educational and entertainment programme for children more frequently, the survey selected the last 15 days of September and the first 15 days of October 2019.

(c) From the total programme aired by the selected broadcasters, singled out for analysis were the specific types of programme – the programme for preschool children and the programme for children in the early school years (tween generation, aged 8-12). Since the shows for children of domestic and foreign production participate equally in the construction of gender and gender roles in the mediatized public sphere, the sample covers the aired programmes of both domestic and foreign production. Also, because the regulator intends to perceive the full diversity of the programme intended for children, the sample includes all types of relevant programme for

⁶⁹ Foucault, M. (2010) [1972]. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language* [1969]. *London and New York: Vintage Books.*

⁷⁰ Bourdieu, P. (2013) [1987]. *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste.* Routledge.

children: of both educational, informative and entertaining role in all of their forms, as specified in the AAVMS' *Guidelines on Type Classification*⁷¹.

In the **second phase**, a secondary selection was made from the entire sample, of children's programmes that are amenable to different types of analysis. After, in the first phase, all shows planned to be analysed were singled out in a code matrix, in this, second, phase, they were segmented according to their *internal structure*, which implied a procedure of assessment of the specific genre based on the *position of the characters/participants in the action/composition*. According to this criterion, from the total overview of shows one can differentiate four types, described for the needs of this research as (1) *narratives/feature stories* (2) *conversation/talk shows*, (3) *music shows* and (4) *hybrid shows*:

(1) *narrative/feature story* – programme the (a) structure of which is set up around an action that develops through the stages of exposition, plot, culmination, peripeteia, and resolution, and (b) the characters of which are transformed through the action (as in television stories, movies, fables, animated films, etc.). [example: *Once Upon a Time* (MRT 1), *Macedonian Folk Tales* (MRT 1), *Pepa Pig* (Sitel), etc.].

(2) *conversation/talk show* – programme the structure of which is designed as a conversation in which there is no transformation of the action or the characters, [example: *We are all more or less equal* (Telma)].

(3) *music show* – programme in which the key component is the music act [*Superstar* (MRT 1)].

(4) *hybrid show* – programme that combines at least two of the previous types without any of these being predominant [*The 5+ Family* (MRT 1)].

The procedure of secondary sampling has an analytical logic, because different types of shows are amenable to different research approaches.

Finally, in the **third phase** of the sub-sample of compositions structured as *narrative/feature stories of domestic production*, paradigmatic examples were isolated for the purpose of deeper qualitative treatment of the gender issues.

Description of the coding process

In the **first coding phase**, which corresponds with the first sampling phase (described in the previous point), the research implements an elementary content analysis close to the definition suggested by Berelson. At this level, two coders encode all occurrences of children's programme on the selected television channels and the selected timeline excerpts within the code matrix. What is coded are *the name of the television channel, the name of the show, the time of the broadcast, the programme's duration, the characteristics of the production, the genre distribution and the as well as the distribution of the so called specific genre*. The only non-standard variable at this stage

⁷¹ Guidelines on the Manner of Classifying the Types of Audiovisual and Audio Programmes (2014), available at: https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Upatstvo_za_nacinot_na_klasifikacija_na_vidovite.pdf

is the one of the *specific genre*, which here requires a brief explanation. The different genre types in the sample (seen according to the internal structure of the programme, and not according to its function), pose a challenge to the content analysis of a number of cases for several reasons, but above all, because of the way the characters should be viewed. **First**, the characters under analysis do not have the same position in terms of their referentiality. In some of the programmes they are defined by internal-referential criteria, i.e. they are fiction, and the consistency of their behaviour is determined solely by the internal logic of the narrative [*Si bilo ednas* (Once Upon a Time) (MRT1), *Makedonski narodni prikazni* (Macedonian Folk Tales) (MRT1), etc.]. In some of the programmes, the participants in the programme are guests in the studio, so the dialogue does not take place for the purpose of unfolding a certain dramatical plot [*Gore dolu site sme isti* (More or less we are all the same (Telma TV)]. **Second**, a challenge is also posed by the fact that the characters have different positions within the programme's structure. In some of them, the character is transformed throughout the narrative [Macedonian Folk Tales, *Lalalupsi* (MRT1)], in others, it is static and can by and large be reduced to a sum of statements that are *not* directed towards unfolding of the action [5+ *Familija* (5+ Family) (MRT 1)]. As this has implications for the way in which the categories should be constructed for analysis, the code matrix reflects this genre distribution by introducing four *specific genres* as described under the previous heading. At this stage, the entire sample is coded for the elementary unit of analysis – the character or the protagonist. The codes reflect the gender distribution of the characters and, in this context, they introduce variables about the type, age and role of the character in the show and their occupation or hobby – if this information is clearly stated in the show.

In **the second phase of coding**, the two coders continue to insert data into the code matrix, but **only** about programme that can be classified as *domestically produced feature/story*. Krippendorff's approach has been adopted at this level. The *basic unit of analysis* at this stage is the *protagonist* in the action. At this stage, there are seven binary adjectives designed to determine some of the aspects of the characters' traits. They are designed as *semantic differentials* out in terms of five grading positions. The adjectives have been selected based on three criteria:

(1) The first level uses three semantic dimensions generated by Osgood's (1959) factor analysis⁷², according to which one can single out three dimensions of adjectives: the evaluative dimension (what is typical here is the good-bad dichotomy), the action dimension (the typical dichotomy is active-passive), and the potency dimension (typical dichotomy: strong-fragile).

(2) At the second level, the adjectives used are those most frequently found in relevant literature, presented in the literature overview.

(3) At the third level, the choice of adjectives has been crystallized in the pilot phase of the research conducted between 28 and 31 October. The dichotomies isolated and refined following the completion of the pilot process are the following: (potency dimension) *wise/shallow*, *smart/naive*, *strong/fragile*, *dominant/submissive*, (action dimension) *active/passive*, *rationally motivated/emotionally motivated*, and (evaluative dimension) *good/bad*.

⁷² Osgood, C. E. (1964). Semantic differential technique in the comparative study of cultures. *American Anthropologist*, 66(3), 171-200.

In this phase of coding, of the same sample of programme, the analysts also code the instances of occurrence of the 'family' as a topic in the matrix, through two categories - the *position of the character within the family* and the *type of family* about which the narrative/action speaks.

Finally, in the ***third phase***, the analysis focuses on paradigmatic cases of programme and applies to these either thematic network analysis or discourse analysis. The thematic analysis singles out *elementary themes*, *organizational themes*, and *global themes*, focusing on the gender issues, and analyses these in the cultural context in which they have been produced and disseminated. The *discourse analysis* deconstructs the power relations within the paradigmatic narratives.

III. Analysis of the national broadcasters' programmes for children

1. Macedonian Television – First Programme Service (MRT 1)

1. General characteristics, frequency and genre distribution of the MRT 1 programmes for children

On the first television channel of the Macedonian Radio and Television (MRT 1), there is a high frequency of broadcasts and noticeable typical heterogeneity of the programmes intended for children and adolescents. During the selected period of thirty-one days, starting from 15 September until 15 October 2019, this channel broadcasted 225 shows with a total duration of over 93 hours, which is more than all other channels that broadcast nationally, and were subject to this analysis. This figure also includes the editions that premiered during the selected period, as well as those that were rerun.⁷³ A total of 138 shows were aired for the first time during the period selected for analysis, which constituted 61.33% of the total frequency of shows. The analysis of gender issues within children's programmes was made on the entire sample of 225 shows.

Show	Frequency	%	duration h:mm:ss	Cases	% of the total number aired
Si bilo ednaš (Once Upon a Time)	37	16.44%	5:44:25	21	56.76%
Lalaloopsy	49	21.78%	17:05:46	24	48.98%
Super dzvezda Top lista (Super Star Top Chart)	25	11.11%	20:36:05	21	84.00%
Od A do Š (from A to Z)	30	13.33%	3:39:35	18	60.00%
Makedonski narodni prikazni (Macedonian Folk Stories)	28	12.44%	12:04:00	21	75.00%
5+ Familija (5 + Family)	32	14.22%	15:42:54	18	56.25%
Detska drama ne e prazna slama (Children's Drama is not Twiddle- Twaddle)	4	1.78%	2:47:34	4	100.00%
Dzvon (Bell)	20	8.89%	15:29:38	11	55.00%
Total	225	100%	93:09:57	138	61.33%

Table 1.1: Frequency of children's shows aired on MRT1 in the period 15.09 - 15.10.2019

The frequency of shows was distributed throughout eight serial programmes for children, which were diverse at several levels: *First*, there is heterogeneity of content in relation to the segment of the young population as their target. The analysis makes this assessment roughly taking into

⁷³ The actual premieres of these shows were broadcasted several months before the analysis. Here, the word 'premiere' should be understood conditionally, i.e. that the show was aired for the first time within the selected period for analysis. Thus, if during the selected period a certain show was broadcasted two or three times (and the premiere took place at a time that preceded the analysis), then only the first of these editions is considered as premiere, i.e. was aired for the first time *within the selected period*.

account the age typology established in the field of developmental psychology⁷⁴ and based on the level of complexity of the narrative structure and the forms of speech and communication among the protagonists or the participants in the programme. Thus, the content of the show *Children's Drama Is Not Twiddle-Twaddle*, which contains elementary forms of speech and rudimentary communication among pre-schoolers, targets the preschool population (3-5 years of age). The series *Lalaloopsy*, *From A to Z* and *Once Upon a Time* aim at audiences of late preschool and early school age (aged 5 to 8), because they either contain more complex narrative structures in which complex normative patterns of behaviour or topics are condensed, or the topics they process correspond to the materials studied by this population as part of the respective curricula of formal education. Finally, the shows *Bell*, *5+ Family*, *Superstar Top Chart* and Macedonian Folk Tales target an audience that can be roughly categorized as school age or what is called the middle childhood (8-12 years of age).

Second, there is a certain diversity in the programmes in terms of the role they play for the audiences. According to the AAVMS' typology, there are three key functions of the audio-visual programs: the informative, the educational and the entertaining. With the programmes for children aired by the Public Broadcasting Service there are no shows that may be put in the informative programme category in the strict sense of the word, however the research detected a high frequency

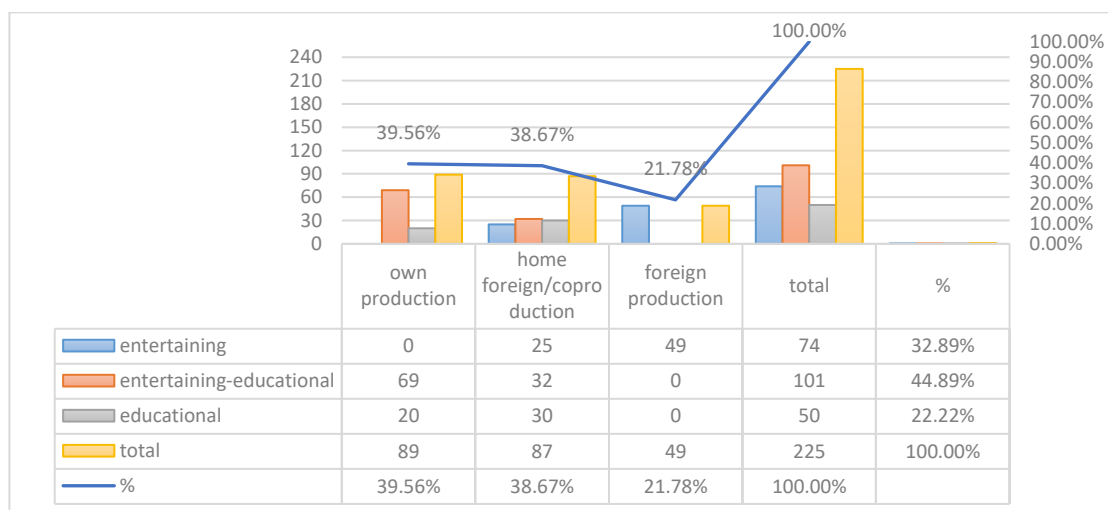


Figure 1.1: Distribution of children's shows on MRT1 based on their role and the origin of the production

of programmes that fall into the educational and entertainment categories. As can be seen in *Figure 1.1*, children's shows produced by the Public Broadcasting Service and those produced by domestic independent production companies, in which the Public Broadcasting Service is a co-producer, have an almost identical share in the total programme for children. Also, in the programmes of in-house production, it is visible that the ones of entertaining and educational character have the largest share: 69 editions or 77.53% of the total in-house production of the house are programmes

⁷⁴ The typologization adopted in this research has been elaborated on in the chapter titled "Methodology".

of entertaining and educational character, and this is due primarily to the high frequency of airings of the shows *Macedonian Folk Tales* and *Once Upon a Time*.

Figure 1.1 shows that there is almost an equal distribution of entertaining, entertaining and educational, and educational shows. The frequency of entertainment shows in the strict sense of the word (25 editions or 28.74% of the total production by independent production companies), was due to the editions of the *Superstar Top Chart* show, produced by "Superstar Studio" in co-production with the Public Broadcasting Service. The frequency of entertaining and educational shows (32 editions or 36.78% of the total production by independent production companies) was owing to all editions of the "5+ Family" series, created by "OHO Production". And finally, the frequency of educational shows (30 editions or 34.48% of the total production by independent production companies) was a result of the show about letters, *Od A do SH* (From A to Z), with "Blu Tang Produkcija" as its producer. As regards the programmes of foreign production, the programmes of entertaining nature occupied a remarkably important spot (49 editions or 100% of the total programme produced abroad), and this was due to the purchase of two seasons of the animated series of *Lalaloopsy*, created by the MGA Entertainment US production company. It follows from Figure 1.1 that the programmes fully created by the Public Broadcasting Service participate with 68.32% in the production of programmes of entertaining and educational character, and with 40% in the production of educational programmes.

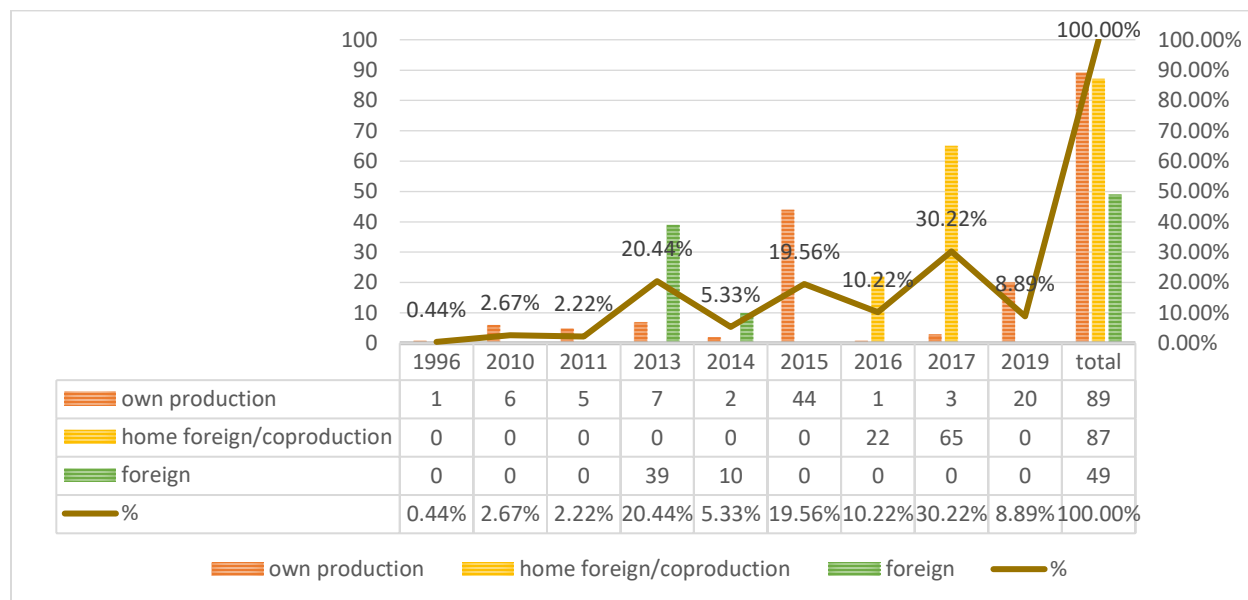
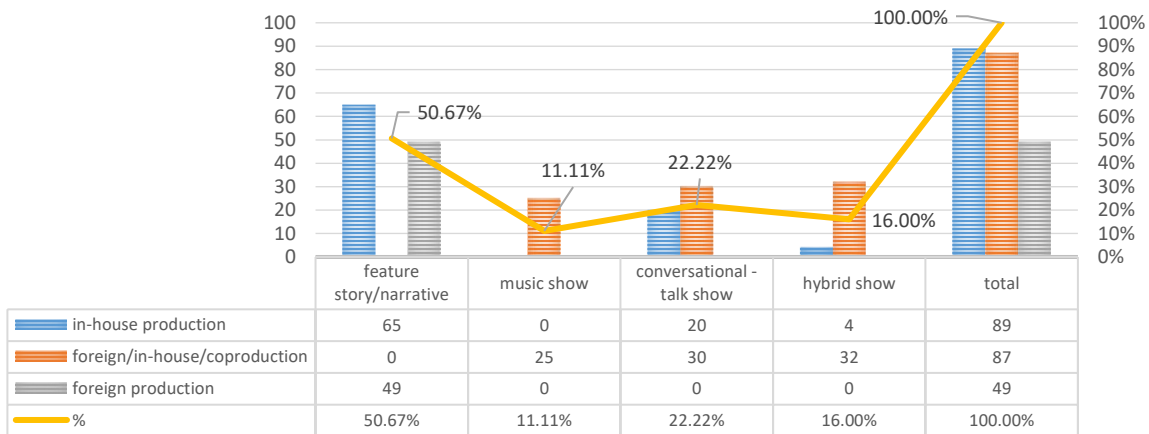


Figure 1.2: Distribution of the children's shows aired by MRT 1, based on the year of production and origin

The distribution of the aired programme based on the year of production shows that the bulk of the programme aired during the selected period came from 2017 (30.22% of the total of 225 broadcasted programmes for children), followed by 2013 (20.44%) and 2015 (19.56%). Only 8.89% of the total of programme broadcasted in the selected period was produced in 2019, but this relatively low per cent can be explained by means of the following two facts: first, that the analysis of the selected period did not take into account the renewed series titled *Dajte muzika* (Give Us

Music), which the MRT 1 started broadcasting at the beginning of November (i.e. outside the period under analysis) and, secondly, the fact that the MRT 1 started broadcasting the new season of the *Zvon* (Bell) show, which was also produced in 2019, on 30 September 2019, which means that it was aired only during half of the sample taken for analysis. *Figure 1.2* shows that, during the period selected, out of the programmes of its in-house production, the MRT 1 most frequently aired programme produced back in 2015, while there were virtually no aired programmes of in-house production dating between 2016-2018. When it comes to the programme by independent producers, again, the most frequently aired programme was that produced in 2017. Among the shows of foreign production, the ones produced in 2013 were aired most frequently. This research, done on a sample of programmes aired within 31 selected days, cannot determine what the actual distribution of programmes aired by the Public Broadcasting Service was, based on the production and the year of production in total.

Third, there is diversity also in terms of the shows' internal structure, i.e. what was defined as *specific genre*⁷⁵ for the purposes of this research. The genre division adopted in this research does



not

Figure 1.3: Distribution of children's shows on MRT1 based on their specific genre and origin of production

reflect any established or globally adopted classification. It has been designed to facilitate the approach of this research to the subject of analysis, i.e. the gender issues. Thus, all shows for children aired on MRT1 can be classified into four categories (*Figure 1.3*): (1) *narratives/feature stories* – programme structured around an action that develops through the stages of exposition, plot, climax, peripeteia (plot twist) and resolution, and the characters in which are transformed

⁷⁵ This diversification has been noted here for analytical purposes – the internal structure of the programme depends on the approach of the content analyst towards its components. Therefore, to meet the needs of this research, we differentiate among four types of structures: 1) *narratives/feature stories*, 2) *talk shows* 3) *music shows* and 4) *hybrid shows*. A more detailed elaboration on the need to make this classification is given in the chapter titled *Methodology*.

throughout the action (as in television stories, movies, fables, animated films, etc.). This category clearly includes the shows *Macedonian Folk Tales*, *Once Upon a Time* and *Lalaloopsy*, which have a 50.67% share in the total of shows for children aired on MRT1 during the selected period; (2) *talk shows* – programme structured as a conversation in which there is no transformation of the action or the characters or participants in the programme, with a share of 22.22% in the total of aired shows. This category includes the shows *Bell* (considering that the conversation prevails, although the show also contains music and dance performances) and the show *From A to Z*; (3) *music shows* – programme in which musical acts are noticeably predominant. This category also includes the *Super Star Top Chart*, which participated with 11.11% in the total of programme for children aired on MRT1 during the selected period; and (4) *hybrid shows* – programme that combines at least two of the previously described types, yet always including elements that resemble a narrative or a fictional story as well.

Diversity according to the internal structure, classified into the specific genres, is the analytical basis on which this content analysis relating to gender issues in children's programmes aired on MRT1 was made. The deepest level of analysis was provided for the shows belonging to the specific genre of *narrative/feature story*.

2. General characteristics and frequency of the characters/participants in the MRT1's programmes for children

Corresponding with the high frequency of shows for children, the first channel of the Macedonian Television marks a high frequency of characters, i.e. participants in the programmes intended for children and adolescents. In the 225 episodes, of the eight series for children, a total of 2,049

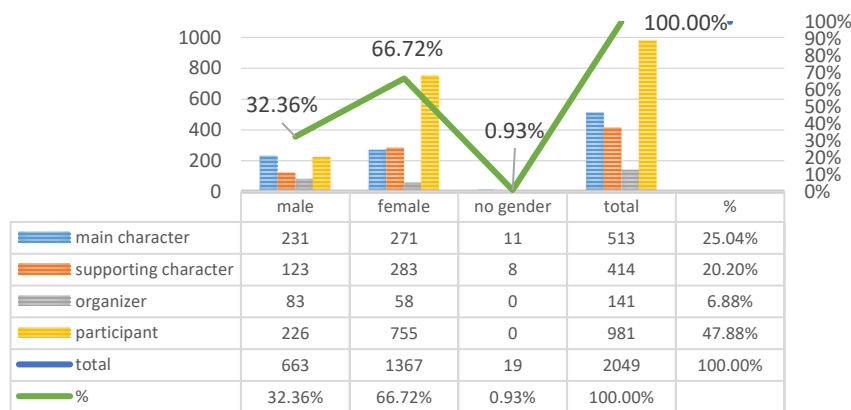


Figure 1.4: Frequency of the characters/participants in MRT1's programme for children during the period 15.09 - 15.10.2019

characters or participants were analysed in the programme, of whom 66.72% or 1,367 were females, while 32.36% or 663 – were males. The remaining 0.93% were characters that could be categorized as neither males nor females. The *Bell* and *Superstar Top Chart* shows had the highest frequency of participants, as 48.61% of the total number of characters/participants, or 996 participants, came from these two shows. With *Bell*, this was due to the fact that the format of this

show did not require an elaborate script, nor did it require any round characters, as the narratives/feature stories would require. With the *Superstar Top Chart* show, the participants' musical performances were recorded and then rerun throughout several episodes of the show, which certainly increased the frequency of the participants in the programme.

Yet, most striking was the numerical predominance of female characters, i.e. participants, in the programme - which in itself has no interpretative significance without these frequencies being segregated according to certain

Sow/gender	male	female	no gender	total	%
Once Upon a time	137	88	19	244	11,91%
Lalalupsi	24	321	0	345	16,84%
Super Star Top Chart	59	381	0	440	21,47%
From A to S	34	34	0	68	3,32%
Macedonian Folk Stories	125	73	0	198	9,66%
5+ Family	87	79	0	166	8,10%
Child Drama is not Twiddle-Twaddle	13	19	0	32	1,56%
Bell	184	372	0	556	27,14%
Total	663	1367	19	2049	100,00%
%	32,36%	66,72%	0,93%	100,00%	

Table 1.2: Frequency of the characters/participants in the MRT1's programme for children in the period 15.09 - 15.10 2019, divided by shows

meaningful criteria. Apart from the two above-mentioned shows (*Bell* and *Super Star Top Chart*), the vast majority of female characters or participants in the programme also came from the animated series titled *Lalaloopsy*, Table 1.2. A total of 1,074 participants in the programme, which is 78.57% of the total number of female characters or 52.42% of the total frequency of characters in general, came from these three series. These three series have specific features that, put in context of the characters' frequency and gender, reveal certain interesting findings:

First, in the shows *Bell* and *Superstar Top Chart* – although the first one is of educational nature, while the second is entertaining – performing arts such as stage performances play an important

Specific genre	Feature story/narrative			Conversation./talk-show		Music show		Hybrid show		Total
	male	female	No gender	male	female	male	female	male	female	
Production/genre										
In-house production	262	161	19	184	372	0	0	13	19	1030
Foreign/in-house/coproduction	0	0	0	34	34	59	381	87	79	674
foreign	24	321	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	345
Total	286	482	19	218	406	59	381	100	98	2049

Table 1.3: Distribution of male and female characters divided by the specific genre and the origin of production (MRT1)

part. In the chapter where these specific shows are analysed in detail, it will also be discussed *why* there is such a high frequency of female participants in the programme, wherever performing arts constitute an important part of the script. **Second**, *Lalaloopsy* is a televised version of a large industry that produces female dolls which live in the imaginary world of *Lalaloopsy* (a counterpart of Disneyland). The dolls are designed specifically for the girls' population in the United States of America, so the animated film is an expression of the need to win over the female television audience of late preschool and early school age.

It is also noticeable that there is numerical predominance of the male characters in the shows *Once Upon a Time* and *Macedonian Folk Tales*. This phenomenon is be more difficult to explain without having an insight into the editorial choices made by the Public Broadcasting Service and without an insight into the reasons why, for instance, only a few actresses had been engaged in the *Macedonian Folk Tales*, which then immediately affects the extent to which male and female characters are represented in the action.

The distribution of characters by gender, internal structure and origin of production shows one more interesting dimension of the issue. There is a larger number of female characters or participants in three out of the four genre categories determined according to the internal structure of the shows. However, as regards the programmes structured as narratives/feature stories, which are of *in-house production*, one can note a different distribution – this time in favour of the male characters, *Table 1.3*. To find out what stands behind these figures in the qualitative sense, related to the male and female characters and their social roles, the analysis needs to zoom in on each of the shows in particular.

3. Analysis of gender aspects of the MRT 1 programmes – analysis of specific programmes

Programmes structured as a *narrative/feature story*

3.1 *Macedonian Folk Tales*

3.1.1 Main frequencies and distributions of male and female characters

In the 28 editions of the programme *Macedonian Folk Tales*, a total of 198 characters were analysed. As presented in *Table 1.4*, which displays the frequencies of appearances of gender-

programme/characters	male characters			female characters			total
	leading	supporting	total m.	leading	supporting	total f.	
Macedonian Folk Tales	62	63	125	16	57	73	198
%	31.31%	31.82%	63.13%	8.08%	28.79%	36.87%	100.00%

Table 1.4 Distribution of characters according to gender in the *Macedonian Folk Tales* (MRT1)

segregated characters – there is a significantly lower representation of female characters compared to male characters. Out of the total number of characters in the programme, 63.13% are male and 36,87% - female characters. The higher number of male characters in this programme is even more obvious when comparing the frequency of lead characters. Total of 62 male characters in the *Macedonian Folk Tales* appear in the lead role, which is 79.49% of the total number of main characters. The same programme has only 16 main female characters or 20.51% of the total number of lead characters, i.e. only 8.08% of the total frequency of characters. Such numerical superiority of one gender is specific for programmes targeting a specific audience – for example, the programme *Lalaloopsy* analysed later herein, targets the preschool female population, which completely explains the fact why male characters in this programme are much fewer in terms of numbers. However, programmes such as the *Macedonian Folk Tales* should refer to different genders, and it is therefore unclear why the production choose scripts in which the female characters are noticeably fewer.

3.1.2 Association of the characters with the social roles and professional preoccupations

The obvious numerical under-representation is deepened when these indicators are contextualized with the analysis of occupations with which these characters are connected in the action. In 127 characters or 64.14% of the total population, the type of their occupation could be determined, and accordingly their social role – 38 female (or 52.05% of the total female characters) and 89 male (or 71.20% of the total male characters). Although this part of the analysis operates with a low number of appearances, it can still draw knowledge of the gender roles in this television series. Therefore, 76.32% (29 cases) of the

female characters with explicitly defined occupation (representing 39.73% of the total population of female characters in the sample), are placed in a position of domesticity, in which main activities are cooking or raising children. In the domestic domain, typical for this series, female characters have a financially dependent position, and limited opportunities to express their will.

In the few editions in which a female character appears at the labour market as a worker, such position has been constructed either as a decline or as a degradation from the previous position. For example, in the episode *The ram “chorbaji”*, broadcasted on MRT 1 on 23.09.2019, the leading female character is looking for a job with one “chorbaji” (rich owner), since she is forced to do that because of the death of her husband – the death of the existence provider, in this case, destabilizes the weak socio-economic stability of the female character who had a service role in the private domain up until that moment. In addition, in cases in which female characters have the role of an aristocrat or a capitalist, their position is connected with housekeeping, regardless of their high social status.

Regarding the male characters in this programme, the diversity of occupations is noticeable. In 46.07% of the male characters with an occupation which can be defined, they are low-skilled

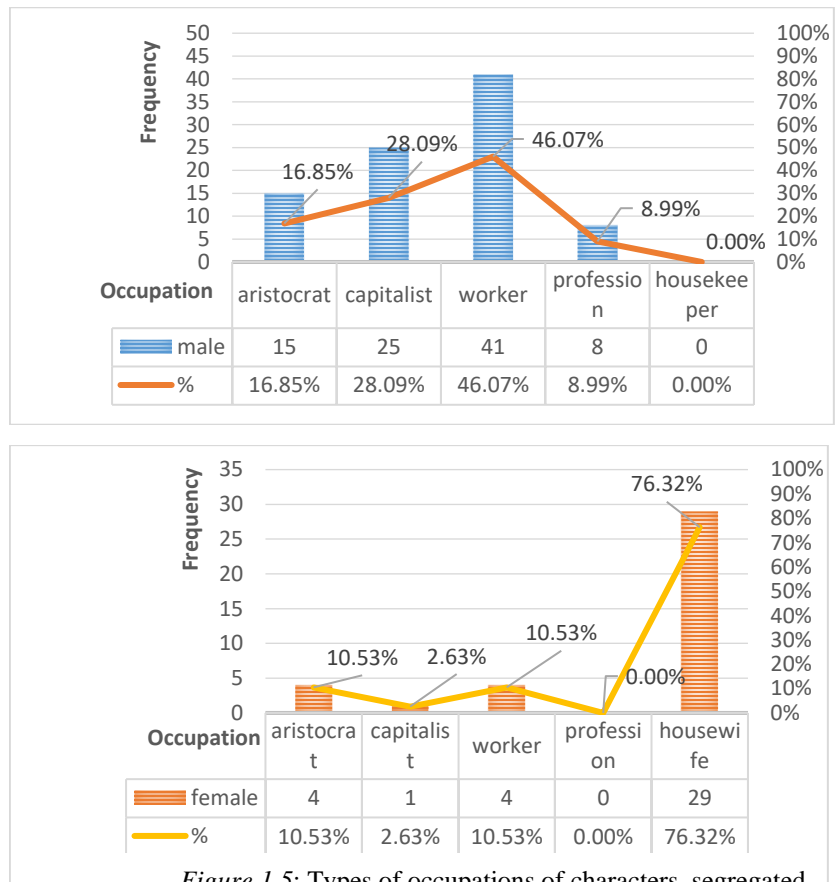


Figure 1.5: Types of occupations of characters, segregated according to gender (*Macedonian Folk Tales*, MRT1)

workers required to exchange their manual labour for means for self-sustainability and for sustaining their family. Regardless of the low social position, the worker in the *Macedonian Folk Tales* is not in a domesticity position, but is rather undergoing a continuous search for self-realisation, often linking such search with transcendental phenomena such as luck, fate, God, etc. – such as in the episode *Trpe Got Angry with the Fate*, broadcasted on 10.10.2019. *Figure 1.5* presents a noticeable frequency of male characters who either have the position of a capitalist (28.09%), and typically for this programme appear as “corbaji”, “traders”, “usurers”, or have an aristocratic position (16.85%) where they have monopoly over the political domain – usually in the role of a czar, prince or other type of noblemen. According to the findings, gender-based polarisation in the case with the *Macedonian Folk Tales* is complete – male characters occupy the public domain regardless whether they appear as landowners or workers. Female characters occupy the private domain.

3.1.3 Identity and personality: analysis of semantic differentials

The total number of male and female characters from the programme *Macedonian Folk Tales* were evaluated on seven five-part scales, alternating between appropriate dichotomous adjectives. Based on this evaluation, from within the context around which the content is constructed, the meanings attributed to the characters and which define them in terms of identity or personality were drawn.⁷⁶ Having in mind that *narratives/feature stories*, or the compositions designed according to the principles of the developing drama action, characters which drive the composition are themselves transformed through the action, the seven dichotomous adjectives for each of the characters are double coded – once according to the manner in which the character is presented in the *exposition* and another time according to the manner in which it was transformed through the *resolution*.

⁷⁶ Criteria for this evaluation and the character coding process are explained in the methodological frame.

Male and female characters in the exposition and resolution - *Macedonian Folk Tales*

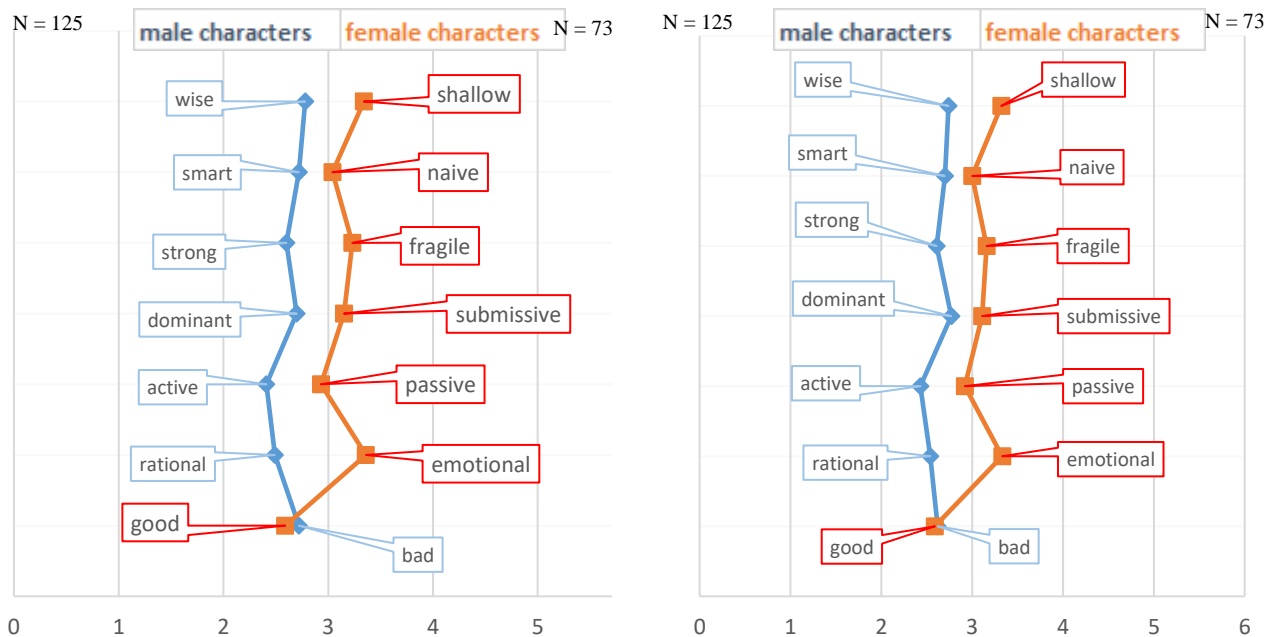


Figure 1.6: Scales of semantic differentials of specifics of the characters as they are represented in the *exposition* (left) and in the *resolution* (right) of the drama action, segregated according to gender (*Macedonian Folk Tales*, MRT1)

As presented on *Figure 1.6*, it is visible that on almost every scale of semantic differentials, excluding the evaluation dichotomy *good – bad*, male characters are mildly inclining to the “positive”, whereas women are inclining to the “negative” side of dichotomous adjectives.⁷⁷ In this respect, male characters are construed in a manner that leaves an impression of being wiser, stronger, and more active compared to the female characters who are shallower, more fragile and more passive than male characters.

In addition, male characters generally establish a dominance relation in the drama action, and against that, female characters display higher level of submissiveness. Actions of male characters are generally more motivated by a sort of rational assessment of the appropriateness of the action, whereas female characters are more guided by feelings in the assessment making, compared to male characters. The semantic differential also shows that male characters are smarter, to some extent, than female characters, although female characters are generally not constructed as naive. The latter can be considered as a contra-intuitive finding, considering the fact that in the popular stereotyped version of the discourse-produced “female”, one of its key attributes is shrewdness which, if strategically required, is recontextualized into manipulative behaviour.

The difference between male and female characters, as it can be observed at the visualised scales of semantic differentials, seems small; however, it is due to the fact that the methodological frame

⁷⁷ The “positive” and “negative” are here taken in the conditional, not in the moral meaning.

envisages in situations in which characters are not inclining to one of the two extremes or when their character does not refer to any of the established dichotomies, the mean value 3 to be encoded in the code matrix. Due to the higher frequency of assessments of the *evaluation, potential, and action dimension* with mean value 3 – average values of the semantic differential produce lower differential margins.

Therefore, the analysis goes deeper into the values of each indicative differential and compares frequencies of the extreme values of the scale, such as (4&5) or (1&2). In this manner, the importance can be observed of the seemingly low margins of difference between male and female characters. Zooming into individual differentials with a more detailed analysis shall be performed only for those values in which characters have displayed the value > 3 both in the exposition and in the resolution⁷⁸. In the programme *Macedonian Folk Tales*, this is the case with the dichotomies *wise/shallow, strong/fragile, dominant/submissive* and *rationally motivated/emotionally motivated*.

Wise/shallow

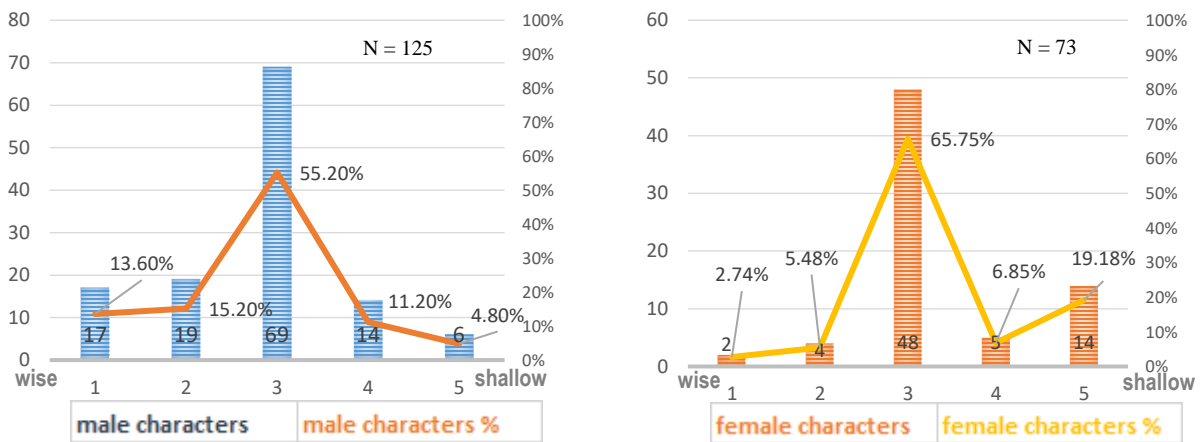


Figure 1.7: Distribution of values on the dichotomy wise/shallow segregated according to gender (*Macedonian Folk Tales*, MRT1)

On Figure 1.7, according to the character construction in the *exposition* of the drama action, the distribution can be seen of the values with which male and female characters are being evaluated on the scale between the dichotomous adjectives *wise/shallow*. The deviation on the scale between male and female characters in this dichotomy is 0.56, and the analysis of the distribution of values shows that 28.80% of the total population of analysed male characters in the programme were constructed as explicitly or implicitly wise. On the contrary, 8.22% of the total population of female characters have such attribution. Accordingly, 16% of the male characters were constructed as shallow, against 26.03% of the female characters. This differentiation, contextualised with the

⁷⁸ The frequencies only for the values of the exposition of the drama action shall be presented further – since displacing of the values among the characters between exposition and resolution is low, as it will be later seen.

fact that the frequency of the extreme value 5 of the explicit shallowness among female characters is 19.18% (against the same value in male characters of 4.80%), indicates the existence of an important difference in the treatment given to both female and male characters in this programme considering their cognitive ability.

Strong/fragile

Figure 1.8 presents the distribution of values with which male and female characters are being evaluated on the scale between the dichotomous adjectives *strong/fragile*. Strong, in this meaning of the word, as described in the methodological frame, represents a measure of stability and firmness of personality, without the value of the physical force benchmark. Deviation between

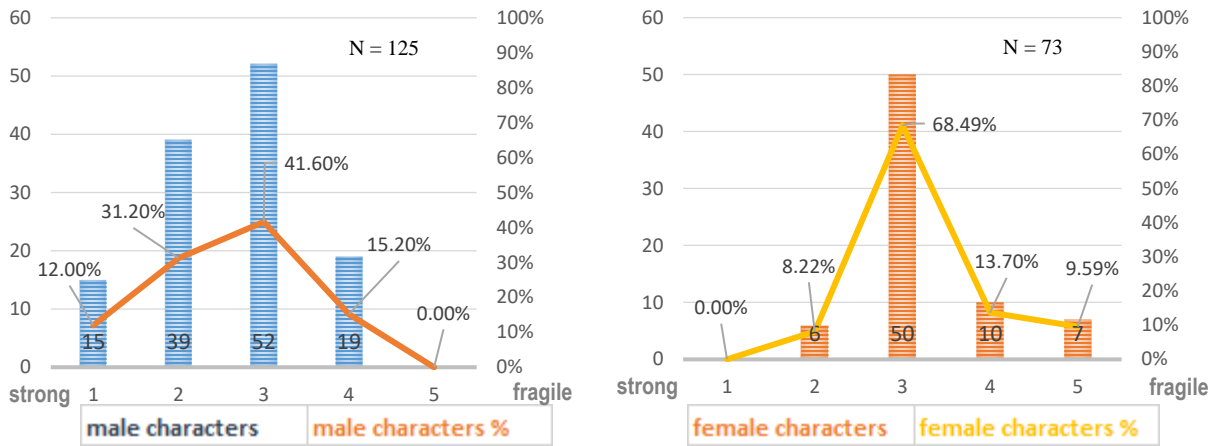


Figure 1.8: Distribution of values for the dichotomy *strong/fragile* segregated according to gender (Macedonian Folk Tales, MRT1)

male and female characters in this dichotomy is 0.63, and the analysis of the distribution of values indicates clear polarisation of characters according to gender, which contributes to the construction of their gender role. The frequency of values inclining to the adjective *strong* in male characters is noticeably high, whereas it is extremely low in female characters: 43.20% of the values of the dichotomy *strong/fragile* of the total population of male characters incline towards *strong* and only 8.22% of the female characters are construed in such a manner. Regarding the other extreme – values by which the characters and constructed as *fragile*, or vulnerable, unguarded, pitiable and similar – one can observe the smaller difference between male and female characters: 15.20% of the male characters are marked as fragile and 23.29% of the female characters have such a value (9.59% of the female characters are construed as explicitly *fragile*).

Dominant/submissive

Figure 1.9 presents the distribution of values by which male and female characters are being

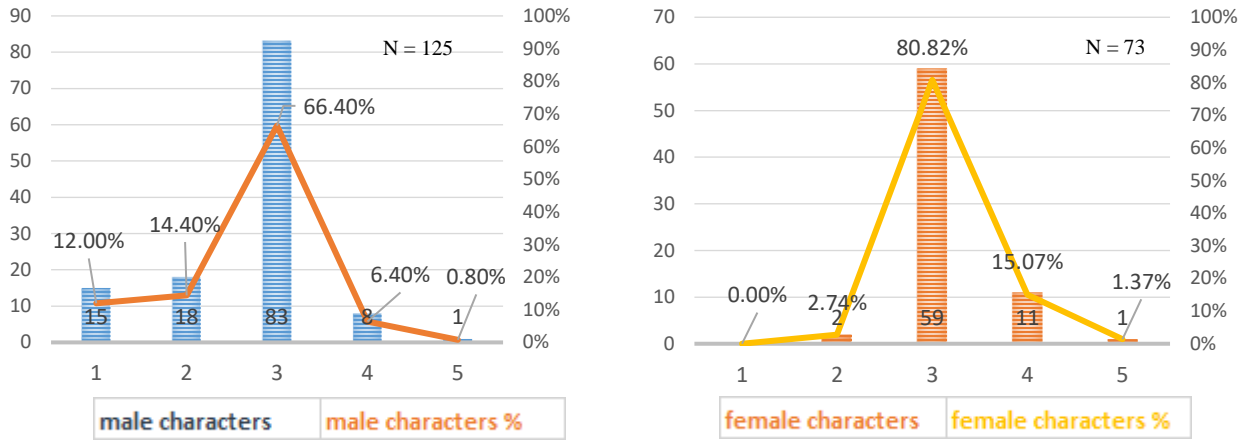


Figure 1.9: Distribution of values for the dichotomy *dominant/submissive* segregated according to gender (*Macedonian Folk Tales*, MRT1)

evaluated on the scale between the dichotomous adjectives *dominant/submissive*.

Deviation between male and female characters in this dichotomy is 0.45, whereas the analysis of distribution of values also indicates the clear polarisation of the characters: 26.40% of the male characters are construed as dominant (12% of the total frequency of characters are construed as explicitly *dominant* with value 1). The difference between male and female characters, in values 4&5 pertaining to the adjective *submissive*, is 9.24 percentage points – visibly lower than the difference for the values 1&2 pertaining to the adjective *dominant*. Moreover, it has a rather low frequency of appearances (9 appearances in male and 12 in female characters), so as to be able to determine whether *Macedonian Folk Tales* construe systematically women as submissive in the same manner in which male characters are construed as clearly dominant. In addition to this barrier, it is clear that the female characters in this programme incline towards submissiveness.

Rationally motivated/emotionally motivated

Figure 1.10 presents the distribution of values by which male and female characters are being evaluated on the scale between the dichotomous adjectives rational/emotional, or *rationally motivated/emotionally motivated*. The polarisation in this case is clear – male characters are construed as rationally motivated (47.20% of the total population male characters have the value 1 or 2), whereas the female characters are construed as actors who are motivated by emotion in the action – 30.14% of the total frequency of female characters are construed as emotionally motivated actors.



Figure 1.20: Distribution of values for the dichotomy *rationally motivated/emotionally motivated* segregated according to gender (*Macedonian Folk Tales*, MRT1)

Transformation of male and female characters through the action

Thanks to the double coding of characters, the study can follow the average transformation of male and female characters through the action. As expected, the transformation expressed on the semantic differential on *Figure 1.11*, has not displayed significant deviations between the average position of male and female characters in the exposition compared to the position in the resolution, although there is a visible low transformation of male characters who, in the resolution are less *dominant* compared to the exposition, and of the female characters who are less *fragile* and less *submissive* in the resolution compared to the exposition. Accordingly, on the low number of

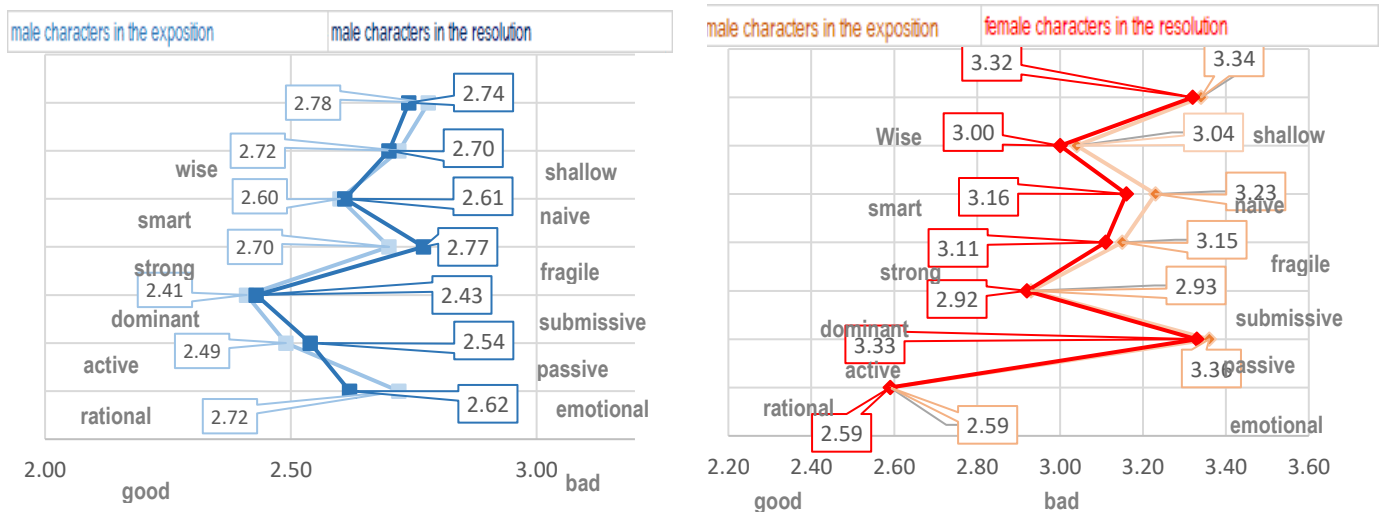


Figure 1.11: Transformation of male and female characters through the drama action (*Macedonian Folk Tales*, MRT1)

appearances, it cannot be concluded that the transformation of male and female characters has an implication on the change of positions analysed in the previous chapter.

2.4 The topic 'family' as a gender issue

In the study, the programmes with structure of *narratives/feature stories*, were coded for the type of family or community appearing in the programme. The reason for such study choice was due to the fact that – it is clear from the literature that media construct a normative image on the organisation of family structures representing a hegemony which normalises the manners in which this social unit is socially constructed. Out of the 28 editions of *Macedonian Folk Tales*, in 24 of them, the leading characters are in some form of marital community. Regardless of whether these

programme/family type	different-sex parents	different-sex spouses	no family	total
Macedonian Folk Tales	14	12	2	28
%	50,00%	42,86%	7,14%	100,00%

Table 1.4 Distribution of characters according to gender in the *Macedonian Folk Tales* (MRT1)

are structures with children, or these are simply marital communities without children – in these narratives, only the *different gender* communities appear. This means that there is nothing counter-intuitive in the findings for the *Macedonian Folk Tales*: regarding dramatized structures making an effort to imitate the ethos of the 19th Century Macedonia, it is common to expect a discourse construction of a strict traditional hetero-normative family organisation. As it can be concluded from the findings presented in the previous chapters – in them, the head of the family is the provider for the family, he is wise, strong and dominant compared to his partner, and is rationally motivated in its actions. On the other side, his wife is the pillar of the domestic domain since it secures the servicing of needs of the other members – in such an organisation, she is shallower compared to her husband who is expected to provide her with a value orientation in the choices she makes, she is weak, sensitive and, to some extent, submissive to his will. This type of narrative structures, however, although they are imitating that ethos, in fact represent new scripts – produced in Macedonia in the last ten years – and are hiding imprints which are not typical for the original 19th Century stories. Hence the conceptual searching for a meaning in the narrative – for example, the episode *Even fools stay away from drunk people*, there are several elements of explicitly unmotivated physical violence in which the bully is the drunk man. Nevertheless, at the moment of transition of the action from exposition into resolution, contrary to the dominant story, the woman also applies violence. Stereotyped characters in the *Macedonian Folk Tales* of the brawler wife and the drunk intrusive husband are, of course, produced as undesired models of behaviour; however, their omnipresence is a problem to be dealt with by the producers and media at the moment of approving specific scripts – in particular when the objective is reaching the young audience.

3.2. *Once Upon a Time*

3.2.1 Main frequencies and distributions of male and female characters

In the 37 editions of the programme *Once Upon and Time*, a total of 244 characters were analysed. This programme is structured at two levels – at the *first* level, two hosts/narrators briefly discuss a topic, and the *second level*, they commence a narration of a fable or a story which always starts with the formula *in illo tempore* – which is frequent in popular literature. Due to the structure specificity, this analysis excludes 57 appearances of hosts/narrators and only refers to the second level where the audience is presented with a total of 187 characters of, often personified animals which follow the human’s behavioural schemes and accordingly, mostly have their characteristics⁷⁹.

program me/char acters	male characters			female characters			genderless			total
	leading	supportin g	total male	leading	supportin g	total female	leadin g	supportin g	total genderl	
Once Upon a Time	72	33	105	28	35	63	11	8	19	187
%	38,50%	17,65%	56,15%	14,97%	18,72%	33,69%	5,88%	4,28%	10,16%	100%

Table 1.5 Distribution of characters according to gender in the programme *Once Upon a Time* (MRT1)

As it can be observed on *Table 1.5* – which presents the frequencies of appearances of gender-segregated characters – there is a significantly lower representation of female characters compared to male characters. Out of the total number of characters appearing in the programme, 56.15 % are men and 33.69% are women. The remaining 10.16% are characters for which one cannot clearly establish the gender and are thus marked, in accordance with the term used from the literature presented in the methodology, as genderless. One can observe in the table that the programme has a numerical balance between leading and supporting female characters; however, leading male characters are double the number of supporting male characters. 72 leading male characters were registered, which is 38.50% of the total frequency of characters or 68.57% of the total frequency of male characters. This finding suggests “biasness” in this programme to the leading role of men in the drama action – although such “biasness” is significantly lower compared to that of the *Macedonian Folk Tales*, analysed in the preceding chapter.

⁷⁹ In 19 cases, the characters either had a grammatical neuter gender or were not explicitly placed in a gender role.

3.2.2 Association of characters with the social roles and professional preoccupations

Regarding the programme *Once Upon a Time*, few characters have been observed for which the type of their occupation can be explicitly defined. If in the *Macedonian Folk Tales*, the share of characters for which the occupation can be defined is 64.14%, that percentage for this programme is 29.95% - the occupation could be defined for a total of 56 characters, and accordingly, their social role could be determined. However, when the occupation is gender-segregated, it is determined that there is no equal distribution in the quantum of cases for which the occupation can be defined.

It can be observed in *Table 1.6* that the highest percentage of characters for which the occupation can be explicitly defined are, in fact, male characters – 44 or 78.57% of those for which the occupation can explicitly be defined are male characters and only 8 characters or 14.29% of those for which the occupation can explicitly be defined are female characters. Out of the total frequency, the occupation can be defined in 23.53%

occupation/gender	male	female	genderless	total
aristocrat	13	1	0	14
capitalist	13	0	0	13
housewife	0	3	0	3
worker	18	4	4	26
total	44	8	4	56
% of the total characters with occupation	78,57%	14,29%	7,14%	100,00%
% of the total characters	23,53%	4,28%	2,14%	29,95%

Table 1.6: Occupation of characters in the programme *Once Upon a Time* segmented according to gender (MRT 1)

male and only 4.28% female characters. This quantitative finding is rather indicative – the population of female characters in the total sample is 33.69%, and the occupation can be defined only for 4.28% of them, indicating a serious underrepresentation of female characters in the public domain. Conversely, the share of male characters in the total population is 56.15%, and the occupation can be defined in 23.53% indicating a rather higher relative representation of male characters in the total number.

The low frequency of female characters for which the occupation can be defined, does not allow for drawing conclusions about the occupation inclined most by the women, and therefore, this analysis shall be made only for the male characters. It can be seen on *Figure 1.12* that male characters in the programme *Once Upon a Time* are associated with the labour market presence, even in a subordinate class position, such as the worker position. Nevertheless, male characters are also associated to the possession of political or class prevalence since in somewhat less than 60%, they are either part of aristocracy, most often in the role of czars or princes, or are part of the class of capitalists – owners of production means, property, traders, etc.

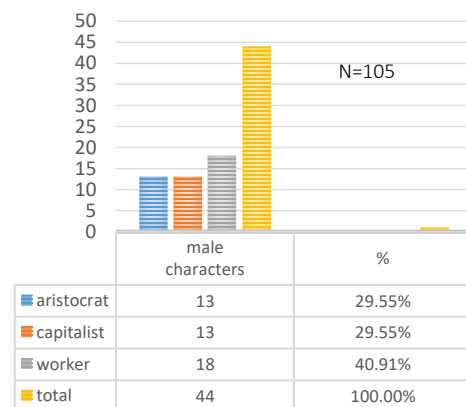


Figure 1.12: Occupations of male characters in the programme *Once Upon a Time* (MPT 1)

3.2.3 Identity and character: analysis of semantic differentials

By evaluating the total number of male and female characters from the programme *Once Upon a Time* in seven five-part scales alternating between the appropriate dichotomous adjectives, out of the context around which the contents are created – the meanings attributed to the characters and defining them in terms of identity or personality were drawn⁸⁰. Having in mind that the *narratives/feature stories*, that is, in the structures organised according to the principles of the developmental drama action, characters are themselves transformed through the action, the seven dichotomous adjectives for each character are double coded – once according to the manner in which the character is presented in the *exposition*, and another time according to the manner in which the one was transformed through the *resolution*.

Male and female characters in the exposition and in the resolution – Once Upon a Time

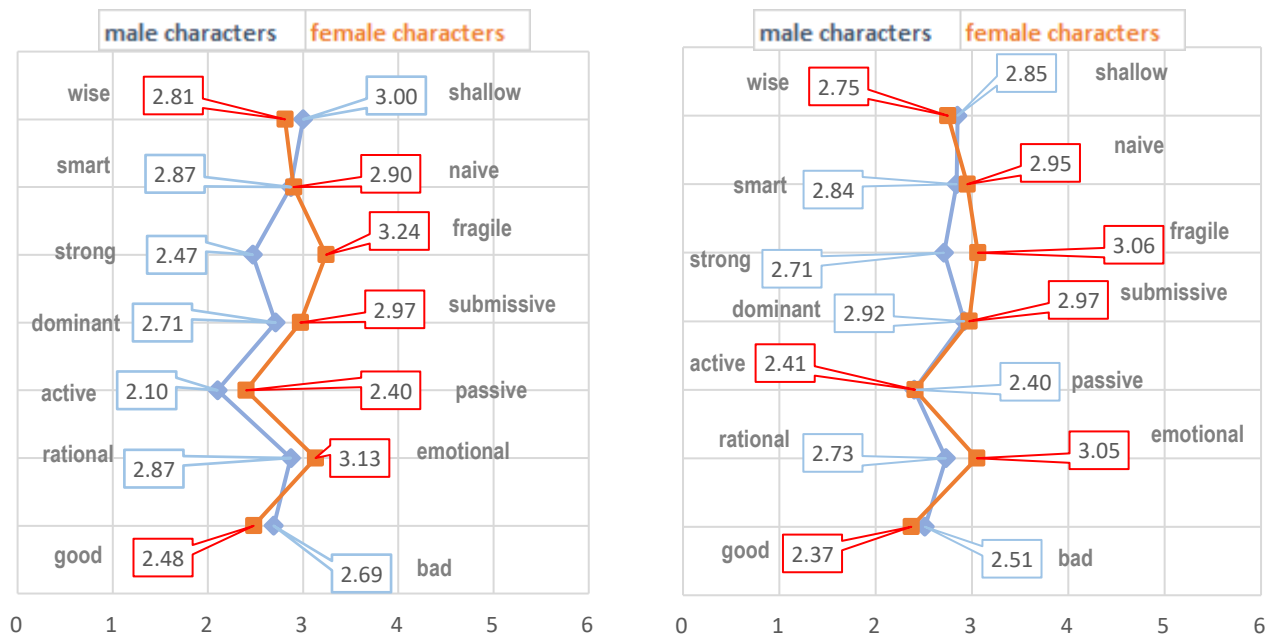


Figure 1.13: Semantic differentials of traits of the characters as they are presented in the *exposition* (left) and in the *resolution* (right) of the drama action, segregated according to gender (*Once Upon a Time*, MRT 1)

On Figure 1.13 it is visible that scales note the highest difference in the dichotomy *strong/fragile* – it amounts 0.77 in the exposition. Nevertheless, through the transformation of female characters, the gap between them on the scale *strong/fragile* reduces significantly. This gap, following the resolution, is 0.35. This means that male characters are generally construed as strong, whereas female characters are construed as fragile, and that they are also transformed through the action –

⁸⁰ The criteria for this evaluation and the character coding process are explained in the methodological frame.

male characters become a bit softer, and female characters exhibit the toughness they have acquired through the action. This can be explained with the typical structure of the original stories from which *Once Upon a Time* draws its contents: such as the fables of Aesop in which personified animals to which the female gender can be explicitly attributed exhibit activity, cunningness, and wisdom, or the Scandinavian stories in which princesses become the decisive active actors in the action, and the king-father becomes fragile because of the development of events.

Similarly, female characters also experience visible transformation in the dichotomies *dominant/submissive* and *active/passive*. In these two dichotomies, in the exposition, male characters are more dominant and more active, although both genders had values < 3. However, their values are almost equalized in the resolution. It can be accordingly concluded that *Once Upon a Time* uncovers contents in which male and female characters enjoy a somewhat higher degree of equality than those in the *Macedonian Folk Tales*. However, there are two important exceptions, and those are the dichotomies *strong/fragile* and *rationally motivated/emotionally motivated*. The finding for the first dichotomy can be explained with the ethos and the cultural context from which part of the stories originates – the “heroic” ethos in which chivalry is the norm for good behaviour and the “naive romanticism”, which deprived of its base of reactionary social movement, is superficially abundant with melodramatic love stories etc., and yet makes male characters less fragile, i.e. stronger than female characters. The other part of the stories are the fables, which also construe personified animals marked as male, as more rational against the wild “female” feelings.

3.2.4 The topic ‘family’ as a gender issue

Since the episodes in the programme *Once Upon a Time* have a structure of narratives/ feature stories, they were coded for the type of family or community occurring in the programme.

Out of the 37 editions of *Once Upon a Time*, in 12 of them, the leading characters are in a some form of marital community which, regardless of whether they have children or not, is always a community of different sexes.

programme/family	parents of different sexes	with single parent	no family	total
Once Upon a Time	12	2	23	37
%	32,43%	5,41%	62,16%	100,00%

Table 1.7: Frequency of types of families in the programme *Once Upon and Time*, segmented according to gender (MRT 1)

The editor’s choice of stories construed in 18th and 19th Century makes this statistic expected. However, it is important to answer the question why has the editor made a choice in which all narratives/feature stories are underlined by the same ethos.

3.3 *Lalaloopsy*

3.3.1 Main frequencies and distributions of male and female characters

In the 49 editions of the animated foreign production programme *Lalaloopsy*, a total of 345 characters were analysed. As seen on the table which presents the frequencies of appearances of characters, gender-segregated, and according to their role in the dramatic action – there is a significantly higher level of representation of female characters in comparison to the male characters. 93.04% of the total number of characters appearing on the programme are female, and 6.96% are male characters.

programme/characters	male			female			total
	leading	supporting	total m.	leading	supporting	total f.	
Lalaloopsy	9	15	24	140	181	321	345
%	2,61%	4,35%	6,96%	40,58%	52,46%	93,04%	100,00%

Table 1.8: Frequency of characters in *Lalaloopsy* segregated according to gender and the role in the action (MRT 1)

The frequency of female characters in *Lalaloopsy* is so high, which makes it impossible to compare according to their role. The high number of female characters in the programme *Lalaloopsy* is due to the fact that the programme (as indicated above) is a televised version of a big production industry of female dolls living in the imaginary world of *Lalaloopsy* (counterpart of Disneyland).

3.3.2 Children's programme, consumerism and public interest

Lalaloopsy, as other franchises of children's programmes (such as the *Winx Club* that was broadcasted on the TV channel Sitel in the selected period), are subject to a global debate and controversy due to their marketing stretching through several platforms. *Lalaloopsy* dolls are specifically designed for the girl population in the United States of America, as well as globally, and therefore, the animated movie is the expression of the need to win the TV female audience from the early preschool and early school age. They are *brand* products and can be treated, to some extent, as an "advertisement" for the mercantile products of the same brand. The valid question to be posed is whether the Public Broadcasting Service, when selecting foreign production programmes, takes into account the marketing aspect associated with the selected programme. Therefore, it should be suggested that the Public Broadcasting Service, in the context of realizing its obligations referred to in Article 110 of the LAAVMS, takes into consideration this aspect, since it targets young audience vulnerable to commercial pressures.

This issue, in addition to the marketing aspect, is also important in terms of the mental development in children. Series of research in the field of social psychology suggests that multi-platform "franchises of branded products grounded by a media narrative [...] produce far-reaching, ubiquitous, and pervasive flows of merchandise but also circulate discursive messages attached to

media narratives and are amplified through advertising” (Lemke, 2009)⁸¹. The circle of products spreading the same ideology can close the children’s experience in the franchise, thus creating an impact with far-reaching consequences. For *Lalaloopsy*, it is issue of sexualisation of dolls in the programme and, in particular, the issue regarding race and ethnicity (Wohlwend & Hall).⁸²

3.3.3 Association of characters with the social roles and professional preoccupations

The study has coded female and male characters regarding their orientation to a specific interest, work or hobby. *Lalaloopsy* construes the characters as stereotyped semantic packages, according to which each of the characters has a noticeably dominant feature or interest and are exhibited with

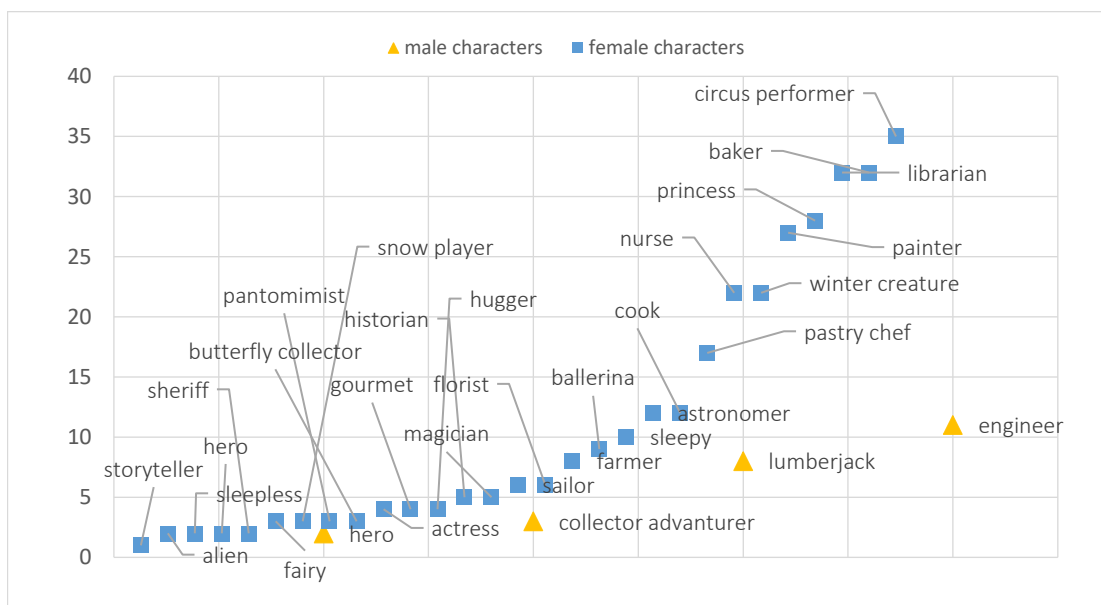


Figure 1.14 presents the distribution of interests or the choice of hobbies and other preoccupations of the total number of characters. The few male characters exhibit interest to preoccupations requiring physical force or technological knowledge – however, they are rather few so as to be able to draw meaningful conclusions. In terms of the high number of female characters, there is an obvious diversity of preoccupations, hobbies or occupations on which the stereotyped construct of their character is based. Professions and occupations such as circus performer, baker, librarian, confectioner, are clearly the most frequent in the *Lalaloopsy* broadcasted programme in the selected period. Nevertheless, this diversity prevents us from seeing the bigger picture. All occurrence of occupations, hobbies or interest can be classified in seven categories: science and technology, performing arts/activities, intellectual activity/art, gastronomy, humanity and social responsibility, agriculture/forestry/gardening and adventure. This classification does not include the benchmarks not suggesting any interest or preoccupation (alien, sleepless and sleepy). Other interests are grouped in one of the offered categories and this representation of the universe of characters of *Lalaloopsy* provides a bit more information.

Although there is a diversity of interests and occupations of the characters in *Lalaloopsy*, the

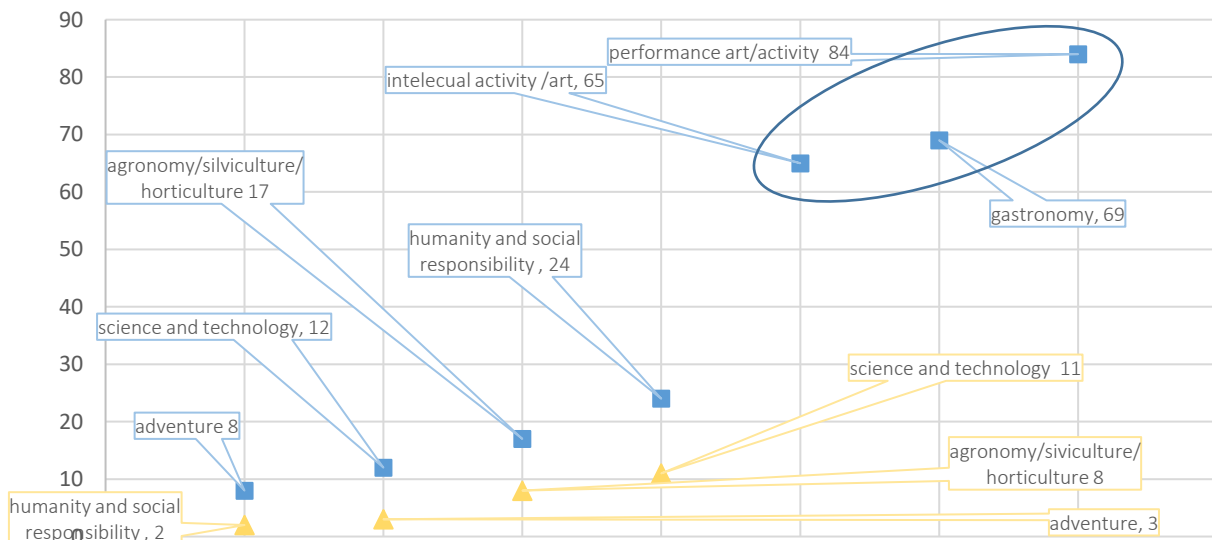


Figure 1.15: Types of preoccupations, interests and hobbies of male and female characters in *Lalaloopsy* (MRT 1)

grouping of this heterogeneity into logical entirety still uncovers that the central position, with 84 occurrences, representing 26.17% of the total population of female characters, is attributed to performing arts/activities (how to be a ballerina, or a circus performer, etc.). Furthermore, regarding the preoccupations pertaining to gastronomy (such as, being a baker, confectioner, etc.), there are 69 occurrences or 21.50%, and regarding the intellectual activities/arts (well-read librarian or historian, etc.) there are 65 occurrences or 20.25% of the total population of female characters. In the broadcasted episodes of *Lalaloopsy*, which means in the selected period,

performing arts/activities, intellectual activity and culinary art are the three most pronounced elements defining the female characters. As can be later seen in the musical and talk shows of MRT 1, performing is the identifying element for defining the female character.

Music programmes

3.4 Superstar Top Chart

3.4.1 Main frequencies and distributions of male and female performers

In the 25 editions of the music programme *Superstar Top Chart*, which in fact represents a decoupage of performances of children at the Superstar festival, a total of 440 music performances of children were analysed. The performances were recorded in the previous years during the editions of the festival and are rebroadcasted on MRT 1, with altered performance number of the performers in almost every edition, so that it would appear

programme/gender	male	female	Total
Superstar Top Chart	59	381	440
%	13,41%	86,59%	100,00%

Table 1.9 Distribution of performers segregated according to gender in *Superstar Top Chart* (MRT 1)

that the rank list of songs is changing. Out of the total number of performances, 381 or 86.59% are performances of girls and 59 or 13.41% are performances of boys. This numerical discrepancy - with 1:6.5 ratio in favour of female participants implies that girls exhibit higher level of interest in music performances compared to boys, which opens more issues initially related to the family relations and the gender-defined construction of performing as a desired profession in the family compositions, the educational system of the country, and of course, the media. This analysis does not have any evidence on the ratio of adult male and female performers in the Macedonian media so as to be able to compare the findings and conclude whether there is any gender-based biasness in the selection of performing arts such as the music performances, life interest, and therefore cannot confirm it, but can conclude that this numerical superiority of female performers in this MRT 1-broadcasted music programme is indicative. In addition, questions should be opened on the selection of the production company which produced it – for example, was there any casting in the selection or anyone expressing the desire to perform was selected? If there was casting, were there any rules introduced on the gender balance? Similarly, a question can be posed for the Public Broadcasting Service whether, at the level of its entire programme, they are paying attention to the representation of male and female performers in music and other performing programmes?

3.4.2 Association of performers with the topics of their songs and analysis of gender aspects in the topics

Association of performers of different sex with the topics of their songs can be another gender differentiation indicator. Therefore, for the male and female performers, the topics they sing about

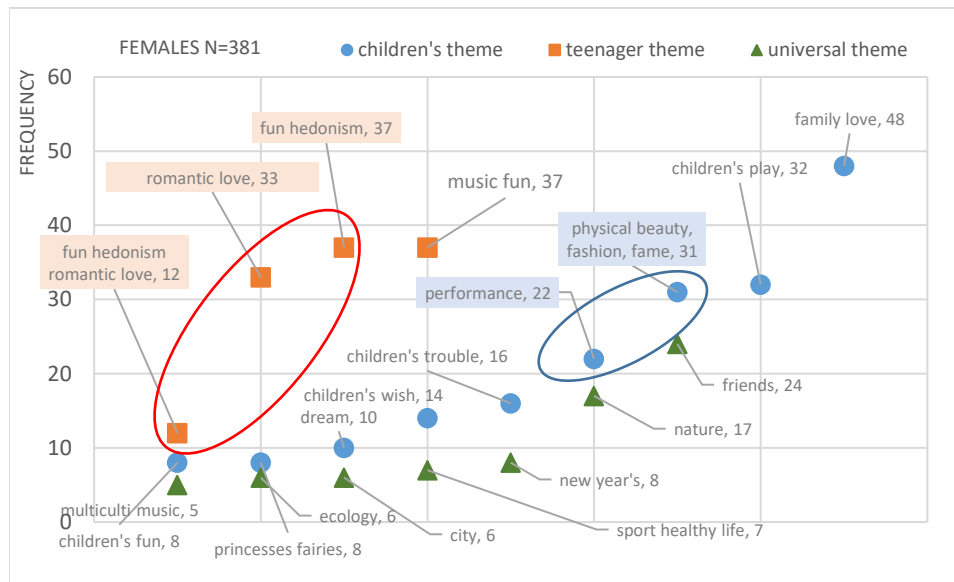


Figure 1.16: Types of themes of songs of female performers in *Superstar Top Chart* (MRT 1)

were coded. Topical categorisation was made in accordance with two criteria: in cases in which the general song topic can be established, categorisation was made by the analyst from above, and where this was not possible, or the song contained several different elements which could be listed under different topics, the names of the topics were defined as key words or expressions from the content. *Figure 1.16* visualises the topics of the songs of performers segregated according to the type of the topic and the frequency of their occurrence in this music programme. Out of total of 381 coded performances of female performers, 189 performances or 49.61% can be said to cover a topic appropriate for the preschool or early school age. For example, topics such as *family love*, which include songs of sister love (“My sister”) or love to the parents (the song “Mommy”), is a theme node which is specifically for children. This also includes the topics *children’s worries* which has songs referring to children’s fear of ghosts (such as the song “I am not afraid”) and the theme *children’s fun*, etc. These themes, however, are not fully freed from the clear gender differentiation – performers of this theme include songs functioning as differential symbolic markers which precisely and in a stereotyped manner fence the “male” and “female” space in early childhood.

Paradigmatic example is the song “You are worth more than a brother to me” – the text speaks that, in the family domain, the mother and father of a girl, while planning a second child, have expressed their wishes, and the father wished for a male child, saying: “a son would be ok, little

football player, little giant”, and the mother, while wishing for a female child – said that “another hardworking, doll I would like”. The title of this song and this stanza represent a condensed expression of a traditional gender differentiation. The issue of the sex of the new-born child is presented as an issue of *value*. Although the title suggests that the sister is *worth* more than a brother, and not the other way around, the value organisation of the dilemma is, nevertheless, an expression of the same traditional matrix. In this matrix, the father “desires a male child” to be able to shape it according to his image and ideology. In this case, that image and ideology are related to the physical force (“little giant”) and football as an important interest of what is traditionally considered a typically male job. Traditionally, this relation between father and son has roots in the Hebrew and Christian religious imagology. However, the mother, according to the words of the second part of the stanza, wants a female child to help her with the work, and who would be beautiful so as to face a lower social resistance in the growing process – that is why the mother wishes for a “*hardworking doll*”. The traits of beauty and diligence in women are also the highest values in the popular imagology. They also have roots in the traditional gender division of labour. It is rather interesting that such textual construct is placed on a sort of a “techno” musical base, which is to instil a “contemporary” effect on the song. This gender-soaked markers create the image of possibilities – prior the birth of a baby. However, the refrain of the song speaks of the actualised possibilities – after the baby is born. The text reads as follows: “You are worth more than a brother to me, [he] would disassemble the entire room/ You are my sunshine and gold, and he would, I know, annoy me”. The unborn male child is here construed as a “troublemaker”, another stereotyped presentation of male children considered naturally to be restless, irresponsible and nogoodnik (the word originating from “ne’er-do-well”). The female (born) child is, however, construed as a sweet creature contrary to what was said about the boy – *sunshine and gold*, someone who would not disassemble the room and annoy his older sister. To some extent, in this instance, the older sister internalises the cultural matrix of her parents (of the older generation), according to which the sex issue is an issue of a higher or lower *value*. This example was chosen to indicate the fact that even in texts with children’s themes – an interesting *political* aspect is hidden, of which text-writers and producers should be aware when construing contents envisaged for children in music programmes.

As seen on *Figure 1.16*, out of the themes under which children’s songs of female performers are listed, two can be singled out as interesting in terms of gender. The *first* refers to the children’s desire to engage in performing arts (such as singing or ballet) and second one refers to the striving to achieve physical beauty and be modern so as to attain fame. These two themes are interesting so as to identify whether the numerical overrepresentation of female performers in the music programme such as the Superstar is also supported in the contents of the songs sung by the girls. Both themes often converge, and they include 53 performances of girls in the *Superstar Top Chart* representing 28.04% of the total number of performances with explicitly children’s theme or 13.91% of the total number of performances of the female performers. For example, in the song “Ballerina”, the girl is singing about how she “does not like to eat éclairs or creamy sweets, but wants to wear ballet shoes”, by which the physical features, in terms of “slim” body as media and

socially desirable for women and girls, are related to the success in performing arts. The contents of the songs include several references in which fame and physical beauty are most desired by the girls, as supported by the high frequency of songs with such contents.

However, the most interesting fact is that *Superstar Top Chart* has a wide spectrum of songs promoting fun, hedonism, romantic love and similar. These topics are not the same as those

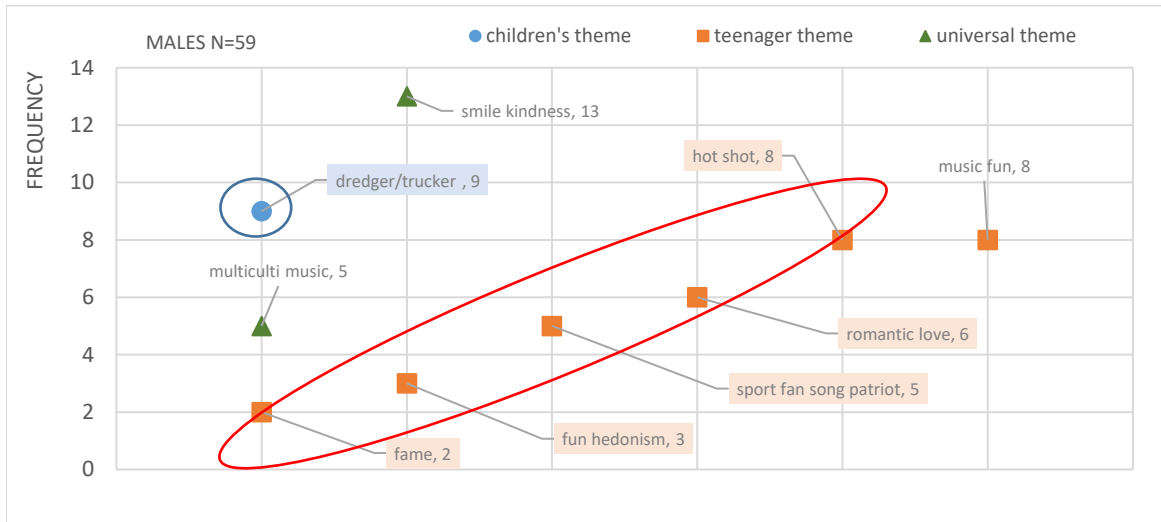


Figure 1.17: Types of themes sung by male performers in *Superstar Top Chart* (MRT 1)

pertaining to the love of children to their parents. These themes refer more to the romantic sexualised love between teenagers. The themes, i) fun hedonism, ii) romantic love and iii) fun hedonism and romantic love, are separately classified since some of the thematic elements contained in a single category are not contained in other categories and vice-versa. However, these construct a thematic entirety and have high frequency. A total of 82 performances are included in these three categories or 21.52% of the total number of female performers. Paradigmatic examples for this group are the songs “Pretty as a picture”, “You have my number”, “On and Off”, “Disco Weekend” and others, which are with contents more resembling contents for young adolescents instead of contents for children. The fact that both types of contents are part of the same festival and the same programme, indicates the level of attention which was(not) dedicated to the developmental characteristics of the age for which this festival is envisaged. That means that songs of female performers are marked by contents indicating sexualisation, high value of physical beauty, high value of arts requiring performance on the stage. It is visible on *Figure 1.17* that regarding male performers, songs with contents resembling the text for late adolescents are dominant – they speak of romantic love, reaching fame and enjoyment. These themes can also be found among the female performers, but to a much higher relative frequency. Two of the following themes can be found among the male performers – one is a cheerleading patriotic song and the other is when referring to a specific “hot shot” since he is doing so well with the girls. It should be pointed out that themes including the nation issue, or themes with political implications in the narrow sense, should not be included in children’s music programmes. In addition, the position of

the “hot shot, who is here construed as a women’s “hunter” is problematic since it automatically construes women as a passive object to be “hunted”.

The thematic analysis of the songs performed in the programme *Superstar Top Chart* would be incomplete if it does not encompass the cultural and value-related context of creation of the programme. The text of the intro song is a good indicator of the values promoted by this music show and, accordingly, to why the gender roles, subject to analysis of this chapter, are determined by this value system. The first stanza of the intro song/theme reads “*I want to be rich and famous/ everyone to speak of me/ and everyone to be crazy about me/ I want to be – I want to be a Superstar/ and everyone to be crazy about me*”. This stanza of the song – intro to a children’s musical programme stems from a value system in which “fame” and “money” are the most important motive for individual achievements. Sexualisation of children and the hegemonic value orientation to hedonism, analysed above in this chapter, are a “logically” positioned brick in this system of values. If this text is to be interpreted as a cultural imprint of social values, it is inevitable to note that it witnesses the consumerist hegemony of the time of its production. The comparison of the texts of this programme with the texts of the children’s festivals created few decades ago (such as the *Golden Nightingale*), indicates the social pressure of the dominant consumer ideology on the youngest population. This, without a doubt, has gender implications, since when the “system” stimulates “wealth” and “fame”, it requires children to adjust their value matrix – boys and girls are under social pressure to become “rich” and “famous” regardless of the affinities or abilities they have. Sexualisation, in this context, is a legitimate manner to reach such objective.

In addition, the study has shown that the Superstar Top Chart has a few problematic thematic units nested in between the music tracks. For example, in the edition broadcasted on 17.09.2019, the host has an interview with Father Viktor of the Macedonian Orthodox Church – Ohrid Archbishopric, who provides religious messages and speaks of the Easter fasting. Nesting of the interview which promotes religious values in a children’s programme is inappropriate in accordance with the same principle according to which religious sermon is not allowed in educational institutions in which minors study.

Programmes structured as talk shows

3.5. Bell (Dzvon)

3.5.1 Main frequencies and distributions of male and female participants in the programme

In the 20 editions of the programme *Bell*, structured as a talk show, a total of 556 programme participants were analysed. Out of this number, 184 participants (or 33.09% of the total number)

Gender	male participants			female participants			Total
programme/role	host	Performer	total m.	F. host	F. performer	total f.	
Bell	20	164	184	3	369	372	556
%	03,60%	29,50%	33,09%	0,54%	66,37%	66,91%	100,00%

Table 1.10 Distribution of characters according to gender in *Bell* on MRTI

are male and 372 (or 66.91%) are female. The 2:1 ratio in favour of the number of female participants can only partially be explained since the character of the programme is such that the performers are mostly requested to do a performing act – such as ballet, drama play, or music performance – total of 109 female performers against only 32 male performers are included in this category. However, as it will become clear, with an important exception, in each category of types of selected hobbies, female participants are numerically superior. This speaks of the higher interest of girls to participate in such type of programmes through which they could reach the public.

In addition, the selected editions for analysis have a total of 20 appearances of male participants in the role of hosts, which is 12.20% of the total number of male participants and with only 3 appearances of female hosts. This is also as interesting information as is the total numerical superiority of female participants. Although the number is low so as to draw any significant conclusions, it is still indicative to note that there are twice less male participants and at the same time many times more appearances of male participants in the role of hosts compared to females.

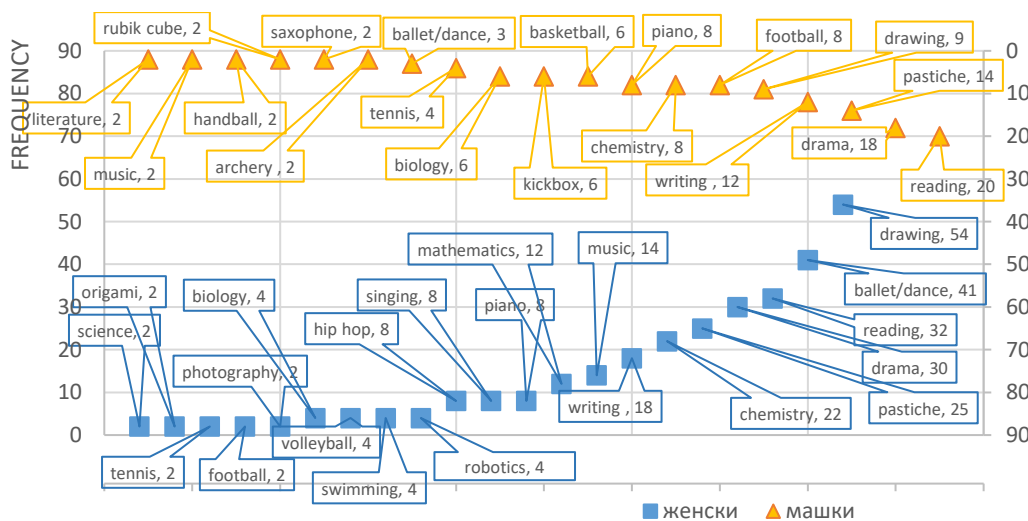


Figure 1.18: Preoccupations, interests and hobbies of male and female participants in the programme *Bell* (MRT 1)

3.5.2 Association of characters with social roles and professional preoccupations

In the study, female and male participants in the show *Bell* were coded for their orientation towards a specific interest, job or hobby. In a total of 298 female participants in the show (or 80.76% of the total number of female participants), it was possible to determine what was their hobby or what profession they would choose. The same could be determined for the 134 male participants (which is 72.83% of the total number of male participants). As seen in *Figure 1.18*, the individual choices of these participants seem very similar and there is no obvious differentiation between males and females - regardless of gender, most participants chose reading, drama, making collages and similar. Furthermore, female participants have exhibited preoccupations that distort national stereotypes on what interests the girls should exhibit – sports are emerging as interests, such as football, scientific interest such as robotics or music choices, such as hip-hop.

These frequencies, however, were grouped by type of interest and this finding, as can be seen in *Figure 1.19*, takes on an additional dimension - probably the most obvious counterintuitive finding is the fact that female participants exhibit a relatively greater interest in science than males. In addition, they exhibit a relatively greater interest than males in the visual arts, music, and, as expected, the performing arts. A finding that most corresponds to the popular notions of what should be a male and what a female preoccupation is the manifested interest in sports - almost 21% of the male participants in the 20 editions were involved in some sport and only 4.3% of the females are engaged in sports.

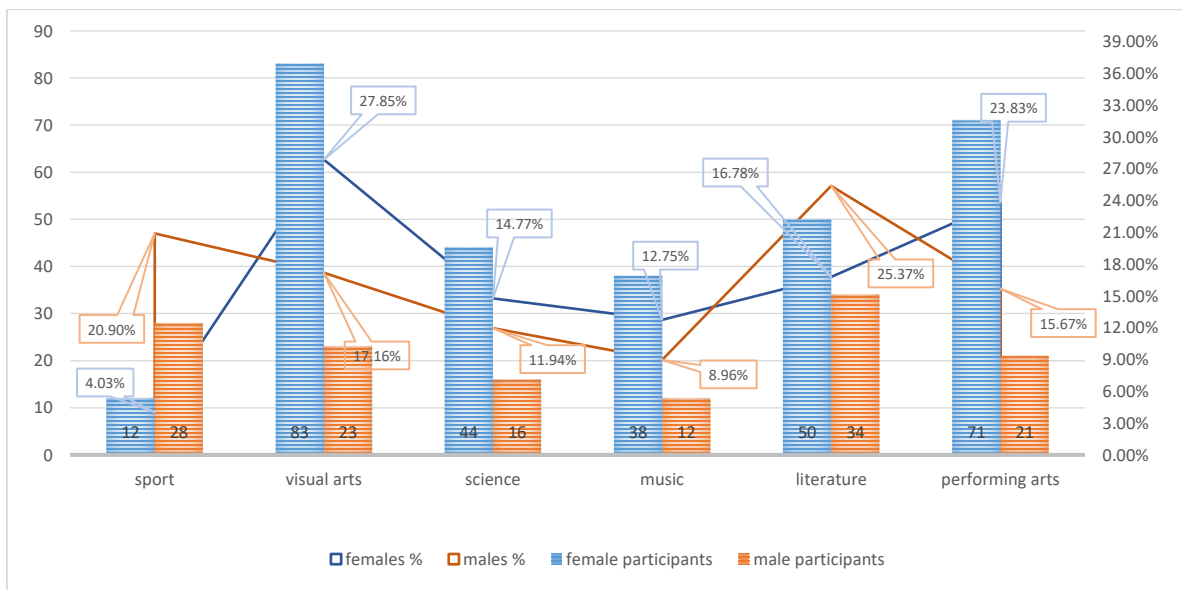


Figure 1.19: Preoccupations, interests and hobbies of male and female participants in the *Bell* programme (MRT 1)

3.6. “*Od A do Sh*” (*From A to Z*)

In the 30 analysed editions of the programme for the letters *From A to Z*, in which one male and one female character appear with equal importance, there are some interesting gender aspects that would be of particular importance for this analysis - except that the female character is called Sekjerche (Sugar), which corresponds to the "expectation" of girls to be identity-determined predominantly by their beauty and "sweetness".

Programmes structured as hybrid compositions

3.7. 5+ Family

3.7.1 Main frequencies and distributions of male and female characters in the programme

In the 32 editions of the hybrid structure programme 5+ Family, a total of 166 characters were realised. As seen on the table, this programme, produced by an independent production company, has a relative balance in terms of the number of male and female characters – 87 or 52.41% of the total number of characters are males, and 79 or 47,59% of the total number of characters are females. Having in mind that each edition in this programme is an individual entirety, leading characters were those who were regulars, but not appearing in every show. The characters with guest appearances, and without a role in the many mini-narratives throughout the show, were coded as supporting.

Gender programme/role	male characters		female characters		total
	leading	supporting	leading	supporting	
5+ Family	80	7	78	1	166
%	48.19%	4.22%	46.99%	0.60%	100.00%

Table 1.11 Distribution of characters according to gender in 5+ Family (MRT1)

3.7.2 Diversity in 5+Family

5+ Family, is the most quality children's programme product within the selected period, not only on MRT 1, but also in general terms. This can be supported by several arguments:

First, the show has a high visual quality compared to other programmes in the selected period, and through simple and often comic narratives, it opens a variety of topics and questions relevant to the young population: for example, questions about tolerance for others, questions about attitude to the environment, attitude to those who are different than us or towards the elderly, etc. This gives the series an educational dimension that is sorely lacking in the overall media sphere in the country's programme for children.

Second, the programme demonstrates a higher level of sense of diversity than other programmes in the same period. For example, although the research did not detect the presence of same-sex communities, the programme still has some differences in terms of family composition - some of the characters are children of divorced parents, there are characters who play children from foster homes, intergenerational conflicts within family groups are being discussed, etc. All this makes this programme a better reflection of the issues and problems faced by the young population that is the target audience of this show.

Third, the script obviously, with the exception of the question of the ethno-cultural identity of the characters, tends to reflect diversity in terms of the situation in which they live - for example Sara, lives with a physical disability, Vedran (who appears in one episode) lives without parents,

Grandpa Mende is an elderly citizen exhibiting signs of dementia and who needs the socialisation with the leading characters in the programme, etc.

3.7.3 Association of characters with social roles and responsibilities

All these elements are constructed around a series of separate hybrid compositions (combination of dramatizations, musical performances and narratives) that ensure their continuity and connection through the typified main male and female characters. Each of these characters has its own dominant characteristics, which, in turn, when subjected to content analysis, have exhibited an interesting and less obvious gender aspect in the show. Male and female characters were coded for their main (defining) characteristics. In character stereotyping compositions (whose logic of character construction resembles that of sitcom compositions) several defining characteristics of each of them can be easily determined. Analysts were asked (in open coding) to list two characteristics that define these characters. These benchmarks were then compared with the traits attributed to these characters on the official website of 5+ Family⁸³ and each of the sets of traits could be grouped around three dichotomous axes: (1) social responsibility (responsible vs. irresponsible), (2) individual characteristic (featherbrained vs. reasonable) and (3) moral characteristic (good-natured vs. malicious). Each character was grouped into two categories - depending on the fact in which of the categories his or her character can be dominantly defined. By taking the example of some characters used here, we describe the coding process: For example, the character of Maria is predominantly determined by her orientation towards activism, environment, civic responsibility, etc. She is a reasonable person and has good intentions to motivate others to act in accordance with those values. In the code clusters, she is defined as (1) socially responsible and (2) reasonable, because these are the two most dominant traits. *Cvetko's* character, on the other hand, is determined by his constant need to find and experience new things and to do so without delving into any of them, a child who loves friendship and motivates others to socialize - in the character set for this research he is coded as (1) featherbrained and (2) good-natured. The character of Komsho, on the other hand, is determined by the absence of a feeling for the common good, he is mischievous and a show-off without anything to support it, but he is featherbrained and not malicious, so he is coded as (1) socially irresponsible and (2) featherbrained.

As seen in *Figure 1.20*, none of the main characters in this show are constructed as malicious, which can be considered as expected for a children's programme in which friendship is treated through positive patterns of behaviour. In addition, there is no differentiation between male and female characters in terms of their benevolence - in half of the male and female characters, benevolence is one of the two dominant characteristics. On the other hand, in the other clusters of characteristics, there is a noticeable difference, which from the gender aspect is quite interesting for the purposes of analysis. An interesting litmus test for differentiation is the issue of social responsibility. There are two female characters in the series 5+ Family (Lina and Maria) who stand out due to their social or civic responsibility. Lina, for example, is a character who is often the

⁸³ See <http://5plus.mk/wp/>

moral compass of the group because she tries to correct the behaviour of others and tries to set an example for everyone else through her own examples of behaviour. Although she is not flawless, she knows when to admit that she has made a mistake and to correct her future behaviour accordingly - her social responsibility is evident in her commitment to the good of the group. *Maria's* character is designed as a face of social movements - she is an activist who advocates for the improvement of the environment.

The antipode to this behaviour is the complete social and personal irresponsibility of Komsho, who is designed as a typical naughty child from the neighbourhood.

This contrast can be illustrated with a few lines - for example in the episode *Photomontage*, in one of the scenes, Komsho and Komshito play chess. Maria enters the stage - revolted, taking off her cleaning gloves, telling the two that she has been cleaning the lawn in front of the building because some irresponsible neighbour threw garbage there. Komsho responds to her remark: "Big deal, I threw a chewing gum out the window yesterday". Then in the episode *Cheating*, Komsho claims to Lina that cheating is a skill of smart students, etc. This manifested irresponsibility of the most frequent male character can be considered as a procedure of his infantilization. It is important to note - even for high quality compositions such as the 5+ Family - the systematic infantilization of some characters provides them with an *alibi* for further irresponsible behaviour, which in turn becomes common and expected behaviour throughout the series and reinforces the comic effect for that character and makes it one of those because of which the audience watches the series. However, when there the irresponsible behaviour in the series and the gender of the characters are matching - then it becomes a matter of required strategic rethinking of scripts in the direction of gender balance in the sense in which it is presented here.

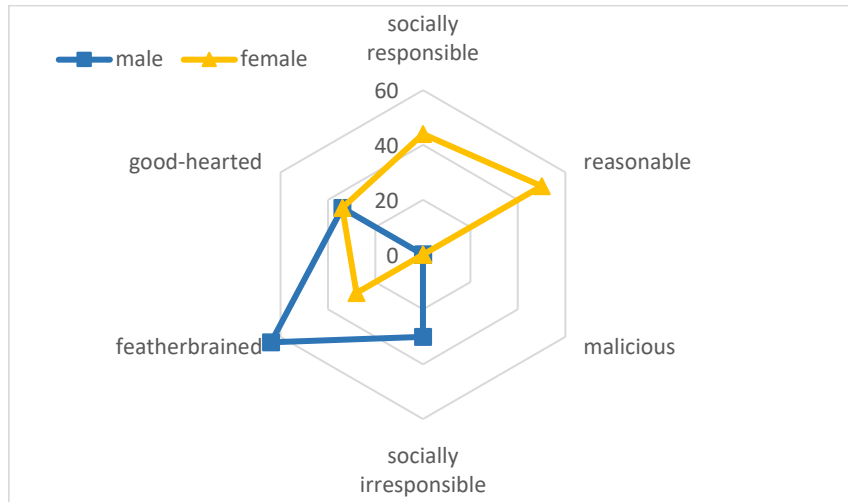


Figure 1.20: Specifics of male and female participants in the programme 5+ Family (MRT 1)

3.8. Children's Drama is not Twiddle-Twaddle

In the 4 editions of the hybrid structure show, *Children's Drama is not Twiddle-Twaddle*, a total of 32 participants were analysed, of which 19 female and 13 male participants. The show is of low quality in terms of visual and audio quality, but also in terms of script - it is intended for preschool

children and according to the analysis, it seems that the basic aspects of gender equality were not taken into account. The number of included editions does not allow for more serious conclusions to be drawn about it; however, it can be observed that the girls are mostly ballerinas, and the boys are often given the role of mischievous children, which in fact interprets the gender roles in a patriarchal society in which females should be smart and should be observing "aesthetics", and boys, although they should curb their "natural" urges, are still allowed space to "learn by mistake". A typical example of the latter is the episode "How to tame Vlatko", in which Vlatko is a naughty child whose behaviour should be *normalised*.

2. Macedonian Television – Programme in Albanian Language (MRT 2)

1. General features, frequencies and genre distribution of children’s programmes on MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian Language

On the second channel of the Macedonian Radio and Television - Programme in Albanian language (MRT 2), in the selected period, 117 programmes were isolated with total duration of over 36 hours. Of the entire quantum of broadcasted content in the selected period, 49.17% are rerun shows, which represents a slightly higher frequency compared to other televisions. In some cases, four reruns of one children's show have been aired, and this especially applies to foreign production programmes. The analysis of gender issues in children's programmes was made on a total sample of 117 programmes.

Programme	frequency	%	duration	premiere editions	% of the total frequencies
Gormiti	18	15,38%	6:56:10	6	33,33%
Let’s Learn Together	12	10,26%	5:19:04	7	58,33%
Come to Our Story	10	8,55%	4:46:32	6	60,00%
Lalaloopsy	17	14,53%	3:49:11	5	29,41%
The Magic of Letters	12	10,26%	4:33:42	6	50,00%
My school	8	6,84%	3:22:49	4	50,00%
Stories	38	32,48%	7:33:39	23	60,53%
Musical	2	1,71%	2:04:39	2	100,00%
Total	117	100,00%	36:21:07	61	50,43%

Table 2.1: Frequency of children’s programmes broadcasted in the period 15.09-1510.2019 (MRT 2 Programme in Albanian Language)

In conceptual terms, the children's programmes on MRT 2 - Programme in Albanian language are poorly structured - both in terms of their internal structure, as well as in terms of placement in the structure of the entire programme of this service. Thus, the category "Stories", which, as seen in Table 2.1, has a share of 32.48% in the total frequency of broadcasts in the selected period, is not actually a clearly conceptualised programme, but is more of an analytical construct made for the needs of this study. In reality, these are more isolated cases of stories in different formats that are positioned in the structures of another programme - often programme for adults. For example, 21 editions (of which 11 reruns) of short stories were aired within the programme intended for a wide and heterogeneous, but above all, adult audience - *Good morning*. Furthermore, the category of stories includes isolated cases of stories such as the one-time editions of *Blerina and the Butterfly*, *Genta* or the *Blerta's Post Office*. Finally, based on the qualitative assessment of the team of coders in this study, in the talk shows of the type *My School* and *Come to Our Story*, the children as protagonists in the programme are "powerless" because they rarely express *their* interests or preoccupations and more often appear as extras in the programme. Thus, in the show *Come to Our Story*, a group of students ask questions to a beekeeper who talks about bee cultivation - students

do not express their views on that profession or their broader interests, but simply ask questions. This example is a principle of behaviour in this type of programmes.

In this context, MRT 2 - Programme in Albanian language still has, albeit in a formal sense, a relative diversity of the programme for children. **First**, there is a partial diversity in terms of the segments of the young audience to which they are appropriate. Based on the assessment of the content analysis, the content of the shows *Lalaloopsy*, *Let's Learn Together* and *The Magic of Letters* are suitable for audiences of late preschool and early school age (4-8 years), *Stories* and both music programmes are suitable for audiences of school age (5-10 years). Although the *Gormiti* show is based on the characters of children's toys used by children aged 4-8, the level of conflict in this animated show and the use of flashing images suggests that the animated film is appropriate for older children.

Finally, the shows *My School* and *Come to Our Story* are suitable for middle childhood children, i.e. school age (8-12 years).

Second, there is some diversity in children's programs in terms of the function they have for the

audience. According to the typology of AAVMS, the three main programme functions are informative, educational, and entertaining - in the programmes for children of the Public Broadcasting Service - Programme in Albanian language, there are no shows that could be categorised as a programme with informative function in the strict sense of the word; however, the study has established that such are broadcasted that fall into the categories of educational and entertaining function. As seen in *Figure 2.1.*, in the selected period, slightly over half of the programmes for children are produced by MRT 2 - Programme in Albanian language and most of them have an educational or entertaining-educational function. In addition, programmes with educational, entertaining, or educational-entertaining function have an almost identical share in the total aired contents for children in the selected period.

It is also obvious that among the broadcasted contents, there is not a single one that is produced by domestic independent producers or a co-production with the Public Broadcasting Service. The

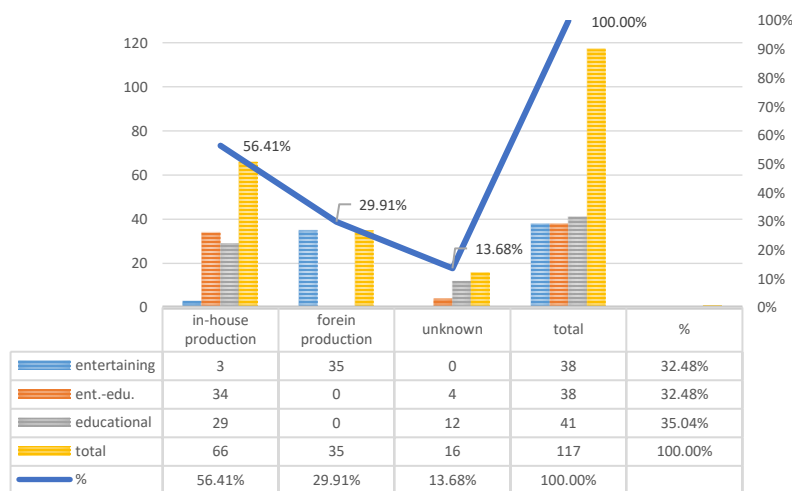


Figure 2.1: Distribution of children's programmes, broadcasted in the period between 15.09 and 15.10 2019, according to function and production (on MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language)

source of the production, however, is not clear everywhere - in 16 cases or 13.68%, the details of the production origin of the show were not disclosed in the closing credits and the study could not verify the production thereof. Regarding the foreign productions, MRT 2 in Albanian language, in the selected period, has aired episodes from the series *Gormiti*, an Italian production of two independent producers, and the series *Lalaloopsy* - American production created by the production company MGA Entertainment.

origin	frequency	%
Macedonia	66	56,41%
Italy	18	15,38%
USA	17	14,53%
unknown	16	13,68%
total	117	100,00%

Table 2.2: Distribution of children’s programmes broadcasted from 15.09 to 15.10 2019 according to the country of origin (MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language)

The distribution of the aired programme according to the years of production shows that the largest

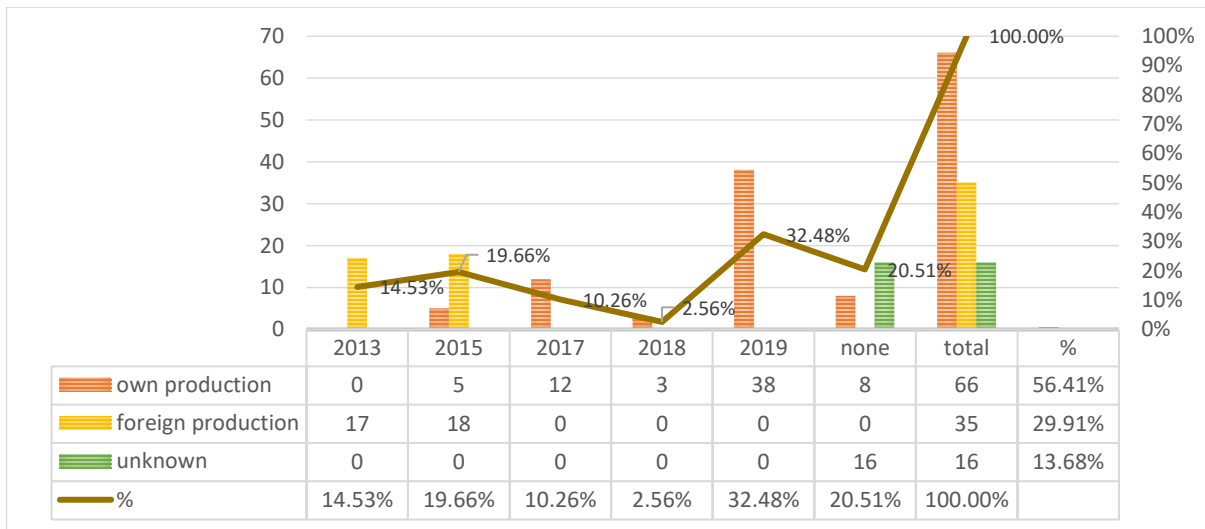


Figure 2.2: Distribution of children’s programmes, broadcasted from 15.09 to 15.10 2019, according to the year and origin of production (MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language)

share in the programme broadcasted in the selected period is from 2019 - 32.48% of the total aired content for children is content from in-house production created this year. This gives the impression that MRT 2 in Albanian language broadcasts new content, however - in fact, this number includes very short, non-dramatized stories aired within the programme largely intended for adults *Good Morning* that goes live, followed by *My school* - a programme that requires minimal script control and rudimentary directing, as well as the programme *Come to Our Story*, which also has elementary structural shapes and basic directing. These are low quality and low conceptual contents that do not require the use of significant human resources and conceptual attention.

For 24 editions or 20.51% of the total frequency broadcasts, there is no data on the production year. These editions are isolated stories that do not appear in a series format nor have any other

conceptual thread with the help of which, we would establish a repetitive relationship with the audience; however, there are also programmes with a clearer concept among them - for example the programme

Let's Learn Together.

Third, the Programme in Albanian language contains certain diversity of programmes regarding their internal structure – which, for the

needs of this study, was defined as *specific genre*⁸⁴. The genre division adopted in this study does not reflect an established and generally accepted classification, but is designed to facilitate the approach of this study to the subject of analysis - the gender issues. The total aired programmes for children on MRT 2 can thus be classified into three categories: (1) *narratives / feature stories* - a programme whose structure is organised around an action developing through the phases of exposition, plot, culmination, peripeteia and resolution and whose characters are transformed through the action (as in television stories, movies, fables, animated films, etc.). This category includes the short non-dramatized *Stories*, which in the selected period were broadcasted within various programmes without conceptual format, and the two series of foreign production *Lalaloopsy* and *Gormiti*. These editions have a share of 62.39% in the total frequency of broadcasts in the selected period; (2) *talk shows* - a programme structured as a conversation in which there is no transformation of the action and the characters or participants in the programme, with a share of 35.90% of the total broadcasted programmes. This category includes the programmes *Let's Learn Together*, *The Magic of Letters*, *Come to Our Story* and *My School*; (3) *music shows* - a programme in which the apparently dominant component is the music act. This is where the exceptionally low frequency was categorised (2 programmes) of incidental broadcasts – one on the holiday occasion, and one titled *Nightingales of Korab*.

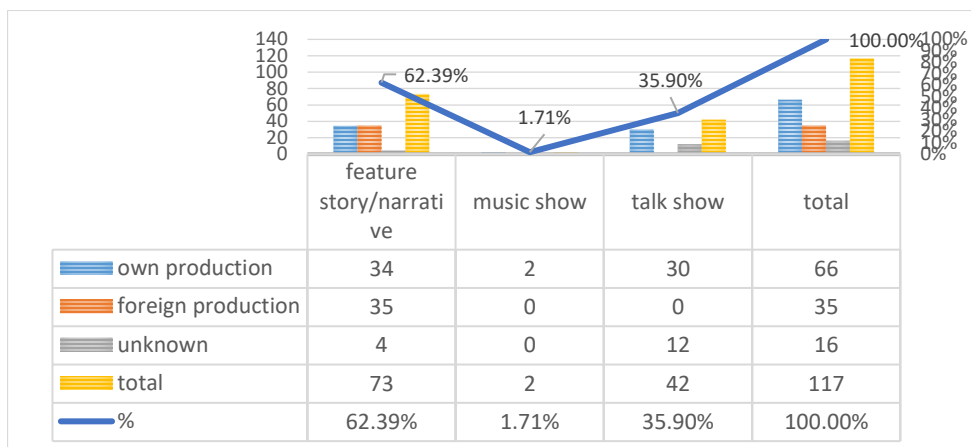


Figure 2.3: Distribution of children's programmes, broadcasted from 15.09 to 15.10 2019, according to the specific genre and production origin (MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language)

⁸⁴ This diversity is here noted due to analytical reasons – the approach of the content analysis to its integral parts depends on the internal programme structure. Therefore, for the needs of this study, we differentiate between four types of structures: 1) *narratives/feature stories*, 2) *talk shows* 3) *music shows* and 4) *hybrid shows*. More detailed elaboration on the need for such qualification is provided in the chapter Methodology.

2. General features and frequencies of the characters/participants in the children’s programmes on MRT 2

On MRT 2 - Programme in Albanian language, in the selected period, there was a relatively high frequency of characters or participants. In the 117 editions of the children's programme in the selected period, a total of 901 characters or participants in the children's program were analysed, of which 38.18% or 344 are males, and 60.04%

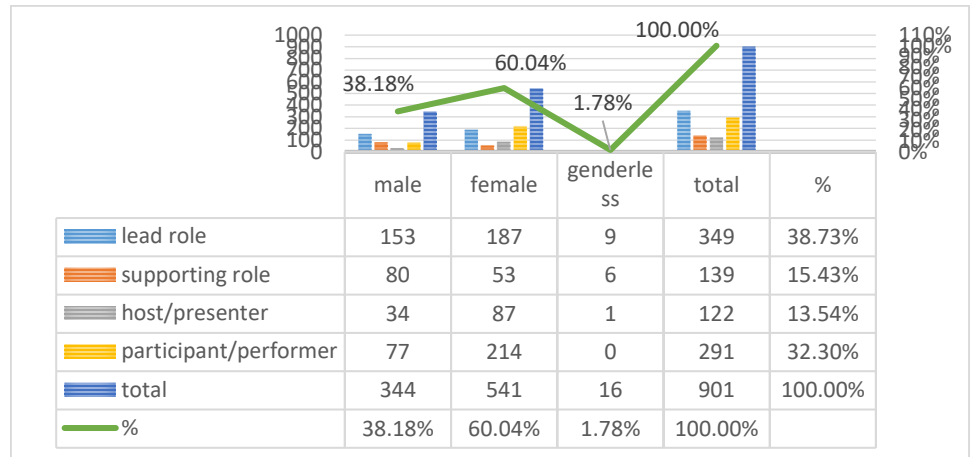


Figure 2.4: Distribution of characters/participants in the children’s programme broadcasted between 15.09 - 15.10.2019 (MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language)

or 541 are females. The remaining 16 or 1.78% of the total number, are characters / participants who cannot be placed in either category and they are marked as genderless.

Most of the characters come from the series structured as *narratives / feature stories* - these are the two series of foreign production *Gormiti* and *Lalaloopsy*, as well as the group of conceptually atomized products that for the purposes of this study were marked with the common title - *Stories*. This refers to a total of 514 characters, which is 57.04% of the total sample of characters / participants in the programme. Although, according to *Table 2.3*, it appears that the *Stories* are a single series with the highest frequency of characters (277 or 30.74%) which should be considered as a benefit of the featured programme of MRT 2 - Programme in Albanian language, this number is still only an analytical construct, because in reality these are poorly conceptualised shows, which have no thread that connects them and whose characters are produced only through the narration of the host or narrator, which means that little production or script energy was invested in them.

Furthermore, regarding the shows *Gormiti* and *Lalaloopsy*, there is a visible imbalance between male and female characters - in the first there is an overwhelming majority of male characters, and in the second an overwhelming majority of female characters. This is due to the

programme /gender	male	female	genderl.	total	%
Gormiti	101	5	6	112	12,43%
Let’s Learn Together	17	12	0	29	3,22%
Come to Our Story	27	46	0	73	8,10%
Lalaloopsy	4	121	0	125	13,87%
The Magic of Letters	23	31	0	54	5,99%
My School	40	149	0	189	20,98%
Stories	119	148	10	277	30,74%
Musical	13	29	0	42	4,66%
Total	344	541	16	901	100,00%
%	38,18%	60,04%	1,78%	100,00%	

Table 2.3: Distribution of characters/participants in children’s programmes broadcasted between 15.09 - 15.10.2019 (MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language)

character of these series which MRT 2 - Programme in Albanian language, in a similar way as MRT 1, as well as the private broadcasters, takes from foreign productions with all the consumerist and gender implications attached to them⁸⁵.

The total higher number of female characters only partially stems from this type of programme. However, the biggest numerical difference comes from the type of shows that in this study are marked as talk shows, which is evident from the show *My School*. A common element of this show are stage performances - singers, dances or other performing acts where, as was observed on MRT 1, there are noticeably more girls appearances than those of boys.

specific genre production/gender	feature story/narrative			talk show		music show		total
	male	female	genderless	male	female	male	female	
In-house production	113	141	10	90	226	13	29	622
Foreign-in./coproduction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
foreign production	105	126	6	0	0	0	0	237
unknown	6	7	0	17	12	0	0	42
Total	224	274	16	107	238	13	29	901
%	24,86%	30,41%	1,78%	11,88%	26,42%	1,44%	3,22%	100,00%

Table 2.4: Distribution of characters/participants in children’s programmes broadcasted between 15.09 - 15.10.2019, according to gender, specific genre and origin of production (MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language)

In series of the type *feature stories / narratives*, it is obvious that there is a numerical balance between male and female characters. The sample of *music shows* is too small to draw some more serious conclusions, but even there, with this sample, it is noticed that there are twice as many female participants than male participants. In the shows that are organised as *talk shows*, it is obvious that female participants are with more than double representation, for the reasons already elaborated.

⁸⁵ The MRT 1 Chapter contains more details on this comment.

3. Analysis of gender aspects in special programmes on MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language

Programmes structured as narrative/feature story

3.1 Stories

3.1.1 Main frequencies and distributions of male and female characters

The sample has 38 shows that were grouped, for analytical purposes, under the name *Stories* - as it was said before, this is actually a group of conceptually non-organised editions broadcasted in the morning show *Good Morning*, which has a small section envisaged for the children's

program me	male characters			female characters			genderless characters			total
	leading	supporting	total males	leading	supporting	total females	leading	supporting	total genderl.	
Stories	64	52	116	59	48	107	6	3	9	232
%	27,59%	22,41%	50,00%	25,43%	20,69%	46,12%	2,59%	1,29%	3,88%	100,00%

Table 2.5: Distribution of characters according to gender in the *Stories* broadcasted between 15.09 - 15.10.2019 (MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language)

programme, followed by a few stories aired separately as part of the children's programme, and several atomized narratives such as *Blerina and the Butterfly*, *Blerta's Post Office*, *Genta*, *Bravo Arlind*, etc. Within these shows, a total of 277 participants appear, of which 232 or 83.75% characters in the narratives, and the remaining 45 or 16.25% appear in the role of narrators / hosts. The latter are not taken for analysis, because they are not part of the narrative; however, it should be noted that the vast majority of narrators, i.e. presenters (43 in total) are female. As seen in *Table 2.5*, this aggregate of programmes has balance in terms of the number of male and female characters, as well as balance of the ratio between them, segmented according to the role they play.

3.1.2 Association of characters with social roles and professional preoccupations

The occupation could be determined for a total of 76 characters (32.76% of the total number of characters) in these rudimentary narrative forms. According to the gender structure - occupation could be determined in 57 male characters (which is 75% of the total segment in which the occupation could be determined). In addition, the type of occupation could be detected in 19 female characters, or 25% of the same segment. It should be noted that many of these occurrences originate from shows that are rerun multiple times - so one occupation can appear in just one show and then multiply. However, it is not of importance for this analysis, because it takes into account

the units of the aired program and considers each show as separate - but makes the bracket transparent regarding the number of show reruns.

Figure 2.5 presents the distribution of occupations of male characters in *Stories*. Most of the male characters in this programme have a profession - in this case it is a sailor (as in the story *Sinbad the Sailor*) or some craft, such as a shoemaker, a carpenter (as in the story *The Shoemaker and the Elves* or *Pinocchio*) etc.

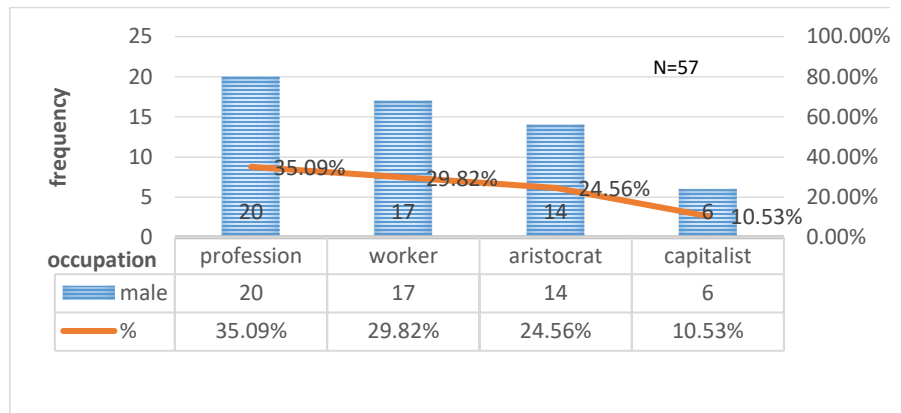


Figure 2.5: Distribution of occupations of male characters in the *Stories* broadcasted between 15.09 - 15.10.2019 (MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language)

Furthermore, male characters appear in the role of common workers, but also in the role of princes or kings. Finally, in 6 cases, a male character appears in the role of a merchant.

In female characters, as seen in Figure 2.6, there is a very low frequency of characters in which an occupation can be determined. It is obvious that the highest frequency is given to the role of the queen who in this case has a more mythical than aristocratic role – *The Snow Queen*. Furthermore, the role of housewife is reserved for female characters in a similar way in

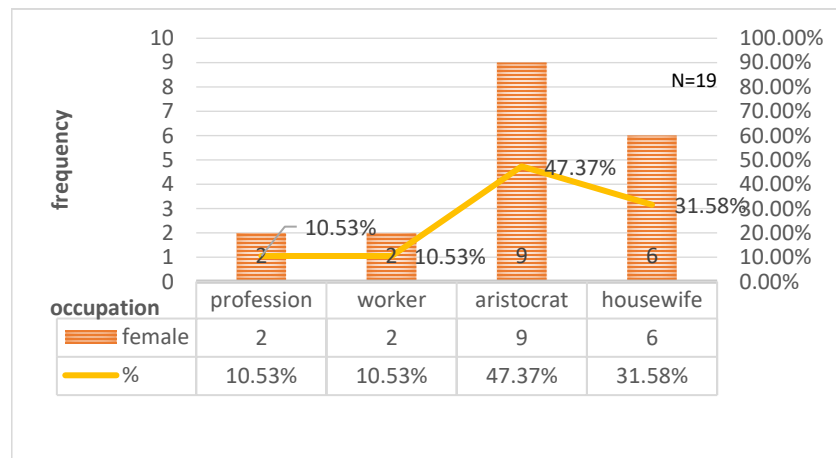


Figure 2.6: Distribution of occupations of female characters in the *Stories* broadcasted between 15.09 - 15.10.2019 (MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language)

which the role of capitalist is reserved for male characters. Unlike the *narratives / feature stories* of home production that were analysed in the programme on MRT 1, there are very few occurrences here to draw more significant conclusions. However, this distribution can also be considered indicative of gender roles in the programme.

The manner in which these stories are presented and the manner in which the characters in them are conceptualised, do not allow an analysis to be made of the characters' traits in a similar way as for the stories of MRT 1. *Narratives / feature stories* of domestic production in the Programme

in Albanian Language on MRT 2, have a poor structure and insufficiently developed complexity of the characters and the action that would render such an analysis meaningless.

3.2. *Lalaloopsy and Gormiti*

On MRT 2 - Programme in Albanian language, as well as on the First Channel, animated series of foreign production were broadcasted, which are in fact multi-platform commercial products. In this case, in addition to the *Lalaloopsy* series, the series of Italian origin *Gormiti* was also broadcasted. Several issues related to the consumerist pressure on the young population and the gender consequences of that problem were discussed in the chapter on MRT 1; however, given that MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian Language has made the same choice, but also expanded the scope of that selection to several such series and on this occasion, a similar debate should be opened.

Namely, *Lalaloopsy*, *Gormiti*, as well as several other franchises of children's programme, are the subject of global debate and controversy due to their marketing that extends across multiple platforms. *Lalaloopsy* dolls, as already mentioned, are specifically designed for the girl population in the United States of America, but also globally, so the animated film is an expression of the need to win a female television audience of late preschool and early school age. Similarly, the *Gormiti* series is part of a multiplatform franchise, but in this case, it targets a global audience of preschool and early school-age boys, trying to introduce them to the fantasy genres (in which superheroes have a prominent place) and science fiction. They, like *Lalaloopsy* dolls, are *branded* products and in a sense can be treated as "advertising" for mercantile products of the same brand. Here, as with MRT 1, it is valid to open the question, whether MRT 2 - Programme in Albanian language, when choosing shows of foreign production, takes into account the marketing aspect that is associated with the selected programme.

In addition, in the context of discussing this programme type on MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian Language, it should be noted that this issue has potential consequences on the mental development of children. It was already indicated that the series of studies in the field of social psychology suggest that multiplatform “franchises of branded products grounded by a media narrative [...] produce far-reaching, ubiquitous, and pervasive flows of merchandise but also circulate discursive messages attached to media narratives and are amplified through advertising” (Lemke, 2009)⁸⁶.

⁸⁶ Lemke, J. L. (2009). Multimodal genres and transmedia traversals: Social semiotics and the political economy of the sign. *Semiotica*, 173(1), 283–297.

This could result into the circle of product disseminating the same ideology to enclose the children's experience in the franchise, thus creating an impact with far-reaching consequences. This aspect was already discussed in the previous chapters, in the *Lalaloopsy* context.

In the context of *Gormiti*, however, the high frequency of male characters in it is due to the fact that - the products of this franchise, which include puppet figures, video games and animated films, are envisaged for the segment of the audience - boys. The gender consequences of this can be seen in at least two points: *First*, the fact that the series has a widespread appearance of masculinized representations of male characters - in which physical strength and combativeness represent the highest value. In this series, the characters act on the imaginary mythological island of Gorm. The universe of the series is divided into seven tribes - *the Earth Tribe, the Sea Tribe, the Forest Tribe, the Air Tribe, the Volcano Tribe, the Light Tribe and the Darkness Tribe*. In each of these tribes dwell *warriors* with different powers - who participate as protagonists and antagonists in the fight between good and evil.

In this predominantly "male" and tribal struggle, the characters are both physically and mentally masculinized, and given the target audience, they (primarily the protagonists) are a model to be pursued. Illustrative example in this regard is the character of Agrom, whose portrayal can be seen in *Illustration 2.1*, and who appears most frequently in the selected period (20 appearances). Agrom is the prince of the Earth Tribe and, like most superheroes in this series, his physical proportions are augmented, and with his character traits of a curious, intelligent, brave and virtuous warrior - he sets high standards to be pursued.

Second, it does not include any prominent female superheroes with whom the girls could identify, and for whom superheroes are equally important in terms of building their character. In addition, MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language did not include in its scheme in the selected period another animated series in which female superheroes will, for example, have a prominent place. This implies the conclusion that the superheroes, according to the choice made on the Second



Illustration 2.1: Agrom, prince of Earth, who is the most frequent character in the episodes of the series Gormiti on MRT 2 Programme in Albanian language.

Channel, are characters for construction of the traits of boys, and not of girls, who need to identify themselves with other aspects of the programme analysed in some of the chapters for the Second Channel.

Of course, simplistic notions of good and evil and their struggle are the central motive of all superhero narratives. The superheroes themselves, on the other hand, are *superheroes* precisely because of their physical and mental power, but also their moral superiority and social responsibility. They, as saviours and as conscience of society, put their powers in the function of caring for others. Therefore, this analysis is not envisaged to problematize the genre at all, or to problematize the importance of superheroes to audiences. However, it aims to open an important debate here - whether the Public Broadcasting Service in the selection of series considers the gender aspects exposed in this chapter: (1) the consumerist pressure on the boy and girl audience (2) the masculinizing and feminizing figures which as role models for boys and girls can potentially be hidden in this programme, and (3) whether in the programme, both boys and girls have an equal opportunity to identify themselves with superior characters such as superheroes (asking questions such as - Why there are only male superheroes in *Gormiti* - heroes that only boys can identify with? Or why, if the *Gormiti* series already has such a concept, MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language does not broadcast another animated series with, for example, female superheroes - heroes with whom the female audience could identify with.

Music shows

3.4 The Nightingales of Korab and the Holiday's Music Show

Regarding the *music programme* of MRT 2 - Programme in Albanian language, one can say that it is negligibly small and much more poorly conceptually designed compared to the shows that are included under the category of *narratives / feature stories or talk shows*. In the two editions of *music shows* broadcasted in the selected period, 42 performers appear, of which 29 female and 13 male performers - the number of performances is too small to draw any significant conclusions about the interest in participation in music programmes among boys and girls. Most of the themes that the songs deal with coincide with what was observed and analysed for MRT 1 - the theme of family love dominates, but the programme also includes songs that speak of friendship, the dream to become a ballerina or princess, enjoyment, and fun.

However, there is a distinctive element in this show, which refers to the appearance of songs with ethno-national or patriotic content. Out of the total of 29 performances, three are with this type of content. Although part of this programme is probably a rerun of a holiday show broadcasted almost a year ago, the contents of these songs do not speak of the development of Albanian culture and education, but more of the nation in the ethno-political aspects: in the show broadcasted on

22.09.2019, the song "Fatherland" was sung, then on October 13, 2019 the songs "Festive sky - Our dream Albania - in Europe you are" and the song "Tears of the eagle" were sung.

The presence of content of ethno-national provenance is also characteristic of the other programmes for children on MRT 2 - Programme in Albanian language. Although regarding the music releases, due to the small number of examples, no more general conclusions can be drawn, and it must be noted (as noted below in two talk compositions) that almost every time when the children's programme reproduces ethno-national narratives, this is performed through the girls participating in the programme - the three songs mentioned in the previous paragraph are sung by girls. Ethno-national discourses contain gender aspects in themselves, but here one can see how girls are the national discourse holders, which in turn abounds in "masculinism" because it is dominated by representations of the epic of national heroes who are overwhelmingly male. In this respect, girls internalise and reproduce the "male" discourse in which the nation is glorified.

Programmes structured as *talk* compositions

3.5 Let's Learn Together

The series *Let's Learn Together*, on which there is no information regarding the production origin and year, in the selected period there were a total of 12 editions with 29 participants - 17 of them are male and 12 female participants. In addition to adults, the show features an equal number of male and female characters (12 each), who are actually animated personified animals - squirrels. This show, intended for preschool audiences, is conceptualised on a very elementary level. Therefore, there are almost no aspects that would be particularly interesting for the purposes of gender analysis. Thus, due to its rudimentary nature in terms of script and concept, gender differentiation is made visually, using a basic culturally determined "rule" according to which male children should dress in colours such as blue or green, and females should be dressed in pink or red. As superficial as this observation is, the fact that one squirrel is dressed in blue and signifies an actor with "male" characteristics, and the other squirrel has make-up and is dressed in pink to signify a "female" actress, resonates with an established and popular basic symbolic matrix division perpetuated with this show.

3.6 My School

In the eight editions of the series *My School*, there are a total of 189 participants, of which 40 (or 21.16%) are male and 149 (or 78.84%) are female participants. This is an obvious numerical superiority which raises questions about why programmes in which stage performance or art are an important element, are more attractive for the girls than for boys. However, despite the large number of female participants (with a ratio of 3.7: 1), the most frequently selected interests, as seen in *Figures 2.7* and *2.8* for both male and female participants - are acting and reciting poetry. However, girls also appear as presenters in the schools they come from as well as in the role of singers, although this number in the overall distribution of interests is not very high - 11.41% of female participants have a stage performance that involves singing (which is 8.99% of the selected interests of the total number of participants).

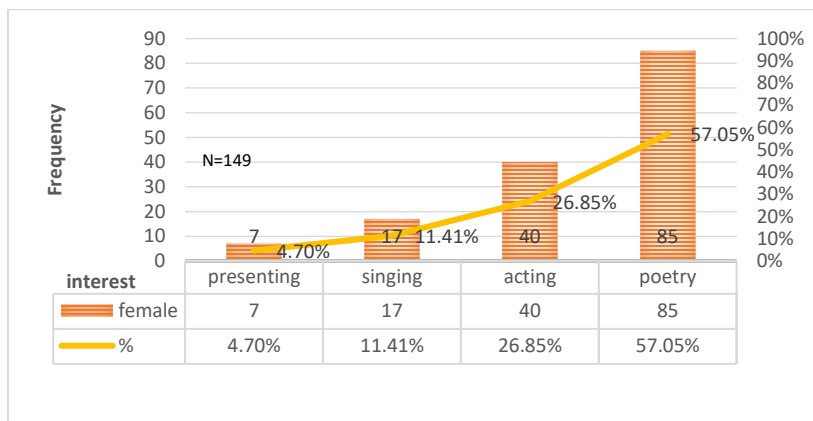


Figure 2.7: Distribution of interests of female participants in the programme *My School* (MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language in the period 15.09 - 15.10.2019)

In this show, however, there is one aspect of the programme seemingly unrelated to gender roles - the subject of this analysis, but representing a very important aspect of it. Among the topics related to reading, children's rights, love for the mother and teachers, etc., there are topics with ethno-specific

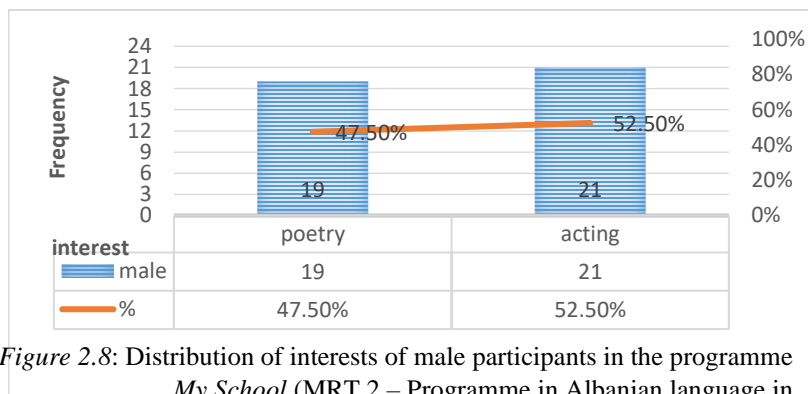


Figure 2.8: Distribution of interests of male participants in the programme *My School* (MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language in the period 15.09 - 15.10.2019)

manifestations. Ethno-specific manifestations herein do not refer to the shows pertaining to the development of the Albanian language, the humanism of Mother Teresa and similar - topics that are also present in the series. These manifestations herein mean topics that may have ethno-political weight, and are reproduced by children. This applies even more for the show *My School* than for the show *The Magic of Letters* analysed in the next chapter, because such ethno-political manifestations appear in as many as six of the eight editions of this show. In the editions on 15.09 and 11.10.2019, poetry is read on the programme about love for the homeland and the nation, and then on 22.09, 27.09 and 29.9 2019, the programme includes a dramatization of a play about the

war, the casualties of war and the Albanian national heroes; in addition, on 11.10.2019 a patriotic song was recited (“Big Wedding”), and finally on 13.10.2019 the poem “Chameria”(Çamëri) - the Albanian name for the Greek region of Epirus - was recited. Part of this programme includes reruns of previous rather old editions.

Ethno-political narratives have serious gender implications. *First*, because they are "male" narratives - they speak of *national heroes* who are overwhelmingly male and tell stories that verify the phallogocentric force of the struggle and *second*, because they tend to colonize the ideas and bodies of individuals into collective singularity of the mythologized "cause." This singularity in ethno-national discourses has a precession over individual rights and freedoms - individuals, children in particular need to internalize it in order to ensure intergenerational reproduction of the narrative. In this context, and in the case of this show, it is extremely interesting that the female participants are the ones who perpetuate the narrative of the "glorious" and inviolable "male" past of the ethno-nation. This in itself is a procedure of internalization of "male" myth-historical discourses by girls.

3.7 The Magic of Letters

In the twelve editions of the series for learning the Albanian language, *Magic of the Letters*, there are a total of 54 participants, of which 23 male and 31 female participants. At first glance, this series, from a gender perspective, does not seem to have explicitly interesting elements to be analysed. However, although it does not seem to be an immediate subject of analysis in this study, it is interesting to note that participants in this programme, as well as those analysed in previous chapters (in one of the music editions and in the show *My School*), are engaged in reproduction of ethno-mythologized discourses and glorification of the ethno-national past, constructing it as an indisputable and undeniable national truth. Among the stories like Pinocchio, Robin Hood or The Ugly Duckling, in two editions of the show (i.e. in a total of five editions if reruns are taken into consideration⁸⁷) the story of Skanderbeg is told in the form of a narrative for the national hero. In the analysis, from a gender point of view, it is interesting to note that in all instances, these discourses are perpetuated by female participants. In this case, the female participants are also the ones who perpetuate the narrative of the "glorious" and unparalleled "male" past of the ethno-nation. Two aspects, which can only be implied here, given the low number of occurrences, are interesting for further expert discussion - (1) whether there should be explicit ethno-discourses in a children's programme that can never be politically neutral, and (2) how female participants internalize the "male" past of the nation and what are the consequences of that internalization procedure for the self-perception of the "female".

⁸⁷ Together with the reruns in the selected period, 12 editions of these series were broadcasted.

3.8. *Come to Our Story*

In the ten editions of the series *Come to Our Story* in the selected period, there are a total of 73 participants, of which 27 (or 36.99%) are male and 46 (or 63.01%) are female participants. Each of the shows opens a topic - in two editions, a guest in the show was a beekeeper and the participants ask him questions about honey production, in two editions the guest is a hiker who has to answer their questions, and in some shows, topics such as the problem of mobbing between students are opened or topics regarding the differences in rural and urban life. Children should have different roles in developing the topics. However, the free opening of the topics is limited by the predetermined script mould in which the children (students) ask questions and the adults answer them, thus teaching them. This is, in other words, a show in which there is little initiative of the participating children. Apart from the larger number of female participants compared to the male participants, there is no interesting angle in this show that needs to be detailed from a gender perspective.

3. TV Sitel

1. General features, frequencies and genre distribution of children’s programmes on TV Sitel

Sitel TV is one of the two private national televisions, which have a relatively high frequency of broadcasts of children’s programmes (the other is TV Kanal 5), although this frequency is about ¼ from that of the first channel of the Public Broadcasting Service (225:60 shows in favour on MRT 1). One can say that this is to be expected, given the stricter obligations that MRT 1 has for broadcasting content envisaged for all segments of the audience, including the young population, due to the different legal obligations of private TV channels versus those of the Public Broadcasting Service. In the selected period of thirty-one days, starting from September 15 to October 15, 60 shows were broadcasted with a total duration of over 21 hours. This number does not include reruns, since the study of TV Sitel had no registered such cases⁸⁸.

The frequency of programmes is distributed through five series for children, where certain diversity can be noted regarding the programme

Programme	frequency	%	duration
Grandpa, tell me another story	38	63,33%	13:41:14
Macedonian old tales	4	6,67%	2:24:22
Winx Club	9	15,00%	3:38:53
Garfield	4	6,67%	0:51:47
Peppa Pig	5	8,33%	0:25:00
Total	60	100,00%	21:01:16

Table 3.1: Frequency of children’s programmes on TV Sitel in the period 15.09 - 15.10 2019

for children and adolescents. **First**, diversity of contents only partially “covers” the different segments of the young targeted population. This analysis assessment was performed only roughly, having in mind the age classification established in the field of development psychology⁸⁹ and based on the complexity level of the narrative structure and the forms of speech and communications between protagonists or participants in the programme. Thus, the content of the show *Peppa Pig*, which has a coherent dramatic action and simple and instructive narratives, targets the preschool population (3-5 years). According to the structure and content, none of the other shows target the population at an early school age, but refer to the adolescent period - such are the narratives in *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story*, *Macedonian Old Stories* - which are narratives that mimic a traditional social setting characteristic of the nineteenth-century Balkans, the *Winx Club* - a typical teen story, and *Garfield* - an animated series targeting children over the age of 12. Although this study does not refer to audiences – nevertheless, the assessment of

⁸⁸ The actual premieres of these shows were broadcasted few months before the analysis. The word “premiere” should be taken conditionally here – that the relevant show was aired for the first time within the selected analysis period. Therefore, if one show was aired once or twice in the selected period (and the premiere was at a moment preceding the analysis), only the first of these editions shall be considered as premiere.

⁸⁹ The classification was explained in the introduction on page 5.

structures of the drama action and the programme content indicates that the content fails to target a particular school age contents (or the so-called middle childhood).

Second, children's programmes are not evenly distributed in terms of their function for the audience. As already pointed out, the typology of AAVMS relies on the three main programming functions - informative, educational and entertaining - the programmes of TV Sitel intended for children and adolescents, are more focused on achieving the entertainment function. Given that the series *Macedonian Old Stories* and *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story*, have educational components, and are part of the cluster entertainment programme - they were coded in this study as shows with an entertaining - educational function, which is still part of the cluster entertainment programme according to the division of AAVMS.

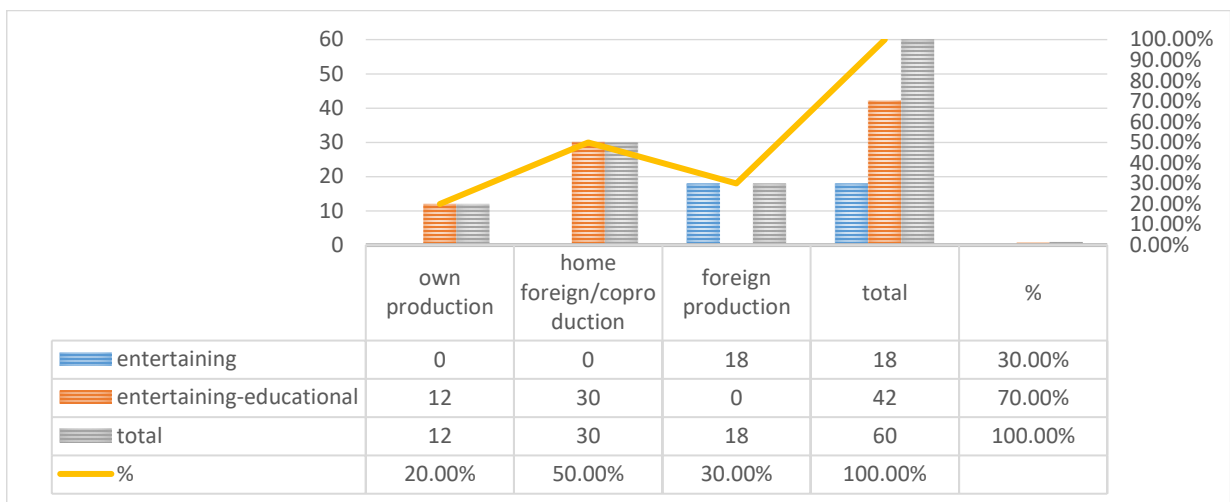


Figure 3.1: Distribution of children's programmes on TV Sitel, broadcasted between 15.09 and 15.10 2019, according to the function and production origin

As seen in Figure 3.1 - 42 editions or 70% of the children's shows of home production - whether produced by the TV channel itself or taken from independent domestic production - have an entertaining-educational function. The entire part of the programme with this function refers to the shows *Macedonian Old Stories* and *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story*. In addition, the foreign production programmes broadcasted on Sitel TV in the selected period have an exclusively entertaining function. The modest in-house production on TV Sitel is prominent. Furthermore, in the broadcasted programme, there is often no indication of the fact when or by whom it was

broadcasted. This was a coding challenge and the study had to find alternative sources of information on who produced the broadcasted content. This was not possible in some cases.

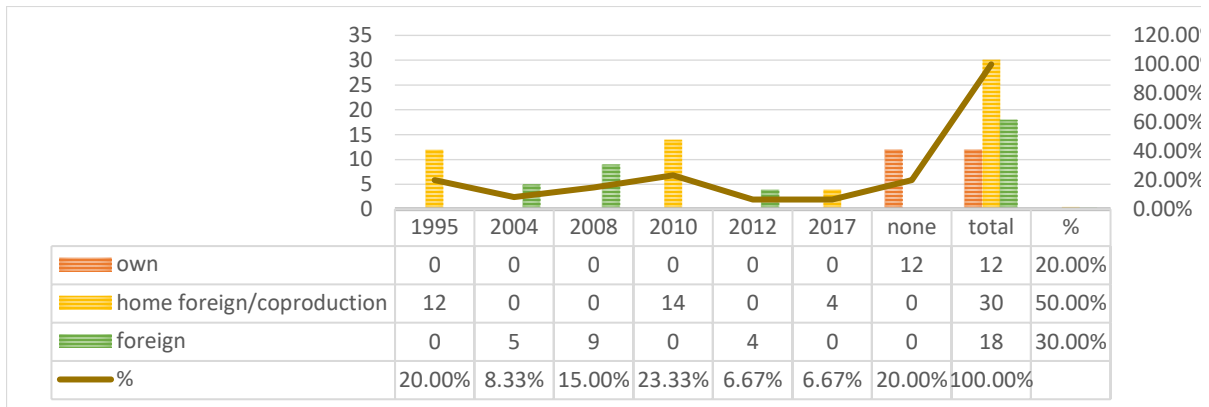


Figure 3.2: Distribution of children's programmes on TV Sitel, broadcasted between 15.09 and 15.10 2019, according to the year and origin of production

As seen on *Figure 3.2*, for 12 editions or 20% of the total production of the children's programme on TV Sitel, there is no indication of the year of production. The graph shows, however, the fact that most of the children's programme broadcasted on TV Sitel in the selected period are in fact decades old production. In the total frequency, 14 editions, or 23.33% are programmes which are 10 years old and 12 editions, or 20% of the total production, are 25 years old. This data cannot be generalized for the overall production of children's programmes on this TV channel, given that a period of one month is selected for the study, but it is certainly indicative of the importance that the editorial policy of the TV channel attributes to the children's programme.

Third, regarding the internal structure of programmes – on Sitel TV, there is diversity of programmes in the selected period which are construed as narratives/feature stories; however, there is no diversity outside of that genre. Of the five broadcasted programmes envisaged for children, all are constructed as narratives – they include both animated series and feature stories.

2. General features and frequencies of characters/participants in the children's programmes of Sitel TV

In relation with the relatively high frequency of programmes analysed in the selected period, the children's programme also has a high frequency of characters. Through 60 editions of 5 series structured as *narratives / feature stories*, a total of 477 characters were analysed, of which 60.17% or 287 are male and 38.99% or 186 are female characters. The remaining insignificant 0.84% are genderless - i.e. characters that cannot be categorised as either male or female characters.

The highest frequency of characters in the children's programme originate from the programmes *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story*, which features a total of 255 characters, which is 53.46% of the total number of characters, and the series *Winx Club* with 124 characters representing 26% of the total frequency of characters in the children's programmes. The characters in both series account for a total of 79.46% of the total number of characters. The internal structure of the shows from which all these characters originate is a *narrative / feature story* structure and, as with other TV shows, in this type of shows there is a total numerical superiority of male characters over female characters with a ratio of 1:1.54 in favour of male characters – as observed in *Table 3.2*. In the case of Sitel TV shows, this ratio is unevenly distributed by shows. For example, in the series *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story*, the male characters are much more numerous than the female characters and here the ratio is 1:2.45. Conversely, in the second series in terms of number of characters - *Winx Club* has a larger number of female characters and here the ratio is 1:1.67 in favour of female characters.

programme/gender	male	female	genderless	total
Grandpa, Tell me Another Story	181	74	0	255
Macedonian Old Tales	13	8	0	21
Winx Club	45	75	4	124
Garfield	23	9	0	32
Peppa Pig	25	20	0	45
Total	287	186	4	477
%	60,1	38,99%	0,84%	100,00%

Table 3.2: Frequency of characters in children's programmes, broadcasted between 15.09 and 15.10 2019, segregated according to gender and name of series (Sitel TV)

This opens up an interesting potential angle for analysis, although at the level of a TV channel, we operate with too low a frequency of broadcasts to reach generalizing conclusions: the intersection of the origin of the show and the number of female and male characters, as seen in *Table 3.3*, reveals that the ratio of male and female characters in the entire sample foreign production programme is almost equal, while in the shows of domestic production it is with a ratio of almost 1:2.37 in favour of male characters. The analysis of these aspects of the overall programme of broadcasters can offer stronger evidence for the possible reasons for such finding, but it is still indicative of the difference between the programmes of foreign and domestic production and the ratio of male and female characters in it.

production	national			foreign				
	gender	male	female	total	male	female	genderl.	total
frequency		194	82	276	93	104	4	201
%		70,29%	29,71%	100,00%	46,27%	51,74%	1,99%	100,00%

Table 3.3: Frequency of characters in children's programmes, broadcasted between 15.09 and 15.10 2019, segregated according to origin of the programme and gender of characters (Sitel TV)

3. Analysis of gender issues in the programmes structured as narratives/feature stories on Sitel TV – analysis of specific programmes

3.1. *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story and Macedonian Old Tales*⁹⁰

3.1.1 Main frequencies and distributions of male and female characters

In the 42 editions of the shows *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story / Macedonian Old Tales*, 276 drama characters were analysed. As seen in *Table 3.4* - which shows the frequencies of occurrences of characters segregated by gender and role - there is a significantly lower representation of female characters than male characters - 194 characters or 70.29% are male, and 82 or 29.71% are female. Comparing the frequency of the leading characters only widens this gap. Total of 132 leading characters appear in the programme, of which 101 or 76.52% are male and only 31 or 13.48% are

programme	male			female			total
	leading	supporting	total m.	leading	supporting	total f.	
Grandpa, Tell me Another Story /Macedonian Old Tales	101	93	194	31	51	82	276
%	36,59%	33,70%	70,29%	11,23%	18,48%	29,71%	100,00%

Table 3.4: The frequencies of occurrences of characters segregated by gender and role (*Grandpa, Tell me Another Story / Macedonian Old Tales*, TV Sitel)

female. Given that *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story / Macedonian Old Stories* is intended for both male and female young audiences, the significant overall numerical under-representation of female characters, as well as the dramatically low frequency of female characters in the leading role, makes this show problematic from a gender perspective.

3.1.2 Association of characters with social roles and professional preoccupations

The association of characters of different genders with different professional preoccupations and roles in the public domain is another indicator of gender differentiation identified in the research presented in the introduction to this analysis. This gender differentiation is clearly visible in this study in the *narratives / feature stories* of home production. In *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story / Macedonian Old Tales*, the type of occupation could be determined for 134 characters or 48.55% of the total population of these two series. Segregated by gender: occupation could be identified in 85 male characters, which is 43.81% of the total number of male characters; in addition, the occupation could be identified for 49 female characters, representing 59.76% of the total number of female characters.

⁹⁰ There are several reasons why these two programmes were analysed together at this instance. First, they are based on the same ethos and same narrative structure – if they had same titles, they could be considered as the same series. Second, the frequency of episodes of the series *Macedonian Old Tales* is too low for the purposes of analysis of such type of content, and finally, it has rather low number of characters, and characters are the main analysis units.

On *Figure 3.3*, it is noticeable that male characters, for which the occupation can be determined, are with relatively high diversity. Male characters most frequently appear in the role of aristocrats, most often as czar or noblemen. The aristocratic attribution of the male characters signifies authority and possession of power in a political as well as character sense - inaccessible to the female characters in this series. The distribution of male characters through other types of occupations (except when male characters appear in the role of workers) goes in the same direction: they are either capitalists, which in these series means rich owners or merchants, or have a profession - as a doctor or a priest (religious person). In the first case, their power and high social status stems from the wealth they possess, and in the second case, from the fact that they possess symbolic power and moral authority or from the fact that their knowledge is needed by common people (physician). 17.65% of the male characters for which the profession can be determined, are given the role of workers - these are manual or hired workers, who do not have a specific profession but are engaged in works that provide them with basic existence. However, even in this role, in which male characters have low socio-economic status, they are out on the labour market, i.e. occupy the public domain.

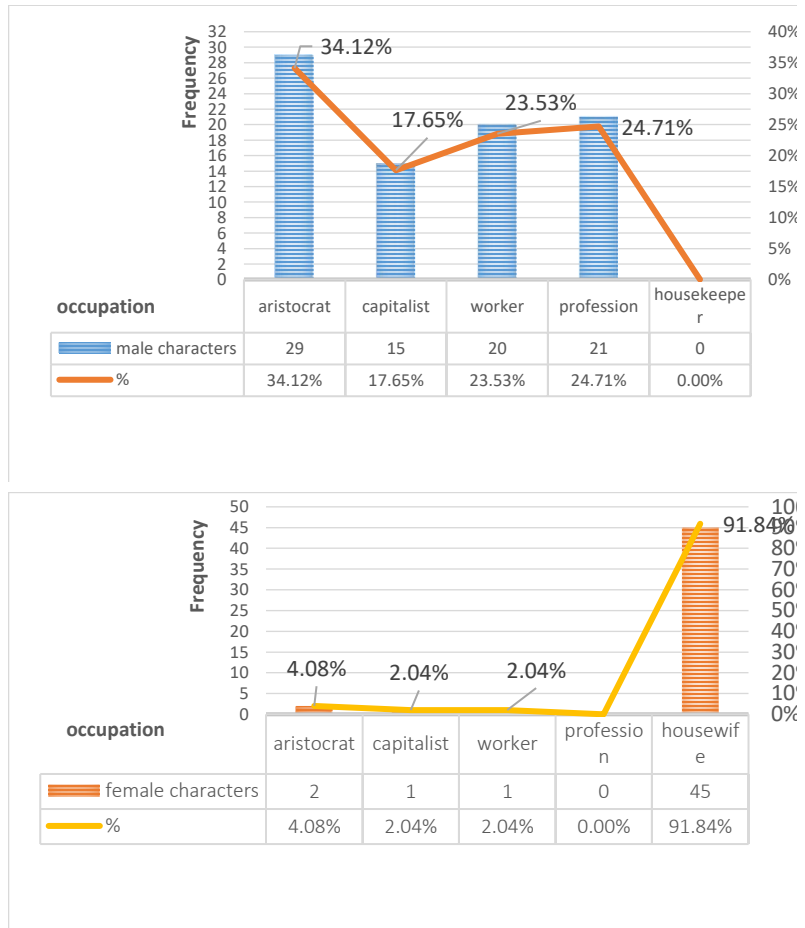


Figure 3.3: Types of occupations segregated by gender (Grandpa, Tell me Another Story / Macedonian Old Tales, Sitel TV)

The only clearly visible role that the female characters have in these two series is the role of a housewife. This domesticity of women is omnipresent, because almost 92% of the female characters are in this role. Even occupations that are in the low spectrum of the socio-economic status (as a worker for example) are inaccessible to female characters in this series. In the domestic domain, female characters have a financially dependent position, have limited opportunities to exhibit their will. The series *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story / Macedonian Old Tales* makes a clear gender differentiation based on the occupation attributed to the characters - male characters

occupy the public sphere and in most cases either occupy a high socio-political position or perform works that provide them with such status. Female characters occupy the private family domain.

3.1.3 Identity and character: analysis of semantic differentials

The total number of male and female characters in the series *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story / Macedonian Old Tales* were evaluated at seven five-part scales composed of appropriate dichotomous adjectives that define their characters. Based on this evaluation, the meanings attributed to the characters and defining them in terms of identity or character were drawn from the context around which the contents was constructed⁹¹.

-Male and female characters in the exposition and resolution

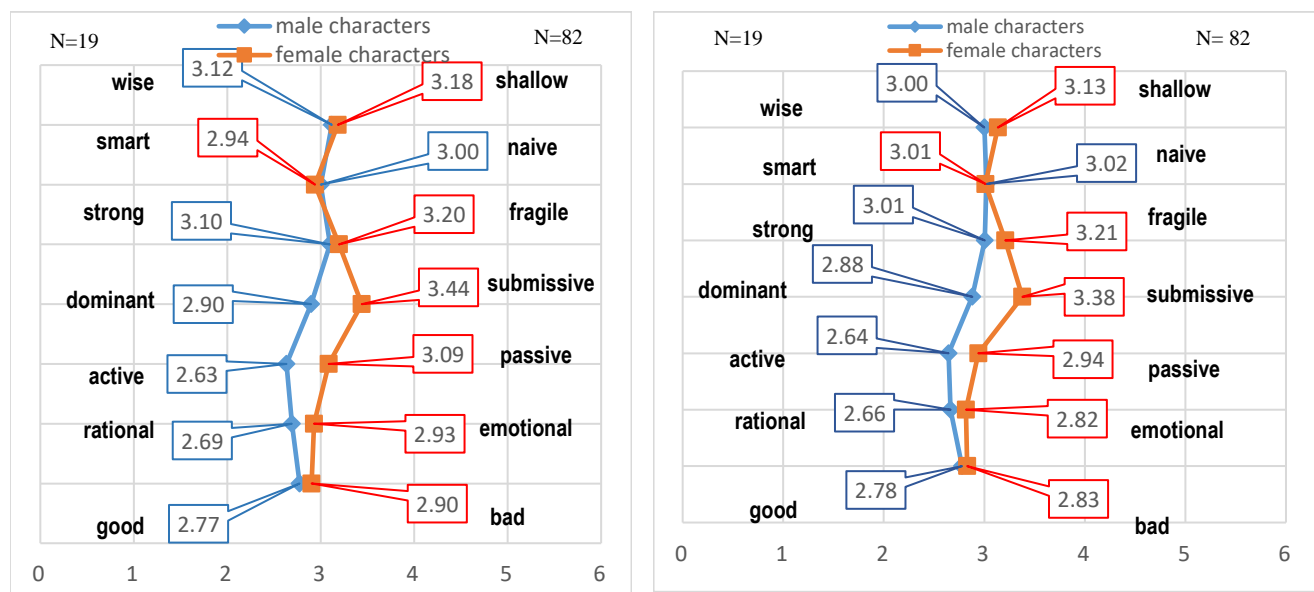


Figure 3.4: Semantic differentials of character markers of characters as presented in the exposition (left) and in the resolution (right) in the drama action (*Grandpa, Tell me Another Story/Macedonian Old Tales*, Sitel TV)

As in other *narratives/feature stories* for which such an analysis was conducted, in this part as well, the seven dichotomous adjectives for each character are double coded – once according to the manner in which the character is presented in the *exposition* and once according to the manner in which the character was transformed through the *resolution*.

As presented on *Figure 3.4*, on two of the scales of the semantic differential, male characters visibly incline towards the “positive” side, and female characters to the “negative” side of the

⁹¹ The criteria for this evaluation and the coding process of characters are explained in the methodological framework.

dichotomous adjectives⁹². This is the case with dichotomies *dominant / submissive* and *active / passive*. In the other five scales (*wise / shallow*, *smart / naive*, *strong / fragile*, *rationally motivated / emotionally motivated* and *good / bad*), their values are either close to identical (as in the dichotomies *wise / shallow*, *smart / naive*); either both gender characters have values <3 or both have values > 3, which suggests that both tend to be on average inclined to be marked on the "positive" side of the differential - for example as *good* and as *rationally motivated*; or both tend to be marked on the "negative" side as *fragile*. This applies despite the fact that in almost all of these dichotomies, with the exception of the *smart / naive* dichotomy, male characters are more slightly inclined towards the "positive" side of the differential as imperceptibly wiser, more rational, better and stronger than female characters. The exceptions are the values for the *smart / naive* dichotomy, for which the values of both genders are almost identical.

The more visible difference between male and female characters is seen on the scales that mark the values of the dichotomies *active / passive* and, in particular, *dominant / submissive*. According to this finding, the series *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story / Macedonian Old Tales* constructs male characters as active drivers of the events that drive the dramatic action and as explicitly dominant, both in terms of the overall action and in terms of female characters. Female characters, on the contrary, in relation to males, are constructed as more passive participants in events and as more submissive characters, i.e. characters who rather implement the will of others.

However, even in these two dichotomies, the difference between male and female characters that can be seen on the visualized scale of semantic differentials seems small, but this is only seemingly due to the fact that the methodological framework provides, in situations where the characters do not incline to one of the two extremes or when their character does not refer at all to one of the established dichotomies, encoding of the mean value 3 in the code matrix. Because there is a high frequency of assessments of the *evaluation*, *potential*, and *action dimension* with mean value 3 - the average values of the semantic differential produce low differential margins.

Dominant/submissive

Figure 3.5. presents the distribution of values with which male and female characters are evaluated on the scale between dichotomous adjectives *dominant / submissive*, where value 1 indicates that the character is marked as *dominant*, and value 5 indicates that the character is marked as *submissive*. The differential deviation between male and female characters in this dichotomy is 0.54%, and the values indicate a clear polarization of the characters: 30.93% of the male characters are constructed as dominant (marked with a value of 1 & 2), while 10.98% of the female are

⁹² The positive and negative side are herein taken in the conditional, rather than moral meaning.

constructed that way. Differences in values 4&5, pertaining to the adjective *submissive* are also high since more than half of the female characters in this show are marked with submissive, and slightly less than one-fourth of the male characters are marked as such.

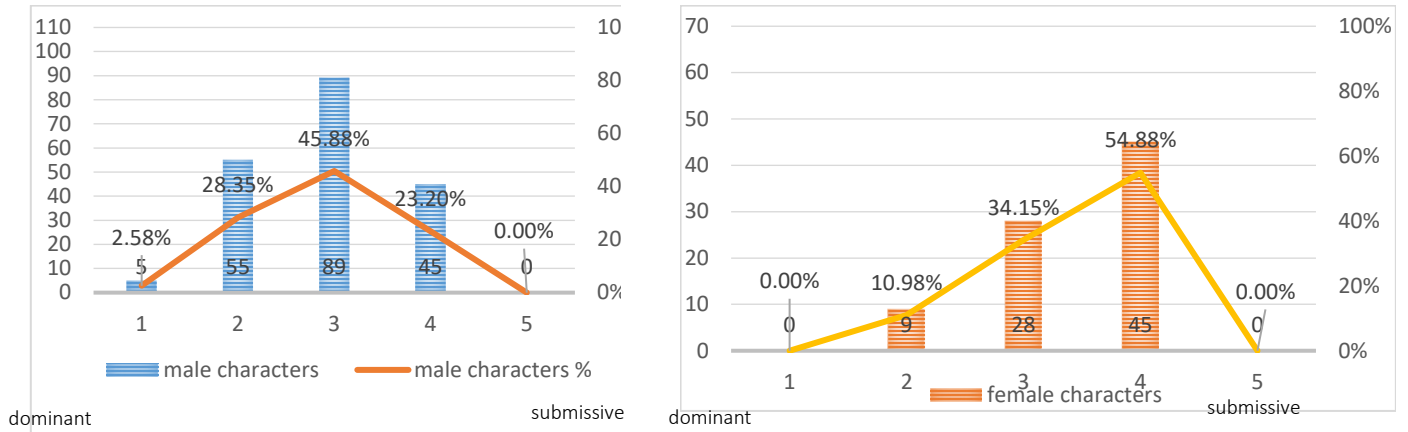


Figure 3.5: Distribution of values for the dichotomy dominant/submissive segregated by gender (*Grandpa, Tell me Another Story/Macedonian Old Tales, Sitel TV*)

Active/passive

Figure 3.6 shows the distribution of values by which male and female characters are evaluated on the scale between the dichotomous adjectives *active / passive*, with value 1 indicating that the character is marked as *active* and value 5 indicating that the character is marked as *passive*. The differential deviation between male and female characters in this dichotomy is 0.46%, and the values, even in this dichotomy in which in the resolution female characters have no value > 3, indicate a clear polarization of the characters - 63, or 92% of the male characters are marked as active, as opposed to 32.93 of the female characters. At the same time, 40.34% of the female characters are marked as passive versus 26.29% of the male characters.

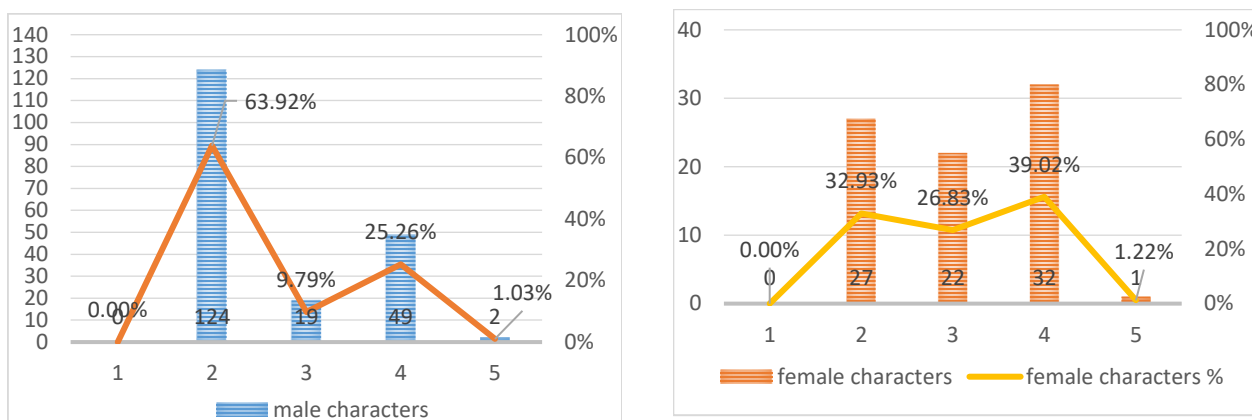


Figure 3.6: Distribution of values for the dichotomy active/passive segregated by gender (*Grandpa, Tell me Another Story/Macedonian Old Tales*, Sitel TV)

3.1.4 The topic “family” as a gender issue

Taking into account that the media construct a normative image of the organisation of family compositions representing a sort of hegemony that normalizes the manners in which this social unit is socially constructed, and the *narratives / feature stories* on Sitel TV were coded for the type of family or community that appears in them.

Out of 42 editions of *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story / Macedonian Old Tales*, in 34, the lead characters are, or it is explicitly seen that they were, in some kind of marital community. Whether they represent structures with or without children, they are always of different genders. Even in cases where the show is about only one parent - he is part of a former different-sex family in which one partner died and is never the result of a divorce - which means that there is nothing contra-

programme/family type	different-sex parents	different-sex spouses	single parent	no family	Total
Grandpa, Tell me Another Story/Macedonian Old Tales	15	13	6	8	42
%	35,71%	30,95%	14,29%	19,05%	100,00%

Table 3.5: Frequency of the types of families in the series *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story/Macedonian Old Tales* (Sitel TV)

intuitive in the findings of this series: for dramatized structures that try to imitate the ethos of Macedonia in the 19th century, as was done in this case on Sitel TV, it is common to expect a discourse construction of a strict traditional heteronormative family organisation.

In the context of the findings of the previous chapters in this set-up - the head of the family is the provider of the means for the family, he is dominant in relation to the partner and he is an active social actor, most often preoccupied with providing financial existence. As a capitalist, professional, or common worker, he occupies the public domain and he is the financially

independent pillar of the family. As an aristocrat, on the other hand, he is the absolute decision-maker in the political domain or occupies that domain as a political being. On the other hand, his wife is the backbone of the domestic domain because, as the findings in the previous chapters suggest, she appears almost exclusively in the role of a housewife for whom public domains, such as economic or political, are inaccessible. In this role, in the series *Grandpa, Tell me Another Story / Macedonian Old Tales*, she is submissive and passive.

3.2. *Winx Club*

Winx Club is an animated series of Italian production that has become a globally distributed commercial product in the last decade. The sample broadcasted on Sitel TV, which included 9 editions of *Winx Club*, included a total of 124 characters. Of these characters, 75 or 60.48% are female and 45 or 36.29% are male characters. In addition, all male characters in the broadcasted

programme	male			female			genderless			total
	leading	supporting	total male	leading	supporting	total female	leading	supporting	total genderless	
Winx Club	0	45	45	59	16	75	0	4	4	124
%	0,00%	36,29%	36,29%	47,58%	12,90%	60,48%	0,00%	3,23%	3,23%	100,00%

Table 3.6: Distribution of leading and supporting characters according to gender (*Winx Club*, Sitel TV)

episodes play a supporting role, while 59 female characters, which is 78.66% of the total number of female characters, play the lead role. This indicates an uneven numerical distribution and unequal role of male and female characters in the series. However, this case, as well as the case with the series *Lalaloopsy* broadcasted on MRT 1 and MRT 2 in the selected period, cannot be interpreted through this prism, since the young population specifically targeted by this commercial product are *girls* from the so-called tween generation (8-12 years). Although the scope of this analysis does not go deeper into the specifics of narrative and characters, as done with the analysis of the scales of semantic differentials in the series of *narratives / feature stories* of domestic production, still, even at the basic level several interesting aspects can be identified:

First, *Winx Club* targets a specific female tween audience, not only with the content of the animated series, but also as an unconquered, whilst broad, market for mercantile products such as clothing, school supplies, and audiences for other multimedia and performance ventures, such as video games, cosplay⁹³ events, musicals, etc. All of this makes the *Winks Club* a global, primarily business-oriented⁹⁴ multiplatform composition that potentially encases its target audience at the crossroads of global capitalism. *Winx Club*, like *Lalaloopsy*, are brand products and to some extent can be treated as an "advertisement" for mercantile products of the same brand. This also has

⁹³ Costume Play Neologism – this word denotes the practice in which participants of a specific game (cosplayers) dress as characters from movies, books, video games, etc.

⁹⁴ Sigismondi, P. (2015). The Winx Club phenomenon in the global animation landscape. *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*, 3(3), 271-285.

repercussions on gender aspects, as the impact of the gender-soaked narrative in children's programmes is multiplied through other business platforms.

Second, some of the literature on children's animated shows refers to the *Winx Club* as a show that empowers female characters and breaks stereotypes about the "female"⁹⁵ - the *Winx Club* has 16-year-old girls who are students at the Alpha Fairy College and who have transformative powers to turn into fairies who possess various powers they use to fight the antagonists who attack the world in which they live. That's why all characters have dual identities - as with all superheroes, civilian identities and identity of female superheroes.

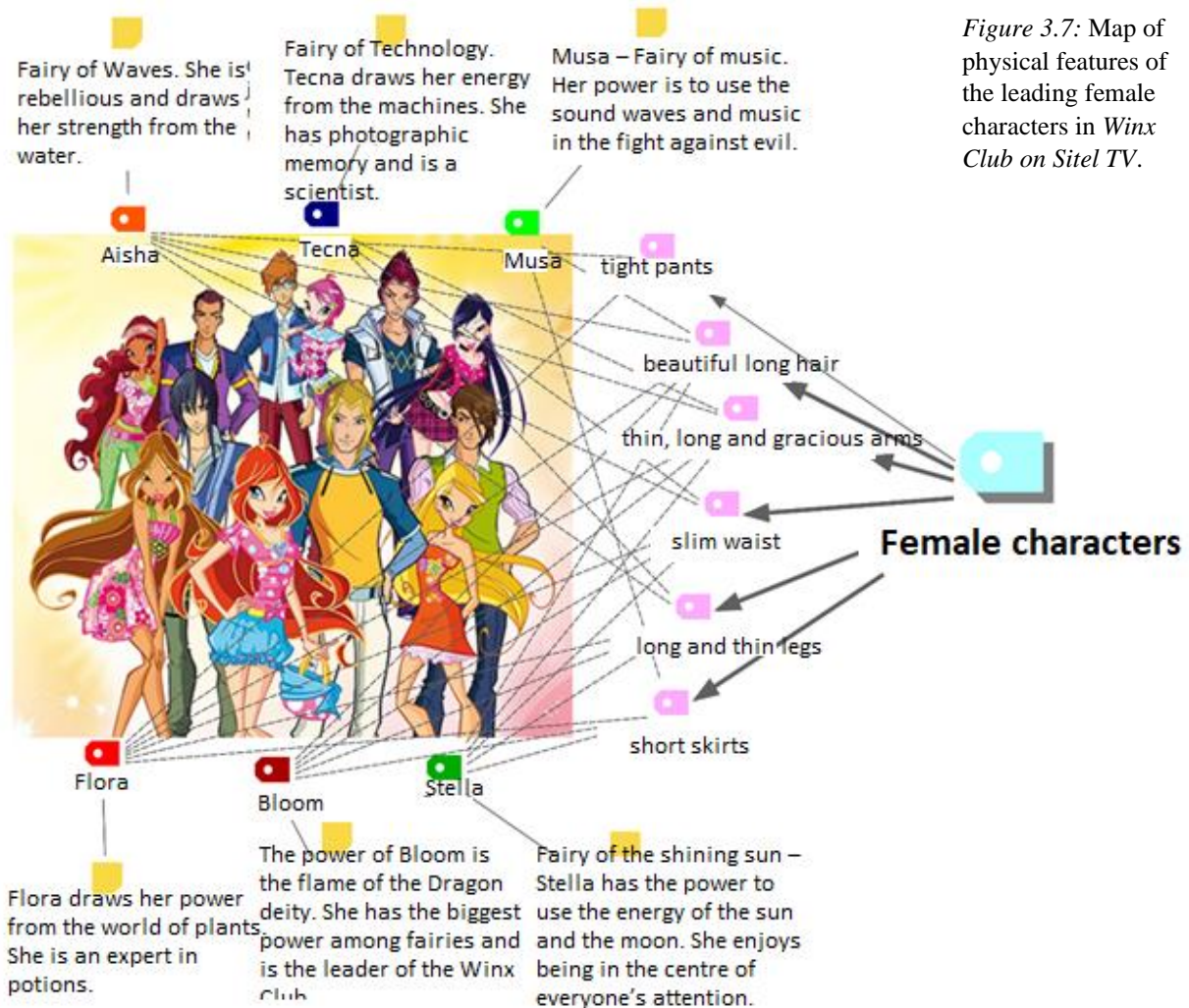


Figure 3.7: Map of physical features of the leading female characters in *Winx Club* on Sitel TV.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Such transformations transform both their characters and their physical appearance. The physical appearance is the important key to open the gender-aspect issues of this series, thus breaking the arguments of both schools for analysis of the *Winx Club*. One that suggests that the female characters in the series break down the petrified value matrices - is reading the surface of the narrative. The other - the opposite of this - suggests an *angelification* of the female figure, given that the behaviour of the characters in the series hides elements specific to the local Italian Catholic culture.⁹⁶ In addition, the characters of the *Winx Club* are explicitly sexualized - there are elements that suggest that a romantic relationship, stereotypically, with a physically idealised male, is in fact a measure of personal happiness.

In this regard, as seen on the elementary map of visual characteristics of the leading female characters, made for this series - there is a dual image of the female characters:

On one hand, all leading female characters are physically constructed in a way that corresponds to the idealised popular, media-stimulated and predominantly masculine versions of what a beautiful female body should look like: women are presented as thin, with noticeably long legs, slim waist, graceful hands, beautiful face, beautiful long hair. They are further fashionably sexualized - with short skirts, tight pants, bare shoulders and deep necklines. Finally, they are also stereotypically sexualized in their relationship with male characters - although they are not as numerous as female characters or have roles as female characters. This sexualisation consists in the fact that they enter into love adventures in a way that decisively defines the overall private female experience, and not as if the relationship with men is only one part of the more complex female intimacy. Finally, there is no diversity of female bodies among female protagonists, but on the contrary, there is a noticeable strong normalisation of an idealised and non-existent version of woman - a myth of female beauty that the consumer society imposes as something that girls want to aspire to, as well as something, of which they should feel failure should they fail reaching it. However, on the other hand, against the background of what can be seen on the map, their characters are built around power, ability, courage, knowledge, and dedication. This is an image of the female as a powerful destroyer of stereotypical images of women.

These two representations are seemingly contradictory, and are often used to justify such commercial products by claiming to break down the negative stereotypes that a beautiful woman cannot be smart, educated, strong, and brave. However, if we turn this superficial argument upside down, we will see that the series actually suggests (given that all the characters are physically superior) that *only* a beautiful woman and one who is in a successful romantic relationship, can be like that and that any success of women in the public sphere is of little value if she does not meet the ideal (and unattainable) physical appearance. This is a potentially significant social pressure on the majority of the young female population of "imperfect" women to conform to the phallogocentric ideal of them.

The scope of this analysis does not allow for a more thorough gender analysis of the series for children and adolescents, and does not delve deeper into the construction vectors of these versions

⁹⁶ Marini-Maio, N., & Nerenberg, E. (2020). The 'angelification' of girls: *Winx Club* as a neo-liberal Catholic project. *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*, 8(1), 23-41.

of the female as it cannot penetrate the modalities of the male construction, which, as seen in the figure, is also physically superior, muscular, thin, and skilful.

3. *Garfield and Peppa Pig*

On Sitel TV, in the selected period, several episodes of two very different series for children were broadcasted. One is *Garfield* - an animated series of French-American co-production in which the lead role is played by the lazy cat Garfield who enters various adventures. On TV Sitel, in the selected period, 4 episodes of the series were broadcasted. They included a total of 32 characters, of which 23 male and 9 female characters. The number of appearances of the characters in this series was insufficient to draw conclusions with the help of content analysis, and the sample is insufficient for the thematic analysis that was conducted on some of the shows.

programme	male			female			total
	leading	supporting	total m.	leading	supporting	total f.	
Garfield	9	14	23	0	9	9	32
%	28,13%	43,75%	71,88%	0,00%	28,13%	28,13%	100,00%

Table 3.7: Distribution of leading and supporting characters in the series *Garfield* according to gender (Sitel TV)

In the selected period, 5 episodes of the British animated series for children *Peppa Pig* were broadcasted on Sitel TV. They included a total of 45 characters, of which 25 male and 20 female characters. The small number of appearances of characters in the show, given the low frequency of broadcasted episodes, does not allow for drawing of relevant conclusions for this series. Nevertheless, *Peppa Pig* is interesting in terms of the idealised version of different-sex families. Peppa is the lead female character in the series who lives with her parents and brother - an ideally different-sex British middle-class family. The analysis here cannot be extended given the limitations of this study, but in the context of what has been said, part of the literature that analyses *Peppa Pig* in this example concludes that all children's programmes are political, even *Peppa Pig*. This is still a rather sensitive issue, given that this series is intended for children aged 3-4 years. However, different-sex marriages cannot be seen as politically and value-neutral structures - they are simply dominant structures accepted as the norm that has established a social hegemony.

programme	male			female			total
	leading	supporting	total m.	leading	supporting	total f.	
Peppa Pig	8	17	25	8	12	20	45
%	17,78%	37,78%	55,56%	17,78%	26,67%	44,44%	100,00%

Table 3.8: Distribution of leading and supporting characters in the series *Peppa Pig* according to gender (Sitel TV)

episodes, does not allow for drawing of relevant conclusions for this series. Nevertheless, *Peppa Pig* is interesting in terms of the idealised version of different-sex families. Peppa is the lead female character in the series who lives with her parents and brother - an ideally different-sex British middle-class family. The analysis here cannot be extended given the limitations of this study, but in the context of what has been said, part of the literature that analyses *Peppa Pig* in this example concludes that all children's programmes are political, even *Peppa Pig*. This is still a rather sensitive issue, given that this series is intended for children aged 3-4 years. However, different-sex marriages cannot be seen as politically and value-neutral structures - they are simply dominant structures accepted as the norm that has established a social hegemony.

4. TV Kanal 5 (Channel 5)

1. General features, frequencies and genre distribution of children’s programmes on Kanal 5 TV

TV Kanal 5 is one of the two private national televisions (the other is Sitel TV) which have a relatively high frequency of broadcasted programmes for children. In the selected period from September 15 to October 15, i.e. thirty-one consecutive days, 95 shows were broadcasted, which can be categorised as a children's programme, with a total duration of over 37 hours. High 95.79% of the number of broadcasts, is content broadcasted only once in the selected period - the only reruns (4 episodes) refer to the series *Tintiri Mintiri (Blah-Blah)*.

Programme	frequency	%	Duration	premiere editions	% of total frequencies
Macedonian Tales	57	60,00%	20:50:52	57	100,00%
Adventures of Itar Pejo (Crafty Peter)	29	30,53%	12:12:42	29	100,00%
Tintiri Mintiri (Blah-Blah)	9	9,47%	4:12:58	5	55,56%
Total	95	100,00%	37:16:32	91	95,79%

Table 4.1: Frequency of children’s programmes on Kanal 5 TV in the period 15.09 - 15.10 2019

Despite this frequency of broadcasts, Kanal 5 TV has a relatively low number of special series (3) and accordingly has a low programme diversity. This can be seen on three levels: **First**, regarding the segment of the young population addressed by the television - the only series that is unequivocally

intended for children is the hybrid series *Tintiri Mintiri (Blah-Blah)* and it is, according to the content, intended for school-age audiences of the so-called middle childhood (8-12 years). The other two programmes, *Macedonian Tales* and *Adventures of Itar Pejo (Crafty Peter)* are programmes, which

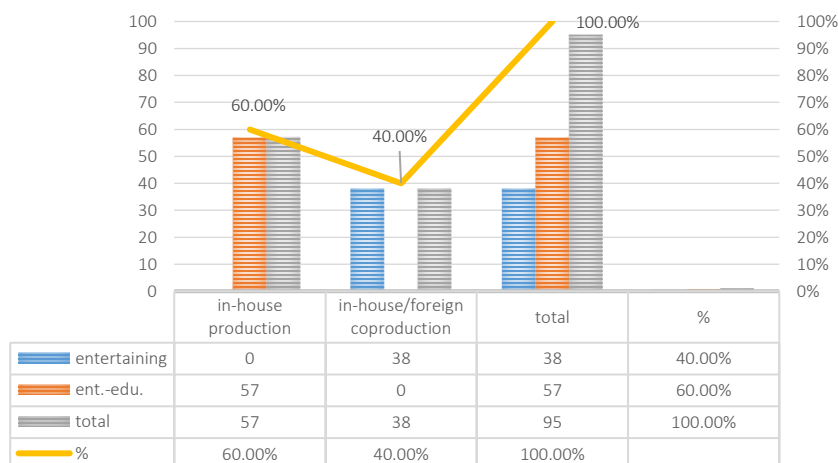


Figure 4.1: Distribution of children’s programmes, broadcasted between 15.09 and 15.10 2019, of Kanal 5 TV according to function and production origin

according to their content, is envisaged for the audience older than 12 years. The latter has a noticeable strong component of motives and vocabulary intended for adults - although the TV Channel has marked this series as a series intended for the 8+ population. The preschool population segment is not included as target audience.

Second, the children's programme on Kanal 5 TV has a partial variety of shows in terms of the function they have for the audience. Out of the three-part categorisation of the programme according to its function adopted by AAVMS, TV Kanal 5 has contents only from the entertainment spectrum: entertaining and entertaining-educational programme. As seen in *Figure 4.1*, of the children's programmes broadcasted on TV Kanal 5, 57 shows or 60% of the total frequency were created in their in-house production and this entire production refers to the series *Macedonian Folk Tales*, which is categorised as entertaining - educational show. The remaining 40% of the total frequency of broadcasts are programmes produced by independent producers, and Kanal 5 TV appears in the coproduction role – these are the shows *Tintiri-Mintiri* and *The*

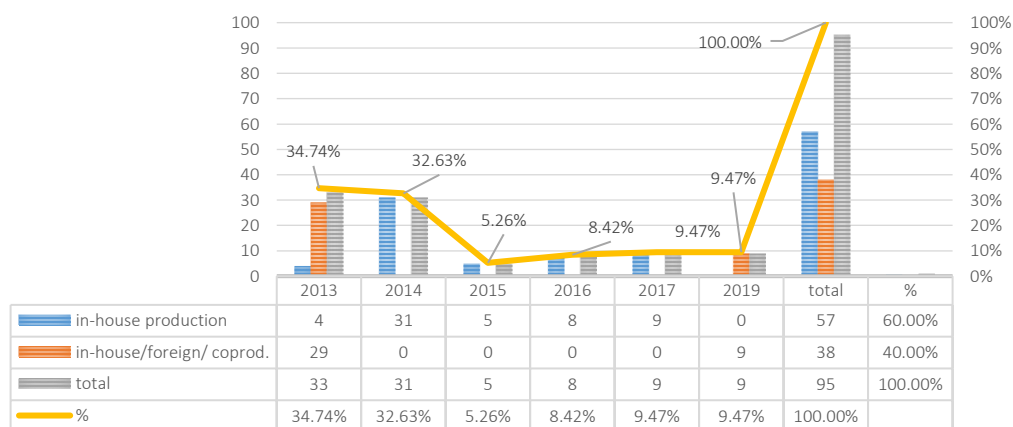


Figure 4.2: Distribution of children's programmes on Kanal 5 TV, broadcasted between 15.09 and 15.10 2019, according to the production year and origin

Adventures of Itar Pejo. In the selected period, there were no foreign production programmes on Kanal 5 TV.

The absence of content with informative and, in particular, educational function in the narrow sense of the word, indicates the absence of diversity in the children's programmes on TV Kanal 5 in terms of the function they have for the audience.

Regarding the programmes analysed in the selected period, as seen on *Figure 4.2*, most of them were produced in 2013 and 2014 - a total of 67.37% of the total frequency of broadcasts in the selected period was produced in these two years. During the last 2019, all broadcasted episodes of the *Tintiri Mintiri* series have been produced. One can say that Kanal 5 TV has a relatively low frequency of shows produced after 2014; however, this study does not have sufficient scope to

determine when the entire children's programme aired in one year was produced - which would be a clearer indicator of whether the TV Channel lacks new production.

Third, Kanal 5 TV has a partial variety of children's programmes in terms of its internal structure. This refers to the category that was defined as a *specific genre*⁹⁷ in this study. As noted earlier, the genre division adopted in this study is designed to facilitate access to the subject of analysis - the gender issues.

However, this division makes it possible to establish and analyse why the programmes lack content with certain specifics of the internal structure. The total broadcasted shows for children on TV Kanal 5 can be distributed in two

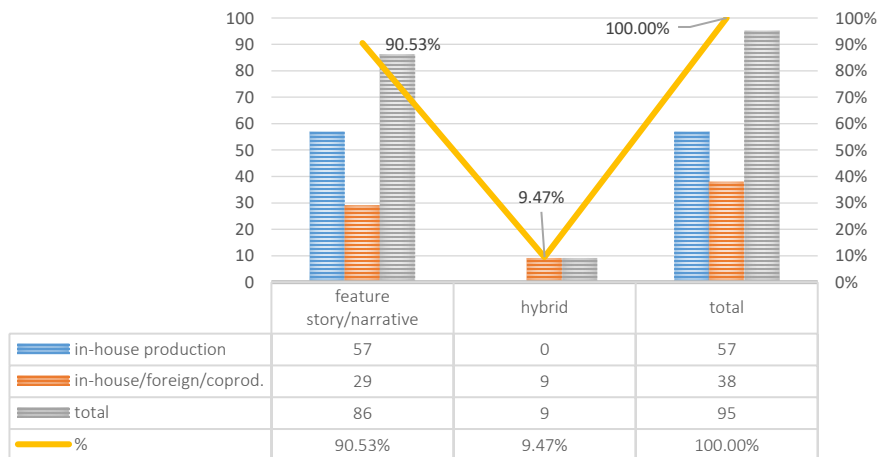


Figure 4.3: Genre distribution of children's programmes, broadcasted between 15.09 and 15.10 2019, on Kanal 5 TV, segregated according to the production origin

genre categories: (1) *narratives / feature stories* - a programme whose structure is organised around an action that develops through the phases of exposition, plot, culmination, peripeteia, and resolution and whose characters are transformed through the action (as in television stories, movies, fables, animated films, etc.). This category clearly includes the shows *Macedonian Folk Tales* and *The Adventures of Itar Pejo* and their share in the total programme is 90.53% and (2) *hybrid shows* - a programme that combines a feature programme with elements of talk and musical structures (9, 47%). There are no music programmes and so-called talk shows (such as MRT 1's *Bell (Dzvon)*).

2. General features and frequencies of characters/participants in the children's programmes on Kanal 5 TV

According to the relatively high frequency of shows analysed in the selected period, the children's programme also has high frequency of characters. Through 95 editions of 3 series structured as *narratives / feature stories* or as genre *hybrids*, a total of 783 characters were analysed, i.e.

⁹⁷ This diversity is noted herein due to analytical reasons – the approach of the content analysis to its integral parts depends on the internal programme structure. More details on this classification and its research justification are included in the methodology chapter.

participants in the programme, of which 52.11% or 408 are male and 47.89% or 375 are female participants. This means the Kanal 5 has a relatively uniform presence of male and female characters/participants in the

programme/gender	male	female	total
Macedonian Folk Tales	181	157	338
The Adventures of Itar Pejo	170	39	209
Tintiri-Mintiri	57	179	236
Total	408	375	783
%	52,11%	47,89%	100,00%

Table 4.2: Frequency of characters/participants in the children's programmes, broadcasted between 15.09 and 15.10 2019, segregated by gender and programme (Kanal 5 TV)

programme. The *Macedonian Folk Tales* are with the highest absolute frequency of characters; however, compared to the number of broadcasted episodes, *Tintiri Mintiri* is the show with the highest frequency per show unit.

Usually, in shows organised as *narratives / feature stories* (such are the *Macedonian Folk Tales* and *The Adventures of Itar Pejo*), there is a disproportionate ratio between male and female characters in favour of males. In this case, too, within this genre, the ratio between male and female characters is 1: 1.8 in favour of males. The programme has a total of 351 male characters, which is 64.17%, i.e. 196 female characters or 35.83% of the total frequency of characters in the genre *narratives / feature stories* (a total of 547 characters). However, within this genre cluster, male and female characters are not entirely evenly distributed. Regarding the *Macedonian Folk Tales*, there is a relatively equal ratio between male and female characters, whilst in *The Adventures of Itar Pejo* it is a matter of complete male domination, although that series is intended for both the male and female population and numerical balance should accordingly be expected.

3. Analysis of gender issues in the programmes of Kanal 5 TV

Programmes structured as narrative/feature story

3.1. Macedonian Folk Tales on Kanal 5 TV

3.1.1 Main frequencies and distributions of male and female characters

In the 57 editions of the series *Macedonian Folk Tales*, 338 dramatic characters were analysed. As seen in *Table 4.3*, which shows the frequencies of appearances of characters segregated by gender

programme /gender	male			female			total
	leading	supporting	total m.	leading	supporting	total f.	
Macedonian Folk Tales	92	89	181	66	91	157	338
%	27,22%	26,33%	53,55%	19,53%	26,92%	46,45%	100,00%

Table 4.3: Distribution of leading and supporting characters according to gender in the *Macedonian Folk Tales* on Kanal 5 TV, segregated by gender and role

and role - the male characters in this series, organised as a *narrative / feature story*, are more numerous than the female characters, although compared to other series of this genre on other TV channels there is a greater equality in the ratio of male and female characters: 181 characters or 53.55% in the series *Macedonian Folk Tales* are male, and 157 characters or 46.45% are female characters. However, the main numerical difference between male and female characters stems from the fact that there is a higher frequency of male than female *leading* characters - a total of 92 characters or 58.23% of the total frequency of lead characters are male and 66 characters representing 41.77% of the total frequency of leading characters are female characters. This indicates that in the *Macedonian Folk Tales* on TV Kanal 5, male characters gain more dramatic weight, although their dominance in this case is not as obvious as in the other structures of *narratives / feature stories* of home production.

3.1.2. Association of characters with social roles and professional preoccupations

Regarding the *Macedonian Folk Tales* on TV Kanal 5, there is a clear gender differentiation of the characters based on their professional preoccupations and their social position. In the selected period, 170 characters (which is 50.30% of the total character population) were identified in the series, for which a specific occupation could be determined as well as that they explicitly occupy a specific social role. At the same time, 83 characters or 48.82% of the characters for which an occupation can be determined, are male and 87 or 51.18% are female characters.

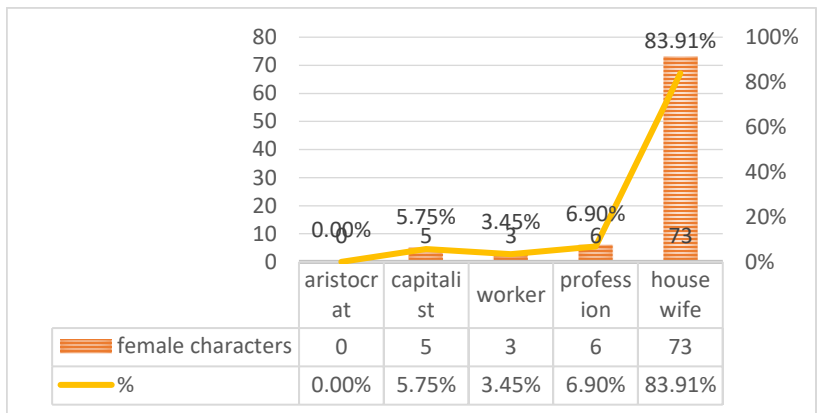
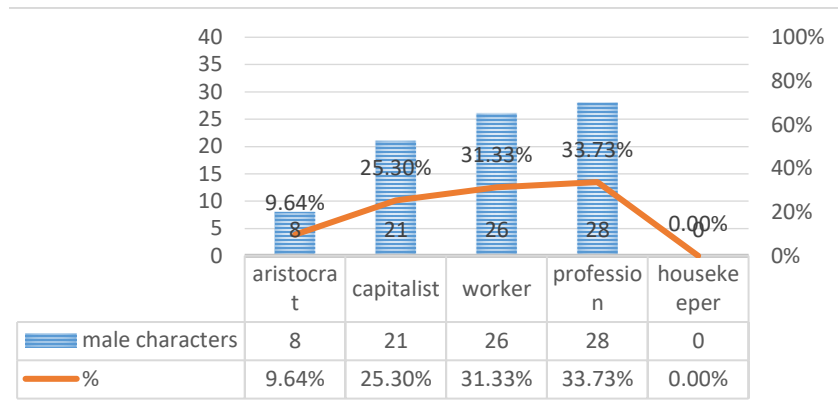


Figure 4.4: Types of occupations of characters, segregated by gender (*Macedonian Folk Tales*, Kanal 5 TV)

As seen in *Figure 4.3.*, there is significant diversity in terms of preoccupations of male characters in which occupation can be established. These characters, with the exception of the occupation of a hired (physical) worker, almost always have a respected, authoritative or even authoritarian social position. Male characters either occupy a profession (33.73%) of some kind - and it is usually a doctor, a priest or a craftsman, or they are capitalists – rich owners or traders (25.30%) or - although in this case less frequently compared to the *Macedonian Folk Tales* on MRT 1 and Sitel TV - occupy a position in the circle of nobility and power that stems from their aristocratic origins. 31.33% of the male characters, for which the occupation can be determined, are given the role of workers - these are manual or hired workers without specific occupation, but who are engaged in work that provides them with basic existence. However, as with MRT 1 and Sitel TV, even in the role in which male characters have low socio-economic status, they are at the labour market, i.e. occupy the public domain, which cannot be said for the majority of female characters for which some sort of occupation can be determined.

As seen in *Figure 4.4*, the only clearly noticeable role of female characters in the *Macedonian Folk Tales* on TV Kanal 5, is the role of a housewife. This domesticity of the woman is omnipresent,

since 83.91% of the female characters are in this role. Here, too, occupations that are in the low spectrum of the socio-economic status (as a worker, for example) are inaccessible to female characters in this series. In the domestic domain, typical of this series, female characters have a financially dependent position and have limited opportunities to express their will, which is a clear marker of gender differentiation based on the occupation attributed to the characters - male characters, just like in shows with the same ethos at MRT 1 and Sitel TV, occupy the public sphere, and female characters occupy the private domain.

3.1.3. Semantic differentials: analysis of identity and character markers of male and female characters

The total number of male and female characters from the series *Macedonian Folk Tales* on TV Kanal 5 were also evaluated on seven five-part scales with dichotomous adjectives. Through the evaluation of the content context, the meanings that are attributed to the characters, i.e. that define them in terms of identity or character, were extracted⁹⁸.

Male and female characters in the exposition and resolution

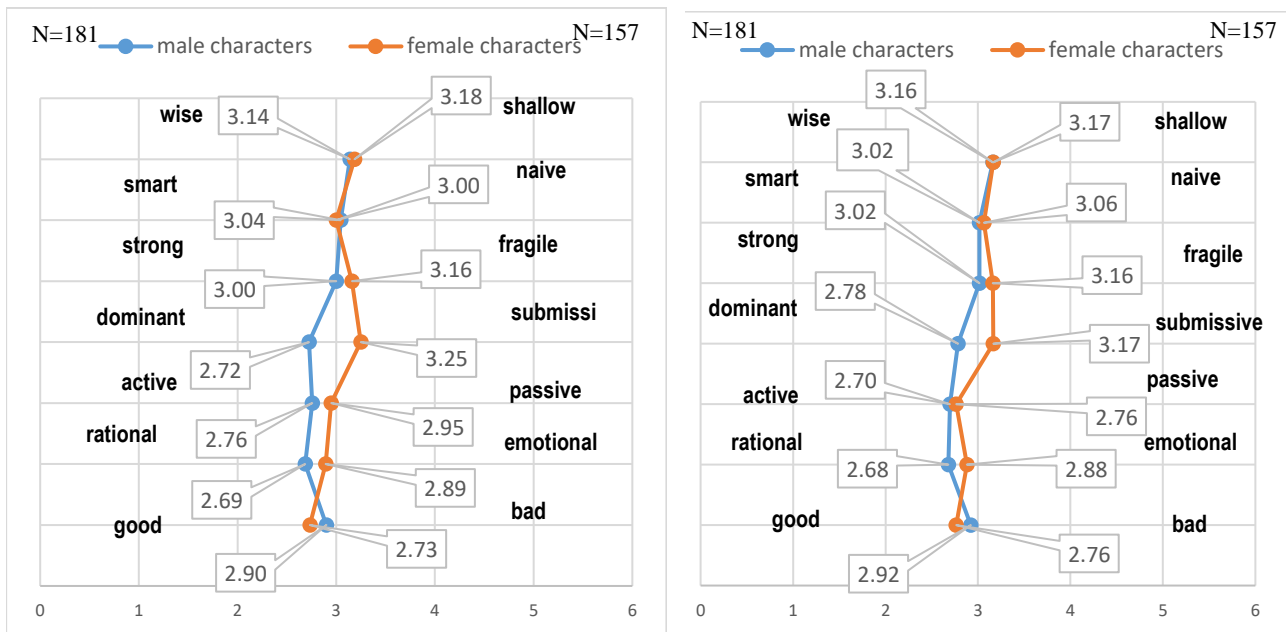


Figure 4.5: Semantic differentials of character markers as presented in the exposition (left) and in the resolution (right) in the drama action (*Macedonian Folk Tales*, Kanal 5 TV)

As pointed out in the previous chapters, in the *narratives / feature stories*, the characters that drive the dramatic composition transform themselves through that action, hence the double coding of

⁹⁸ Criteria for this evaluation and the character coding process are explained in the methodological framework.

the seven dichotomous adjectives for each character - once in the *exposition* and once after the transformation. through the *resolution*.

Male and female characters, as seen in *Figure 4.5*, in most of the semantic differential scales have in average close values, although in four dichotomies, females are significantly slightly *more* inclined to the "negative" side compared to males: *wise / shallow*, *strong / fragile*, *active / passive* and *rationally motivated / emotionally motivated*. In the last two dichotomies, the average value of both male and female characters is <3, which means that although female characters are less inclined towards *active* and *rationally motivated* characteristics, they cannot be said to be constructed as emotionally motivated or passive – on the contrary.

Conversely, in the *smart / naive* and *good / bad* dichotomies, male characters are the ones who, much more slightly than the female ones, lean towards the "negative" side of the scale. Given that the values of both sexes are here also either slightly lower or extremely close to the neutral value 3, neither male nor female characters can be said to be constructed as *smart* or *naive* or as *good* or as *bad*.

Only the dichotomy *dominant / submissive* has a finding that suggests gender differentiation of character traits. Male characters have a value of 2.72 on the semantic differential, and female characters have a value of 3.25, which suggests that male characters in this series are constructed as dominant in terms of social position and individual relationship with other characters in the series. Conversely, female characters are constructed as submissive.

Dominant/submissive

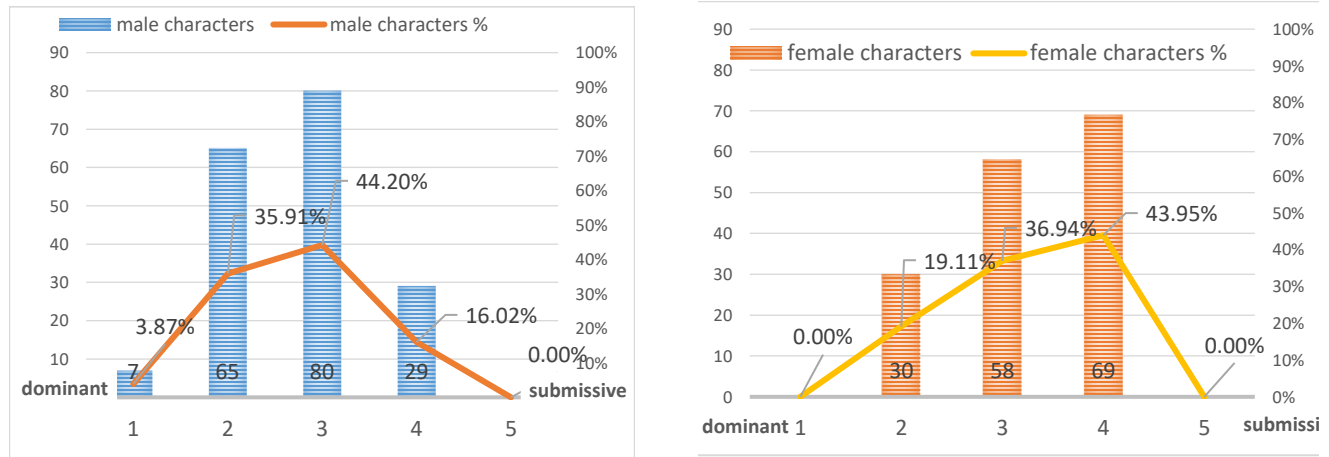


Figure 4.6: Distribution of values for the dichotomy *dominant/submissive* segregated according to gender (*Macedonian Folk Tales*, Kanal 5 TV)

Figure 4.6 shows the distribution of values by which male and female characters are evaluated on the scale between the dichotomous adjectives *dominant / submissive*, with value 1 indicating that the character is marked as *dominant* and value 5 indicating that it is marked as *submissive*. The deviation between female and male characters in this dichotomy is 0.53 (*Figure 4.5*), and the

values indicate a clear gender polarization of the characters: 39.78% of the male characters are constructed as dominant (marked with a value of 1 & 2), and (although implicitly - because are marked with a value of 2), 19.11% of the female characters are constructed in that way. At the same time as much as 43.95% of the female characters are constructed as submissive (marked with the value 4), and 16.02% of the male characters are constructed in that way.

The difference between the average values of male and female characters visible on the scale of the semantic differential for this dichotomy, as well as the distribution of values for the characters undoubtedly confirm that the male characters in the *Macedonian Folk Tales* on TV Kanal 5 are construed as *dominant* and the female characters as *submissive*.

3.1.4. The topic “family” as gender issue

In the *Macedonian Folk Tales*, as a show that is structurally among the shows organised as *narratives / feature stories*, the type of family or community it represents was coded, due to the clearly established knowledge that the media constructs a normative image on this issue, which is a sort of hegemony that normalises the ways in which this social community is discursively constructed. Out of 57 editions of *Macedonian Folk Tales*, in 47, the leading characters are, or are

programme/type of family	different-sex parents	different-sex spouses	single parent	no family	other	total
Macedonian Folk Tales	17	26	3	10	1	57
%	29,82%	45,61%	5,26%	17,54%	1,75%	100,00%

Table 4.4: Frequency of types of families in the series *Macedonian Folk Tales* (Kanal 5 TV)

explicitly seen to have been, in some kind of marriage relationship, which, regardless of whether or not there are children in it, is always a different-sex relationship. Even in cases of a single-parent family - the reason is always the death of the partner in a former different-sex family, and it is never a divorce - which means, as with the Macedonian Tales on MRT 1 and Sitel TV, there is nothing counter-intuitive in the findings on this series: in this dramatized structure that attempts to imitate the ethos of Macedonia in the 19th century, as was done in this case on TV Kanal 5, it is common to expect a discourse construction of a strict traditional heteronormative family arrangement.

3.2. *The Adventures of Itar Pejo (Crafty Peter)*

3.2.1 Main frequencies and distributions of male and female characters

In the 29 editions of the series *The Adventures of Itar Pejo*, a total of 209 dramatic characters were analysed. In this series, there is complete numerical dominance of male characters. The ratio between male and female characters in this show is 1:4.36 in favour of males, of which 170 characters or 81.34% are male and 39 characters or 18.66% are female characters. Such a dramatic difference is characteristic only for shows that target a mostly one-gender audience, such as the already analysed *Lalalopsy* broadcasted on MRT 1 and MRT 2 or the series *Winx Club*

programme	Male			Female			total
	leading	supporting	total m.	leading	supporting	total f.	
Adventures of Itar Pejo	68	102	170	20	19	39	209
%	32,54%	48,80%	81,34%	9,57%	9,09%	18,66%	100,00%

Table 4.5: Distribution of leading and supporting characters according to gender in *The Adventures of Itar Pejo* segregated according to gender and role (Kanal 5 TV)

broadcasted on TV Sitel, which explicitly target a female audience and their female characters have a similar dominance. However, in this case, it is a show intended for audiences of both sexes, but older than 8 years.

3.2.2. Association of characters with social roles and professional preoccupations

In *The Adventures of Itar Pejo*, as well as in the *Macedonian Folk Tales*, a clear gender differentiation can be observed according to the type of occupation of the male and female characters. In this series, the type of occupation could be determined for 120 characters or 57.42%.

Segregated by gender: the occupation could be identified for 90 male characters, which is 52.94% of the total number of male characters; in addition, the occupation could be identified for 30 female characters, representing 76.92% of the total number of female characters.

As seen in Figure 4.7, the male characters for which the occupation can be determined in this series, usually have some sort of

profession - in this case it is either the priest profession (25 cases or 39.68% of the characters who have a profession) or police officer (19 or 30.16% of the characters who have a profession). Regarding the female characters, in 13 out of 14 cases when the female character has a profession, it is the profession of a fortune-teller. Although there are extremely few observations in female characters, this finding, nevertheless, suggests that in *The Adventures of Itar Pejo* there is a gender differentiation of the occupations of characters.

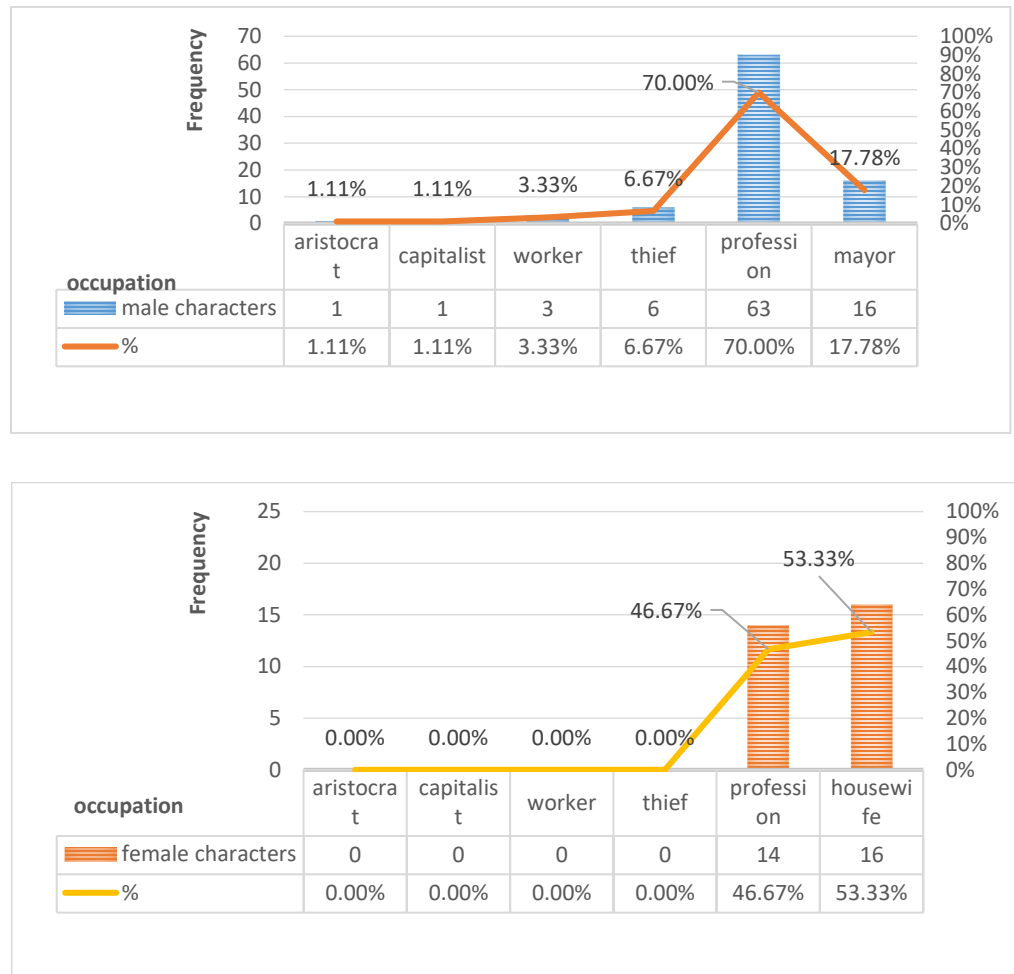


Figure 4.7: Types of characters segregated according to gender (*The Adventures of Itar Pejo*, Kanal 5 TV)

3.2.3. Semantic differentials: analysis of identity and character markers of female and male characters

The total number of male and female characters from the series *The Adventures of Itar Pejo* (Crafty Peter) on TV Kanal 5, were evaluated on seven five-part scales with dichotomous adjectives that define their characters, and at the same time, the meanings attributed to the characters, which define their identity or character, were extracted from the context⁹⁹. Double coding was also performed here, once prior to transformation of the character, i.e. in the *exposition*, and once afterwards, through the *resolution*.

Male and female characters in exposition and resolution

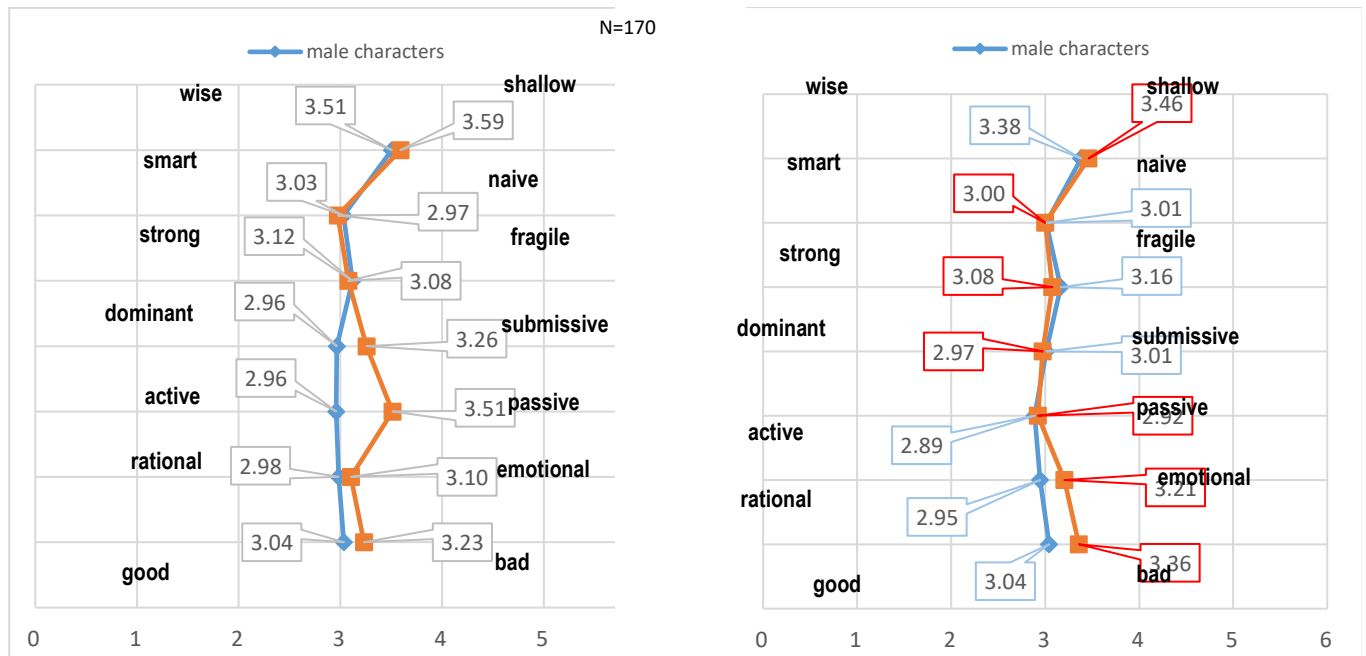


Figure 4.8: Semantic differentials of character markers as presented in the exposition (left) and in the resolution (right) (*The Adventures of Itar Pejo*, Kanal 5 TV)

Scales of semantic differentials, as seen on Figure 4.8, indicate that in the series *The Adventures of Itar Pejo*, the narrative, as well as the male and female characters nested therein, are specific at several levels:

First, although this narrative is expected to share the same ethos with the *Macedonian Folk Tales*, the male characters on average do not seem to have the "superiority" characteristic of the *Macedonian Folk Tales* (editions of MRT 1, Sitel TV and TV Channel 5). Female characters in this series are those who, on average, are constructed as *smarter* and *stronger* than the males, and within the resolution, they undergo a visible transformation and are constructed even as rather slightly *more dominant* than male characters. On average, male characters are constructed neither as *dominant* nor as *submissive*.

⁹⁹ The criteria for this evaluation and the character coding process are explained in the methodological framework.

Second, despite such character marking of female characters, they incline to the negative side on the scales for the dichotomies *rationally motivated / emotionally motivated* and *good / bad*. Therefore, this series also retains the construction of the "male" as a *more rational* actor in the social domain in relation to the female, and the "female" as a *more emotional* actor in relation to the male, driven by feelings in decision-making. Interestingly, the male characters in the series are constructed as better in moral terms, than the female characters who are constructed as bad.

Third, both female and male characters on the *wise / shallow* dichotomy scale are noticeably inclined to the "negative" side of the dichotomy. Thus, there is no gender differentiation of the association with the characteristic of shallow-mindedness. This can be explained by the specific format of the show, which contains comic units with sexual content in which both men and women should be comedy actors who reveal their own stupidity in front of the audience and who are foolish.

Finally, the level of transformability of the female characters throughout the action is rather interesting. In the dichotomies *dominant / submissive* and *active / passive*, there is a dramatic transformation of female characters, as seen in Figure 4.9. In the first dichotomy, the deviation between the average female character in the exposition in relation to the resolution is 0.29, whereas in the second dichotomy it even reaches 0.59. Both deviations are towards the "positive" side of the scale. This suggests that the narrative of *The Adventures of Itar Pejo* significantly destabilises the notion of woman as submissive and passive.

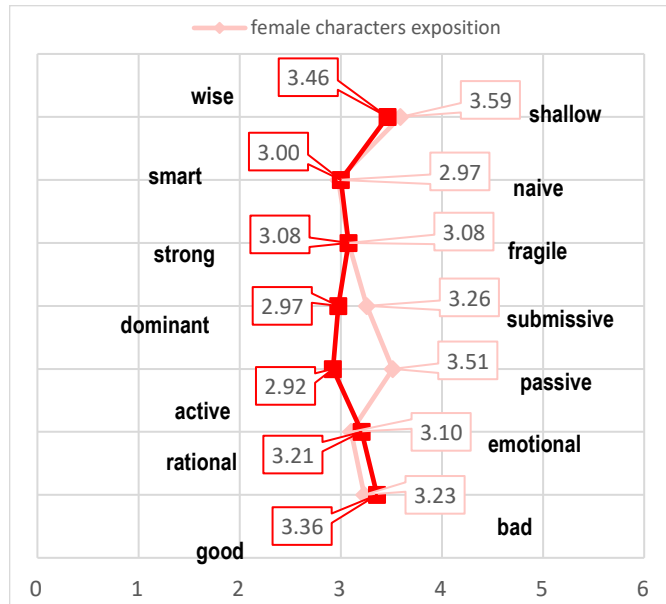


Figure 4.9: Semantic differentials of character markers of female characters transformed through the action (*The Adventures of Itar Pejo*, Kanal 5 TV)

These figures demonstrate how, *in average*, the total number of male and female characters in *The Adventures of Itar Pejo* are constructed (regardless of the role they play). However, they should be read in the context of the ethos of the series, which emphasizes the comic aspects of characters, but which cannot be taken into account without initiating at least an elementary qualitative analysis of the narrative and the characters embedded in it.

And a brief discourse analysis of the gender roles of one episode of the series reveals that serious examples of misogyny, homophobia and vulgar language, with a low level of literary literacy, lie behind the "moderate" numbers.

The episode *The Inverted Zaptiye (Gendarme)*, broadcasted on 18.09.2019, is a paradigmatic example. The story speaks of Mullazim who has the role of an Ottoman zaptiye (gendarme) – the

feudal protector of the village kmet (in Macedonian language the word of an Ottoman origin “kmet” signifies a “village elder” rather than simply a “serf”). While the kmet is compiling a list of women, who “were bedded by” and “been with” Itar Pejo, and while he is describing their physical features, such as those of “Blaguna with the fat buttocks”, he is visited by the zaptiye whose behaviour is also construed so that it explicitly corresponds to a vulgar stereotype of a gay man – the zaptiye twists his finger around the decorating black threads hanging from his fez, and subtly touches the tip of a sharpened pole, whilst looking seductively at the kmet and saying – “Kmet! Oh, my dear kmet!” The kmet responds with repulsion and instructs the zaptiye to immediately leave his yard. The zaptiye continues with his day, and a similar scene is repeated when he meets two villagers from Mariovo and tells them that it would be nice if the two “become three” - referring to himself as the third party. The two find an excuse to run away from the undesired company, and whilst running, they are holding their buttocks and turning to a wall with their backs and move laterally to the exit from the unpleasant situation saying that the zaptiye was “inverted” and that “the scandal will be out if someone learns of this”. Later, the zaptiye repeats the same incident with the village priest, and the persons witnessing the behaviour of the *Zaptiye* gather around and decide to “reverse the [inverted] man the way he was before”. The villagers beat the zaptiye with sticks and, as a result, he *improves* his behaviour by becoming a person who is submissive in front of the kmet. In the last scene, however, the zaptiye, contrary to the events in the village, says that he will continue his usual socialising with other zaptiyes.

The Inverted Zaptiye, is not so much a “male” story as it is a macho-masculinised and phallogocentric, pseudo-popular story. All its roles are interpreted by men who, nested in the tribal social structure resemble *The Elders* in the patriarchal societies. Represented as “the self-made jokers” – *The Elders* are in fact symbolic dispatchers of hegemonic cultural matrices which conserve stereotyped markers of gay man; they norm heterosexuality; sanction male sexuality as oriented towards female bodies as sexualised *objects*; norm the aesthetically desired characteristics of women; and discipline the deviation from these “norms” ensuring the preservation of the “order” in the community.

(1) The narrative which rests on the same nineteenth-century cultural template as the moral values of the *Elders*, primarily constructs a negative stereotype of the gay man - he is noticeably and aggressively feminised, untamed and aggressive suitor, aesthetically eccentric, sexually insatiable, and subject to perversion. Highlighting these elements in the exposition of the narrative is, of course, a strategic undertaking - this construct gives a contrastive weight to the moral correctness of the *Elders'* behaviour throughout the rest of the course of action. Thus, every scene in which they interact with the zaptiye or with each other - in other words, every scene in which the stereotyped gay man explicitly is in touch with the patriarchal order, is marked by some kind of *abnormality* of sexual Otherness - the mayor asks the zaptiye "Are you ok?" when he behaves *odd* in front of him. The two villagers, after the incident with the gendarme, confirm that he is “inverted” and that it is not clear to them what happened to him in the meantime since “he was good before this”, and now he is a “pain in the neck”. Finally, in his interaction with the priest, he shows him the cross and tells him that he is “insane”, “unbeliever”, “a zaptiye Satan”, praying for

this “zaptiye’s illness” to be cured. The zaptiye’s *condition* signifies an *abnormality* to be overcome, and herein, such abnormality is marked in *physical* (the mayor finds the feminised movements as unacceptable), *mental* (he is insane and out of one’s mind) and *moral* terms (he is the Satan and unbeliever). Homosexuality, construed as *illness* is the prevailing cultural framework with tendency to transform into a hegemonic framework whenever there is moral public support available. The construct of the zaptiye as *inverted*, fully conforms with this a conservative idea.

(2) Consequently, if *invertedness* is identified as physical, mental and moral disorder or disease, it is then considered a *threat* to the community and necessary measures are to be undertaken to neutralise it. *Elders*, as holders of the power to sanction, decide at the “tribal meeting” that the gendarme is to be brought into order, as suggested by Itar Pejo (Crafty Peter). After few suggestions, one of the villagers says that the zaptiye is okay as he *is*, but is only to “refrain from chasing after someone else’s butts”, and the mayor notes that “first, he is to refrain from butts”, and then he is to be beaten with a pole “to bring him halfway, neither here nor there”. This is an interesting interaction between these characters, due to which the primary strategy of the *Elders* is not immediately attacking the zaptiye, but rather first protecting the “hetero-community” from the threat. In multiple instances, the *double reflex of a threatened person* functions in the narrative – he initially defends himself against the attack of the gendarme, and afterwards either runs away or chases the zaptiye to preserve his biological and symbolic space. For example, in the first scene, the kmet first raises his hands and tells the zaptiye “wait, wait”, and then casts him out. In another scene, both villagers, in a protective manoeuvre, hold their buttocks and immediately find excuses to escape the company of the zaptiye, and finally, the priest casts out the zaptiye as an unbeliever. The symbolic *exclusion* here is justified with the defence reflex of straight men. Another threat defence strategy could be what may be called *quarantisation* of the threat pursued by Itar Pejo himself. When he first learns of the zaptiye’s behaviour, Itar Pejo tells the two villagers that perhaps the kmet has failed with women and has maybe “humped the zaptiye”, so consequently, the villagers should also stay away from the kmet until Pejo the wise guy clears this matter. In this respect, the kmet is also placed in quarantine as if the *condition* of the zaptiye is contagious and Itar Pejo suggests the prevention of an outbreak.

(3) In addition, if *invertedness* is identified as physical, mental and moral disorder, then measures are to be undertaken *to help the sick to conform to normality*. At a tribal meeting, however, it was decided that the zaptiye should take a beating so as to *reverse* him. Two indicative lines also seem to separate here – the first one, suggested by Itar Pejo, to “bring the zaptiye in order”, i.e. to transform him into *a straight man*. Regarding the second one, the proposal of the kmet is indicative, saying: “[T]o bring him halfway, neither here nor there”. Both strategies include physical violence, however, the first one means full co-opting of the gendarme in the order, whereas the second one means dual strategic organisation in which the gendarme shall have to put two masks on his face – one straight, the other one gay. The question to be posed is – what does it mean “halfway” and what does it mean “neither here nor there”? This interaction suggests that the gay person is not expected to turn into a straight person; on the contrary, the one is expected to conform to the heteronormative order by behaving in a manner acceptable for the *Elders*.

(4) The remaining narrative suggests that precisely this Janus¹⁰⁰ - manoeuvre is the “compromise” resolution of the story. In the penultimate scene of this episode of *The Adventures of Itar Pejo (Crafty Peter)*, upon the end of the violent episode of “normalisation”, the zaptiye stands in front of the kmet who is in the company of Itar Pejo, and listens to the kmet’s orders; however, it seems as if he has trouble understanding them, so he needs to utter them out loud once more, so as to unlock their meaning. This suggests that the zaptiye has limited cognitive abilities, but the one is now acceptable as such to the kmet and to Itar Pejo, who are satisfied with “bringing him in order”. However, immediately after this, in the last scene in which the zaptiye has a monologue, he stands up straight and walks firmly on the ground, taking off the mask of “dullness” worn in front of the kmet, and noting that “wooden sticks are not painful for the buttocks”, and now, in the evening, “more zaptiyes get together” in a place to make a “train”. The Janus – manoeuvre here is complete: the zaptiye **must** conform to the norms of the patriarchal order, at the same time, he can only *at the margins* occupy (or be confined to) his private domain and his sub-cultural gay domain as an explicit gay person.

(5) The narrative remaining part in this male gay-straight interaction is the “female” as a discourse construct. Those same *Elders* to whom points 1-4 have referred, are also the cultural dispatchers of the patriarchal misogyny and fetishizing of the female’s body. In almost all interactions in which the negative stereotype of gay man is being constructed, there is a construction of the desired passive, beautiful, sexualised and submissive “female”. For example, when the mayor lists the women of Itar Pejo, he explains how Blaguna had nice round buttocks, the fortune-teller was beautiful but he “forced her as an ox and she was no longer seen in his vicinity”. In this episode, the narrative goes back to the final scenes, this time including Itar Pejo, smiling with satisfaction to the kmet’s comments which are obviously taken by him as flattering. Or, when the *Elders* gather to speak of how to deal with the problem with the zaptiye, the priest tells the kmet that the zaptiye served him, but the priest has no need of a zaptiye since he has his wife to serve him.

This short discourse analysis clarifies certain political consequences of this generally homophobic, misogynist and fetishizing narrative structure. It is interesting that it explicitly uses the *popular symbolic gap* branded as Itar Pejo (Crafty Peter) – although it is obvious that these are original scripts. The question is why? Reasons could be multi-layered, but one important reason is *the assumed authoritative power of folk stories* – marking the narrative as folk story in this context construes an aura of the collective wisdom which should unconditionally be accepted by the new generations – as a tradition. Pseudo-traditionalism, as is to become evident from the general conclusion of this analysis, is omnipresent in the entire production of *narratives/feature stories* of home productions – subject to this analysis.

The deconstruction of the episode of the series *The Adventures of Itar Pejo (Crafty Peter)* enables the re-contextualisation of the findings from the measurement of semantic differentials scales. The reason why male characters fail to demonstrate superiority in them could be sought in the fact that the otherness here is not only constructed in the symbolic gap between the male and female sex,

¹⁰⁰ The Roman God Janus is portrayed with two faces – one facing the future, and one facing the past.

but also in the gap pertaining to other forms of sexualities within male characters. The analysis of the contents, due to the volume of this study, could not encompass the analysis of all shades of sexual orientation and stereotyped construction (in a manner in which it is performed with the discourse analysis of this chapter). Thus, in the coding process, shades of construction of the other manhood are lost – the analysis analyses them as manifestations of the same phenomenon – male characters in the action. Furthermore, the low number of female characters are construed in the manner suggested by the differential, but the scales of semantic differentials do not include the constructions of femininity, in absence of females, which are obviously abundant in this series.

3.2.4. The topic “family” as gender issue

The coding for the appearing type of family or community has shown that in the 29 editions of *The Adventures of Itar Pejo* there is not a single instance in which traditional families of different-sex parents who have children appear, which is another non-standard feature of this series in which, given the nineteenth-century ethos, a widespread presence of families with two different-sex parents and children can

programme/type of family	different-sex spouses	single parent	no family	total
The Adventures of Itar Pejo	11	3	15	29
%	37,93%	10,34%	51,72%	100,00%

Table 4.6: Frequency of types of families in *The Adventures of Itar Pejo* (Kanal 5 TV)

be expected. The dominant relationship form is the relationship between different-sex spouses. This in itself speaks little on how the family is constructed in this series; however, the discourse analysis from the previous chapter suggests the creation of narratives that see the female as a domesticated actor, submissive, and passive in the private domain.

Programmes in hybrid format

3.2. *Tintiri Mintiri (Blah-Blah)*

There is a series on TV Kanal 5, which according to the internal structure, can be categorized as a *hybrid show*, i.e. a show that is an amalgam of a narrative / feature story, talk show and a music

programme	male participants	female participants	total
Tintiri Mintiri	57	179	236
%	24,15%	75,85%	100,00%

Table 4.7: Frequency of male and female characters in the programme Tintiri Mintiri (Kanal 5 TV)

programme. 236 participants were included in the analysis of the 9 editions of the *Tintiri Mintiri* series. The basic frequencies also show numerical superiority of the female participants compared to the male participants. The participants, mostly girls, are part of various situational dramatizations in which, in a very rudimentary, superficial way, they elaborate issues important to children of early school age. Topics covered include the following dramatizations: *Filmophile*, who talks about what happens when children watch a movie until late at night; *A day without phones*, a dramatization in which children try not to use the phone for at least one day; *Game Show Night*, which speaks of a quiz in which three girls participate; *Lost mirror* - the priceless mirror is returned to the owner; *Nervousness*, the older sister is nervous, angry with her younger sister, etc. The themes are simple and their dramatizations have an elementary structure - this is a production of a rather low quality. Aside from numerical superiority, in *Tintiri Mintiri*, in the selected period, there are no interesting gender aspects worth analysing.

5. TV Alsat M

1. General features of the children’s programmes on TV ALSAT M

Alsat M TV has an insignificant frequency of shows intended for children and adolescents. In the period from which the sample of thirty-one days was extracted (September 15 - October 15), 16 shows were broadcasted with a total duration of 6:30 hours.

Nine of these releases are sequels to the *Young Leaders* show and seven are sequels to the short episodes *Do You Cook Meow*. Part of this programme are actually reruns, so for analytical purposes it should be noted that 10 shows are considered premieres¹⁰¹, and the other six are reruns.

programme	frequency	duration hh:mm:ss	premiere releases
Young Leaders	9	4:41:08	5
Do You Cook Meow?	7	1:53:47	5
Total	16	6:34:55	10

Table 5.1: Frequency of broadcasted children’s programmes on TV Alsat M in the period 15.09 - 15.10.2019

Young Leaders is a multicultural show, produced by an independent production company, in which children, who are reported to belong to different ethnic groups, speak about different issues in their mother tongue. In some of the editions, as is the case with the edition on 15.09.2019, children have a very passive role - they simply ask questions to members of the Red Cross of RNM and in return receive the answers they are looking for, whereas in some of the editions, as the one broadcasted on 28.09.2019, children have a slightly more active role - the show resembles a focus group in which participants, according to the script, talk about what and to whom they would express gratitude in their lives. The show, which is produced by an independent production company, has an elementary structure and has a concept that does not require significant investments of funds or human resources. According to the internal structure, this show targets the population of school age or middle childhood.

Do You Cook Meow is a series produced by the Serbian production company Media Art Content LTD and it includes two dolls, one of which is a cat and the other an alien, cook and tell cooking recipes. The editions are short and their concept and structure are elementary. According to the manner of presentation, this show targets the preschool audience.

The short description and the low frequency of shows is sufficient to suggest that Alsat M TV does not target the young audience in a serious and appropriate way and does not provide diversity of the children's programme, and since there is no genre diversity, there is no diversity in terms of the function it has for the audience and the frequency of broadcasting of the editions is too small

¹⁰¹ The actual premieres of these shows were broadcasted several months before the analysis. Here, the word ‘premiere’ should be understood conditionally, i.e. that the show was aired for the first time within the selected period for analysis. Thus, if during the selected period a certain show was broadcasted two or three times (and the premiere took place at a time that preceded the analysis), then only the first of these editions is considered as premiere.

to be considered that the TV channel provides diversity to the target groups within the young population. In addition, in terms of content and concept, the programme that was broadcasted in the selected period is a low-quality programme that does not contain in-depth meanings relevant to the young population. Consequently, little can be said of the gender aspects of these shows.

2. General features and frequencies of characters/participants in children's programmes on TV Alsat M

The low frequency of shows means a relatively small number of characters or participants in the programme. In the 16 editions of two series on Alsat M TV, a total of 297 characters were analysed, of which 175 or 58.92% of the total number - female and 115 or 38.72% - male characters. The other 7 characters are genderless.

Most of the total frequency of participants in the programme originates from the show *Young Leaders* - 283 participants or 95.29% of the total frequency, and insignificant 14 appearances of characters come from the show *Do You Cook Meow*. Given the insufficient frequency of units for analysis in the second show and given the insignificant gender implications of the characters in it, the subject of analysis here will only be the show *Young Leaders*.

programme/gender	male	female	genderless	total
Young Leaders	108	175	0	283
Do You Cook Meow?	7	0	7	14
Total	115	175	7	297
%	38,72%	58,92%	2,36%	100,00%

Table 5.2: Frequency of male and female characters in the children's programmes on TV Alsat M broadcasted from 15.09 to 15.10.2019

3. Analysis of gender issues in the children’s programmes on TV Alsat M – analysis of specific programmes

Talks Shows

3.1 Young Leaders

3.1.1 Main frequencies and distributions of male and female characters

Out of the portion of participants in the show *Young Leaders*, 108 are male, which is 38.16% of the total frequency of participants in this show and 175 or 61.84% are female participants. Most of the interactions in the show are predetermined in the script, which means that children do not speak completely of their own free will in the show, as is the case with the show *More or Less we are All Equal*, aired on Telma TV or *Bell* which is broadcasted on MRT 1. In many instances, participants in the *Young Leaders* show simply ask questions to adult experts or socially engaged individuals. Although their speeches, even rudimentary ones, can be subjected to some type of qualitative analysis - such as thematic analysis, such an endeavour is still beyond the research scope of this analysis.

3.1.2 Association of participants with specific interests

However, there is a potentially interesting gender aspect which can be elaborated with quantification of qualitative data, and that is the gender distribution of interests of the participants

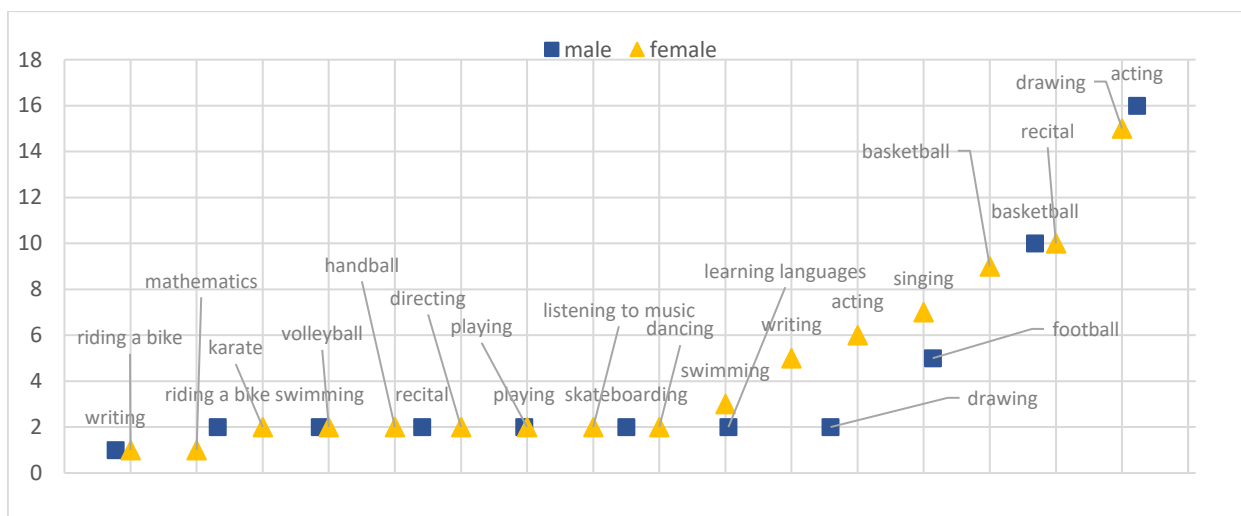


Figure 5.1: Occupations, interests and hobbies of male and female characters in *Young Leaders* on TV Alsat M

in the programme. Information about their interests is presented at the beginning of each episode. According to the script, some of the children - participants should say what is their favourite subject and what is their hobby. In 46 boys, which represents 42.59% of the total population of male participants, i.e. in 71 girls, which is 40.57% of the total female population of participants, it was possible to determine their interest or hobby. Interestingly, the ratio between the total number of male and female participants in *Young Leaders* is 108:175, and the ratio between those male and female participants in which interest can be determined is almost 1:1.

Drawing, reciting, acting, basketball, and singing are among the most prominent interests of the participants in this programme. This distribution alone speaks little of the potential gender differentiation in the selection of interesting preoccupations. Therefore, the multitude of interests were grouped into several categories: sports, science, music, literature, painting, and movie / theatre. The last four are natural to create one category (art), however, they were divided for analytical purposes - the analysis sees them both separately and together.

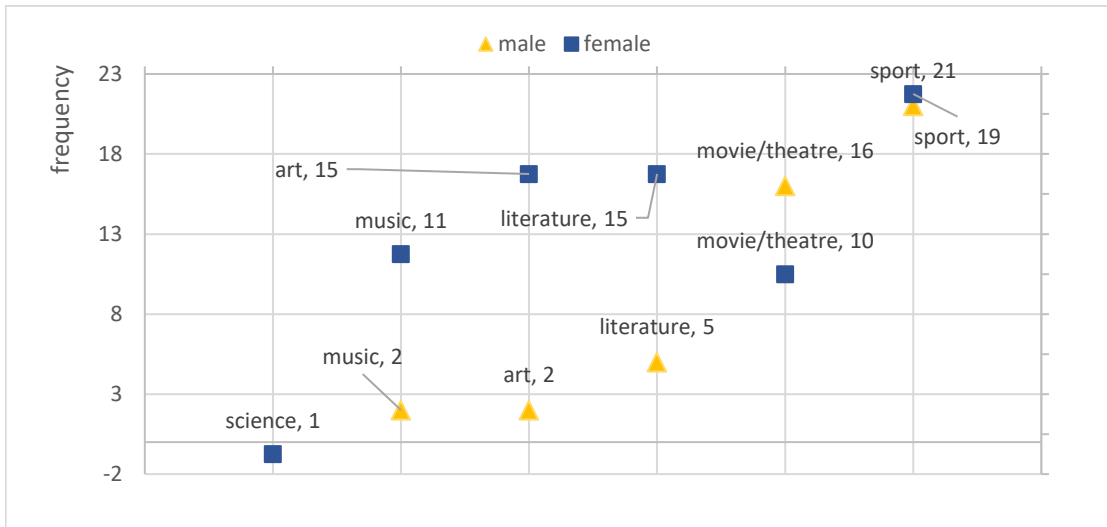


Figure 5.2: Types of preoccupations, interests and hobbies of male and female characters in *Young Leaders* on TV Alsati M

As seen in *Figure 5.2*, if different arts are perceived as different types of activities, then sport, in absolute numbers, is the first choice for both male and female participants. However, the relative value of sports among male and female participants is different - a total of 21 boys, or 45.65% of the male participants in which interest can be determined, chose a type of sport and 19 girls, which is 26.76% of the total number of female participants in whom interest could be identified, did the same. This implies that sport is a male interest. In addition, one can learn from *Figure 5.1* that both male and female participants have the greatest interest in basketball. For male participants, football is high on the priorities, but, interestingly, it is the second choice, right after basketball. Football, as a sport that is still socially labelled as male, is not present among the female participants.

If we categorise the arts together, then it is obvious how high is the interest in arts among girls. A total of 51 female participants, which is 71.83% of the total number of participants, have a special interest in some of the arts, with the greatest interest in painting and literature, and slightly lower, but also high interest, in music and film or theatre. Among male characters, 25 participants expressed interest in art, which is 54.35% of the total number of male participants in whom interest can be identified. However, while female participants have a similarly high interest in all the arts, as presented, male participants have a high interest only in film / theatre, but not in other arts.

It is interesting to note that there is almost no interest in both male and female participants about science. Only one girl chose mathematics as her interest.

6. Telma TV

1. General features of children's programmes on Telma TV

Telma TV has an insignificant frequency of programmes intended for children and adolescents. In the selected period from September 15 to October 15, or a total of thirty-one days, 7 shows were broadcasted with a total duration of 8 hours. Four of the releases are feature-length animated films of foreign production, subtitled in Macedonian language, which are beyond the scope of this analysis (*Island of Lemurs: Madagascar*, *Happy Feet - two*, *The Legend of the Protectors and Batman*). Three of the editions (of which two premieres¹⁰²) are sequels of the series *More or Less*, *We Are All Equal - with Ivce Pivce (Beer Ivce)*. The last series is the only repetitive (serial) programme for children and the total duration of its three editions is 3:15 hours. *More or Less*, *We Are All Equal - with Ivce Pivce* is the only show to be subjected to analysis.

At a basic level - three elements are problematic in the show: **First**, the question arises whether in a children's show the host should use his nickname (which is contained even in the title of the show) which implies the habit of someone who regularly drinks beer. It should be borne in mind that such frequent and explicit use of the host's nickname, especially if it is known that he is a favourite character of children in the show, can create in children the effect of normalising the consumption of beer as alcohol. Children are the most vulnerable category of the audience in terms of the potential harmful impact that different contents could have on their development, and therefore, the legislation in the audio-visual field includes a number of rules that aim to protect them against such influences. For example, the *Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services* specifically regulates the issue of protection of minors against various contents that may harm their physical, mental, or moral development (Article 50), and the Agency has prescribed special measures for protection with a bylaw. The Rulebook on Protection of Minors¹⁰³, adopted by the Agency, indicates that the use of different harmful substances, including alcohol, should not be displayed in programmes intended for minors, and their use shall not be supported, instigated, encouraged, or exalted (Article 4). The programme does not refer to explicit supporting of the alcohol assumption, however, it is implied to certain extent with the humorous nickname of the host, which is inappropriate for a children's programme. Furthermore, although this is not advertising content, but a children's programme, it is useful to make an analogy with the rules for commercial communications in audiovisual programmes which allow beer broadcasting, but do not allow commercial communications for beer specifically intended for minors (Article 53, paragraph 8, line 1), and also define that beer consumption should not leave the impression

¹⁰² The actual premieres of these shows were broadcasted several months before the analysis. Here, the word 'premiere' should be understood conditionally, i.e. that the show was aired for the first time within the selected period for analysis. Thus, if during the selected period a certain show was broadcasted two or three times (and the premiere took place at a time that preceded the analysis), then only the first of these editions is considered as premiere.

¹⁰³ Rulebook on Protection of Minors, available at: https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Pravillnik_za_zastita_na_malloletnite_lica.pdf

indicating that its consumption shall contribute to social success (Article 53, paragraph 8, line 3). Accordingly, although the use of the host's nickname in this children's programme is not regulated with a specific legal provision, the broadcaster should more broadly "read" the intention of the legal provisions to protect minor audience against different types of contents that could even indirectly and negatively affect the children's development. The host's nickname opens the issue of ethics and taste which, having in mind all of the above-mentioned, is to be dealt by both the host and Telma TV. It is also a fact that the host's nickname does not mean advertising of an alcohol product, and it is a fact that everyone is entitled to have whatever nickname one desires in their private lives – however, integrating of any contents in children's programmes should be subject to a rather significant ethical scrutinising.

Second, at the beginning of each episode, the host requests the children – participants to list the show's sponsors, thus putting them in the role of persons promoting commercial organisations. It is a fact that children's programmes can be sponsored so as to encourage increased production of children's programme, however, one of the main sponsoring rules is that it should not affect the contents or quality of the programme. Accordingly, the audiovisual field regulation¹⁰⁴ imposes rules on identifying or denoting the programme's sponsor, where for children's programmes, such identification is allowed only at the beginning and end of the programme, and not throughout the programme (Article 54 paragraph 9 of the *Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services*). The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services has adopted in 2015 the *Rulebook on Sponsorship*¹⁰⁵, whose article 4, paragraph 4, also indicates that if [...] children's programmes are sponsored, it is not allowed for the sponsor to be identified throughout their duration". The problematic issue in this show is that the sponsor's identification is made by the children participating in the show, which is one of those things to be avoided with the identification rules – the programme to be freed from any commercial influence from the sponsor. This is not the choice of children who, due to their age are unable to independently decide whether they would like to be included in any type of commercial promotion. When speaking of children's programmes, it is desirable for the sponsor's identification to be fully separated from the content, in terms of making it either the integral part of the opening and closing credits or to be made by an adult and not to be related with the programme's content.

Third, in concept terms, this programme is inadequately organised and does not exhibit awareness of the potential problematic aspect of the topics being discussed, regardless whether they are debatable in gender terms, as suggested by the thematic analysis to follow. The show sometimes disseminates ethnic stereotypes and underestimating gender portrayals.

These basic information on the children's programme indicate that Telma TV does not target young audience in a serious and appropriate manner, and does not secure diversity of the children's programme.

¹⁰⁴ All these rules are harmonised at European level and are incorporated in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, and the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services and bylaws of the regulator are duly harmonised with the AMSD.

¹⁰⁵ Rulebook on Sponsorship, available at: https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Pravilnik_za_sponzorstvo.pdf

2. Analysis of gender issues in the programmes of TV Telma

The low frequency of children's programmes also means low frequency of characters or participants in the programme who are the basic unit for analysis in this study. In the three editions of *More or Less, We Are All Equal - with Ivce Pivce* there are a total of 46 appearances of participants in the programme, of which 25 appearances are of male participants and 13 of female participants. Additional 8 appearances are genderless (in the cartoons within the show)¹⁰⁶. For some of the participants in the programme (14 appearances), their interest or preoccupation can be determined. Most often, these interests or preoccupations are formulated in a comic manner, but such formulations can also be indicative of gender inclination in the choice of interests.

Thus, two of these participants (five appearances) are female, and they are defined through three types of interests: (1) cooking and having "expertise" in the kitchen (Cece), followed by (2) having "expertise" in, as they say "Biotics and antibiotics" (Andrea), and (3) having "expertise" in surfing the Internet (Cece). Six of the participants in which interest can be identified (nine appearances) are male and they are defined through four types of interests: (1) possession of expertise in "Railways, Siberia and Russia" (David), (2) possession of "wisdom and knowledge on the oldest and most difficult things" and international expertise for anything and everything (Luka and Josip), (3) expert in seas and sports, skipper (Miha) and (4) lazy (Antoshka).

The very low frequency of characters does not provide basis for reaching a relevant conclusion on the gender aspects of the programme that would make sense, but here it is only conditionally noted that in the three broadcasted shows there are twice as many male than female participants and that the male participants are attributed an interest that requires *knowledge and wisdom*, and female participants are attributed an interest that is focused on *domesticity (cooking)* or *medicine (nurse)*. However, in the introductory conversations on the three shows, the host asks the participants whether they have read any of the required readings for the holidays – the female participants are said to have been diligent and fulfilled the tasks associated with reading the required readings, while the host verbally expresses the expectation of the male participants that they must have been lazy, had fun and they had "not read anything." This type of gender differentiation constructs female participants as a *disciplined* subject who is hardworking and who above all respects the rules of school discipline, while male participants are willing to *resist* the school rules, to be irresponsible "nogoodniks" thus placing them in the *domain of freedom* - regardless of school rules. It is interesting that the host makes such differentiation despite the fact that the male participants in the show try to show him that they really have read the required readings during the holidays.

¹⁰⁶ The low frequency of participants also makes the content analysis only of this programme – meaningless. Therefore, this analysis uses a descriptive strategy of thematic analysis.

2.1 Thematic analysis of the section: World Happiness Day

More or Less, We Are All Equal is a talk show with “loose” script and structure. Nevertheless, it has talk sections rendering the thematic analysis of gender issues – justified. On the episode broadcasted on 15.09.2019 (with rerun on 21.09.2019) and on the episode broadcasted on 22.09.2019, there is a section titled *World Happiness Day*. It includes jokes said by the children participants. Having in mind that jokes represent simple forms¹⁰⁷, i.e. elementary collectively produced narrative structures, which are the usual constructors and transmitters of fruitful gender stereotypes – the content of the jokes was subjected to thematic analysis from which several important gender-aspect-related terms arise, and which recorded several transgressions, which additionally render this show as problematic. The number of released jokes in this type of analysis is of secondary importance and it is completely irrelevant that male participants in the show say twice more jokes than female participants. The analysis focuses on the main topics that stem from what the children have chosen to say on the show, and the manner in which such topics are organised in a coherent organising structure, as the basis to understand the cultural context on whose background such structures are positioned.

2.1.1 Thematic analysis of jokes of male participants

As seen in the schematic map of theme nodes (*Figure 6.1*), out of the jokes told by the boys in the show, seven themes emerge: (1) *Labour relations* - a theme that deconstructs the position of the protagonists in labour organisations or deconstructs the consumerist-dominated social space, (2) *Ethnic marker* - a theme that operates in the domain of ethnic stereotypes, (3) *Generation gap* - a topic that deconstructs inter-generational misunderstandings, (4) *Marriage relations* - a theme that deconstructs and stereotypes the relations between spouses (5) *School relations* - which refers to the position of students and teachers in educational structures, (6) *Sarcasm* - which refers to the deconstruction of the absurdity of the position in which the protagonist finds himself, and finally,

¹⁰⁷ Jolles, A. (2017). *Simple forms: Legend, saga, myth, riddle, saying, case, memorable, fairytale, joke*. Verso Books. Andre Jolles' structuralistic theory refers to several such “simple forms”, such as the legend, saga, proverb, etc.

(7) *Word play (puns)* – a group of jokes in which the effect is achieved by playing with words or shifting of the meaning of a specific word into an alternative context.

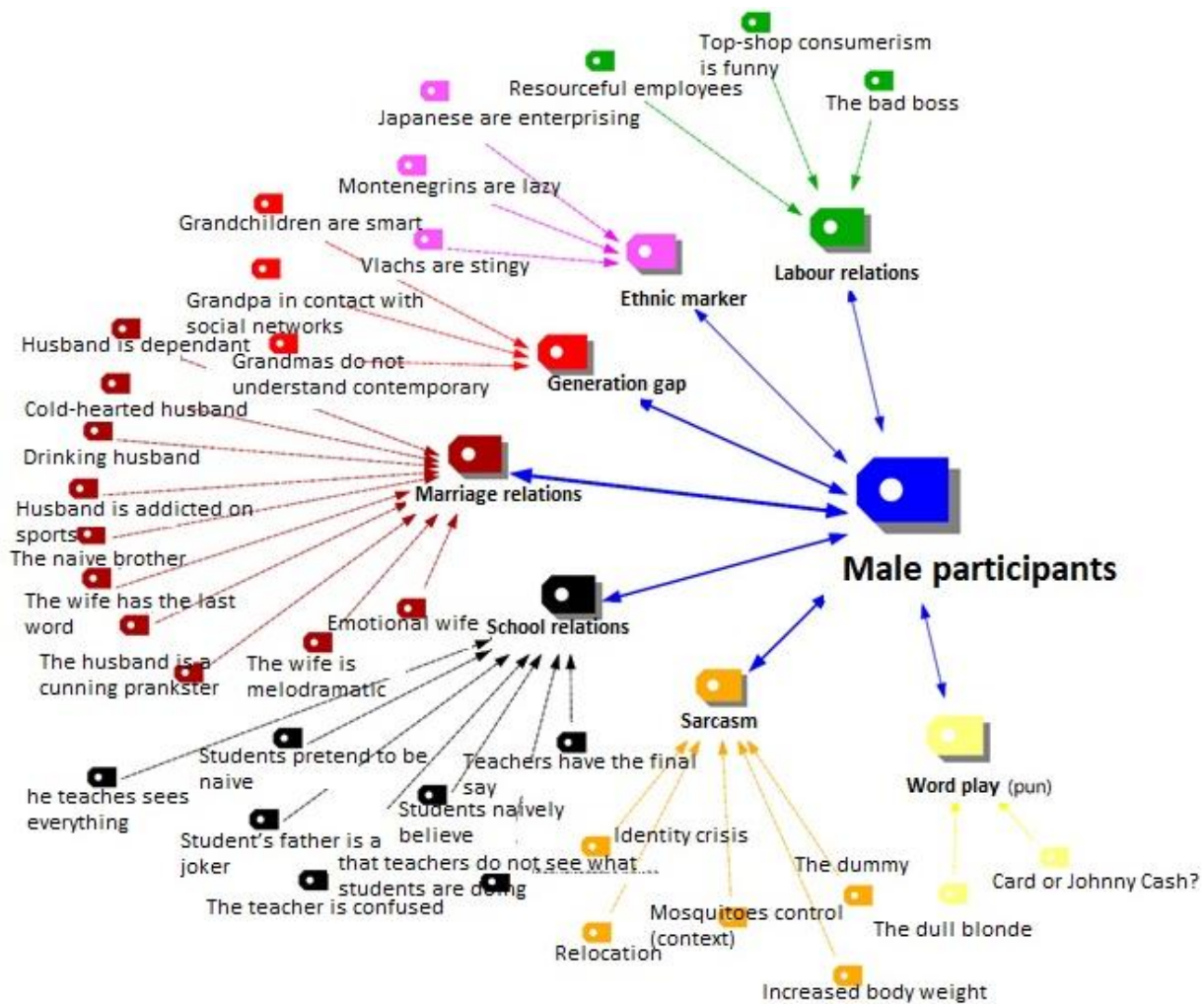


Figure 6.1: Map of thematic nodes of jokes of male participants in the programme *More or Less, We Are All Equal – with Ivce Pivce* (Telma TV)

Theme nodes are not equally relevant to the subject of this analysis. The theme node *Marriage relations* has the most obvious gender implications, and this node is the most frequent in respect to the jokes of male participants in this programme. As seen on the map (Figure 6.1), this node is based on several basic themes that construct men in the marital relationship, on the one hand as dependent on the attitude of the woman, as nincompoops, drunks, naive and incompetent, but also as cold-blooded and cunning pranksters, on the other hand. Wives, on the other hand, appear in several basic themes as melodramatic and emotional, but also as someone who has the last word.

This thematic structuring reproduced by children at an early school age is important due to several reasons:

First, at the most basic level (and if we exclude, for a moment, *humour* from the equation on the manner of functioning of the joke), the concept for the programme *More or Less, We Are All Equal* stimulates in children-participants the production of *adult discourses* without taking into account the manner in which children interpret them. For example, complexity of marriage relations, on which this joke cluster is based, transcends the children's direct experience – in other words, this theme node for children is completely “installed” by the cultural matrices around them, which cannot be said of the theme nodes *School relations* or *Generation gap*, which could be destabilised or enriched considering the children's personal experience. The cluster *Marriage relations* is an almost always ready stereotyping package, which children could completely and non-critically adopt or from the stereotyped interaction of their parents, or directly in the peer interaction, or in this manner, amplified through media constructs. This is a strategy problem because it enables for established gender matrices and their travesty to be uncritically reproduced by the young generations – as given and stable.

Second, (and if we were to again include humour in the equation of how a joke works), the dominant and most frequent stereotype in the *Marriage Relations* node is female *authoritarianism* and *authoritarian*, and the corresponding construct that marks men as nincompoops, naive, dependent on the position of the woman, etc. This construct is the opposite of the patriarchal background on which it is produced, in which, conversely, *the man has the last word*, and the woman is the one who is *naive and dependent*.

In *Table 6.1*, one can see the jokes produced in the theme node *Marriage relations* and they, evidently, most often function through this stereotyped contrast which is the opposite to the patriarchal relation organisation. In them, the husband says that he needs to ask his wife if he has the right to speak (*segment 1*), the wife tells her drunk husband Trpe not to confuse open toasters with open books (*segment 3*), and in those, the wife renders the discussion objective clear by saying the husband not to cry since it is only football, and not real life (*segment 6*). What is interesting is that, even with such “authoritarian” and “autocratic” portrayal of the woman, some of the jokes indicate her domesticity – for example, when Trpe eats the contents of what he mistakenly believes is soup in *segment 4*, it is expected that the soup is prepared by Trpana and she is the one indicating that it is not soup but water left from the dishwashing process from the previous meal – which means that Trpana is washing the dishes. Or in *segment 3*, Trpana has the last word, however she waits for the husband to come home drunk and open the toaster instead of the book. Structuralist reading of the simple form *Joke* refers to the fact that this composition, although short, is still

rather complicated in terms of the manner of reading of the often contradictory meanings stemming from it.

Organising theme	Main themes	Segment
MALE\Marriage relations	The woman has the last word	1. SLC (State Electoral Committee): “Hello, Sir, this is SLC calling, do you have the right to vote (<i>speak</i>)? Husband: “Please hold, I need to ask my wife”.
	The man is dependant	
MALE\Marriage relations	Emotional woman	2. Wife: sweetie, I have butterflies in my stomach. Husband: It’s not the butterflies, it’s the beans.
	Melodramatic woman	
	Cold-blooded husband	
	The man is a cunning joker	
MALE\Marriage relations	The woman has the last word	3. Trpana is laying in the bedroom and calls to Trpe – Trpe, come here, it’s bedtime, are you drunk again? Trpana, leave me be, I’ll read a book. Trpana says – Trpe, leave the toaster and come here.
	Drunk husband	
MALE\Marriage relations	The woman has the last word	4. Trpe says to Trpana – Trpana, this soup is disgusting And Trpana says – It’s not soup, I’ve poured water in the pan to soak it.
	Nincompoop husband	
MALE\Marriage relations	Naive brother	5. Trpe and Cvetko are taking a walk, and Trpe says to Cvetko: “Trpe, I heard you got married”. He says – “Yes, to the twin”. Trpe “How do you tell them apart?” Cvetko: Bro, you don’t have long hair.
MALE\Marriage relations	The woman has the last word	6. Husband and wife are sitting on the armchair and watching TV. Husband: “Honey, don’t cry, it’s just a movie”. A bit later. Wife: “Honey, don’t cry, it’s just football”.
	Melodramatic woman	
	The husband is addicted to sports	

Table 6.1: List of jokes produced in the theme node *Marriage relations* in male participants (*More or Less, We Are All Equal – with Ivce Pivce*, Telma TV)

According to this reading, each joke *shifts* the meaning and *breaks* some existing link¹⁰⁸. The relations could pertain to the relations between the mark and marked or between the construct and its context. The example for such *break* is the joke in the theme node *Word play (puns)* when a participant is telling a joke about blondes – in which a police officer tells her “*give* me your name and surname”, and she replies “Well, if I *give* them to you, what would my name be?” or in jokes pertaining to *Marriage relations* in which there is turning of the patriarchal cultural context upside down. However, as shifts and breaks occur, new stereotype is linked – for example, the blonde is produced as *dull*, and the husband is the *victim*. In the first case, it refers to an arbitral meaning, and in the second case, *repacking* of a patriarchal cultural matrix.

Another rather serious problem in terms of approaching such type of contents in children’s programmes is the theme node *Ethnic marker* (Table 6.2). Boys-participants in the show say jokes which adversely stereotype entire ethnic groups. Thus, their jokes perpetuate negative stereotypes according to which Vlachs are stingy (*segments 1 and 2*), and Montenegrins are lazy (*segment 3*). Ethnic and national stereotypes in jokes are omnipresent, without exception, in each popular

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. “As we see, even a simple joke is already a complicated structure. Yet all the parts of this structure aim at the same thing: every time, they undo something, unbind something bound”).

culture. In some cultures, there are even strong forms of auto-stereotyped ethnic or national constructs. They are complex structures, since on one side they construct the “other” and establish hegemony of an unchangeable status of organisation in the world, but at the same time, they can powerfully deconstruct the one reproducing them or the culture in which it is nested. They can also

Organising theme	Main themes	Segment
MALE\Ethnic marker	Vlachs are stingy	1. Children visit a Vlach person and say to him: “We are collecting donations to make a pool”. The Vlach is thinking a bit, and gives them a bucket filled with water. He adds “Return the bucket later”.
MALE\Ethnic marker	Vlachs are stingy	2. The Vlach got tired reading jokes about them in newspapers and has therefore sent a message to a newspaper. “If you don’t stop with these offensive jokes, I shall stop borrowing the newspaper from my neighbour”.
MALE\Ethnic marker	Montenegrins are lazy Japanese are enterprising	3. There was a ship accident and the only survivors were a Montenegrin and a Japanese person. The Montenegrin was just sitting, and the Japanese asked “What are we going to do now?” Montenegrin: “Oh come on, you Japanese people only want to do something”.

Table 6.2: List of jokes produced in the theme node *Ethnic marker* in male participants (*More or Less, We Are All Equal – with Ivce Pivce*, Telma TV)

free the tension of political correctness in such “special situation”, in which an event occurs that would not be allowed in another context, in the similar manner as the carnival is a “special event” which turns reality upside down. However, this cannot be valid for the “adult” discourse produced by children and being disseminated through the national media. The production company of this show and the TV channel on which it is broadcasted must take into account the impact of these contents on the petrifying of children’s understanding of the world around them.

2.1.2. Theme analysis of jokes of female participants

Out of the jokes said by the girls in the programme, four topics emerge which are presented on *Figure 6.2* as organising theme nodes: (1) *Word play (puns)* – group of jokes in which the effect is achieved with word play or shifting of the meaning of a specific word in alternative context, (2) *School relations* – pertaining to the position of students and teachers in educational systems, (3) *Marriage relations* – theme that deconstructs and stereotypes relations between marital partners, and (2) *Sarcasm* – pertaining to the deconstruction of absurdness of the position of the protagonist. These topics are the same with the topics opened by the boys, whereas these jokes do not include ethnically marked jokes or topics that deconstruct the generation gap between children and adults.

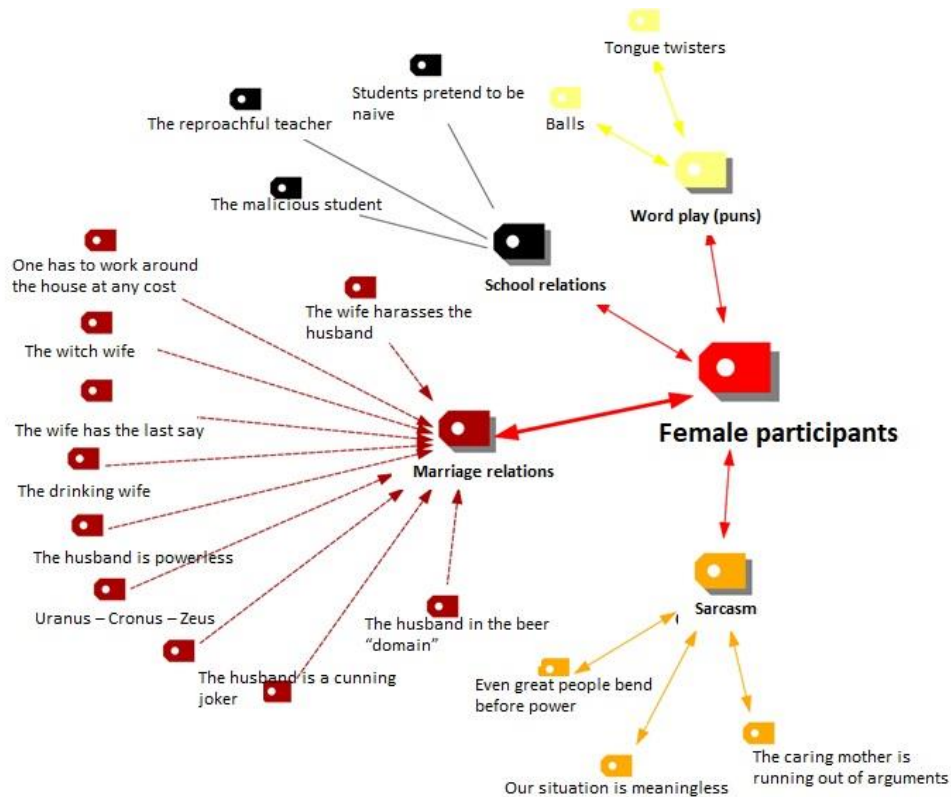


Figure 6.2: Map of theme nodes of jokes of female participants in the programme *More or Less, We Are All Equal – with Ivce Pivce* (Telma TV)

As with jokes reproduced by the male participants – they are not equally important for the subject of this analysis. The most obvious gender implications can be found in the theme node *Marriage relations* which, as with the male participants, most frequently occurs in the jokes of the girls in this programme. As seen on the map (Figure 6.2), this node is built out of several basic themes which attribute to men in marriage context the meanings of powerlessness and submissive relation on one side, and humour on the other side.

The wife, in the jokes told by the girls, is construed as a witch, as a person having the final say, as well as someone who harasses the husband, as someone who only knows to prompt and not do something, and even as an excessive beer drinker. Although there were no references to blonde women in the girls’ jokes, these main theme references within the theme *Marriage Relations* are more direct and more explicit, even compared to those in the jokes reproduced by male participants. This means that neither the producer nor the host or the TV channel have asked the question regarding the discourse imprint left by the contents reproduced by children.

In this case, theme structure reproduced by early school-age children is also important due to several reasons: The comments above on the boys-participants also apply to the girls – the concept of the show *More or Less, We Are All Equal* stimulates in children-participants the production of adult discourses without taking into account the manner in which children interpret such discourses. On equal basis, as with the boys, complexity of marriage relations, on which this cluster of jokes is based, transcends the children’s direct experience – in other words, these theme node for girls is fully installed by the cultural matrices surrounding them.

Organising theme	Main themes	Segment
FEMALE\Marriage relations	The woman has the last word	1. Trpe gets up and Trpana tells him: Put on your apron and wash the dishes/ Trpe says: I can’t today, my hands are shaking. Well then, “shake” the carpet.
	The wife harasses the husband	
	One has to work around the house at any price	
FEMALE\Marriage relations	The witch wife	2. Sweetie, where is my broom? Go on, wife, there is the store, walk a bit.
	The man is a cunning joker	
FEMALE\Marriage relations	The woman has the last word	3. The father tells his son – I’m in charge in this house. The son whispers – Does mum know about this?
	Uranus - Cronus - Zeus	
	The man is powerless	
FEMALE\Marriage relations	The drinking wife	4. Woman, where is my beer? Wife: Well, I was feeling hot... The entire crate? Well, I was very hot.
	The man in the beer domain	
FEMALE\Marriage relations	Wife only knows how to prompt	4. Trpe and Trpana are riding in the car together. Trpana is driving. After a while, they see a very slow-driving truck and Trpana asks Trpe: What should I do now? Aaah, now you don’t know – and you know everything when I’m driving.
	The man is a cunning joker	

Table 6.3: List of jokes produced in the theme node *Marriage relations* in female participants (*More or Less, We Are All Equal* – with Ivce Pivce, Telma TV)

Regarding the jokes in the theme node *Marriage relations* said by the girls, the dominant stereotype, although less frequent than in boys, is again female *authoritarianism* and *authoritarian* behaviour, and the corresponding construct marking the man as *powerless*. In the cluster of jokes on marriage relations among the girls-participants, the wife forces the husband to work even though he says that his hands are shaking (*segment 1*) and the wife is the one to be asked on who is in charge in the home (*segment 2*). Here as well, even in situations with “female dominance”, the wife is domesticated – for example, when the wife asks about the broom (*segment 2*). Nevertheless, regarding the jokes of girls, there are certain specifics not found among boys’ jokes – *the witch wife*, *the harassing wife* and *the drinking wife* do not stem from boys’ jokes, but can be found here.

It is interesting to analyse the joke about the father trying to demonstrate him being the dominant one in the family domain; a claim which is quickly destabilised by the silent question of the son – Does mum know? This question in the joke simultaneously makes two semantic manoeuvres –

“killing” only – the promoted authoritarian position of the father – as in the mythological narratives in which Cronus kills Uranus, and Zeus overthrows Cronus. At the same time, the son places the father in a submissive situation against the mother – the son’s question, does mum know?, could also be interpreted as demonstrating fear. This double manoeuvre creates the comic effect.

Of course, the comedy of the *special situation* which carnivalizes reality would allow such transgressions in the private domain of adults, but here, it refers to a discourse of children disseminated through the national media. Girls not only internalise adults’ speech – they non-critically internalise the key of the culture they originate from, and in which jokes about marriage relations turn reality upside down.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

Public Broadcasting Service – MRT

The Public Broadcasting Service – Macedonian Radio Television is obliged to broadcast various programmes envisaged for all segments of the audience, including the children's audience. In doing so, the programme it broadcasts should be distinctive with a view to achieving and maintaining high quality. Distinctiveness and quality, in the context of this analysis, mean that the Public Broadcasting Service should have a particularly high degree of gender sensitivity in each of the children's programmes. This is because it, more than any other platform participating in the permanent public sphere *polylogue*, has a mission to *educate* the young population, so the topics it opens and the way it opens them have potentially far-reaching consequences on *equality* - in this case gender equality - a founding value marker of modern democracies. In other words - the programmes of the *Public Broadcasting Service*, while participating in the modelling of the attitudes and beliefs of the next generation of citizens, it also participates in a special manner in the construction of gender equality – which is, basically, an important issue of *human rights*. Of course, this applies equally to the First and Second Programme Service of the Macedonian Radio and Television, to all types of programmes with educational, entertaining, and informative function, as it applies to all four identified types of internal structure of the programmes.

It can be concluded that, in general terms, the Public Broadcasting Service has a planned and well conceptualised programme policy regarding the children's population, as an important segment of the entire audience. Nevertheless, the evidences for this argument are not equally “distributed” – the conclusion applies more to MRT 1 than it could be supported for MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language, on which the children's programme only partially has the required variety. The frequency of children's programmes on both channels is relatively high – on MRT 1, a total of 255 programmes were broadcasted¹⁰⁹ where, for the needs of this study, a total of 2049 characters or participants in the programme were identified and analysed. On MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language, in the selected period, 117 episodes were broadcasted and total of 901 characters or programme participants were analysed. Compared to the private media, this frequency of the children's programmes is high.

However, the analysis of "pluralism" of these programmes has demonstrated that MRT 1 has a much wider range of diverse programming and noticeably better conceptually defined policy, compared to MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language. On MRT 1, there is a variety of programmes, first, in relation to the segment of the young population they are targeting. The analysis has established that the First Channel has a programme for preschool and early school children as well as programmes aimed at an audience that can be roughly categorised in the so-called middle childhood (8-12 years). Second, MRT 1 has a certain diversity of the programme in

¹⁰⁹ These numbers also include all broadcasted programme reruns. The analysis has data on the percentage of reruns of the broadcasted programme.

terms of the function it has for the target audience - it has a large presence of shows with entertaining (including entertaining-educational) and educational content, but it lacks shows that have an informative function in the narrow terms of that concept. Finally, heterogeneity also exists in terms of the internal structure of the shows - MRT 1 has different specific genres: *narratives / feature stories* (50.67%), *talk shows* (22.2%), *music shows* (11.1%) and *hybrid shows* or a combination thereof (16%). This variety is relatively well designed although there are big differences between the shows in terms of their quality and in terms of the ways in which gender issues are covered - despite the fact that MRT 1 has shows with high production quality and greater awareness of gender issues (*5 + Family*, for example), there are also lower quality and less gender sensitive shows (*Children's drama is not Twiddle-Twaddle*, for example).

Although MRT 2 can be said to have a certain diversity of the children's programme in terms of the target audience, in terms of the function of the programme and in terms of the internal structure of the shows - this analysis shows that this diversity is more formal and it can be argued by the visibly low conceptual design of the shows. Thus, in the programme - although there are *music shows* in the selected period - there are only about two short and incidental editions (*Korab's Nightingales* and one holiday show), then although the programme has shows that can be categorised as *narratives / feature stories*, still they are just short and inadequately produced editions of the most often non-dramatized stories aired on morning shows or other adult shows. The analysis of the gender aspects in the programme of MRT 1 (i.e. the analysis of the characters as a basic analytical unit) and MRT 2 - Programme in Albanian language established the following findings:

Narratives/feature stories on the PBS (Public Broadcasting Service)

In this category of the MRT 1 programme, two series of domestic (*Macedonian Folk Tales* and *Once Upon a Time*) and one series of foreign production (*Lalaloopsy*) were broadcasted. On MRT 2 - Programme in Albanian language, on the other hand, several atomized shows were broadcasted of in-house production, which for the needs of the analysis were included under the same name *Stories* as well as two series of foreign production (*Lalaloopsy* and *Gormiti*).

(1) From the analysis of the domestic production programmes of MRT 1, it can be concluded that the programme of the First Channel organised as a *narrative / feature story* is completely facing the recurring social values specific of patriarchal societies which has significant implications on gender roles. In addition to the numerical superiority of male characters (there are noticeably more male than female characters, as there are dramatically more male than female characters in the lead roles), it also has a clear value and character differentiation of the characteristics of male and female characters. The aggregate of male characters, contrary to female characters, is given features which can be considered as *superior social markers* - the analysis of scales of semantic differentials has shown that male characters are construed and represented as *wiser, stronger, and*

more active than female characters, who are *shallower, more fragile and more passive*. Furthermore, the analysis of scales has shown that male characters in the drama action are most often in dominant position, whereas females are in subordinate position.

This is mainly due to the programmes making an effort to present social organisation specific for the nineteenth century, such as the *Macedonian Folk Tales*. Their narratives are presented to the audience as *historical artefacts* – the “brand” *Macedonian Folk Tales* seems to represent part of the collections of collectors of folk literature such as Cepenkov – however, they are in fact new scripts which only mimic the nineteenth-century social ethos, so they cannot be said to simply encapsulate and transfer a discourse construed a century and a half ago. This is a newly-constructed pseudo-traditional discourse. Thus, in the MRT 1 series, organised as *narratives/feature stories*, women are exclusively housewives and occupy the private domain, whereas men are most often landowners (capitalists) or workers who occupy the public domain. In such set-up, marriage and family are undoubtedly heteronormative and patriarchal categories, which does not allow for any deviations, and which could have far-reaching implications on the gender aspect of the construed viewpoint among the young population. To a certain, although noticeably lower extent, this also applies to the programme *Once Upon a Time* whose inspiration is drawn from several internationalised narratives, such as the tales of the Brothers Grimm or of Hans Christian Andersen.

(2) From the analysis of the MRT 2 home production programmes, it can be concluded that the Programme in Albanian language, structured as *narrative/feature story*, is most often based on internationalised narratives such as the tales the Brothers Grimm or of Hans Christian Andersen, and they bring with them the social ethos which is non-sensitive to the contemporary issues of gender equality and non-discrimination. However, additionally, the atomised and exceptionally poor programme, in conceptual terms, of the type *narrative/feature story* is specific for MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language, and therefore, the characters which are part of its action do not offer sufficiently rich information so as to perform a more detailed analysis.

(3) The broadcasted foreign production programme on MRT 1 and MRT 2, structured as a *narrative/feature story*, according to the analysis, does not take sufficiently into account the potential consumer pressure on the children’s programme, which also obviously has gender implications. The animated series *Lalaloopsy* (broadcasted on both channels in the selected period) and *Gormiti* (broadcasted only on MRT 2) are multiplatform commercial products that, in addition to the TV series, have a franchise for production of dolls, video games, children’s school supplies and similar, and it is unclear whether the Public Broadcasting Service, as a non-commercial media platform, has taken this aspect into account whilst making the selection. Both series are interesting in gender terms since one of them (*Lalaloopsy*) is exclusively intended for girls, and is dominated by female characters, whereas the second one (*Gormiti*) is intended for boys, and is accordingly, dominated by male characters. Although the first one breaks several stereotypes, in particular regarding the selection made by the characters in reference with their interest, hobby or profession

for girls, it still does not extend beyond the dominant tendency in the programmes of Macedonian broadcasters to dominantly associate female characters and participants with a sort of performing interest such as – dancing, ballet, singing, etc. On the other side, the series *Gormiti* is abundant with accentuated masculinised portrayals of the male from an imaginary universe lacking female superheroes.

Music programmes on PBS:

This category on MRT 1 includes the broadcasting of a series which actually represents a collage of children's songs performed at the Superstar festival (*Superstar Top Chart*). On MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language, this programme is almost non-existent in the period selected for analysis purposes, with the exception of two short and incidental editions (*The Nightingales of Korab* and *Holiday show*).

(1) From the analysis of this programme it can be concluded that female music performers numerically dominate in it - girls in this case are also more present in the performing arts that require stage performance. However, this also reveals that the Public Broadcasting Service, more precisely the production companies that produced these programmes, did not consider the need to establish a balance in terms of the presence of male and female performers, which is feasible if there is a process of gender sensitive casting for performers.

(2) A rather informative qualitative aspect of the research arises from the analysis of the themes of children's songs and the intersection of isolated themes with the gender of performers. These themes can be divided into three clusters depending on the age of the theme being sung. Of the songs that would be suitable for preschool or early school age, the theme of family love - such as love between mother and daughter or between sisters and similar, dominates among the girls. However, the themes that deal with *fame, fashion or physical beauty* are positioned at a high place. Themes suitable for performers who are in their teens are dominated by texts that deal with hedonism, fun and romantic love. Among male performers, in addition to themes related to romantic love, themes in which male performers are presented as "hot shots" and conquerors of female attention have a prominent place – which is a classic masculine construct.

(3) Deeper qualitative analysis of paradigmatic songs supports the argument that males and females in song lyrics are moulded into typical gender roles in which females are smart, calm, and helpful to the mother in the private domain, and males are strong, sport-oriented, and even aggressive.

Programmes structured as talk shows on the PBS:

Within the study that included a one-month programme, MRT 1 had two shows which could be classified in this category (*Bell* and *From A to Z*) and four shows, each with low frequency, on MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language (*Let's Learn Together*, *Come to My Story*, *The Magic of the Letters* and *My School*).

(1) It stems from the study that structures of this specific genre and MRT 1 and MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language do not pay attention to the numerical balance between male and female participants in programmes.

(2) This programme also strives towards increased participation of girls in performing acts requiring dancing and singing – stage performances of modern dances, ballet acts, which is not the case regarding the boys.

Hybrid structures on the PBS:

On MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language, there are no shows to be classified in this category. MRT 1 has two such shows (*5+ Family* and *Children's Drama is not Twiddle-Twaddle*).

(1) This First Channel programme, in the selected period, had its most quality show in production terms (*5+ Family*), as well as the weakest in production terms (the several releases of the series *Children's Drama is not Twiddle-Twaddle*). The quality of the programme, even for the youngest pre-school age population targeted by the series *Children's Drama is not Twiddle-Twaddle*, should be at an equal, high level.

(2) The main series in this genre (*5+ Family*) demonstrates an elevated feeling of diversity compared to other programmes on MRT 1 in the same period. This diversity has gender implications. For example, although the study has failed to detect any presence of same-sex communities within the show, the series, however, has certain degree of diversity in terms of family structures – some of the characters are children of divorced parents, there are characters impersonating children from foster homes, intergeneration conflicts within families are discussed, etc. All this renders this series a better reflection of the issues and problems with which the young population targeted by this show live with.

(3) However, the study has shown that the *5+ Family* show has a clear tendency of infantilizing male characters, and constructing female characters as socially more responsible characters.

Recommendations for the Public Broadcasting Service

1. The Public Broadcasting Service should invest production efforts to rethink its feature programme in terms of concept and gender-sensitivity, in particular the programme of the *narrative/feature story* type. Such rethinking should focus, inter alia, on the following elements:

- Reduce the prominence of home-production feature series reproducing the patriarchal and phallogocentric social ethos which is problematic in gender terms.
- Enable plurality of social viewpoints in this programme by introducing several feature TV series (*narratives/feature stories*) in which gender issues are treated in liberal terms, thus providing an appropriate place for gender discourses which are not part of the patriarchal value matrix and where the patriarchal viewpoint would be allowed to be disputed.
- *Macedonian Folk Tales* as brand, should return to their origin – to the collectors of folk literature – without turning them into pseudo-traditional, yet new scripts, which are basically gender insensitive, whilst using the “authority” of the *tradition*.
- The Public Broadcasting Service, while selecting the programme to which this cluster belongs, and which is of foreign origin, should take into account its commercial and consumer aspects and the effects that such aspects could have on the young population – due to the fact that the multiplatform varieties of market products are often hidden behind this programme.
- In the selection of the foreign featured and animated programme, the Public Broadcasting Service must pay attention to its gender implications since it often hides mythologised ideas on the bodies and the behaviour of male and female characters which, under consumer pressure, are portrayed as desirable (normative) models to be followed by both boys and girls.

(2) The Public Broadcasting Service should restore its focus to children’s music and produce more and better conceptualised music programme. Such rethinking of the music programme should take into account the following elements:

- The music production should be gender-sensitive, both in terms of selection of participants, and in terms of the selection of themes in their songs.
- This programme shall not hide any commercial elements, which either explicitly or implicitly advertise a specific product or sponsor.
- The music programme shall pay attention to the adult sub-segments of participants and of the target audience – children of early school age do not have the same interest as children from the middle childhood.

(3) The Public Broadcasting Service, together with the independent production companies, should continue developing and maintaining the high quality of shows marked for the needs of this study as *hybrid* - shows such as *5+ Family* and others not included in this study due to being broadcasted in the past or were aired after the period of analysis (*Give me Some Music (Dajte muzika)*, *Our Neighbourhood (Nashe maalo)*, *Shaggy Alphabet (Bushava azbuka)*, etc.).

- This MRT 1 programme should also maintain as well as further develop the high gender-sensitivity level.
- MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language should invest editorial and production efforts to produce such programmes or participate in the designing of such programme jointly with the First Channel, which could be enabled if the Public Broadcasting Service starts functioning as an integrated media service.

(4) In the programmes of MRT 1 and MRT 2 – Programme in Albanian language, marked as talk shows in this study (*Bell, My School*, etc.), attention should be paid to the numerical balance of female and male participants, as well as to the type of performance of these participants.

(5) The requirement without which higher level of gender-sensitive programme, as indicated in the above recommendations, is difficult to achieve:

- Both channels of the Public Broadcasting Service should work on an integrated approach towards the educational programme – thus saving resources for the Public Broadcasting Service to be able to secure more quality programme for children on both channels. The establishing of the new programme service, specialised for the children’s programme, MRT 5 can take a step in that direction; however, it should not be understood as a platform on which spheres of impact shall be broken, but as a platform for quality and gender-sensitive children’s programme which shall be equally directed to the children of all ethnic groups in Macedonia.
- Constructing home-production shows and the selection of foreign-production shows should be performed with participation of appropriate experts – mainly experts for developmental psychology and experts in gender issues.

Private TV Channels

Private terrestrial channels, at state level, have defined obligations in terms of the programme format or the diversity of the programme being broadcasted. All five analysed private TV channels are with general and predominantly entertaining format, which means that they should broadcast diverse programmes both in terms of the target audience and in terms of the function (informative, entertaining, and educational), whilst the entertaining function dominates therein. This means that the programme envisaged for children can simultaneously be entertaining, educational, and informative; however, there is no precisely defined percentage in reference with the three functions, i.e. the children’s programme can be entirely entertaining. It was left to the programme policy of each TV channel to decide the children’s programme to be broadcasted. The analysis has shown that TV channels have no designed or observant editorial approach to the selection of shows intended for different age segments of the minor audience. Furthermore, broadcasting of children’s programmes on private TV channels is far from satisfactory in terms of the airing frequency, and even more in terms of contents and, relevant for this analysis – in gender terms. However, this

does not equally apply to all private TV channels at state level. Thus, TV Alfa had no children's programme in the selected period. TV Telma only had few editions of a single show, which to a certain extent applies to TV Alsat M. Finally, TV Sitel and TV Kanal 5 had increased frequency of children's programmes. Nevertheless, even on private TV channels with increased frequency of shows that can be classified as children's programmes, this programme lacks the genre and functional diversity specific for the Public Broadcasting Service – prevailing part of the programme aired on the private TV channels are shows with *narratives/feature stories* structures, and one exceptionally small part are structures of the talk show type.

Narratives/feature stories on private TV channels

Within the frames of this category, in the selected period, there were broadcasts by TV Sitel (*Grandpa, Tell Us Another Story* and *Macedonian Old Tales* – home production, and *Winx Club, Peppa Pig* and *Garfield* of foreign production) and TV Kanal 5 (*Macedonian tales* and *The Adventures of Itar Pejo (Crafty Peter)* – both of home production).

(1) The programme with the structure of *narrative/feature story* of home production at both TV channels is obviously fully adopting the masculinised patriarchal ethos which uses pseudo-historical semantic markers which leave the impression that shows are filmed versions of old Macedonian tales and legends. However, under the surface of these markers, one can observe that these shows are actually partially or fully new scripts presented as Macedonian folk tales or as elements of the popular folklore related to the events involving Itar Pejo (Crafty Peter). This has deep gender-relevant consequences since by imitating the social set-up of the nineteenth-century *narratives/feature stories* on TV Sitel and TV Kanal 5, the markers of phallogocentric power are internalised, heteronormative portrayals are fixed on the manner of organisation of the family structure, and female bodies and actions are domesticized, while simultaneously positioning male bodies and actions in the public domain, regardless of their class position. This, as presented in the study with the analysis of scales of semantic differentials, is an indicator of the position of dominance of male characters in the action. Such dominance, occasionally in the Macedonian tales on these two TV channels, turns into open physical violence which is unacceptable for a programme watched by children. This tendency becomes incredibly more obvious and clearer with the *narratives/feature* programmes of home production on TV Sitel and TV Kanal 5, if it is known that there are no programmes on these TV channels resembling children's programmes of this specific genre – the entire feature home production programme, as in this type of programme on the Public Broadcasting Service, has a patriarchal, phallogocentric, heteronormative imprint. Such occupation of the public sphere with these types of discourses is a phenomenon requiring discussion and serious reassessment. In addition, in the programmes such as *The Adventures of Itar Pejo (Crafty Peter)* (broadcasted on TV Kanal 5), there is widely distributed misogyny and stigmatising homophobia, such as presented in the discourse analysis herein of the episode *The Inverted Gendarme (Zaptiye)*.

(2) In part of the shows structured as *narratives/feature stories* of foreign production, broadcasted on TV Sitel, there is an obviously high level of sexualisation of female and male characters. *Winx Club* is the typical example of the latter, and this is clearly presented with the visual analysis herein – sexualisation of the female is construed through the selection of producers, female superheroes are modelled according to the normed “expected” physical appearance of the female body – with ideal proportions and lack of imperfections. Furthermore, male characters are masculinized and physically modelled so as to correspond to the imaginary and essentially hard-to-reach physical appearance, as a model which boys are to follow.

Programmes structured as talk shows and hybrid programmes:

In the selected period, such shows were broadcasted on TV Telma (*More or Less We Are Equal – with Ivce Pivce*) and TV Alsat M (*Young Leaders* and *Do You Cook Meow*). The three shows on these TV channels have a relatively low frequency of broadcasts and are conceptually different, and lack the high production quality:

(1) The manner of production of the show *More or Less We Are Equal – with Ivce Pivce* on Telma TV, as well as the lack of other children’s programmes¹¹⁰, indicates that the TV channel has not developed a programme strategy which would, in an appropriate manner, attract, educate, inform, and entertain the young population. Not only is the frequency of shows on this national TV channel insignificant, but the one it has exhibits the lack of care on the quality of content for the children.

(2) In gender terms, the TV channel does not take into account the discourse effects produced by the programme being broadcasted on the its target group population – the theme analysis conducted in this study of the jokes said by male and female participants in the programme, indicates the fact that participants, regardless of gender, internalise matrices of humour specific for adults. The most prominent theme node in this context is the theme *Marriage relations*, in which the dominant and most frequent stereotype in *Marriage relations* is the female *authoritative* and *authoritarian* behaviour and the corresponding construct that marks the male as a nincompoop, naive, dependent on the position of the woman, etc. This construct is contrary to the patriarchal background on which it was produced, and in which, conversely, *the man has the last word*, and the woman is the one who is *naive and dependant*. However, in the structuralist reading of jokes and their *carnivalised* value – “every joke makes *shifts* of the meaning and *breaks* some existing links”. In other words – these jokes, by playing with *stereotypes of the reverse*, in fact, perpetuate a masculine discourse. It is particularly interesting that these jokes have a prominent place among the girls-participants, which means that they internalise the dominant social matrix.

¹¹⁰ With the exception of two feature movies which were broadcasted in the selected period.

(3) Regarding the male participants, a cluster of jokes were detected which play with ethnic stereotypes. “Stingy Vlachs” or “Lazy Montenegrins” – are not topics to be said by children since the effect of such discourses is unpredictable.

(4) Both series broadcasted on TV Alsat M are of low production value, with elementary structure not elaborating deeper themes relevant to the young population. Hence, it is not possible to draw certain more important findings from the analysis related to the gender aspects in these shows. The low frequency of shows intended for the minor audience and their content specifics provide the basis to conclude, for the period for which the analysis was made, that TV Alsat M has also failed to design the programme policy in a serious and appropriate manner as regards the young audience and has failed to secure diversity of the children’s programme – both in terms of the target audience and in terms of programme functions.

(5) In several instances, the participants in the show *Young Leaders* simply pose questions to adult professionals or socially engaged individuals. In the children’s programme, children should have a more active role – on the contrary, in this case they are passivized and placed into a simple script set-up in which the questions are set in advance and children only have to ask them.

Recommendations for private TV channels

(1) Private TV channels, within the frames of the editorial independence while creating the editorial policy, should enable increased frequency of children’s programmes and pay more attention to designing quality contents envisaged for children. For private TV channels, this does not only mean realisation of their part of public interest, but also winning of an unconquered audience segment. Private TV channels have to do this in a manner which shall currently, and in the future, bring new generations of cultivated audience, regardless of the media platforms to which audience and TV channels shall migrate in the future.

(2) When creating their own programme and buying shows of home or foreign producers, private TV channels shall have to take into account that gender roles reflect the contemporary efforts for full equality between genders, both in the public and private domain. They must pay attention to elaborating all gender issues without any discrimination.

(3) Programmes should not produce and reproduce unreal – imaginary portrayals of female and male physical beauty. The consumerism pressure which stimulates the unreachable physical appearance of female and male bodies has adverse and far-reaching consequences on the young population.

(4) Children’s programmes should be free from violence as the method for solving problems in public and private domains. This means that even in cases when violence is constructed as fully unacceptable model of behaviour – it must not be explicit, and even less be presented as physical violence between men and women.

(5) Contents to be broadcasted in children's programmes shall obligatory be adapted in accordance with the developmental specifics of different age groups of the target audience. This recommendation pertains to all development domains – cognitive, socio-emotional, moral, and gender.

(6) Private national TV channels shall strategically work on winning the children's audience with educational, informative, and entertaining content, while working on the mutual cooperation and cooperation with the producers, as well as on the advancement of own knowledge and awareness of the importance of this issue in the private media business and of the possibilities it opens.

Research team

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