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NURSERY SCHOOLS IN HUNGARIAN SOCIETY IN THE 19TH CENTURY

(Theses of PhD dissertation)

by

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I. Objectives and attitude of the dissertation

It can seem even a paradox that this dissertation focuses on that period of the nursery school history, which is considered the most thoroughly investigated period in history of the nursery schools. However, the paradox – which we think apparent – can be resolved relatively easily if we can answer the question if the investigation can provide some new information in addition to the knowledge being available for us so far. The answer is given jointly by the objectives and attitude of the dissertation as well as by the methodical considerations.

The objective and the investigated period have been chosen on the basis of two principal realizations. One is that there are not traditions of researching the social relations of the nursery schools. The social factors of the institutional education before school age have become interesting only recently for the researchers. The other realization is connected to the historiography of the nursery schools where there are some traditions. However the criticism given by Ottó Vág seems rightful¹, namely – while the education-historical literature dealt much with the period when the Hungarian nursery schools were established and with the matters of the Hungarian nursery schools in the reform era – the research is not as successful as the number of the relevant publications shows. There are only few publications where approach with new concepts is applied. Data are not well-checked in many cases; there is no demand to explain the things in the social context and no the development history of the institution is studied in details².

¹ Vág Ottó (1994): Az óvodai nevelés története Magyarországon Magyar Óvodapedagógiai Egyesület, Miskolc, 5.

² Pukánszky Béla (2005): A gyermekről alkotott kép változásai az óvoda történetében *Educatio* 4. sz. 703.

The primary objective of *the research* is to study the social purposes concerning the infants in the kindergartens. It could contribute to it that we see more clearly and correctly than before the situation, role and place in the society of the kindergartens as well as the education-political concepts in the Hungarian society in the 19th century. In harmony with this objective this dissertation uses the social and education political-historical attitude in which the kindergarten is considered one possible institute of the social control. It studies how the social demands and expectations to the kindergartens were changed, developed and manifested in the historical period specified in the title; what tasks were specified by the education policy to the institute and how the policy tried to control these tasks. The other particularity of this dissertation is a critical attitude approaching to the sources found and their contents by which the interpretation range can be extended.

The process, which has come to the idea of legal regulation, as well as the establishment of the law on nursery school is worth of especial attention. Structure of the dissertation is in harmony with this logic. The first part introduces the way from appearance of the nursery schools in Hungary to enacting the law on the nursery schools. The next greater structural part gives an analysis of the content in the law on nursery schools as well as discourse analysis of the debate and discussion on the bill at the Parliament.

II. Main issues of the research

1. How the changes in the Hungarian society in the 19th century influence the institution of the nursery schools; do these changes modify the purposes specified for education at nursery schools?
2. What are the reasons of it that Hungary was the first among the European countries that urged on legal regulation of the education at nursery schools in the 19th century?
3. How are manifested the purposes of the society in the law on nursery schools enacted in 1891: directly or indirectly?
4. What subjects are discussed in the debate at the Parliament? How are formed they during the discourse?
5. Does the analysis of discourse additional knowledge in comparison with analysis of law content?

III. Summary of the new scientific results

1. Explanation of establishment of nursery schools in the concept of modernisation (*polgárosodás*)

There are two explanations, slightly contradictory one to another, concerning the appearance of nursery schools in Hungary in the education-historical literature. One of the explanations states: establishment of the nursery schools was due to the social-economical development in that era as well as to the women's employment since 1828.³ However women's employment was not typical in this period – stated by historians and information sources - because in Hungary, due to the limit of the industrial development - the textile industry, which employed mainly female and child workers in West Europe, was not extended.⁴

By the other explanation the nursery school – at time of its birth – was a prematurely born import institution. By this when Teréz Brunszvik adapted the nursery schools being imported from England to Hungary she established an institute of which the principal conditions were missed.⁵ A critical comment can be made to this statement because it does not give a guideline to the further development of the institution.

This dissertation tries to resolve the contradiction between the above statements and provides a conceptual frame as a possible explanation. Although the Hungarian social-historians have no agreement on these concepts but they can be used to interpret the appearance and increasing number of the nursery schools in different way as before. It is the explanation of the way into the modernisation and gives mainly cultural content in the process from the reform era to the Compromise of 1867. The term “modernisation” (only one word in Hungarian) comes from the neology and is very difficult to translate into other languages. Sometimes it is translated as civilisation and refining, which refers the improvement of education level.⁶ In addition to the meaning of “improving the education level” it had the meaning of citizenship, too.⁷ Later, in the dualism the term obtained an economic meaning, too (procedure into the capitalism).⁸

If the appearing nursery schools and the founders' purposes are put into this conceptual frame of the modernisation we can see the new institutions are not prematurely born establishments but are fitted functionally in the efforts of the reform era for the modernisation. Teréz Brunszvik's purposes - to educate the people, to provide institutional system for this and to extend in the country – are fitted well into the above meaning of the modernisation.

3 Mészáros István (1968): *A magyar nevelés története 1790-1848-ig*. Tankönyvkiadó, Bp. 247-248.; Bereczki - Komlósi - Nagy (1977): *Neveléstörténet*. (Szerk.: Komlósi Sándor) Tankönyvkiadó, Bp.; Mészáros István - Németh András - Pukánszky Béla (2000): *Bevezetés a pedagógia és az iskoláztatás történetébe* Osiris Kiadó, Bp. 342. ; Pukánszky Béla - Németh András (1994): *Neveléstörténet* Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, Bp. 305. ; *A magyar nevelés története I.* Főszerk. (1988): Horváth Márton. Tankönyvkiadó, Bp. 276.

4 *Magyarország története*. V. kötet. Szerk. (1980): Vörös Károly Akadémiai Kiadó, Bp. 573.

5 Vág Ottó (1962): *A magyar óvodai nevelés kialakulása és Brunszvik Teréz*. In.: Brunszvik Teréz pedagógiai munkássága Vág Ottó - Orosz Lajos - Zibolen Endre tanulmányai. Tankönyvkiadó, Bp. 7-10.

6 Gyáni Gábor - Kövér György (1998): *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a reformkortól a második világháborúig* Osiris Kiadó, Bp. 25.

7 Péter László (1989): *Volt-e magyar társadalom a XIX. században? Valóság*, 5. sz. 5-6.

8 Kövér György: *Piacgazdaság-polgárosodás-demokrácia* In: *Magyarország társadalomtörténete I.* (szöveggyűjtemény, szerk.: Kövér György, 1995) Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, Bp. 64.

In this conceptual frame the importance of Teréz Brunszvik and the nursery school-movement having been developed due to her activity lies in understanding that modernisation is a social demand.

2. Implicit purposes and contents in the Law on nursery schools enacted in 1891

Description of the content and structure of the Law XV on nursery schools enacted in 1891 is available to us but the content has not been evaluated systematically yet. Therefore one of the results of this dissertation is to discover the purposes of the law, especially the hidden purposes. To understand the purposes and intentions analysis of the content is the most efficient method. Since we focused on it how the social demands and purposes were manifested in the nursery school institution we studied the purposes specified in the law mainly. The purpose-categories were developed on the basis of texts in the law, specifying the tasks and/or obligations. The text could be encoded with the category-system on the basis of dimension of the implicit and explicit purposes as well as of the manifest and latent contents. After encoding dimensions were explained and defined. Mainly the directly expressed purposes and the associated manifest contents as well as the hidden, latent purposes were studied. The reason why these two dimensions were emphasized is that it is very important which purposes and contents appear in the law in manifest mode and – on the other side – what implicit contents can be discovered in the law. The hidden and latent contents can be revealed by considering the social-historical context only. Manifest contents being associated to the direct purposes provide little information about the true reason of establishing the law on nursery schools; the implicit contents give more. The method of the content analysis made possible to disclose those implicit purposes that show relations over the nursery schools, too.⁹

One of them is the purpose of the national unity and a united society that is included in the law, in various dimensions like anxiety on number of Hungarian people, adoption of Magyar (Hungarian) ways through introducing the Hungarian as a state language, decrease of denominational division, as implicit purpose.

3. Combined application of content analysis and discourse analysis

Searching for solution of validity problems in the content analysis has led us to the analysis of discourse. Since the main uncertainty in the qualitative research is that the aspects of validity and reliability are not treated as seriously as necessary we made efforts to confirm the results of the content analysis with data gained by different method. This consideration resulted in discourse analysis of the debate at the Parliament. From point of view of the research it is considered a possible triangular procedure. The main reason of the discourse analysis is that results of the content analysis can be compared with the arguments given in the debate at the Parliament about the law on nursery schools and with the subjects relating to the disclosed implicit purposes.

Combined application of the methods can be considered novel because both methods work with texts. Therefore, it is very important to show the differences between them. Content analysis focuses on the description of the content manifesting in various contexts namely “what is included in it”; “what we can understand in it” and what direct and implicit information can be disclosed. Therefore, it is a descriptive and static method rather. In discourse analysis construction of the text is emphasized; it is a dynamic method and studies how (in which conditions) the text itself was created and changed. Due to this difference the methods can be used in the research for different purposes and in different way. Their combination seems a good solution because the knowledge of education-political concept in the 19th century concerning the nursery schools can be complemented.

4. Application of discourse analysis in subjects of pedagogy (education-political history)

Data gained in the international and Hungarian background literature show the discourse analysis method is used to study the interactions in the classrooms (mainly in linguistic research). But there are no many experiences in its application in pedagogic research. Regarding the application in educational-political research, there is only one paper written in Hungarian. The method was applied in a political scientific research and then successfully adapted in study of the higher education policy in Rumania between 1990 and 2003.¹⁰ According to our knowledge this dissertation is the first case where discourse analysis is used in an educational policy-historical project. Results coming from “testing” the discourse analysis are not only acquisition of the method and the new information gained by it but the rather the attitude that shall be known by the researcher in order to understand the principles of the method.

Our attempts have showed us the possibilities provided by the interdisciplinary method are worth of intensive using in the pedagogic research in the future and in research of other subjects requiring refined analyses but relevant with the method.

According to our present knowledge discourse analysis can be used efficiently in researching historical and present period with education-political approach (in disclosure of intentions, interests and ideology) and in getting acquainted with the internal world (life) of the school, especially in revealing the “power relationships” (e.g. relationships between teacher and student, leader and staff, teacher and parents). It can also be used in introducing the inequality resulting from various positions (and their manifestation in the communication procedures).

⁹ Podráczky Judit (2000): A társadalmi célok kifejeződése az 1891. évi kisdédvási törvényben *Pedagógusképzés*, 241-258.

¹⁰ Mandel Kinga (2004): A parlamenti naplók elemzése mint a felsőoktatás-kutatás egy lehetséges módszere *Kisebbségkutatás* 3. sz. 467-475.

5. *Systematic disclosure of debate about the law at the Parliament*

There was much less interest in discussion on the bill on nursery schools at the Parliament than in the enacted law. Study of the various papers dealing with this discussion shows the subject is not disclosed in details yet, although many researchers were strongly interested in education-political history of the dualism.¹¹ Therefore, systematic disclosure of the debate can be considered as filling a gap that was carried out by the above specified discourse analysis.

Discussion on the bill at the Parliament was studied as a platform of formation of the education-political decisions therefore when we established the standpoints (guidelines) of the analysis we considered those aspects of the discourse analysis mainly that are provided by the sociological/political approaches.¹² We made efforts that the guidelines are fitted in study of the individual cases because we think each discourse is an individual case. Our analytical considerations provide possibilities to explain the formation of debate-roles, to chart the subjects being brought to light in the debate and to introduce the methods used to confirm/weaken the debating partners' opinions.

Analysis of the debate – in addition that it confirmed the conclusions of the content analysis of the law – turned our attention to less-known and not-emphasized but important relationships and details. In the debate the demographic and health questions as well as denominational division problems are emphasized especially in connection with role-acceptation of the state but establishment of the nation-state is the most-emphasized consideration, which is manifested in debate on the Hungarian language. This is the most determinant factor that also answers the question why the Opposition accepts the role of the political alliance in this debate; why and how the representatives of nationalities become enemy from opponent in the debate and why the issue of spreading of Hungarian language determines the formation of the roles.

6. *Refining the education-political conception in the 19th century concerning the nursery schools*

As a result of this dissertation we can show more clearly than before what intentions directed the legislation attempts before the law was enacted in the century; how the purposes specified for the nursery schools were modified and what efforts made important to establish the law on the nursery schools at the beginning of the last decade of the century.

Appearance of the institution of the nursery schools itself was the result of development of the society. However, it is important what conceptual frame is used to explain the appearance of the new institution because different conceptual frames result in different conclusions. When we studied what was the meaning of modernisation in the reform era we found appearance of the nursery schools in Hungary was neither strange nor prematurely born but fitted well into the efforts for achievement of middle-class status, which were typical in Hungary in the reform era.

The basic problem and the main aim in the period from reform era to turn of century are to organise the uniform society and to create the national unity. Although the principal problem does not change however the ideas and means, which are used to treat the problems, are modified in this period as an effect of the social processes. These changes can be traced in specifying the purposes of the nursery schools, too. Teréz Brunszvik and the active supporters of the nursery schools believed the purpose of the nursery schools in the reform era was spreading the education as well as promoting the rise of the social groups below the middle class. This time the concept of legal regulation of the nursery schools came up together with concept of the agitprop work. It was in 1843 first when Bill on agitprop work was submitted and in 1848 second time when the closing paragraph in the bill on the basic education was completed with a ministerial authorisation for legal regulation of the nursery schools.

The Compromise of 1867 provided a new basis and possibility for development of the society that was exemplary both in its efforts and products. It seemed the time had come to regulate the affair of the nursery schools. However, the great proposal of József Eötvös to regulate the public education, which wanted to put the nursery schools into category of public educational institutes, was not supported properly. Instead of it a demand was established, namely the nursery schools should be regulated by a separate law. Eötvös prepared the Bill on the nursery schools but due to his death this Bill was removed from the agenda. It is important that in this period – as declared in concept of Eötvös – the nursery schools were considered institutes, which completed social functions and prepared the children for the school.

These aims were modified by the time when the law was enacted in such a way that the baby-sitting (taking care of children) function became the dominant and the mental – intellectual development was pushed into the background. Strengthening the baby-sitting function is connected with those social processes, which can be observed from the 1880's. They were more and more urgent tasks for the government. There was room for uneasiness at demographic statistics and strengthening the anti-foreign feelings; the nationalities wanted to get right to self-determination. In these conditions the most important question was the national unity and survival of the nation. Content analysis showed the establishment of the law on the nursery schools in 1891 was motivated mainly by the above-mentioned problems.

11 Felkai László (1983): Neveléstörténeti dolgozatok a dualizmus korából Bp. Tankönyvkiadó, 71-81.; Mann Miklós (1987): Oktatáspolitikai koncepciók a dualizmus korából Bp. Tankönyvkiadó, 84-88.

12 Donati, Paolo R. (1992): Political Discourse Analysis In: Diani-Eyerman eds.: Studying Collective Action Sage Modern Politics Series Volume 30. London; Potter, Jonathan (1997): Discourse Analysis as a Way of Analysing Naturally Occurring Talk In: Silverman, David ed.: Qualitative Research. Theory, Method and Practice. Sage Publications, London Szabó Márton: Politikatudomány és diskurzus http://www.iti.mta.hu/Gyula/TANULMANYOK/Szabo_M.pdf 2006. 06. 22.

Szabó Márton: A diszkurzív politikatudomány alapjai www.hik.hu/tankonyvtar/site/books/b170/ch09s02.html 2006. 08. 10.

Szabó Márton (2004): Szimpozion a politikai diskurzuselemzésről Politikatudományi Szemle 4. sz. 135-137; Csigó Péter: A gazdasági stabilizációs diskurzus – a konszolidációs diskurzus <http://www.mtapti.hu/mszt/19983/csigo.htm> 2006. 07. 11.

Discourse analysis of debate at the Parliament confirmed it one side and provided additional informational on the other side. The hidden contents of the debate at the Parliament being disclosed in the content analysis can be registered as the determinant subjects of the discourse: matters concerning demography, denominations and the Hungarian language were the most important subjects in the debate and became stressed in those contexts in which they appeared as the results of the content analysis.

In the debate the persons submitting the Bill and others emphasized that the Bill considered very special Hungarian conditions. Analysis of the discussions showed the “specific conditions” were demographic problems, in which the main cause was the high child mortality as stated by the government. In this respect, the main expectations of the law were “saving the children for the homeland” and decreasing the child mortality. These long-term purposes are supported by the obligatory education at nursery schools and the prescriptions for taking care of children (baby-sitting). The perspective purpose in this respect is to increase the Hungarian population.

“Typical Hungarian feature” has another meaning on the other hand, namely it is the composition of the Hungarian society: our country was one of the most heterogeneous countries in Europe in respect of language, nationalities and denominations. This feature made difficult to establish the nation-state in Hungary, in which the basis of the national community is the common language- as stated in the Herder concept a concept orienting the European thinking. It caused much less problems in the countries of West and North Europe that are mainly uniform in respect of languages and are examples to Hungary. In Hungary nation-state conception based on one language could be realised only in long term and in such a way that the non-Hungarian nationalities adopted of Magyar (Hungarian) ways¹³. To promote and accelerate this process there were more and more actions carried out by the government starting in the 1870's that aimed at widening the use of Hungarian language as state language. This effort can be found in the legal regulation of the nursery schools, too, which can be considered a station of the policy for adaptation of Magyar (Hungarian) ways. It is confirmed by the results of our research. So the institutional frame of the education at the nursery schools was recognised as a good mean of the adaptation of Magyar (Hungarian) ways. Problems of establishment of nation state, resulting from these Hungarian features, can give answer why Hungary urged first in Europe the legal regulation of nursery schools.

Thus the education political concept in the 19th century, concerning the nursery schools, can be placed into a wide relation of the efforts for development of the Hungarian society and creating the national unity.

Publications in subject of the dissertation

Essays

1. *A társadalmi célok kifejeződése az 1891. évi kisdédóvási törvényben.* In.: Pedagógusképzés 2000. 241-258.
2. *Az óvoda megjelenésének indítékai Magyarországon* In.: Az értékek akarása. A Kaposvári Erkölcsefilozófiai és – Nevelési Konferencia előadásai. KECSVMPFK 2000. 376-385.
3. *Az óvodával szembeni társadalmi igények, elvárások alakulása Magyarországon a 19. században* Pedagógia szakosok 3. konferenciája, Pécs, 2000. márc. 25. In.: Pedagógiai Műhely (szerk.: Boreczky Ágnes) PTE Tanárképző Intézet Ped. Tanszék 2001. 93-98.
4. *Kirekesztés és befogadás az óvodai nevelés törvényi szabályozásában* Erkölcse-, Művészetfilozófiai és Nevelési Konferencia, Kaposvár, 2001. aug. 29-31. In.: Tünekény moralitás = Die flüchtige Moralität (szerk.: Czirják J. et. al.) Kaposvár: KECSVMPFK 2002. 409-421. (Merczel Sándornéval közösen)
5. *Az óvodai nevelés törvényi szabályozása a 19-20. században.* In.: Az oktatási rendszer jogi szabályozása Magyarországon a 19-20. században. Tudományos Konferencia, Tatabánya, 2002. okt. 11. Tatabányai Múzeum Tudományos Füzetek 7. Tatabánya, 2003. 69-83.

¹³ Karády Viktor (1990): Egyenlőtlén elmagyarosodás, avagy hogyan vált Magyarország magyar nyelvű országgá? Századvég 2. sz. 9-10.

Presentations at Conferences

➤ *Az óvoda intézményének társadalmi megítélése a 19. században a törvényi szabályozás tükrében* A Tudomány Napja alkalmából szervezett konferencia, BTF Budapest, 1999. nov. 5.

➤ *Az óvodai nevelés törvényi szabályozásának kísérletei Magyarországon a 19. században* Tudományos és Művészeti Napok, Kaposvár, 2002. nov. 4.

➤ *Diskurzuselemzés a pedagógiai kutatásban.* Gyermek-nevelés-pedagógusképzés Tudományos felolvasóülés ELTE TÓFK 2006. nov. 17.

➤ *Kleinkinderpflege- und Kinderschutzbewegung in Ungarn in der k.u.k. Monarchie.* 2007. március 31. Pädagogische und kulturelle Strömungen in der k.u.k. Monarchie. Internationales Symposium, 29-31. März 2007, Szombathely