HISTORY OF THE CHILDHOOD: THE REFLECTION OF THE TEACHER'S IMAGE IN DOLLS

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Abstract. *The toys are an indispensible part of the childhood. They influence the formation of the child's conceptions because through them the child perceives and learns about the world. Dolls are toys that have not lost their topicality since the origins of the humankind. As the visual information dominates it is important what information is expressed by dolls-teachers because children will arrive at school having already some notions about the teacher. This can influence children's relations with the teacher and the school. The aim of the article is to analyze the image of dolls – teachers. The used methods are the analysis of literature and material/visual sources. Pictures of 207 teachers- dolls were analyzed. The obtained results reveal what representations these toys can create in children. The started study marks new trends in the research of the teacher's image and toys.*
Key words: *toys, teachers- dolls, representations, the outer appearance.*

Introduction

A toy is a product of culture which is formed by values, ideas, technologies, media, fashion, etc. Its appearance for the first time or in a new image can be facilitated not only by the development of the culture and technologies but also seasons and different events. A toy is like a "bridge" of socialization between children and the world. A toy can help to teach the child about the differences among people, culture, values, opinions, thoughts and ideas in the society. Toys are a diminished reproduction of human objects. Toys are socialized, created by an adult or technologies and depict the functions of the adult world and prepare the child for accepting these functions (Dinka, 2012). New, modern toys that are topical only for a short period of time enter the post-modern world; the world changes and toys change as well; however, there are toys that last.

One of such groups of toys that has existed already since the origins of the humankind is making dolls and using them in games that over time have been improved and reaching huge scopes bear the idea about important and popular images for the mankind that people want to use also in their everyday life – in developing and educating their children. Studying the phenomenon of the teacher's image it is surprising that this is one of the professions that is popularized in the most diverse areas, including toys, preserving the totality of elements that creates unequivocal associations about the teacher's profession.

Toys influence the formation of the child's conceptions because through them the child perceives and learns about the world. It is essential to evaluate what information toys carry in themselves therefore the aim of the article is to analyze the image of dolls – teachers. The used methods are the analysis of literature and visual sources.

Research methodology

Regardless the type, style or material of the doll it together with different objects, elements and their combinations creates its own image and through it- a story that often also tells about the profession, status in the society, habits or hobbies. Surprising popularity among the most popular images of dolls – a princess, a bride, a ballerina, a mermaid, a baby, etc., is taken by the "doll-teacher" that raises not only a question "what actually is the image of the teacher?" but also "what elements create the associations about the teacher's profession?" and "what representations about the teacher do these dolls-teachers carry?"

In order to find out the look of the latest and most popular dolls-teachers that have not lost their topicality (e.g., the collectioners' samples) the research basis was pictures that were selected through different browsing programs using the key words *doll, teacherdoll, puppetteacher, marionette*, as well as purposefully looking through the homepages of the most common toy shops (see Sources 1-11). The research used 207 pictures regardless their place of origin or aim (advertisement pictures, photos from everyday life scenes, handicraft examples, etc.). The research is based on the analysis of visual sources.

The analysis of the image of dolls-teachers uses the research methodology of the teacher's visual image of A. Novoa *(Nóvoa A.)* (2000) and M. Vick *(Vick M.)* (2000) as well as the ideas expressed by S. Weber *(Weber S.)* (1995) and C. Mitchell *(Mitchell C.)* (1995) about understanding the teacher's visual image. Usually the analysis of the teacher's visual image takes into consideration such aspects as the gender, age, voice, mimicry, body language, gestures, place in the classroom, manners, clothing, accessories, hair-do. As the subject of research is dolls, the study used adapted criteria: gender, clothing, footwear, accessories, hair, face (mimicry, make-up), body, school subject.

 The abovementioned aspects, their frequency, individual peculiarities depending on what can be seen in the picture (the accessible) - the part of the doll, the doll in full length, the doll-teacher among the other professions of the same series, a doll-teacher in a set with different "tools of the teacher", together with pupils or in the advertisement pictures where the particular doll is illustrated in some action were analyzed in the pictures. Due to the necessity in some questions of the analysis the dolls of the "Barbie" company were singled out (but not excluded) which because of their huge proportion and mutual similarity strongly influence the common results; however, it should be taken into account that the dolls of this company are the most widely spread and the ones that popularize the image therefore in order to get a full picture "Barbies" of one series that are different but not similar (e.g., they differ only as to the skin colour, hair, etc.) also belong to the sample group.

The most characteristic features of teachers - dolls

Gender

Almost all dolls-teachers are represented as (97% – people, 3% – animal image), sometimes their age is hard to tell, 85% dolls-teachers are identified as female representatives and only 12% – male. Thus also the dolls show the feminization of the teachers' profession. Dolls of indefinable gender – without features that could prove belonging to one of the genders constitute only 3%; it is mainly connected with conscious generalization for marketing purposes (woodoo dolls, present preparations).

The gender is mainly explicitly definable also for dolls where the teacher is presented as an animal for which the elements describing the gender seem to be attached artificially without any good reason. (Fig.1)

Figure 1 **Teacher-doll as an animal with accessories that is gender-indicative**
(http://shop.mattel.com)

The teacher as the doll-animal is represented only in the form of four animals. The most frequently mentioned animals are: a mouse (38%), a bear (37%) and less frequently – a badger (13%) and a hare (12%).

Clothing

Clothing if Barbies are excluded from the analysis is mostly outdated. Definitely, the most popular piece of clothing is a dress. Skirts in combination with a shirt or a blouse are the second popular clothing. Usually the skirt and dress is knee- long; however, Barbies often have shorter dresses.

The most frequent combination for male teachers is the trousers and a sweater or a cardigan and a shirt (not the jacket).

However, for female teachers trousers are one of the less frequent pieces of clothing; if they still wear them they are more like leggings.

The stereotypical costume that is seen in everyday wear can also be mentioned as one of the less frequent pieces of clothing.

But the most surprising clothing that is listed as the sixth most popular is the apron. It is worn by female teachers of different school subjects without any grounded reason (Fig. 3).

Analyzing the pattern of the dolls' clothing it was stated that one-colour clothing dominates significantly; the cloth of different patterns are less used. As regards patterned clothing there are relatively many squared and flowery clothes. The neutral "matter-of-fact" colours – white and black are often used. The least frequent is the pattern of the stars, still though it is hardly ever found in the reality for the dolls it is the tenth most popular pattern of clothing and it can be found in the texture of clothes worn by the art teachers. The symbol of a red apple in the pattern or as a tab which in America is a traditional gesture of gratitude for teachers, for example, if the pupil "is misbehaved" for something (connected with the theme of the fruit of sin) then an apple is brought to the teacher (Fig. 2, Fig. 3).

Figure 2 **Motive of apple in clothes**
 (http://www.epinions.com)

Figure 3 **The teacher in apron**
 (http://www.pinterest.com**)**

Sometimes unusual drawings, like, "ABC" (Fig.4) and "123" together with other, e.g. pictures of the ruler, appear in the teachers' clothing. It is possible that they are used to indicate explicitly the belonging of the dolls to the teacher's profession.

Figure 4 **Letters in the cloth pattern** (http://www.ebay.com)

Footwear

Footwear, though not all dolls have it, still is a very important element that influences the perception of the image. They are the most diverse as regards the colour and design (therefore they cannot be analyzed effectively) but the type of shoes whether they are high-heeled, low-heeled or shoes on platform really influence the associations about the teacher's image.

Although Barbies traditionally have high-heeled shoes for dolls-teachers the most popular shoes are low-heeled or flat shoes. Less frequently (more than 50%) they wear traditional shoes on heel. There are also boots and shoes on platform that mainly is connected with preschool and elementary school teachers-dolls though in reality nowadays it is less typical.

Hair

The study analyzes the hair of the dolls-teachers in greater detail because usually hair is especially emphasized. The most popular colour of the hair of teachers-dolls is markedly fair- blond hair is in 51% which is the majority because the other half is split among five different colours. The next most popular is the darkest – black hair – 19%. Dark brown, grey and red hair is 12%, 9% and 8% respectively in dolls but the brown is only in 1% which in comparison with the grey or red tone is found surprisingly rarely.

Differing from the teachers-dolls whose hair has six different colours including different nuances the male teachers-dolls have only four colours of hair. The most frequent are grey (56%) and brown which for female dolls was the least frequent (1%), for male teachers-dolls it is 22%, which is the second most popular. The third place is taken by extreme opposite colours – the blond and black hair. The hair-do for female teachers-dolls most frequently is without any special arrangement- simply long, straight hair. It should be mentioned that the teacher of cooking has straight loose hair even if she wears the cook's cap and an apron.

However, also the hair done in a pony-tail is also very popular and it is surprising that "the pony-tail" in most cases is comparatively high that in reality is less common for adult women and is more typical for pupils than female teachers. The stereotypical teacher's hairdo – the knot takes only the third most popular position; besides surprisingly that the knot in an exaggerated size (much greater than it would be naturally done) can be found even more often than the knot of a regular size. (Fig. 5)

Figure 5 **Hair do - „knot" (http://collectdolls.about.com)**

It should be mentioned that we found also hairdo that is even less characteristic of this profession – two plaits and two pig-tails – each on the opposite sides of the head.

Studying the structure of hair three types were easily singled out – straight, curly and frizzly hair – small permanent wave curls. As regards female hair structure then the dominant is straight hair – 77%, curly and frizzly hair is similarly frequently spread - 13% and 10%.

Dolls – teachers' hair can be analyzed also according to its quantity/density because in 42% of male teachers-dolls the hair does not cover the whole head.

In 58% of male dolls-teachers the head is covered with very short hair, 25% male dolls-teacher have receding hair and for 17% have very receding hair (they are more bald – Fig.6).

Figure 6 **Very receding hair** (http://secretlyplayfulpuppets.com)

Male dolls-teachers have a conspicuous facial hair- those having a moustache and beard are numerously more than those without facial hair. It is interesting that most male dolls –teachers have a moustache. Usually the moustache is brown or grizzled, not very long and without special form. Also the beard is most cases can be described as short.

Face

The face was analyzed from the point of view of visual aspects – mimicry and the use of make-up. Due to the specifics of the doll design it is not possible to apply many variations in the mimicry. The facial expression is mainly defined by the expression of the lips – whether they form a smile, pressed together creating a serious expression (the corners are neither pointed upwards nor downwards) or slanted downwards. Thus there are gradations- the smile is either inexpressive or pronounced. All in all teachers predominantly have a smiling face which largely is due to the influence of the Barbie's "typical" smile. Often a slight smile decorates the face of the female dolls-teachers but it is not so for the male dolls-teachers.

The male dolls-teachers often have lips tightly pressed together (sometimes in combination with the look from the above not looking straight as we are used to) which for the dolls is a rare feature. Even some Barbie-type dolls-teachers fail to have the classical smile and their lips are pressed together.

Although the lips are shown in a serious expression (the corners make a straight line) surprisingly often it is pleasant to notice that the negative expressions of the lips with the corners going down are very few. However, such an expression is more often found in the male dolls than in the female dolls-teachers.

The face was also analyzed as to the quality of the make-up. The authors isolated a natural look when the make-up was not used at all (64%); some make-up, e.g., only eye-shadows or the lip-stick was worn by 19% of dolls and showy make-up by 17%. It is interesting that if the dolls have eye-shadows they usually are blue.

Figure 7 **Dool- teacher in comparison with the doll- veterinarian**
(http://www.fashion-doll-guide.com, www.globalmagazine.com.br)

Body
The body of the dolls-teachers was analyzed according to the skin colour and the body structure. The most frequent was the fair skin– 94% of dolls. Only 4% of dolls had dark skin and 2% had darkish/swarthy skin.

Although the "Bratz" and „Monsterhigh" dolls (with strikingly deformed proportions) have come into fashion similarly also the fashionable unnatural slimness is not characteristic to the female dolls – teachers if we do not count Barbies which though could be just called slim.

The unusual proportion of the body depending on the type of the dolls is quite frequent, especially for the dolls that have a decorative function (not as a toy) and have practical application, e.g., „figer dolls" or a doll- vessel. Almost all dolls that are designed after the flourishing of the Barbies have unnatural proportions – heads, eyes and lips are bigger, the nose and body is smaller, and strikingly long legs.

Accessories
Another essential element that influences the teacher's image is accessories. They include both different decorative and functional things, also jewelry. Taking into account the common design of the Barbie type dolls, they are specified separately in this parameter.

The dolls-teachers wear bracelets very seldom.

The hair hoop is more frequently used; however, it is more characteristic only to the Barbie type dolls. Shawls and neckerchiefs are the most characterist accessories for the teachers. They are bright, colourful, and fashionable and perform a seemingly warming function as the plaid; usually they are in natural tones of the earth.

Both male and female dolls-teachers (including Barbies) wear ties. This is the second most popular accessory for the female dolls-teachers. Beads are approximately as popular as the tie though not for Barbies.

Ear-rings are even a more popular element which is unusual because they are a very complicated detail in the production of dolls.

Hats are found with the dolls of both genders and are little connected with the profession or the surrounding conditions.

A belt in comparison with other professions/doll types is a frequent accessory for the dolls-teachers.

The second popular accessory – the ribbon/butterfly is another surprise. The dolls have it in the hair, attached to the clothes, as the substitute of the tie, especially frequently if other accessories are not used. Most often it is red. Proportionally it is very popular both with the female (also Barbies) and the male dolls-teachers.

However, the most popular accessory for both the female and male dolls-teachers unequivocally is glasses. (Fig.8) Glasses are present in many sets of dolls and even Barbie teachers though usually the dolls have neither the form of the face nor ears to be able to wear glasses. That could be one of the sources of the stereotype that all teachers wear glasses (Kalke, 2012).

Figure 8 **Teacher-doll wearing glasses** (http://www.etsy.com)

School subjects

The study of the school subjects popularized by the dolls reveals that actually teachers do not differ from each other depending on their school subject (often one and the same cliché) but the qualifications are easy to identify according to the picture/name on the packaging or the things that make up the set and come together with the doll. Often these are textbooks of the school subjects, also other things, including small globes, palette, retorts, etc.

The most popular subject is mathematics. Almost equally frequently these are teachers of geography and art.

Another feature to be mentioned is that different sets of dolls – art teachers include brushes, palette, an easel and a cat. Usually the cat is while but there is no evident reason why it is included in the set.

It is interesting that the authors of the study did not find any doll- teacher of informatics though this is the age of computers. However, there were teachers of less traditional subjects: dino, yoga, ballet and cooking. Dolls-teachers almost never are depicted as the teachers of secondary or primary school but mainly together with very young children. (Fig.9)

Figure 9 **Teacher- doll with pupils** (http://icanbe.barbie.com)

Conclusions

1. Toys are one of the most essential parts of the childhood. They influence the child's mental and physical development and help to get acquainted with the world. New toys enter the modern world and they reflect the topicalities, fashion and values of the particular time. The world changes and toys change as well; however, there are toys that last. One of such groups of toys that have existed already since the origins of the humankind is making dolls and using them in games.

2. Toys influence the formation of the child's conceptions because through them the child perceives and learns about the world. As the visual information dominates it is important what information is expressed by dolls-teachers because children will arrive at school having already some notions about the teacher. This can influence children's relations with the teacher and the school.

3. Summarizing and analyzing the pictures of 207 dolls-teachers it is possible to conclude that the teacher mainly is a woman with straight blond hair; she uses make-up, smiles and usually wears a dress which is mono-colour, low-heeled shoes, glasses and teaches mathematics, geography or art.

4. A teacher like, e.g., a police man or doctor keeps the symbols that help to recognize the profession. Glasses, an apple, a book in hands and often old-fashioned clothes usually are the main symbols of recognition in dolls-teachers.

5. On the whole dolls-teachers leave the matter-of-fact or a motherly (grandmother's) impression. Dolls confirm once more the feminization process of the profession which is strengthened by dolls-animals that almost

always have some gender specific objects – make-up, a scarf, a ribbon, a dress, etc.

6. The teacher's image in dolls is influenced both by the key demands for the dolls (attractive, Barbie-type- smiling, slim, etc.) and largely also by what is characteristic and historically attributed to the image of the teacher's profession. It has developed common symbols in the course of time that indirectly are connected with the reality, philosophy, opinions or fashion of a particular period of time.

7. The teacher's image in dolls could be potentially very close to the real and ideal taking into consideration the fact that dolls are often designed also on the similarity with a real teacher, imitating the person (finger dolls, marionettes, gift dolls) and that in most cases dolls are commercial in their character therefore it is very important to depict this popular image as a maximum characteristic (typical for the profession) and attractive (idealizing it).

8. The started study marks a new trend in the research of the teacher's image and toys. The study still poses questions and opens different possibilities of interpretation.

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