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The Academic Reception of Austrian, German and Swiss Reform Pedagogy Representatives in Hungarian Educational Science in the Interwar Period.

S

Quantitative Content Analysis of the Magyar Paedagogia (1918–1939)¹

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Abstract By remarkably dissenting from the contemporary mainstream educational thinking, reform pedagogy played a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape of Europe and North America. This influence was also reflected in the professional periodicals of these geographical areas. Focusing on the Central European macroregion, my paper aims at examining the references to the different representatives of three (at least partly German-speaking) countries' reform pedagogy within the pages of the prominent

Hungarian educational journal, Magyar Pedagógia (Hungarian Pedagogy). The study applied computer-assisted deductive content analysis in order to identify the key figures of reform pedagogy in the text of the journal. The results indicate a notable increase in the number of the mentions subsequent to the Trianon Treaty. These reform pedagogy representatives frequently co-occurred in the same writings, with the work school (*Arbeitsschule*) being highlighted as a key nexus where their ideas converged.

Keywords reform pedagogy, Central Europe, educational discourse, content analysis, network analysis

1 The research was supported by the Research Library for the History of Education at DIPF (BBF) – Scholarship Programme (2017).

Introduction

Though with remarkable dissimilarities among the different geographical areas in this respect, education and schooling can be regarded as an everlasting place of reforms and innovations (Cuban, 1990; Dietrich & Tenorth, 2003; Grunder, 2015; Schiefelbein & McGinn, 2017). These reform endeavors are certainly accompanied by narrower or broader discourses, whose diffusion (cf. Mayer, 2014; Rogers, 2003; Roldán Vera, 2005; Warford, 2017) also can be viewed as a recurring phenomenon. In the last third of the 19th century, a particular realm of these educational reform discourses was the life reform movement, which paved the way for various branches of reform pedagogy at the turn of the 20th century. While numerous studies dealt with the question of reform pedagogy in recent decades (Depaepe, 1993; Németh, 2005; Németh, Stöckl & Vincze, 2017; Oelkers, 2006; Skiera, 2006; for further literature see the summary of Carstensen & Schmid, 2016), the differences in definition, periodization and the (sub)sets of the recognised actors cause several difficulties in empirical approach (cf. Mészáros, Németh & Pukánszky, 2005; Grunder, 2015; Vincze, 2018).

The primary aim of this paper² is to investigate the academic reception of the reform pedagogy conceptions originating from the “core countries” of Central Europe’s German-speaking area (namely Austria, Germany and Switzerland) in Hungary between the two world wars. With specific regard to Germany, Henriksen & Nørgaard (1993) underscore the pivotal contribution of Theodor Wilhelm to the critical approach to reform pedagogy. In this region, reform pedagogy is essentially linked to prevailing educational policies, representing the product

2 I would like to say thank you to the *Bibliothek für Bildungsgeschichtliche Forschung* for selecting me as the recipient of a one-month long international scholarship; I am particularly grateful for the support given by the *employees of the library*. I wish to acknowledge the ideas and remarks provided by the *participants of the research colloquium* at the Humboldt University. I would like to thank my colleagues in the *Research Group for Historical, Theoretical and Comparative Education (Eötvös Loránd University – Faculty of Education and Psychology – Institute of Education)*. The recommendations given by *András Németh* and *Péter Tibor Nagy* and has been a great help in finalising this paper.

of the particular geographic context and the interwar period. Regarding the temporal scope, it is essential to emphasize that although the history of Western European and North American reform pedagogy can be divided into three main periods³ (Mészáros, Németh & Pukánszky, 2005), due to the significantly differing (educational) development of Hungary after the end of World War II, solely the first two phases' reception can be examined in this particular country.

Although the representatives of the three examined countries' reform pedagogy have already appeared from the turn of the 20th century, the chosen temporal range (1918–1939) enables the examination of the later acting individuals. However, concerning the reception of reform concepts, it is worth noting that the interwar period was an ambivalent developmental phase in both Central Europe and Hungary. Although Austria, Germany and Switzerland had come into focus during the education-related political debates (cf. Garai, 2019; Kotásek, 1996; Nagy, 1997; Szabó, 2017), due to the dominance of the conservative ideology in interwar Hungary, the reform pedagogy appeared fragmentarily in the educational policy discourses.⁴ Instead of examining the political arena, this paper directs its attention towards a more open domain, the written communication of educational science; more specifically, this study concentrates on the examination of a professional

3 The first phase started in the last decades of the 19th century, and ended with World War I. The second period lasted from the 1920s to World War II, while the third developmental phase dates from 1945.

4 The latter perspective was presented in December 2018 in a research colloquium at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (*The Diffusion of Educational Discourses in Central Europe: The Impacts of German and Austrian reform Dialogues on Hungarian Educational Policy in the First Half of the 20th Century*). The current approach was demonstrated in December 2019 at the *Visszhangzó századok* (Echoing Centuries) conference, with a broader temporal scope; the title of the presentation was *A reformpedagógia német, osztrák és svájci képviselői a Magyar Paedagogia című folyóiratban (1922–1942)* (The representatives of German, Austrian and Swiss Reform Pedagogy in the Magyar Paedagogia [1922–1942]). Other possibilities of network-based discourse analysis were introduced in my former methodological paper (Szabó, 2017).

journal titled “Magyar Paedagogia” (Hungarian Pedagogy).⁵ Analyzing the references to reform pedagogy representatives makes it possible create a map illustrating the diffusion of reform concepts.

Based on the problem statement outlined above, three research questions have been formulated:

1. Which representatives of Austrian, German and Swiss reform pedagogy can be identified in the periodical?
2. How frequently do they occur in the different volumes and subperiods of the chosen temporal scope?
3. What instances of concurrent appearances among the identified individuals can be observed in distinct articles?

Methods

As mentioned previously, the primary source of the research was the *Magyar Paedagogia*, one of the major national periodicals in the period (Gécsi, 2007; Mészáros, 1992). The digitalised volumes of the journal are accessible through the University of Szeged’s ‘SZTE Miscellanea’ repository, where optical character recognition (OCR) technology enables full-text searching. The whole set of the volumes under examination comprises a total of 5432 physical pages.

Based on the above-mentioned subperiods, a tripartite catalogue has been developed, encompassing Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The list incorporate names from different summaries, textbooks and other theoretical and historical works on education (Dietrich & Tenorth,

5 Also worth mentioning, that in this period there existed a strong relationship between educational policy and the academic educational science. This connection was evident in the participation of the university professors in the preparation of education-related regulations: Count Kuno von Klebelsberg, the minister of religion and public education from 1922 to 1931, named three university professors (Ákos Pauler, Ernő Fináczy, and Gyula Kornis) as his collaborators during the development of the new secondary school law (cf. Szabó, 2017). The latter one, Kornis had a leading role in (education) policy too: among others, he was a deputy, head of the parliament (in the lower house) and secretary of state. He and the other mentioned scholars often published in the examined periodical, or even participated in the editorial process (namely Pauler and Kornis).

2003; Grunder, 2015; Mészáros, Németh & Pukánszky, 2005; Németh, 2004; Scheipl & Seel, 1987). The catalogue contains the main representatives of reform pedagogy from these countries. Nevertheless, it is notable that, apart from two exceptions – Rudolf Steiner from Austria and Adolphe Ferrière from Switzerland – the remaining figures are of German origin. This distribution can be attributed to the national affiliation of the source works' mentioned individuals (for the possible reasons and consequence, see Hacoen, 2000). It is important to emphasize that Ferrière was born in Geneva, and Mészáros, Németh & Pukánszky (2005) also introduce him in the chapter about the francophone countries. This list was extended by one more person, Ellen Key, as she can be identified as the “origo” of reform pedagogy (Grunder, 2015). Despite her Swedish origins, Key's main work, the *Barnets århundrade* (The Century of the Child) gained early popularity in the German-speaking area, facilitated by its relatively quick translation to this language in 1903. To observe the development from the starting point and to examine the relationships and references to her, she has been incorporated into the catalogue.

Using this list, I performed a deductive, *a priori* code-based, semi-automatic content analysis on volumes of the periodical between 1918 and 1939. In the subsequent chapter, following the categorisation of Kuckartz (2014), the units of analysis were the articles, while the coding and the context units were the different expressions. The basis of the sign-vehicle analysis (Friese, 2012; Janis, 1965; Krippendorff, 2018) was the family names of the actors with unlimited suffixes, in a not case-sensitive way, with all possible (even grammatically incorrect) hyphenations.⁶ Since the search was semi-automatic, every finding needed confirmation, which is performed by the author. During this phase, the contextual units of analysis were the relevant articles. During this confirmation process, three main types of codes were assigned manually to the different quotations: the result of the

6 This is necessary due to the agglutinative nature of the Hungarian language.

confirmation, document type and the unique identifier (UID) of the writing.⁷ The related decision tree is illustrated in Figure 1.

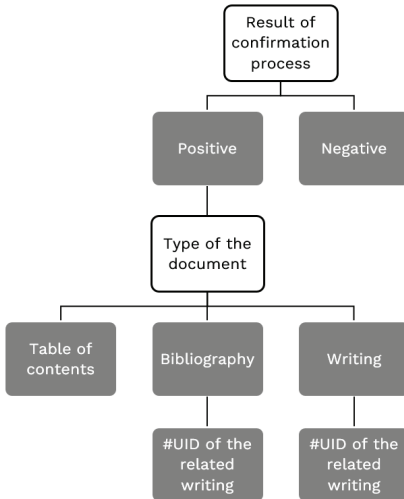


Figure 1. The top-down decision tree of the manual coding process. Questions are marked with white, the answers (labels) are represented in grey.

In addition to the above-mentioned ways of content analysis, I conducted historical network analysis (Barabási, 2016; Brughmans, Coliar, & Coward, 2016a; Düring et al., 2009; Grunder, Hoffmann-Ocon & Metz, 2013; Szabó, 2016) in order to reveal the features of the related discourse. Instead of the broader interpretation of historical networks, this study focuses on the more formalized approach (the possible differences are outlined by Knappett, 2016), including centrality measures, as one of the most commonly applied methods in the field of history, which is well-suited for examining impact (Brughmans, Coliar, & Coward, 2016b). The analysis and data visualisation have been executed by the 8.4.24.0 version of the ATLAS.ti software and the yEd Graph Editor (version number: 3.19.1.1).

7 The UID is essential because the splitting of the volumes into separate writings cannot be automated trustworthily.

Results

Research Question #1

To answer the first research question – regarding the presence of the representatives of reform pedagogy – it is unavoidable to make a distinction between positive (real) and negative (pseudo-) references. Utilizing the method outlined earlier, 26 individuals were subjected to examination. Consequently, 656 mentions have been identified in the full text of the papers, a figure that was subsequently reduced to 327 after eliminating false detections. The distribution of positive and negative results is depicted in Figure 2.

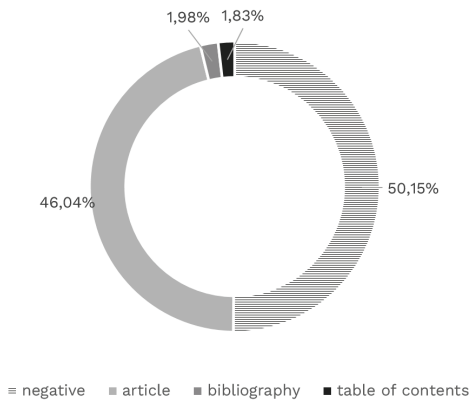


Figure 2. The distribution of the confirmation process' result and the document types. Positive results and its subcategories are marked with gray/black, the negative results are indicated with horizontal lines.

As can be seen in the illustration, a large proportion of the mentions (comprising more than half) cannot be confirmed. The majority of the positive detections were writings (e.g. articles, reviews, reports), but the representatives of reform pedagogy were also identified in bibliographies and table of contents.⁸ The detailed results of the search process can be seen below (Table 1).

8 In this paper, bibliography can be described as list of scientific or other professional works presented separately without any annotation. A table of contents typically includes the representatives when their names appear in the title of a publication or they authored an article for the journal.

Name	Nationality	Automatic detection	Confirmed	Number of related writings
FERRIÈRE, Adolphe*	Swiss	94	94	29
GAUDIG, Hugo	German	13	13	10
GÖTZE, Carl	German	1	0	0
HILDEBRAND, Rudolf	German	62	0	0
JENSEN, Adolf	German	0	0	0
KARSEN, Fritz	German	5	5	4
KAWERAU, Siegfried	German	8	8	4
KERSCHENSTEINER, Georg	German	91	91	46
KEY, Ellen	Sweden	19	5	5
LAMSZUS, Wilhelm	German	0	0	0
LANGBEHN, Julius	German	1	1	1
LEVINSTEIN, Siegfried	German	4	1	1
LICHTWARK, Alfréd	German	0	0	0
LIETZ, Hermann	German	20	10	6
MOLT, Emil	German	66	0	0
OESTREICH, Paul	German	18	17	4
ORFF, Carl	German	12	0	0
OTTO, Berthold	German	26	0	0
PETERSEN, Peter	German	58	58	18
REICHWEIN, Adolf	German	0	0	0
RÜHLE, Otto	German	1	1	1
SCHEIBER, Otto	German	1	0	0
SICKINGER, Anton	German	2	2	2
STEINER, Rudolf	Austrian	145	12	2
TEWS, Johannes	German	9	9	5
WOLGAST, Heinrich	German	0	0	0
Total		656	327	99**

Table 1. The list of the examined individuals (alphabetical order). * Alternative search expression was employed in the case of Adolphe Ferrière, where the character è (resulting in 0 detections) was replaced by é (yielding 94 detections). ** Due to the overlaps among the writings, the total number (99) is differing from the sum of the related articles (138).

Research Question #2

As displayed in Table 1 above, the ratio of the non-appearing individuals is relatively low in the examined discourse (4/26). However, following the confirmation process, this proportion notably increased; resulting in the exclusion of nearly half of the examined individuals (11/26). Although the figure indicates a slight asymmetry between the first and the second phase of the reform pedagogy (7 and 4 mentions, respectively), it cannot be interpreted as a meaningful difference. The majority of the mentions, nearly with equal numbers, are associated with Kerschensteiner and Ferrière, totaling 57% of the references. Nevertheless, it is only an aggregated quantity; the temporal distribution is depicted in Figure 3.

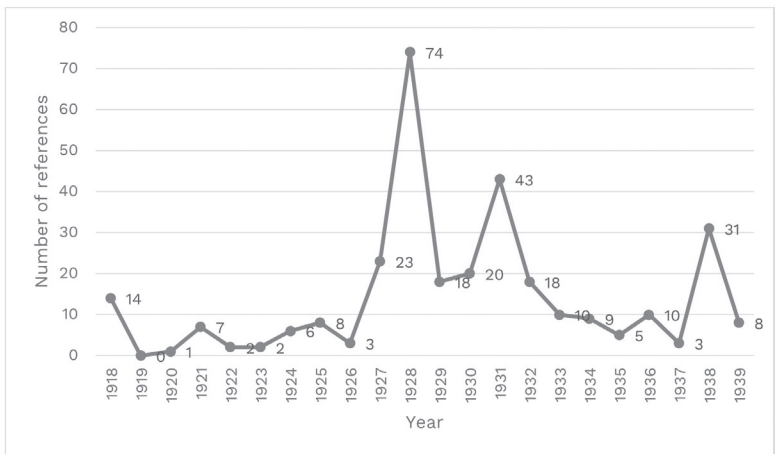


Figure 3. The temporal distribution of the references to the examined individuals. Note: Connecting points only helps better visibility.

As evident in the figure, the intensity is varying, with the most concentrated periods occurring in the late 20s and the early 30s. Notably, the year 1928 stands out with a remarkable 74 mentions. The lowest number can be observed in 1919; no references were detected during this year. In total, 315 references (with UID) can be identified (M = 14,32; SD = 17,04). At the same time, this data (including outliers)

can be considered misleading, as a single representative can be mentioned multiple times within a separate writing.

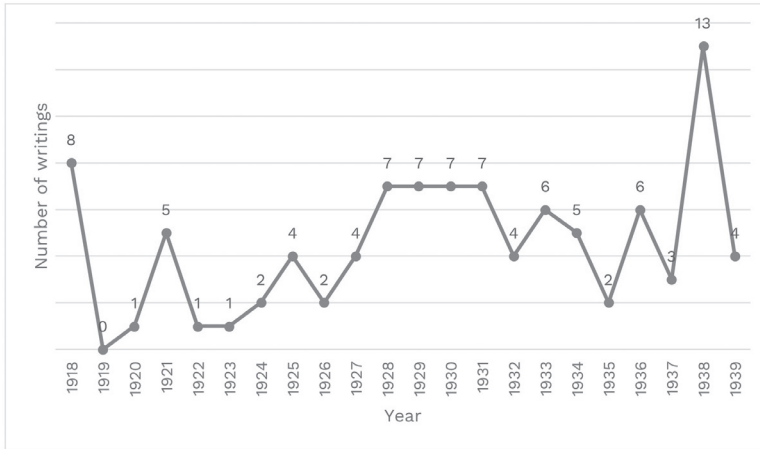


Figure 4. The temporal distribution of those writings, which mention the examined individuals. Note: Connecting points only helps better visibility.

As it can be seen on Figure 4, if the number of the writings ($N = 99$) is taken into consideration, the late 20s and the early 30s were not outstanding, and not even represented the most intensive period. In contrast, the biggest number of references appeared lately, in 1938. However, the period spanning from 1928 to 1932 still showed great strength and a degree of stability in comparison with the whole set ($M = 4,50$; $SD = 3,04$). Although the general intensity can be summarized via these two figures, the individual frequency and the interconnections among the representatives of reform pedagogy required a different approach, namely network analysis.

Research Question #3

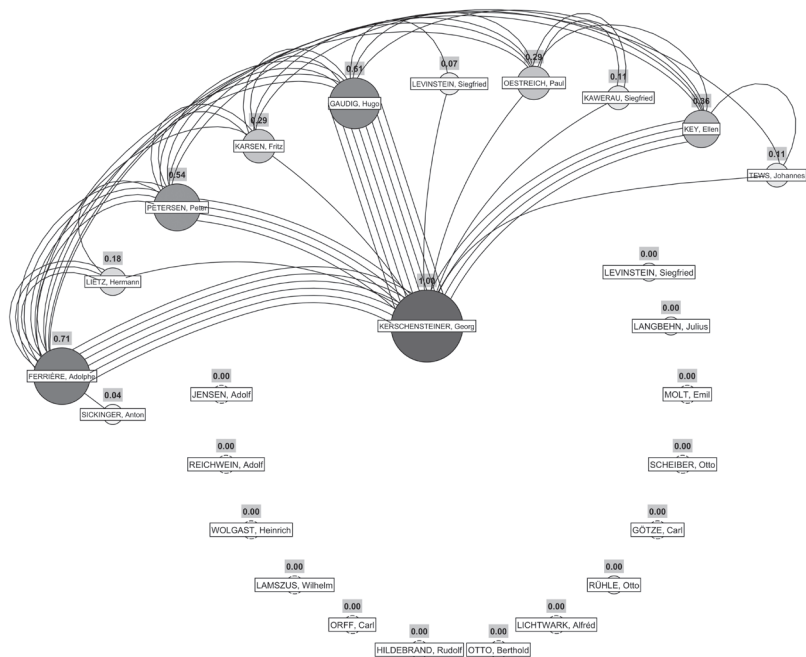


Figure 5. The co-occurrences of the examined individuals. The size of the nodes and the numbers with grey background indicate degree centrality (from 0 to 1). Own edition with the yEd software.

As Figure 5 demonstrates, 60 connections (edges) can be identified among the 26 individuals. A general overview of the network shows that certain representatives of reform pedagogy own significantly more relationships than others. The centre of the network is occupied by Kerschensteiner (with 28 mutual appearances), while Ferrière, Gaudig and Petersen also possess numerous references. Nevertheless, 53,85% of the individuals have no connections; either because they are not referred or they do not appear in conjunction with other representatives. Regarding the the latter it is important to note that although Langbehn, Rühle and Steiner received references (1–1–12 respectively), they

always stand alone, or, in other words, they can be regarded as isolated elements in the examined scientific discourse.

Discussion

Interpretation

Although one can distinguish different subperiods within this nearly two-decade timespan, the references transcend temporal boundaries, and frequently have retrospective functions. The year 1919, immediately following World War I, resulted in the lowest possible value, and 1920, marked by the Treaty of Trianon, and the consequential significant territorial, social and economic losses in Hungary, may have limited the number of foreign patterns' references. After that, depending on the examined variables, a gradual or more rapid increase could be observed. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the second half of the interwar period showed higher intensity, and reached its topmost point at the the year before World War II.

The mentions to the different representatives often appeared together, raising the question that which peculiarities led to these co-occurrences. One potential factor is the work school (*Arbeitsschule*), which could explain the rich interrelations among Gaudig, Oestreich, Petersen, Key and Kerschensteiner. In the contemporary discourse, the *école active* of Ferrière was also mentioned as the French version of work schools (Buzás, 1937), but differences (namely the stronger focus on the biological-psychological development of the child) were also highlighted in this source (regarding further features, see also Mészáros, Németh, & Pukánszky, 2005). It is worth noting that Ferrière and Kerschensteiner had remarkable professional activity in Hungary (e. g. Kerschensteiner's visitations and lectures in Hungary or Ferrière's publications in the *Magyar Pedagógia*), and they also became the honorary member of the Hungarian Pedagogical Society (*Magyar Paedagogiai Társaság*). Interestingly, Ellen Key, often regarded as the starting point of reform pedagogy, did not emerge as the centre of the network.

Limitations & Further Development

Although the digitalised text of the periodicals offers numerous benefits (cf. Kokas, 2014; Moldován, 2014), and the optical character recognition (OCR) performed exceedingly in comparison with the age of the documents, it is crucial to emphasize that the two versions (paper and electronic) are not identical. Because of this, several instances of non-detected names have been discovered during the research process, but because this collection was not produced systematically, it was not included in the total count.

Another limitation of this study is that it focused exclusively on the names of these representatives. Exploring other markers (e.g. title of their works, typical notions, etc.) may help to reveal further discourse patterns.

The third restraint is the limited reliability of the confirmation. Though the automatic detection itself does not necessarily need repeated coding (cf. Janis, 1965), the reliability of the confirmation process can be improved by the invitation of further independent coders. This would help to exclude both intraobserver inconsistencies and interobserver disagreements (Krippendorff, 2004).

The fourth limitation is due to temporal distribution. The current analysis does not take into consideration the years of activity. Because of that, older representatives and/or earlier writings may have a higher chance of being referred by the journal.

A potential way for further development could involve conducting qualitative content analysis of the context surrounding the identified references. This approach may provide additional insights and enrich the study's findings.

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