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That's what Dad says, anyway

Gender Representations in *Key English* Textbooks

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ABSTRACT:

Suomen peruskouluissa opetuksen sisällöt ja tavat määrittyvät vahvasti oppikirjojen sisältöjen kautta. Koululla on tärkeä rooli lasten ja nuorten sosiaalistamisessa, ja oppikirjoilla suuri merkitys oppilaiden identiteetin muokkaantumisessa. Sukupuolten välinen tasa-arvo on yksi perusopetuksen lähtökohdista, jota oppikirjojenkin tulisi edistää. Aiempien tutkimusten perusteella tavoite ei kuitenkaan aina toteudu, vaan muun muassa äidinkielen ja oppilaanohjauksen oppikirjat sisältävät paljon sukupuolistereotypioita. Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena on laajentaa oppikirjatutkimusta englannin kirjoihin ja selvittää, millaisia sukupuolirooleja laajalti Suomen yläkouluissa käytettävissä *Key English* -tekstikirjoissa tuodaan esille.

Tarkastelun kohteena ovat kolmen yläkoulun oppilaille suunnatun tekstikirjan (*Key English 7–9*) avaintekstit sekä niihin kiinteästi liittyvät osat ja kuvat. Tutkielmassa analysoidaan a) ovatko miehet ja naiset tasapuolisesti esillä oppikirjojen teksteissä ja kuvissa, b) millaisia piirteitä, harrastuksia ja kiinnostuksen kohteita miehiin ja naisiin liitetään ja c) millaisissa ammatillisissa ja sosiaalisissa rooleissa heidät esitetään. Lisäksi tarkastelussa on mahdollinen seksistinen kieli, joka omalta osaltaan ylläpitää sukupuolten epätasa-arvoa oppikirjoissa.

Tutkimus osoitti, että *Key English* -tekstikirjojen sukupuolirepresentaatiot ovat suurelta osin tasa-arvoisia ja opetussuunnitelman mukaisia, mutta puutteitakin löytyy. Tilastojen valossa naiset ja miehet ovat tasapuolisesti edustettuna kirjojen avainteksteissä, mutta lähempi tarkastelu osoittaa, että erityisesti perhekontekstissa naiset ja miehet esitetään usein perinteisissä sukupuolirooleissa. Kirjoissa esiintyvät sukupuolirepresentaatiot ovat lisäksi poikkeuksetta heteronormatiivisia, ja stereotypioihin perustuviin sukupuolikäsityksiin viitataan usein normina.

KEYWORDS: English textbooks, gender roles, sexism, stereotypes, hidden curriculum

1 INTRODUCTION

School textbooks play an essential role in teaching and are often used by whole generations with only marginal changes. Textbooks hold a unique social function as they reach young people more efficiently than any other printed material and convey ideologies consciously and unconsciously. According to Sunderland (1992: 86) they affect the pupils in the same way as the TV or magazines affect their consumers. They act as major routes for the complex and continuous process of socialization and represent an authorized version of human knowledge and culture to one age-class at a time. The influence of school books on society is indisputable, which is why it is important to ascertain their contents are up to date and appropriate.

Most importantly, study materials should be in line with the curriculum. In the Finnish core curriculum for basic education, which describes the most important aims of each school subject and the general educational goals of comprehensive school, equality and respect for the rights and freedom of the individual are identified among the most important underlying values. According to the curriculum, gender equality is promoted in the basic education instruction "by giving girls and boys the ability to act on the basis of equal rights and responsibilities in society, working life, and family life" (*National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004*: 12).

Increasing gender awareness in Finnish schools is also one of the goals mentioned in the *Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008–2011*, coordinated by The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The Action Plan compiles the measures by which the Government promotes the equality between women and men and sets also demands for contemporary study materials. The action plan aims, for instance, at bridging gender pay gaps, promoting women's careers and alleviating segregation in everyday life. In the Action Plan it is stated that, in Finland, it should be ensured that the study materials do not, in any way, convey or maintain stereotypical perceptions of girls and boys, men and women. They should, instead, convey unbiased and open-minded conception of what is appropriate and possible for women and men to do.

The importance of the study materials in achieving the objectives of equality should not be underestimated. The national core curriculum is the framework for comprehensive education and teaching, and in reality, the course of the lessons is often defined by the study material. Due to increased requirements teaching often sets for a teacher and to the diverse study materials that are easily available, current teaching practice is mostly based on textbooks (Mikkilä-Erdmann et al. 1999: 436). According to Sadker and Zittleman (2007:144), pupils spend 80 to 95 percent of classroom time using textbooks. A study conducted in Canada by Baldwin and Baldwin (1992: 114) showed, in turn, that an average teacher uses textbooks for 70 to 90 percent of the classroom time. According to my own experience as a pupil, a school trainee and a language teacher in four different lower secondary schools[1] and to the discussions I have had with other language teachers the tendency is approximately the same also in Finland.

Gender representations and equality in school textbooks have been scrutinised for decades with the focus often on gender representations and equality regardless of the field of study. The first survey on gender representations in school textbooks was conducted in 1946 by Child, Potter and Levine who found that primary school textbooks often portrayed females rather negatively and stereotypically and were, thus, manipulative. More systematic sociolinguistic investigations of gender representations and biases in study materials got started in the 1970's when American activists and educators started to document and analyse them, encouraged by the feminist movement. (Blumberg 2007: 5, 12.) Later, a number of similar surveys have been conducted around the world many of which have lead to a similar result showing that in school textbooks female participants are often outnumbered by the male ones, and women perform a more limited range of roles than men.

According to Blumberg (2007: 5–9), there are two main features that can be considered typical for learning materials regardless of the country, time and material studied.

[1] I did part of my teacher training (2009–2010) in Vöyrinkaupunki lower secondary school (grades from 7 to 9 in Vaasa) and have also worked there as a substitute teacher. In addition, I have worked in Seinäjoen yhteiskoulu (occasionally in 2007–2010) and Jalasjärven yläaste (spring 2011). As a pupil I went to Kuortaneen yläaste in 1996–1999.

Firstly, women are under-represented in both texts and illustrations, and, secondly, both genders are shown in highly gender-stereotyped ways in domestic and occupational roles as well as in the actions, attitudes and characteristics portrayed.

In Finland, gender representations in school textbooks have been examined by, for example, Lahelma (1992) and Palmu (2003). In addition, several Master's Theses have been written on the issue during past decades. The conclusions of the studies have often been the same: most of the textbooks contain gender bias and stereotypical or sexist representations of either or both genders. In her research, Tarja Palmu (2003: 187) scrutinised books used in teaching Finnish and literature and investigated how gender is constructed and produced in different school texts. She found that the textbooks portrayed gender as a bipolar and the male culture and norms as primary and superior to female culture and norms. She also concluded that differences between female and male characteristics and roles were maintained in the books instead of challenging and questioning them. Women were often represented as caring characters, whereas men were active adventurers or building a career. All in all, women appeared in textbooks more rarely than men.

Elina Lahelma (1992: 117) came to a similar conclusion in her study on the ways in which genders are differentiated in the textbooks included in the Finnish curriculum. According to Lahelma, female invisibility was explicit especially in history and social studies textbooks. She also concluded that there were stereotypical descriptions of both boys and girls, and men and women, and that stereotypical representations were most obvious in the textbooks for upper grades and in the descriptions of adults.

Also a recent Finnish survey by Liisa Tainio and Tiina Teräs (2010) indicates that, despite all the actions taken to increase gender equality in Finnish study materials, it seems that stereotypes and gender biases sit tight in current textbooks used in Finland. Their study, which was part of the *Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008–2011*, focused on gender representations in textbooks used in teaching Mathematics and Finnish for pupils in the third, sixth and ninth grade (pupils of the age of 9, 12 and 15)

of the Finnish comprehensive school. In addition, all books used in pupil counselling in comprehensive school were included in the study. Altogether 51 textbooks and workbooks, published by four different publishers, were included in the analysis. The analysis focused on the number of gender-linked words (e.g. proper nouns) and gendered characters appearing in the texts and illustrations. Attention was also paid to all other text contents that somehow represented gender or gender equality. In addition, the equality of the author teams behind the books was analysed in terms of gender. The survey showed that the author teams behind the books were explicitly dominated by women. The illustrations and texts, however, represented distinctively more male (57% of the pictures, 56,6% of the words) than female (35,8% of the pictures, 43,3% of the words) characters. The results show that neither the aims of the *Government Action Plan for Gender Equality* nor the ones of the *National Core Curriculum for Basic Education* are achieved in the textbooks of the three subjects, and they may, thus, contribute to the gender inequality in society.

The purpose of this study is to expand the one by Tainio & Teräs by scrutinizing the representations of gender in *Key English*, a book series used commonly for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching in Finnish lower secondary schools. The study is qualitative, and the focus will be on description and comparison of the occupational and social roles male and female characters are given in the books. The importance of the identification and analysis of the representations lies in the increased awareness of the possible gender bias in *Key English 7–9* books. Teachers can, if need be, discuss them with the pupils and, in the long run, make necessary adjustments to the textbooks.

The first aim of the present study is to examine if the two sexes are presented equally often in the books, that is, the gender division of the pilot characters as well as the frequency of proper and common nouns referring to male and female characters. The second aim is to see what kind of occupations and social roles men and women are given, and which activities and interest they (also boys and girls) are related to. Thirdly, the present study aims at analysing other descriptions and characteristics given for men

and women in *Key English* textbooks. Fourthly, the sexist language usage in *Key English* textbooks is analysed, that is, the masculine generic constructions and prioritisation. The hypothesis of the present study is that gender representations in *Key English* textbooks are likely to be in line with the results of the previous studies and also contain gender-bias or maintain stereotypical perceptions of girls and boys, men and women.

The theoretical framework for the study is based on the concepts of gender and representation. The categories used in the analysis are adaptations from Tainio & Teräs (2010) and Porreca (1984), who analysed sexism in 15 ESL (English as a Second Language) textbooks widely used in the United States. In her analysis, Karen Porreca (1984: 718) focused on the categories of omission, firstness (prioritisation), occupations, the frequency of male nouns to female nouns, masculine generic constructions and the types and frequency of adjectives describing men and women. In every category of her study, she found clear biases and evidence of sexism. For example, women were represented only half as often as males in both texts and illustrations.

In addition to Porreca's categories, the present study includes also the interests men and women are related to in *Key English* textbooks. This is due to the fact that in several textbook studies conducted (e.g. Michel 1986), males and females were usually portrayed with typical male and female activities and having different interests. Also the manual presenting data collection methods for capture gender representations in school textbooks by Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) was consulted.

It is important to consider the values study materials promote because they might have an irreversible influence on a whole generation. English textbooks might, for instance, promote beliefs on which occupations are more suitable for men than for women even if this has nothing to do with the English language. As Sunderland (1992: 86) has stated, female/male characters playing restricted social, behavioural, and linguistic roles, do not suggest cognitive or communicative female/male empowerment. This may even hinder

the language learning if the learners are conscious of the bias. Teachers should be aware of any sexist bias in the learning materials they select for use in the classroom and monitor the contents that are taught (Wolfson 1989: 185). Besides giving the authors and publishers information about their products, textbook research also helps the teachers to become aware of the hidden values in the material they use in their work.

1.1 Material and Method

The primary material of the present study consisted of *Key English* book series published by Werner Söderström Ltd (WSOY), the dominant publisher of EFL study materials for comprehensive education. Approximately 60 per cent of the Finnish comprehensive schools use *Key English* for teaching English as the first foreign language, the rate being even close to a hundred per cent in some parts of the country (WSOYPro, personal consultation with the sales representative, 16 March 2011[2]). The present study covered three *Key English* textbooks targeted at grades 7, 8 and 9 in the Finnish lower secondary schools, that is, for pupils that are approximately 13–15 years old.

The first textbook in the study, *Key English 7* (2002) covers two courses both consisting of four separate study units. The second textbook, *Key English 8* (2009) consists of ten study units and courses from three to five. The third textbook, *Key English 9* (2009), covers nine study units and three courses, that is, courses six, seven and eight. The first book published is eight years older than the last one, which might also show in the results as the editors might have paid more attention to gender representations in the books as the issue has received increasing attention over the years.

[2] The sales representative did not want his name to appear in the text. Also Jutta Joutseno, Marketing Communications Manager at WSOY confirmed that *Key English* book series is widely used in the Finnish lower secondary schools, but the sales figures cannot be provided as they are confidential (personal e-mail conversation, 14th April 2011).

There are several reasons why particularly these EFL textbooks were chosen for the analysis. Firstly, because the *Key English* series is commonly used in lower secondary schools in Finland and, as a future teacher, it was interesting to have a closer look at the "tools" used in teaching English. Secondly, the age group at whom this book series is targeted, twelve to sixteen-year-old teenagers, is probably at the most receptive age, moving from childhood to adulthood, to hidden values of the study material. Thirdly, the three grades of the lower secondary school form a clear entity for the study and, thus, it is possible to test if gender representations remain consistent throughout the material used at this stage of the basic education. It is interesting to see if, for instance, the year of publication shows in the contents. Fourthly, English teaching and EFL textbooks were chosen because they form an important part of the curriculum in Finland as English is a compulsory subject in lower secondary schools. In 2009, 99.2% of the lower secondary school pupils studied English as a compulsory, optional or elective foreign language (*Official Statistics of Finland 2009*). In many schools, the pupils have, for example, from two to three English lessons (45 minutes each) every week, two in the 7th grade and three on the 8th and 9th. The division may be slightly different but, all in all, only Mathematics and native language (Finnish or Swedish) have more weekly lessons (from three to five) than English. EFL textbooks may, therefore, have a stronger influence on pupils than, for instance, Biology or History textbooks.

According to my own teaching experience, a great deal of the textbook material is usually left with no attention in the lessons due to the limited time reserved for each course. Therefore, only the primary *Key Texts* (1A–28A) and pictures in them were included in the present study. It is not possible to determine which of the other sections are the most frequently used in teaching in all Finnish schools, but the primary texts will give an inclusive insight of the books. Also the other sections are unlikely to differ from the primary texts in their approach to gender issues. In the present study, the concept of textbook is understood as being the actual textbook itself. Thus, all the material that was not in the books, but on a CD or in the teacher's manual, was excluded from the research. Workbooks were left outside the study because of their incomplete and bilingual nature.

The concept of representation formed the background of the present study. Representations may be understood as the "production of meaning through language" (Hall 1997: 16). A representation is not, however, only the reflection of reality but also a value system. It reveals the shaping of reality that, at the same time, aims at explaining and legitimating a social order. This mode of knowledge contributes to the development of individual and social identities and also reshapes them. (Brugeilles & Cromer 2009: 13.) School textbooks play a remarkable role in the socialization as they provide the pupils representations and depictions of everyday life and of the whole society with its social division of identities, roles and statuses. According to Cherkaoui (Brugeilles & Cromer 2009: 13), they offer the pupils possibilities through texts and pictures, exercises and games to "play roles, to share meanings with other people, to respond to and anticipate their expectations, to internalize norms, values and systems of thought" in a privileged and active way. Pupils absorb ideologies and roles from textbook representations, often embodied in different characters, real or fictional. Characters "allow actions, take them on, are subjected to them, link them together and give them meaning" (Reuter in Brugeilles & Cromer 2009: 16). Moreover, by examining the language and characters in a school textbook it is possible to identify the relevant indicators that create gender and reveal the way in which men and women are seen in the society the books represent.

The starting point for the analysis was to identify and categorise all characters represented in *Key Texts* into *male characters* (e.g. a boy, Dave, dad) and *female characters* (e.g. a girl, Hillary, mum). Ungendered characters (e.g. a pupil) were left outside the study as the main objective was to study the representations of characters identified by their sex. Also some male and female animals (three dogs and a parrot) were left out since they were not considered characters that the pupils would identify with. In addition, characters represented by ambiguous pen names in a chat conversation (e.g. *Sorry* and *King Kong* in *Key 7*: 50–51) were left out of the analysis as their gender was not explicit.

Besides identifying the characters and dividing them into female and male ones, all proper or common nouns referring to women or men in the texts were recorded. That was because, according to Michel (1986: 53), for example, the frequency of the nouns and pronouns characterising each gender often illustrates better the sexism in the textbooks than the number of male and female characters. By identifying different nouns referring to each gender, it was possible to get a reduced picture of whether the society represented in the books is dominated by men or women. It also reveals a set of social and emotional judgements whether a character is called by a forename (e.g. Jenny or Dave), a surname (e.g. Miss Greenleigh), a kinship or other bond (e.g. dad, sister, wife, friend) or by an occupational status (e.g. a firefighter, a teacher, a nurse) (Brugeilles & Cromer 2009: 17). The aim was to see whether either gender is introduced with a word referring to a social or occupational title more often than the other and what kind of epithets, if any, were used with them.

A character's occupation, marital and family status, and certain activities including hobbies, domestic tasks, exploration and adventure are important factors in analyzing the ways in which gender is represented in textbooks because they may reflect the traditional gender stereotypes (Brugeilles and Cromer 2009; Michel 1986: 50–52). Thus, the next step in the study was to categorise all occupational roles and family roles given to female and male characters in the books. That is, all nouns designating character's occupation (e.g. engineer) or role in the family (e.g. mum, grandpa) were recorded. In addition, all references to hobbies or interests were identified and analysed in order to find out the areas of life women and men are associated with in the society represented in the textbooks and possible stereotypical representations related to them.

Of the other qualities of the characters, their physical attributes, psychological and moral qualities were observed as far as they were explicitly represented in the text, that is for example, through descriptive adjectives. Previous research shows that the use of adjectives often reveals gender bias and stereotypical categorisation in EFL textbooks. A study by Carroll and Kowitz (1994), for example, showed that that some adjectives (e.g. *rich*, *important* and *famous*) referred exclusively to men and others (e.g. *busy*,

beautiful and *tall*) to women. In the present study, all adjectives referring to a certain character in *Key English* textbooks were recorded and distributed to women and men according to Porreca's (1984: 713) categories as follows:

1. Physical appearance (e.g. *beautiful*, *handsome*)
2. Intellect / Education (e.g. *quick thinker*, *dumb*)
3. Emotionality / State of mind (e.g. *happy*, *upset*)
4. Physical state / Condition (e.g. *fit*, *weak*)
5. Personality traits (e.g. *friendly*, *careful*)
6. Age (e.g. *young*, *old*)
7. Environmentally descriptive (e.g. *rich*, *poor*)
8. Rapport / Reputation (e.g. *famous*, *successful*)
9. Normality / Deviance (e.g. *abnormal*, *alien*)
10. Ability (e.g. *efficient*, *good dancer*)
11. Environmentally induced (e.g. *professional*, *independent*)

Along with the analysis of the characters, the present study scrutinised possible sexist language used in *Key English* textbooks. The male/female prioritisation was studied also on the lexical level, that is, whether one of the sexes was always mentioned first in word pairs such as *women and men*, *boys and girls* and *he or she* in *Key English*. Some of them may be set phrases, but they still have a sexist bias. Lastly, the use of generic pronouns, the use of *he* or as well as the generic usage of *man* and its compounds (e.g. chairman, cameraman) when talking about people in general or about a person of unknown gender, was under scrutiny.

Also pictures and photographs used in *Key Texts* were taken into consideration as they form an important part of the modern EFL textbook. Pictures and photographs make things easier to understand and make the texts and the learning more enjoyable (Brugeilles & Cromer 2009: 24). Their purpose is to contextualize the linguistic contents and to set the framework for the communicational events the pupils are dealing with (Dendrinos 1992: 46). Graphics are often an integral part of a text as they are used to identify the discourse type of the text, for example an e-mail, a quiz or a poll, in *Key English* series. All occurrences of female and male characters in illustrations were identified as well as their possible link with the text. The pictures representing the pilot character(s) of the text, were considered to give the character(s) a more important

position in comparison with other characters that were represented only in text. Otherwise characters in *Key Text* illustrations were analysed separately from the texts and the categories analysed were gender, occupations, actions and interests if they were visible in the picture. The analysis of the illustrations aimed at revealing possible inequalities in how frequently men and women are represented in the pictures and whether the pictures depicted stereotypical female and male representations in relation to their occupation and interests.

One of the most important objectives of this study was to increase the teachers' awareness of the gender representations in *Key English* book series in order to help them with the subject as they use the books in teaching. Moreover, the results may be useful when the teachers select new book series to use in their work. Textbooks used for teaching English in lower secondary schools in Finland are usually selected by the teachers within the economical framework given by the school authorities. Books series are continuously updated and improved, and, besides the economical factors, the selection is often made on the grounds of their attractiveness, clarity and the date of publication. There are several book series available and the selection of the most suitable one can be challenging. The selection of Finnish EFL book series targeted at lower secondary school teaching are, therefore, shortly introduced in the following chapter.

1.2 English Textbooks in Finnish Schools

There are two main publishers of EFL study materials in Finland, WSOY and Otava both of which contemporarily publish two EFL book series (WSOY: *Key English* and *Spotlight*, Otava: *Smart Moves* and *This Way Up*), targeted for the Finnish lower secondary schools (Otava; WSOYpro). A book series published by WSOY was selected as the primary material of the present study because of its wide spread usage in Finnish lower secondary schools.

Key English series consists of three parts, *Key English 7 Courses 1–2, Key English 8 Courses 3–5 and Key English 9 Courses 6–8.* In the analysis section, also shortened forms of the names, *Key 7*, *Key 8* and *Key 9*, will be used. *Key English* study material for lower secondary school systematically revises everything that has been taught in the primary school. The approach to learning is constructional and based on repetitive practice. *Key English* material aims at improving the pupils' language skills and to give them elementary skills (B1.1) in listening and reading and pre-intermediate skills (A2.2) in speaking and writing English at the end of lower secondary school[3]. Otherwise the material handles themes and communication situations corresponding to the Finnish comprehensive school curriculum and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. (WSOY 2010, my translation.)

The material in the books can be broken down at several levels. Each book includes two or three courses which, in turn, are divided into a number of units with different parts and types of exercises. In *Key English* textbooks, each unit begins with an introductory *Ready!Steady!Go!* section. The core of each unit is the *Key text*, whereas the *Carry on* - section elaborates the discussion related to the topic of the *Key text*. Another section, *Key Talk*, presents uses of English in different communicational situations through listening and acting assignments. Some units include special *Key Info* sections with information on the language, life and customs in the English speaking world. At the end of the book there are separate *Key Grammar* and *Key Reference* sections that systematically compile the grammar, new vocabulary, the pronunciation and other useful information.

According to several discussions with English teachers that have used *Key English* in their teaching, in three different lower secondary schools I have been working at, most often only *Ready!Steady!Go!* and *Carry on* sections are handled in the class besides the

[3] In the *Finnish National Core Curriculum* the pupils' language skills are evaluated with the levels of A1.1, A1.2, A1.3, A2.1, A2.2, B1.1, B1.2, B2.1, B2.2 and C1 from the lowest to the highest. In this scale, B1.1 refers to "functional basic language proficiency" and A2.2 to "developing basic language proficiency" (2004: 143). In is noteworthy that, in the assessment criteria, letter B stands for better skills than letter A.

Key Text. The present study, thus, concentrates merely on these parts of the textbooks. The separate grammar and reference sections are left out of the present study because of their general "list-like" nature.

The author team behind *Key English* series is relatively equal in terms of gender as Paul Westlake, Raija Kangaspunta, Eero Lehtonen and Jyrki Peuraniemi have taken part in creating all three books and both Arja Haavisto and Merja Auvinen in one of them, Haavisto in creating *Key English 7* and Auvinen in *Key English 9*. Only *Key English 8* has been edited by three men and one woman. This may have an influence on gender representations the books include. According to Huttunen and Happonen (1974: 51), the authors have more opportunities to affect the gender roles presented when editing language textbooks than, for instance, when writing history textbooks. The process is different depending on whether the possibilities in choosing the material are wide or limited and whether the material is based on real events or on fictional stories. In languages the whole material may be based on fiction and there is, thus, a wide selection of material available (Huttunen and Happonen 1974: 51, 56). They can, thus, have a great influence on what kind of characters are chosen and how they are represented in books. Their own gender, beliefs and values may, in turn, have an influence on the selection and representation.

In many countries, EFL textbooks are authored by non-locals, published by multinational companies and often produced in the United Kingdom. This "textbook globalism" entails pedagogical compromises, meaning, for example, that the expectations and sociocultural and linguistic background of the learners cannot necessarily be taken into account, which may, in turn, deteriorate the quality of the teaching materials. (Dendrinos 1992: 40–41.) In Finland, however, the situation is slightly different as textbooks used in teaching English as the first foreign language are authored by teams consisting of both local teachers and native English speakers and published by national publishers. There is healthy competition in school book industry in Finland, and the publishers aim at producing the books of good quality. The books are authored specially for Finnish pupils taking into account their sociocultural and

linguistic background in planning the study material. It is, thus, justifiable to expect that the books are designed in line with the curriculum and the recommendations concerning gender equality, for instance.

One of the purposes of school textbooks is to reflect contemporary society, thus, contributing to the socialization process by conveying, for instance, traditions from one generation to another. In order to be able to evaluate the textbooks from this point of view and to contrast the textbook representations with the real life situation, gender roles in contemporary Finnish society are shortly reviewed in the next chapter.

1.3 Gender Roles in Contemporary Finland

Gender equality plays, and has played, a crucial part in building the Finnish welfare state. One of the cornerstones of gender equality is that women and men can both be financially independent. The labour market participation rate of Finnish women is one of the highest in the EU (*Striving for gender equality in Finland 2006*: 7). It is assumed, to a large extent, that men and women should share the responsibility for their family's income (*Gender Equality Barometer 2008: 17 –18*). According to a national survey, the fact that Finland has a female president is regarded as an important matter among the Finnish people: four out of five women and two out of three men consider it an important factor for gender equality to have a female president (*Gender Equality Barometer 2008*: 12). Still, men usually have a higher status than women in Finland and Finnish society is still facing some challenges in achieving gender equality, segregation on the labour market being the most important (see e.g. Emerek 2006: 77; (*Gender Equality Barometer 2008*: 9; *Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008–2011*: 21).

Even though the situation has improved during the last decades, the Finnish labour market is still distinctly split into masculine and feminine professions. Finnish men typically work in industrial fields, in manufacturing and transportation, while women

work in the fields of social and health care, education and services. In 2003, only about 15% of the whole workforce worked in fields with a fairly equal number of women and men. (*Striving for Gender Equality in Finland 2006*: 8.)

Men and women are also often situated on different hierarchical levels at the workplace. The leading posts are male dominated, men advance faster in their careers and also have better opportunities to rise to a higher position. This gender-based division has an influence on, among other things, the wages. An average woman receives often approximately 80 per cent of a man's pay even if the educational requirements are the same. Moreover, Finnish women often have slightly higher level of education than men. (*Striving for Gender Equality in Finland 2006*: 8–9.) Also the perceptions of equal opportunities in working life differ greatly as more than one half of the men regard women's opportunities just as good or nearly as good as those of men, while only a third of women share this opinion. (*Gender Equality Barometer 2008*: 14–15.) In 2005, the Government and the labour market organizations drew up a long-term equal pay programme which aims at reducing the gap between women's and men's pay by five per cent by 2015 (*Gender Equality Policies in Finland* 2006: 12).

At home, most Finns believe in sharing the domestic responsibilities and, according to the national survey, both sexes believe that they have authority in decision-making within the family. Many women already share childcare and household tasks with men. Nevertheless, according to the *Gender Equality Barometer 2008* (40–43), women seem to carry the main responsibility of the laundry, cooking and ironing, while fathers are responsible for vehicle maintenance, home repairs and renovations. Also washing the dishes, cleaning and contact with the school are mainly the mother's responsibility, although some parents share the responsibility for these. The duties in which parents most often share responsibility are looking after the children, ensuring the homework is done, shopping, spending time with the children and transporting the children to school and hobbies. In general, however, women are considered to be more home-bound than men.

Societal gender segregation is the result of a multidimensional process that has its roots in the early socialization. The present study is based on the assumption that gender characteristics are, for the most part, socially constructed and affected by the structural inequality in society. That is a two-way process in which institutions, practices and beliefs shape gender roles and gender roles shape society (Sunderland 1994: 2, 4). In order to change the ways in which women and men are seen and treated in society, one needs to act upon the socialization process, beliefs, conceptions and options children are offered at home, at school and in all possible contexts. Also gender representations in the school textbooks play an important role in this.

Before the actual analysis it is necessary to determine the essential concepts employed in the present study. Equality and textbook as well as their relationship will be, therefore, discussed in Section 2. Section 3, in turn, discusses the concepts of sex and gender, representation, sexism and gender stereotyping through which different conceptions of what it is to be a woman and a man are conveyed in school textbooks. Section 4 reports the actual findings of the analysis of the textbook series and discusses the results of the study, and Section 5 presents the conclusions.

2 EDUCATION AND EQUALITY

This section focuses on the relationship between education and gender equality and on the role textbooks play in promoting gender equality in society. Section 2.1 discusses equality as an educational goal, and in section 2.2, the concept of hidden curriculum is introduced. Section 2.3 includes discussion about textbooks as teaching tools and ideology conveyors.

2.1 Equality as an Educational Goal

In contemporary education, equality is often identified as the core of the overall aims (see e.g. Atkins, in Briggs & Sommerfeldt 2002: 27.) Unesco's *Education for All report 2003* proclaims that "[f]ull gender equality in education would imply that girls and boys are offered the same chances to go to school and enjoy teaching methods, curricula and academic orientation unaffected by gender bias" (2004: 17). The objectives of the current *Guidelines for the Development of Curricula and Textbooks in International Education* (Unesco 2002: 9, 16) also include the "need to eliminate discrimination [...] such as racism and sexism".

There are three approaches to gender equality as an educational goal. Unesco's declarations refer to the approach that is based on the *access to* education, referring to the equal access of men and women to education. Secondly, gender equality may be approached *within education,* which refers to the equal rights of men and women to non-discrimination in terms of educational opportunities in school. Men and women should be offered similar learning contents, teaching methods, subject choices, assessment modes, management of peer relationships and learning outcomes. Educational institutions should also function in ways that do not impose gender stereotypes or delimit the educational opportunities for boys and girls. Thirdly, gender equality may be approached *through education,* by promoting gender equality, for

example, in school practices and learning materials. (Subrahmanian 2005: 403–405.) In this study, the focus was on gender equality through education.

The equal access to education is no longer an issue in Finland, and the Finnish educational system rests on the principle of gender equality, as well. *The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education* (2004: 12) aimed at pupils in compulsory education names equality as the second underlying value of the basic education right after human rights, that is, equality in and through education. The objective of equality refers to the parity of the two national languages and the two national churches, to the parity of the national minorities and the majority and to regional equality but also to individual and gender equality. According to the curriculum, basic education aims at giving girls and boys the ability to act on the basis of equal rights and responsibilities in all fields of life.

Equality in schools has been discussed in Finland since the 1980's when the Ministry of Education set a committee to develop equality within and through education (Helakorpi 2011). The committee suggested that schools could approach equality as an educational goal from three different viewpoints. Firstly, by providing the pupils with knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary in order to promote equality in all fields of life. Thus, school would support the equal opportunities, possibilities and responsibilities of men and women in whole society. Secondly, schools should aim at removing stereotypical conceptions of what it is to be a man and a woman by giving everyone the opportunity for individual development without their sex or gender having any influence on the matter. Thirdly, female and male experiences but also the differences between the two sexes should be accepted, respected and valued in the same way in the school. (*Tasa-arvokokeilutoimikunnan mietintö* 1988, my translations.)

The important role the school has in the socialization process is underlined in the curriculum, and gender equality is included in the most important targets. Still the classroom reality has remained different, and the curriculum has been criticised for being too subtle and gender-neutral only on paper (see e.g. Lynch & Feele 2009). Though much has happened during the last few decades, Finnish education continues to

be gender-segregated. It still maintains gender differences as pupils are, for instance, often placed into girls' and boys' groups in crafts and physical education.

The Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008–2011 (p. 21) acknowledges the above mentioned problem in the Finnish educational system. The Action Plan admits that in most of the schools, pupils are obliged to choose in the fourth grade (at the age of 10), whether they want to attend technical crafts or textile work. The impact of the decision on the pupils' subsequent choices in life is acknowledged, but no amendments of the system are suggested. Nevertheless, study materials are set requirements also in the Action Plan. According to it, study materials should not convey or maintain stereotypical perceptions of girls and boys or men and women. They should, instead, convey unbiased and open-minded view of what is appropriate and possible for women and men to do.

The objective of equality in the curriculum as well as in school material is, however, somewhat contradictory to the objective of ensuring the social continuity and transferring cultural tradition from one generation to the next. On the one hand, pupils are educated within the framework of the current society and its, possibly, unequal hierarchies, and, on the other encouraged to critical thinking, equality and acceptance of multiculturalism, among others. (*National core curriculum 2004*: 12.) This disparity is what the teachers are constantly dealing with in their work. It is often discussed whether the teachers and textbook authors should concentrate on transferring, for example, the gender roles prevalent in the current society, or on challenging them and representing a more progressive society in order to improve the present situation (Sunderland 2000: 152). For example, if mothers in contemporary society often stay at home with the children, should that be the representation of women in the textbooks as well, or should the men staying at home and taking care of the children, be presented as an alternative? The ideal case would be a balance between these two alternatives, that is, both men and women represented in a working life as well as at home with the children.

The most important thing to bear in mind is the potential the school and textbooks have in affecting the pupils' conceptions of the world as schools do more than simply transmit the contents of the official curriculum. Besides the English grammar and mathematic formulas, for instance, a number of norms, values and beliefs are conveyed in the formal educational content as well as in the social interactions within the schools. These learning experiences are often unconscious and referred to as the *hidden curriculum*, the byproducts of schooling, which is discussed in the following section.

2.2 The (Hidden) Curriculum

The term *curriculum* refers to the educational framework within which teaching and learning take place in school. It compiles all the aims for school work and defines the complex set of ideas and practices that determine all school activities. It is aiming at defining what kind of social beings the school "produces" (Briggs & Sommerfeldt 2002: 1). According to the *Finnish Core Curriculum for Basic Education*, the objective is that the pupils leave comprehensive school as confident, balanced, open minded and active citizens who are able to think critically and are committed to life-long learning (*National core curriculum 2004*). The final outcome of the process of education, however, is relatively uncontrollable and impossible to predict. Although the official curriculum designates the educational goals, it is an inescapable fact that teaching and learning do not take place in a vacuum, and they are always influenced by many factors inside and outside the formal education. Besides the contents of the official curriculum, different beliefs, attitudes, ideologies and behavioural patterns are absorbed by the pupils at school, most of them at an unconscious level. They are part of the unwritten *hidden curriculum*, often also called *by-products of schooling* that may, or may not, be against the official aims and values of the school (Briggs & Sommerfeldt 2002: 1).

The term *hidden curriculum* was first used by sociologist Philip Jackson (1968), who saw school as a socialization process where pupils pick up messages through the experience of being at school, in interaction with teachers and peers and the school

structures, not just from things that they are explicitly taught. The hidden curriculum involves the learning of attitudes, norms, beliefs, values and assumptions expressed through rules, rituals and regulations that form the social life in the school and in the classroom. An example of this is the ritual of not getting seated before greeting the teacher and getting the teacher's permission. Such unarticulated rules may also be different for each pupil, and whether a hidden curriculum is positive or negative highly depends of the person concerned. All of these unarticulated learning contents are, however, often unconsciously learned, taken for granted and rarely questioned.

Henry Giroux (2001: 3, thus, identifies schools as political institutions that are inevitably linked to the issues of power and control in society as they, beside the curriculum and instructional plans, organize and legitimate the social and cultural reproduction of class, racial and gender relations. Schools form the arenas where pupils from "different social classes [and of different gender] learn the necessary skills to occupy their class [and gender] specific locations in the occupational division of labor" (Giroux 2001: 78, my brackets). School may reinforce existing social inequalities, for example, as teachers may treat and educate pupils in different ways according to, for example, their class and gender. Pupils may be channelled into professions dominated by one gender or into gender-stereotyped social roles, girls into domestic chores and child-caring and boys into breadwinners of the family, which does not necessarily follow educational policies and support the value of equality. It is, however, possible for pupils to resist the hidden curriculum as the school environment also can enhance individuals' understanding of power in society and provide new ideas and possibilities for social organization (Giroux 2001: 49).

The reproduction of existing social organizations and hierarchies occurs through the control of teachers and textbooks in schools. Foreign language teaching, for example, aims at providing information about the target culture as well as making the pupils aware of how the foreign language is structured on morpho-syntactical, morpho-phonological and communicational levels. Additionally, foreign language teaching aims at developing the pupils' skills in language comprehension and use, including specific

speech patterns expressing, for instance, cultural norms and attitudes. In this process, ideologies and social values are inevitably conveyed by the themes being dealt with as well as by the language used consciously and unconsciously. Foreign language learners are, therefore, constantly socialized in several ways determined by the uses of the foreign language taught to them. (Dendrinos 1992: 21.) Textbooks play an important role in this process as the teaching is often based on their contents.

2.3 Textbooks as Teaching Tools

Parents have the primary influence on children's ideologies and gender role development in the early years of their life. Studies have, however, shown that that gender differentiation increases with age and, when one goes to school, other influences are inevitable. Given that pupils in the last grades of the comprehensive school spend a major proportion of their life at school, also the school plays an important role in shaping and reinforcing gender differences. In particular, teachers and school textbooks are noted to be major sources of different ideologies that influence the development of children's perception of gender roles. (Lytton & Romney 1991.)

The first textbooks were simple and included mainly readings, whereas contemporary textbooks are accompanied with teachers' guides, workbooks, tests, CDs or DVD's. Moreover, additional material is often found also on the Internet by the same publisher. The material is clearly structured in different courses and units, which makes the teachers' work easier but also set out a framework that the teachers often follow. Materials are thus taking on an increasingly significant role in the structuring of the lessons, providing the contents for the school work and also controlling the ways in which the teachers and pupils are working (Cunningsworth 1995).

The use of textbooks is justifiable as they provide the pupils with a large portion of material that is not mentioned by the teacher and make it possible for the pupils to look ahead and back, to prepare themselves for the new information and to revise past

lessons. Course books also provide material in a well-presented form. (O'Neill 1988.) There are also disadvantages in following the material too closely. As Cunningsworth (1995: 10) has pointed out, it may cause a lack of variety in teaching, and spontaneity and flexibility may be diminished due to the heavy dependence on course material. Also the sensitiveness towards individual pupil's needs may be reduced, and there may be a lack of creativity in teaching techniques and language use. Still, at best, textbooks should allow improvisation and spontaneity and provide only the framework for balanced interaction between the teacher and the pupils.

Irrespective of the quality of the textbooks or of the way they are used, their dominant role as teaching tools has been proven by several studies. For example, Ingvar Sigurgeirsson's (in Johnsen 1993) survey of the use of curriculum materials in Icelandic schools (1990) showed that textbooks play a decisive role in most classrooms. In EFL teaching, 96 % of teaching time was spent using textbooks. According to my work experience in five different lower secondary schools and the discussions I have had with other teachers, in Finland, it is more rule than exception to use textbooks in foreign language teaching. The contents of the books are closely followed, and more than once an experienced colleague has instructed me by saying that there is no need to write and create one's own material for the courses as the textbooks used offer a great deal of material and alternatives that are easily available and of good quality. Another common means of organising a language course is to go through merely the primary texts of the books as the schedule of the courses and the school year are often extremely tight and the material package the books offer, in turn, relatively wide.

Even though it is the teachers who primarily select the material for the courses, the choices are made on the basis of the curriculum which often keeps them closely tied to the learning material. Also the pedagogical decisions (what is done in the classroom, how and in which order) made by teachers are, thus, for the most part dependent on the textbooks due to the institutional authorization textbooks are given by the state and the school. As Dendrinos has stated (1992: 25), the tighter the states control over education, the stronger the teachers' reliance on textbooks.

The fact that textbooks are considered authorized has been given at least three explanations. Firstly, they are authorised by the social institutions around them, the school and the National Board of Education. Secondly, as Olson has stated (1980: 192–193), they are so influential because of the impression of objectivity the contents of the textbooks often create with their clear and unequivocal representations that seem true and valid. Secondly, textbooks are often written in a language which seems to come from an impersonal outside source independent of the learning situation. This is due to their principal goal of teaching a school subject. Textbooks aim at portraying a fairly realistic and clear worldview in order to keep the pupils' attention in the contents.

Gender representations in textbooks may as a result be directly adopted by the pupils. It often happens with reference to their previous experiences and may lead to readjustments (Marie-Joseé Chombart de Lauwe & Nelly Feuerhahn, in Brugeilles & Cromer 2009: 13–14). This assimilation is harmful if the representations are somehow biased and, for example, based on stereotypical conceptions. Research has indicated, for instance, a clear relationship between pupils' perception of what kind of education is appropriate for women/men and their motivation to succeed in their tasks (Huston 1983; Stein and Bailey 1973). This is taken into consideration in *Key English 9* (58), for example, where a female character is represented as a web designer. A woman is related to characteristics and interests which challenge the traditional stereotypes of women being somehow technologically challenged and not interested in computers, and it offers female pupils a role model which may help them to become inspired by computer technology and, for example, encourage them to study information technology. In the same chapter, a male nurse is represented, which provides a similar role model for boys by challenging traditional stereotypes.

The authority and influence of an EFL textbook on gender construction may be considered slightly stronger than one of other schoolbooks. Bessie Dendrinos (1992: 47), in her analysis of the nature of the EFL textbook, claims that this is due to the fact that text types found in EFL textbooks are different and more varied than in other textbooks. She also argues that, while some textbooks relate more closely to the

educational institution, the instructional texts in EFL textbooks tend to be strongly related to other social institutions besides the school. Many school subjects, for instance Religion and Mathematics, relate closely to one or two institutions, in this case religious, economic and political institutions, while language studies and books seem to deal with topics from all social institutions, political, economic, religious, linguistic, educational and aesthetic. This is partly due to the unlimited opportunities in teaching a foreign language with very diverse tools, which also gives the editors more freedom in selecting material for the books.

Foreign language textbooks play an important role as gender ideology conveyors as they present male and female characters in verbal interaction and in social relationships (Sunderland et al. 2002: 223). Also the discourses and text types found in EFL textbooks differ from material used in other studies. According to Dendrinos, other textbooks are more "schoolbookeese" than EFL textbooks, and she defines the distinction as follows:

> [Other schoolbooks are] written to convey subject-specific information in expository narrative, whereas many [EFL textbooks] frequently resemble texts that people produce in their everyday social encounters and that fulfil a communicative purpose outside the classroom setting (Dendrinos 1992: 47–48, my brackets).

EFL textbooks are often read page by page, which controls the classroom activities to a large extent, only not necessarily in the intended way. Christina Gustafsson (in Johnsen 1993: 96) has argued that textbooks, in general, have not only positive but also negative control over learning situations. According to her, textbooks may exercise negative control in four different ways. Firstly, "as regards material selection and sequencing when the teaching medium is not based on the logical structure of the subject" (96) and, secondly, "as regards learning when pupils do well merely by memorizing the words in the textbook when basic skill like speaking and writing are not called for" (96). Moreover, and most notably in terms of this present study, negative textbook control over learning occurs when the teaching medium "forces" the pupils into certain ways of thinking, and when there is no discussion on the ideologies and values expressed in the

teaching medium. This might happen, for example, through chapter 5A in *Key English 7* (68) in which one of the protagonists, a boy, makes a generalisation over "typical girls" being "only interested in dancing and riding horses". If this explicit stereotypical representation is not questioned and discussed with the pupils, it may affect the pupils' insights of what it is to be a "typical girl". Also the concept of "a typical girl" should be taken up in discussions as, according to the values and beliefs represented in the curriculum, there is no such thing as "typical girl" or "typical boy" (see Section 2.1).

In is also noteworthy that gender is not a bipolar concept with only two alternatives, a boy and a girl, but there are a number of variables in between. The following section deals with the concepts of sex and gender, clarifying the difference between them and presenting the theoretical framework in which gender representations are analysed in the present study.

3 MEN AND WOMEN IN TEXTBOOKS

The main purpose of this study has been to analyse how women and men are seen in the society *Key English* textbooks represent. It is, thus, important to define the concepts of gender and representation as they are the central concepts of the study. In this chapter, the theoretical framework of the study is presented and the essential concepts defined.

3.1 Sex and Gender

Being girl or a boy, woman or a man, is a crucial factor in a life of a human being. Sex defines a person's life already before he or she is born, and, especially, the life after being born. People observe and experience the world according to how their sex and differences between the two sexes are seen and constructed in the society. Their sex affects their worldview, and they tend to act in the way the roles given by the society define what is appropriate for men and women to do. In these actions, people implement their gender. These two concepts, sex and gender, are related to each other but not to be confused.

Ann Oakley was one of the first feminist scholars who distinguished physiological sex from the social sex. According to Oakley's (in Brugeilles & Cromer 2009: 11) definition, *sex* refers to the biological differences between female and male, and *gender* to a set of learned social attributes, the social classification of masculine and feminine in a specific culture Sex is often regarded as essentially binary and a person either female or male. Unlike sex, gender is not binary and one may identify as a woman, a man, neither or both (e.g. transvestites and transsexuals). Gender has previously been understood vaguely as "a culturally shaped group of attributes and behaviours given to the female or the male" (Humm 1989: 84–85), but in modern understanding, it is seen as a performance, and a part of one's identity rather than something given or determined (Sunderland 2000: 149). Nowadays social sciences define gender as "a social category where masculine and feminine are understood to be behavioral categories usually

ascribed to, and aligned with, those born with the correlative sex" (Jule 2008: 5). In other words, human beings are identified by their biological sex at the latest when they are born. After birth, they are surrounded by a certain culture with certain norms and expectations for boys and girls. Gender is the result of the differential socialization in which a child learns how to be a boy or a girl. Sex, thus, relates to gender ideologically as biological sex differences are often the starting point for differential treatment or socialization process. This definition, however, leaves out those in between.

There are three main approaches to the construction of gender. Biological differences are emphasised in gender essentialism which considers gender differences as implications of differences in genes or environmental factors that affect gene expression. The fundamental idea of gender essentialism is that the natural biological differences predispose males and females to different gender characteristics and the differences in gender behaviour result from biological differences. That is, however, contradictory to several studies that have proven that sex-role differentiation is affected and increased through, for example, the way in which parents treat their children. According to gender environmentalism, the other approach, learning mechanisms and the environmental impact on gender development are considered essential in gender construction and differentiation. Whereas gender essentialism sees human beings as passive consignees of certain genes, the third approach, gender constructivism, considers children active agents who develop their gender in active intercourse with their environment independent of their physical characteristics on the basis of the options they are given by the society. (Liben & Bigler 2002: 7).

From a gender essentialist's point of view, education and learning materials would have only a marginal effect in gender construction, and a gender constructivist would argue that gender representations in school textbooks do not make a difference as children are able to construct their gender independent of the way society sees them. In the environmentalistic approach, learning and socialization are closely tied together and, thus, school and learning materials may be considered playing a remarkable role in identity and gender construction. Environmentalism also comprises the idea that being

rehearsed into gender performances by, for example, learning materials, predicts one's choices in life (Jule 2008:3). This forms the premise for the present study.

It is through differential socialization that we develop our personality and gender, our sense of self and our identity as female or male. An example of the differential socialization would be the way in which children's interests are channelled into gender relevant activities, ballet for girls and football for boys, thus causing them to be socialized into stereotypical gender roles. According to Oakley (in Best 2003: 144), differential socialization has four different modes. It actualises through *manipulation* as children's behaviour is encouraged or discouraged on the basis of what is considered to be normal or abnormal behaviour for a girl or a boy. Besides this, children's interests are *channelled* towards games and toys that are considered appropriate for their gender. They are also *encouraged to participate in different activities*. Earlier, girls were encouraged to participate in indoor activities that were related to domestic issues, whereas boys were more likely to take part in outdoor activities. The situation has changed significantly, at least in Finland, but stereotypes still persist. In addition, differential socialization is also reinforced through *verbal appellations*, that is, the use of language that steers children towards appropriate gender identification. This happens when, for example, a crying boy is told to behave like a *man* and stop crying. These socialization models are often based on traditional stereotypes and there is a lack of socialization for those who are not at the two extreme ends of sexes. Rather than learning appropriate behaviour, they are "forced" to adopt the norms for either gender.

Different cultures have a different conception of what it is to be and man or a woman or of what is or is not acceptable for men and women to do. Hence, gender roles vary considerably in different societies and the forms of socialising the children are also different from culture to another. Regardless of the culture, however, gender construction is a variegated process partly defined by our sex but most importantly affected by our surroundings and the ideologies we are raised in. This happens through variety of already existing female and male representations. In the following section, the concept of representation is clarified and discussed.

3.2 Representation

Socialization actualizes partly through cultural representations. According to Stuart Hall (1997: 15), representation means "using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people". He also describes it as a value system and an essential part of the process of producing and exchanging meaning between people, which often happens through the use of language. Hall makes a difference between three theoretical approaches to representations. The first, *reflective approach*, sees language as simply reflecting the meanings which already exist in different objects, whereas the second, *intentional approach*, sees it as a means of expressing exactly what the speaker or writer wants to say. According to the third, *constructivist approach*, meanings are constructed through language. In the present study different approaches to representations are not considered, and it is sufficient to comprehend representations as a form of knowledge that is developed and shared socially (Brugeilles & Cromer 2009: 13), as part of the "cultural circuit" (Hall 1997:15) and the socialization process in which existing certain female and male roles are passed on to the next generations. Representations of male and female roles in textbooks are not unequivocal reflections of reality, but orderings that aim to explain the prevailing social order and to legitimate it. As they represent a certain idea of what it is to be a man or a woman, they contribute to the development of gender identities.

As study materials have been shown to play an influential role in gender socialization, they possess the potential to change society and the roles men and women have in it. According to the reflective approach the books would be seen as mirroring the contemporary organisation of the society without aiming at changing it, whereas improvement in the existing status quo would represent the intentional approach. Gender representations in textbooks may, for example, have an impact on the occupational ambitions girls and boys have. In this light, it is important to make sure that the books convey an open minded view of gender roles and do not indicate that certain jobs are only for men and others for women. Such segregation is based on stereotypes which will be discussed in the following section.

3.3 Gender Stereotyping

Previous research into textbooks has mostly aimed at revealing stereotypical representations of men and women (Brugeilles & Cromer 2009: 15). For example, in Lahelma's research (1992) her primary material showed that, in Finnish study materials men were constantly represented as determined and assertive leaders whereas women were represented as kind and caring. This kind of stereotypical gender representations easily cause biases in pupil's insights of what it is to be a girl and a boy.

Generally, the concept of a stereotype is used to refer to the set of representational practices through which people maintain social and symbolic order in society. Hall (1997) determines stereotypes as follows:

> Stereotypes get hold of the few 'simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized, characteristics about a person, *reduce* everything about the person to those traits, *exaggerate* and *simplify* them [... and] *fix* 'difference'" (258, my italics and brackets).

According to Hall (1997: 258), a stereotype is, thus, a popular belief about specific social groups or types of individuals that help people organise the world around them. Mills (2008: 126) elaborates the definition by stating that stereotypes are "sets of features, roles and possible narrative sequences that we hypothesise" according to someone's behaviour and then generalize them to the whole group of people, simultaneously affording these features a *prototypical status*. The notion of the prototype refers to the often unconscious views on what is appropriate for men and women as well as to the practise of inclusion and exclusion of the normal and abnormal, which is also a feature of stereotyping.

Gender representations become stereotypical if they are simplified, rigid and anonymous and have a certain characteristics attributed to a certain group. An example of this would be the assumption that all women have long hair or that all men are tall. (Brugeilles & Cromer 2009: 15.) Gender stereotyping is, thus, based on people's

tendency to draw conclusions about the others – about their occupations, about the clothes they wear, the way they behave and look like, for instance, on the grounds of their sex.

Previous studies (see e.g. Lahelma 1992; Palmu 2003; Porreca 1984; Tainio & Teräs 2011) have shown that textbooks defined as sexist often depict males at work or in relation to outdoor activities, whereas women, in turn, are shown as wives and mothers and related to household chores instead of hobbies. In general, stereotypical women are often expected to, for instance, wear dresses and have long hair. They might also be considered kind, more passive, dependant, emotional and preoccupied with their appearance than men. A stereotypical man, in turn, is expected to wear trousers and have a short hair. Men are also tougher, more competitive, assertive and independent than women and always in control of their emotions. This setting has, however, changed dramatically due to the changes in society over the last century. Stereotypes are not fixed but dynamic hypotheses that are changed and reconstructed, for instance, through the representations on television, in newspapers and textbooks, the arenas through which the "common experience" is mediated (Mills 2008: 128).

Stereotypes are not necessarily negative by their nature but considered sexist or biased when they are evaluated negatively. For example, the stereotype of women being more compassionate than men is not considered to be sexist since this feature may be seen as valuable for women. Nevertheless, all negative stereotypes can be considered damaging since they convey assumptions that are often conflicting with our self-image. They are also authorised through their public nature and institutionalised instead of being only personal opinions. (Mills 2008: 129.) The stereotype that women should take the main responsibility of the household chores, for example, is, very often, contradictory to what many women actually think or do these days.

The social stereotypes of sexual roles are part of the sexist behaviour and attitudes, "the practises whereby someone foregrounds gender when it is not the most salient feature" (Vetterling-Braggin, in Mills 2008:1). An example of this sort of sexism would be the

statement “girls behave better than boys”, which assesses girls and boys on the grounds of their sex and makes a strict generalisation instead of considering each individually and taking their individual characteristics into account.

Despite the fact that gender is a political or social rather than linguistic issue, the language of male or female, is often considered, not the intention of the speaker, but an inevitable part of normative grammar. Sexism and sexist bias are partly disguised in traditionally normative grammars, for example, in that the male pronoun ‘he’ has traditionally been used generically when referring to all human beings in English. On the one hand, it may seem over-sensitive to regard this sexist, but it also does underline that sexism is also a language related issue through which gender conceptions are changed. This is why the present study aims at analysing sexist language in *Key English* textbooks besides the stereotypical representations of men and women in them. In the following section, the concept of sexism in language will be discussed in more detail.

3.4 Sexist Language

Discriminative use of language has been of interest to especially feminist scholars since the 1960s, and female representations in the media, for instance, have been studied a great deal, and feminist campaigns have had a remarkable impact on language usage. Due to the changes in relationships between men and women and to the increased equality in society, efforts have been made to implement a language change. In many contemporary societies, the use of gender-neutral language that is formally unmarked for gender, the replacement of discriminatory words and language forms, is considered to be a concern of “political correctness” and several guidelines for bias-free and non-sexist language usage have been published. (Mills 2008: 1, 77–78.)

According to Sara Mills (2008:1) sexism, racism, ageism and other discriminatory forms of language arise from larger social forces and wider institutionalised inequalities of power. One of the traditional ways of making sense of the world is biased and

favours the males as they are seen as the positive counterpart of the female negative. The classifying and ordering of this reality has been made through language that is a vehicle that creates meanings. (Spender 1980: 2, 139–141.) Sex differences in language are related to the historical power of men and powerlessness of women and to the conception of women being not only different from men but an opposite to them. If there is a hidden presumption that men are the norm from which women deviate, male characteristics are also seen as natural and normal and female characteristics, in turn, something that is abnormal (Cameron 1985: 28–29, 57). It has been claimed that the male bias in English language usage is purely grammatical and, thus, does not matter. It has, however, also been shown that if sexist language is used, the conception of reality as well as the practices in real life are also likely to be or become sexist. (Cameron 1985: 73; Spender 1980: 2, 141.)

Sexism may be divided into overt and covered sexism. Overt sexism refers to the kind of sexism that appears on the lexical level in the language and can, thus, be easily identified. Also stereotypical or historical beliefs and opinions about women or men that are explicitly represented are considered overt sexism. An example of this kind of presupposition would be “girls are only interested in dancing and riding” which is suggested in *Key 7* (68). One way is to imply that men’s experience is human experience, ”circumcision was common amongst Americans in the 1950’s”, an example given by Mills (2008: 2). Covered or discourse level sexism refers to the kind of language usage where sexist attitudes are present but somehow covered or undercut by humour or irony, or indicated by, for example marked intonation. (Mills 2008: 2–4, 11–12.) Similarly to stereotypes, non-sexist language is, thus, never only a matter of using or avoiding certain expressions but has to be evaluated in a context.

One of the most widely examined forms of sexism is omission. As Porreca (1984: 706) has illustrated this, when women do not appear as often as men, for example in a textbook, “the implicit message is that women's accomplishments, or that they themselves as human beings, are not important enough to be included”. The historical male dominance appears also in the way the word *man* is often considered to be

synonymous with *people*. Research has shown that the term *man*, even if used as a generic representative of all human beings, is nearly without exception understood as "male". The contemporary recommendation for avoiding a sexist bias is, in fact, to replace biased word selections with more neutral terms such as *humankind, human beings*, *people* or first person plural pronouns. (Schwartz et al. 1995: 3–5.)

Similarly, compound word forms with *man* as part of them (e.g. *manpower*, *manmade*, *chairman, fireman, spaceman*) are imprecise and biased when they refer to both sexes or to a person of unspecified sex. These are also the kind of cases in which sexism lies in individual words and phrases that can be avoided or changed in order to solve the problem. Usage guidelines recommend gender-neutral alternatives, such as *personnel*, *artificial*, *chair(person), fire fighter* and *astronaut*, especially for occupational titles. (Schwartz et al. 1995: 6.)

The reform of the words is, however, not always that simple as some words are gender-marked. For example the term *astronaut* is historically strongly associated with men, and so is also *doctor*. A feminine form *doctoress* has been traditionally used, but in the modern thinking, all feminine suffixes as *–trix (aviatrix), -ess (doctoress)* and *-ette (usherette)* are considered to give the term an auxiliary role in relation to the masculine term. (Schwartz et al. 1995: 21.) There has also been discussion about whether women should be called *female astronauts* and *female doctors* in order to assure the equality of the term. (Mills 2008: 14.) If the equivalent male term still was *astronaut*, this practice would, however, maintain the perception of women representing the deviation from the standard.

In *Key* 8, such obviously sexist associations have occasionally been successfully avoided. For example, the term *astronaut* is used when referring to a female character. In other cases sexism still prevails as, for instance, the term *nurse* is used in *Key 9* (24A) when referring to a male character. There has been discussion whether *male nurse* would be a politically correct term or should all nurses be called *paramedics* or *medical assistants* regardless of their gender. This shows that sexism resides deep in the

beliefs and attitudes and on the discourse level of language rather than in the words as such. Gender-neutral alternatives should, however, be employed in all cases where the common-gender form has become strongly marked as being only masculine or feminine.

According to the traditional English grammar, the pronoun he and all its forms may be used when its singular antecedent is of unspecified gender or an indefinite pronoun. An example of this would be the following sentence from *Key 7* (49): "If your friend tells you that his mother is seriously ill and asks you not to tell anyone about it, do you...[followed by three options]". In the example generic pronoun *his* is used when referring to a friend whose gender is not otherwise given. This kind of use of generic pronouns has been considered a fundamental feature to the English language but a revision is increasingly recommended. It can be done by using the plural *they* or a double-pronoun construction (e.g. *he or she*, *she/he*, *s/he* or *(s)he*). In addition, the whole sentence may be restructured or the preceding noun repeated to eliminate the personal pronoun. (Schwartz et al. 1995: 8–14.) An adequate way of revising the sample sentence would be to use one of the given double-pronoun constructions.

In the expressions referring to both sexes, the male term is traditionally placed before the female one as, for example, in *men and women*, *boys or girls*, *Mr. and Mrs.*, *he or she*. An exception of this male prioritisation is the often used phrase *ladies and gentlemen*. (Sunderland 1992: 81–82.) The tradition of naming men before women is based on the medieval insight that men are the worthier gender and that it is more natural to place the man before the woman, as, for example, in *male and female*, *brother and sister*. As the dominant group those days, males were able to encode forms of language which enhanced their status. (Spender 1980: 147.) Although sometimes the ordering may be partly determined by phonological factors, it may be considered reflecting similar semantic hierarchy as, for example, in *good and bad* (Hegarty et al. 2011). Thus, in modern culture societies, such beliefs are seen as antiquated and this sort of sexism should be avoided. Some guidelines recommend using the alternative

order in such fixed expressions and writing *female and male, women and men, Mrs. and Mr., she or he* at least half of the time. (Schwartz et al. 1995: 12, 29.)

The way in which courtesy titles *Mr., Miss* and *Mrs.* are used is also considered a form of sexism. *Mr* can refer to any man regardless of his marital status, whereas women are defined by their relationship to men. To avoid this, many guidelines recommend the use of *Ms.* for women regardless of their marital status. Individuals may be also referred to by their full or their last names. (Schwartz et al. 1995: 31–32.)

Some forms of sexism in teaching materials are considered more offensive and harmful than the others. Annemarie Young (in Sunderland 1992: 85), for example, executed an international questionnaire for EFL teachers, in which respondents graded sexist features of EFL textbooks according to their offensiveness. The results proved gender stereotyping worse than invisibility and linguistic biases such as masculine generics. The books were, however, criticized for the use of generic *he*, for instance, in the headlines. (Sunderland 1992: 85.) In line with Young's study, the present analysis focuses on gender stereotyping, stereotypical occupations, roles and attributes given to men and women although is also includes the use of masculine generics and prioritisation.

4 GENDER REPRESENTATIONS IN *KEY ENGLISH* TEXTBOOKS

The purpose of the present study has been to extend the analysis of Finnish school textbooks and to scrutinize the representations of gender in EFL textbooks. Qualitative content analysis was conducted on three *Key English* textbooks with the purpose of revealing possible gender bias and stereotyping in them. Based on the results of previous research it was hypothesized also that the EFL textbooks are likely to convey stereotypical gender representations. This assumption was also verified in the analysis that focused on the prevalence of female and male characters, on the occupational and social roles and other characteristics given to men and women as well as on the sexist language used in the primary texts of the books.

This section presents the results of the analysis of the *Key English* textbooks. First, the findings concerning the pilot characters of the texts are discussed in section 4.1. Section 4.2 analyses different occupational and social roles women and men are given in the texts. Section 4.3 discusses sexism inherent in the language of *Key English* series and, finally, 4.4 comprises the analysis of the illustrations.

4.1 Female and Male Characters in *Key English* Textbooks

The first step in the analysis was to identify all the pilot characters in *Key English* textbooks and find out whether female and male characters were equally represented in terms of their prevalence. The pilot character's gender was considered an especially important factor in analyzing the visibility of genders in the books since the narration revolves around these individuals and the teachers, for example, refer to them several times during the lessons.

Key English textbooks introduce altogether 76 characters with identifiable gender: of these 35 were male and 41 female. In *Key 7*, there were 27 pilot characters of which 12 are male and 15 female. *Key 8*, in turn, introduced 27 pilot characters, 13 male and 14

female. The division was almost similar in *Key 9*, as well, as there were altogether 22 characters of which 10 were male and 12 were female. In the light of these statistics, women and men were relatively equally represented, a slight majority being women, but neither gender was notably omitted or invisible in the textbooks.

Most of the characters are introduced only once, but there are, some groups of teenagers that are represented in several different chapters as, for instance, Sarah, Earl, Paul and Pat in 7A (*Key 7*: 96–97) and 8A (*Key 7*: 110–111) and Janet, Miko, Coco, Juan and Marinetta in chapters 20A–23A (*Key 9*: 9–39). Besides them, *Key English* textbooks represent several pupils, both girls and boys, who talk about their life in their home country or abroad as exchange students. In addition, the reader gets to know some adults, most of them introduced in the context of the work they do.

While the visibility of both men and women is important in textbooks, the way gender is represented is even more so. The characters in the books suggest how people should or should not think and behave and serve as role models for the pupils. As mentioned earlier, stereotypical representations of male and female attitudes and behaviour have been constantly found in textbooks in previous studies. A close reading of the text indicated similar results also in the present study. Many improvements, however, were also noted.

At the beginning of the analysis, it became obvious that recording and analysing individual words would not be enough as the aim was to get a comprehensive view of gender representations in the textbooks. The identification of such elements, however, was the starting point of the study after which the texts were closely read in order to record ideologies implied by the representations of behaviour and attitudes related to gender.

The identification of gender-related adjectives showed that there are 34 different adjectives describing female characters in *Key Texts*, whereas male characters are characterised with 25 adjectives. The results show distinctively that women are assigned

more personality traits than men, and while men are represented as, for example, (*fun Key 7*: 50) and *determined* (*Key 9*: 11), women are described as *caring* (*Key 7*: 50), *kind* (*Key 7*: 50), *timid* (*Key 7*: 51) and *foolish* (*Key 7*: 51), to name some of the most distinctive examples.

An example of a stereotypical representation of gender related personality traits can be found in chapter 4A, *Speak Easy* (*Key 7*: 50–51). It is a sample from a website chat room called Speak Easy where a discussion about friends and friendship is going on. Altogether nine teenagers participate in the discussion, but as they use nicknames, only six of them have an identifiable gender. The rest of the characters were not recorded as pilot characters. Of the characters whose gender was identified, four were female and two male characters. This suggests that girls are represented as looking for advice and approval of the others more often than men. It is, however, the comments in the chat that reveal clear gender stereotypes as, for example, the pen name Sputnik tells that she has her best friend in the world and this friend is a girl. Sputnik describes her as "kinder, more caring and more reliable than anyone else" (*Key 7*: 50). This goes hand in hand with the stereotypes of girls and women being kinder and more caring than men. This view is also emphasised by the following comment were the pen name Donald Duck tells about a male friend who he thought was "a real mate" but who said bad things behind his back and turned out to be a betrayer. Whereas a female friend is in the first comment said to practically save the writers life by being such a good friend, a male friend in the third comment is called "a jerk and a fake" and "a fickle" (*Key 7*: 50).

Both men and women are evaluated according to their physical appearance in *Key English* textbooks, the difference being, however, in the quality of the adjectives. Whereas male physical appearance is described with mostly positive adjectives (*tall, cute, pleasant*), only one of the adjectives describing female characters (*pretty*) can be considered clearly positive. Chapter 1A, *Kids on the move* (*Key 7*: 10–11) offers an example of typical male representations as it shows two teenage boys, Greg Brooks and Kirk McNeil who have moved to a new city and are telling about the big changes they are going through in their lives. In the text, Kirk tells the following about himself:

(1) No one has tried to bully me at school but that's probably because I'm *built like a tree*. Some guy in my class said I was a hick so I told him to button his lip and buzz of. (*Key 7*: 11, my italics.)

In the passage, Kirk is given stereotypical male characteristics as he is considered tall, strong, direct and bold as well as metaphorically "built like a tree" (example 1). There is a striking contrast to the metaphors representing a female character, Lily, in chapter 17A called *Jumble* (*Key 8*: 102–103). According to Lily's story, she is a new girl in her school and bullied because of her clothes that are not as expensive as those of the other girls (example 2). Whereas Kirk, in chapter 1A, is compared to a tree, Lily is described as "more like a weed than a lily" and run "like a terrified mouse" and "like an escaped prisoner" from the school at the end of the day (*Key* 8: 102–103). These metaphors relate Lily with a small and weak animal, and with a person who had lost her/his freedom which may be considered as a negative female representation. Also gender related metaphors in *Key English* textbooks, thus, reveal a gender bias. It is noteworthy that the metaphors are in different chapters and in different books instead of being under same heading. Still, the descriptions clearly underline the traditional gender stereotypes according to which girls are smaller and weaker than boys.

All in all, chapter 17A takes the importance of appearance for women and girls to the extreme. It introduces the reader two pilot characters, Barbara Heston and Lily Barnes who are in the same school but otherwise represent two very different pupils. The story is told by a third, anonymous girl who describes Barbara and Lily as follows:

(2) Barbara Heston is the most important person in our class. She is a large girl with a loud voice, curly red hair and big white teeth. Her friends say she is pretty. If you're small, keep out of her way. The new girl was small. Her name was Lily Barnes, though she looked more like a weed than a lily, being thin and nervous, as if she was afraid some gardener would come and yank her out by the roots and throw her on a rubbish heap. She was wearing the wrong kind of clothes. [...] They began calling the new girl 'Jumble', I suppose because she looked as if she'd got her clothes from a jumble sale. (*Key 8*: 102, my brackets.)

This description reveals a great difference and strong tension between the girls and also tells something about the relationships between girls in general. Stereotypically girls and women are more superficial and concerned about their appearance than boys and men. In *Jumble*, being large, pretty and rich, and having white teeth, is related to being popular and having power, while being small and poor is the opposite. (Example 2.) The whole story is based on the differences in the girls' appearance which provokes disagreements and is the reason why Barbara and her friends bully Lily. Barbara accuses Lily of stealing a pound from the pocket of her cardigan and threatens Lily until she bursts into tears. At the end, she finds her coin but does not tell it to Lily. The influence of group power and pressure is also dealt with as all girls are said to dress like Barbara as they all try to copy her. Barbara is so powerful and the other girls so superficial that they would wear "sleeveless blouses, miniskirts and ankle socks, though it was a cold May and [their] arms became blue and goose-pimpled" (*Key* 8: 102, my brackets). Boys are mentioned in the text only once as they are said to *jeer* at the girls wearing miniskirts despite the cold weather. This adds to the stereotype of boys being less interested in clothes and appearance than girls, which is not necessarily the case any longer. Another stereotype maintained through the text is the one of girls giggling. Barbara's character, interestingly, challenges the stereotype of girls being kind, but when the teacher comes she is also behaving well, thus, giving the stereotypical impression of a good girl to the outsiders.

Adjectives related to the physical state seem to entail a gender bias as the only adjective describing female physical condition is *ill* (*Key 7*: 49) while men are described as *healthy* (*Key 7*: 10). In the questionnaire in *Key 7* (49), one question deals with what the pupils would do if their friend told them his/her *mother* was seriously ill, and in *Key 9* (71), a woman writes in her letter to the editor that she suffers from diabetes. A man is once mentioned being unconscious. His condition is, however, related to a heroic action of saving cat and falling down from a tree. He also recovers well, whereas female characters suffer from more serious, possibly chronic illnesses and are, thus, represented as weaker and needing more help than male characters.

Negative representations of female characters are dominant also in terms of adjectives referring to their intellect and education. These are used only of female characters, and all of them are negative (*dumb* and *stupid* in *Key 7*: 51, *not brilliant* in *Key 9*: 59). The portrayal of female intelligence may be considered negative also in chapter 26A (*Key 9*: 78–80) in which a girl tells about her habits of listening to the radio. She mentions listening to rock stations but also to "the news, weather and current affairs programmes" and adds, that "After all, I'm not a complete airhead" (79). This interjection suggests that girls may usually be considered 'airheads', while she is an exception, or that girls, in general, need to somehow prove their intelligence. Female representations in one part of the chat conversation in chapter 4A (*Key 7*: 50–51) are also questionable. The passage is written by a pen name *Stupid*, which does not directly reveal the gender of the writer. As can be seen from the following sample, the comment is perhaps the most thought provoking in the whole chapter.

(3) I don't have a friend. [...] What's wrong with me? I'm easy-going, relaxed, and the most down-to-earth person you ever wish to meet. OK, I'm a bit reserved so I guess people think I'm boring or dull or something. You know – like DUMB, DUMBER and DUMBEST. But I'm not really. I'm just timid, that's all. Suddenly I feel foolish. Help! I wish I hadn't written this. (*Key 7*: 51, my brackets.)

As already noted, the comment as such does not reveal the gender of the writer and it is, thus, gender neutral, not pointing a finger to either gender. In the *Carry on* section on the following page, however, there are questions about each comment and the second question concerning Stupid reads "How does *she* see herself?" (*Key 7*: 52, my italics). The representation thus refers to a female character and represents her in a questionable light. In addition, the pen name of another female character in the chat is *Abnormal*. The name is clearly related to her question about whether it is normal to be friends with the opposite sex, but together with the comment by *Stupid*, the view this gives of the female gender is not very flattering in contrast to the comments written by male characters that are represented as confident and assertive.

Generally *Key English* representations depict girls as weaker than boys, but it is hard to establish a clear difference between the level of sensitivity they are given. Only girls are said to cry (17A, *Key 8*: 102–103) but boys, in turn, are the only ones portrayed as missing their families or friends. In chapter 15A, an exchange student Nolan Campbell finishes his first e-mail "P.S. I think I'm homesick" (*Key 8*: 79) and, in chapter 20A (*Maple Camp, Key 9*: 9–11), another male exchange student, Juan, in introducing himself to other exchange students adds "I also have to say that I feel a bit homesick" (10). Also Kirk, in chapter 1A (*Key 7*: 11), says he is missing his friends in his former home town.

Besides personal characteristics girls and boys, women and men, are given in the texts, gender stereotyping is apparent in the ways in which hobbies and interests are related often to only one gender. In *Key English* textbooks, male characters were explicitly related to ten different hobbies, seven of them representing some kind of sports or outdoor activities such as football (e.g. *Key 9*: 31), ice hockey (e.g. *Key 7*: 11), fishing (e.g. *Key 8*: 126), climbing and action sports (e.g. *Key 7*: 68–69). In addition, playing in a school orchestra (*Key 7*: 8), chess (*Key 7*: 69), poetry (*Key 8*: 8–12) and collecting stamps (*Key 7*: 68) were mentioned as male hobbies. Female characters were explicitly related to twelve different hobbies of which also seven represented sports or dancing (e.g. *Key 7*: 68). In addition, women were described to be interested in poetry (*Key 7*: 8–12), drawing (*Key 9*: 10), singing in a choir (*Key 7*: 8), reading (*Key 7*: 8) and shopping (*Key 7*: 84). It is notable that only women were related to dancing, drawing, reading and shopping. In the light of these simple statistics, girls were not positioned only in quiet, artistic roles indoors and boys in the physically active sphere outdoors, but also exceptions from the traditional stereotypes were made a girl was said to be interested in water polo (*Key 7*: 69), for instance. Closer reading of the texts, however, revealed traditional stereotypes.

An example of this is given already in the preparative part of the first *Key Text* which introduces three teenagers, Daniel Collins, Sandy Miller and Annie McGregor. They are not pilot characters of the text but were considered as important as pilot characters in

the present study because their hobbies and social roles are explicitly represented in the text and in the assignment the pupils are actually *asked* to identify with one of the characters and interview each other (*Key 7*: 8). Two of the characters, a boy and a girl, are interested in music, but a stereotypical division is made as Daniel plays in the school orchestra, whereas Annie sings in the school choir. Singing in a choir can be considered as a more feminine hobby, while playing an instrument could be seen as a more active and masculine hobby. The third character, Sandy, is also given a rather stereotypical female hobby as she is said to read a lot. In the actual text 1A (*Key 7*: 10–11) also the "likes and dislikes" of Kirk and Greg are listed, and they both are said to be interested in sports; one likes football and the other hockey and canoeing. It is also mentioned that Kirk dislikes TV soap operas, which is noteworthy as soap operas are often considered as a female genre.

Only a few of the stories of the textbooks take place at school. Attitudes towards school and studying are explicitly represented only in chapter 3A, *"I've enjoyed my time here"* (*Key 7*: 36–37) which presents a 15-year-old Emma Baker and her school in London in the form of a letter. It is not a surprise that the pilot character of the text is a girl as girls are traditionally considered to have a more positive attitude towards school than boys. Interestingly, the boys' attitudes towards school are not presented in any of the *Key* Texts, despite the fact that many of them are given the role of a pupil. In the above case, as well, the protagonist, Emma, represents a stereotypical girl who enjoys school and reads out religious stories in assemblies (*Key 7*: 36). Other stereotypes are, however, challenged again as Emma mentions media studies as one of her favourite subjects and says she enjoys sports and has belonged to three extra-curricular sports clubs (37).

The first four chapters of *Key 9* all focus on the same pilot characters, exchange students Miko, Coco, Juan and Marinetta, who are on an orientation camp in Canada at the beginning of their exchange year. In the first chapter 20A, *Maple Camp* (*Key 9*: 9–11), all teenagers introduce themselves and talk about their interests. Again, boys have somewhat stereotypical hobbies and interests: outdoor life, canoeing, camping, climbing, football and ice hockey. Both girls and boys are said to be interested in North

American Indians. Contrary to a traditional stereotype, also the head of the orientation camp is a woman, Janet, who clearly knows a great deal about camping and wildlife. One girl, Marinetta, represents a stereotypical girl as she is interested in art, handicrafts and drawing, but the portrayal of the other girl, Coco, in turn, challenges the stereotype as she is said to be crazy about sports. She has also played in the national football team of her home country Ghana. (9–11.)

As the previous discussion suggests, both male and female characters are represented as interested in sports in *Key English* textbooks. A traditional division into "girls sports" and "boys sports" is, however, apparent. For instance, ice hockey and fishing seem to be exclusively male activities according to the textbooks, whereas dancing and riding a horse are female dominated hobbies. Chapter 10A, *Departures* (*Key 8*: 21–22), for instance, introduces three young travellers, Ian, Raija and Johan, and a radio reporter who is interviewing them at the airport. Ian is going on holiday to Finland with his parents and younger brother, and the main thing he is looking forward is *fishing* (21). Raija, in turn, is going to Wales on a *walking holiday* with her best friend Mia (22).

Female and male sports are intentionally contrasted in chapter 5A, *Twin diaries* (*Key 7*: 68–69) which introduces teenage twins called Sharon and Sean Sebastian who are writing about their hobbies in their diaries. Both siblings are given several hobbies some of which are stereotypical. According to the text, Sean has earlier been interested in fishing and collecting stamps but he is getting more interested in action sports, all of which are traditionally considered as male interests. Sharon, in turn, is interested in dancing, especially ballet, and riding, both traditionally considered as female interests. As, for example, the following sample shows, stereotypical attitudes are directly conveyed in the lines of the characters.

(4) I'm even thinking of taking up rock-climbing soon. I've asked Sharon to join me but she's only interested in dancing and riding horses. *Typical girl*. (*Key 7*: 68, my italics.)

Sean's idea of a typical girl (Example 4) is, however, challenged by his sister Sharon who, in her second diary entry, says that she is going to start playing water polo for a change (69). Similarly, Sean gets a new hobby as he starts playing chess (69). It is apparent that the authors have considered the gender representations here, as well, and challenged some of the old stereotypes. Others, however, still remain, and it is questionable to include such strong stereotypical statements as "typical girl" in a textbook if gender equality is considered the overall objective in the education. On the one hand, the pupils may experience it as offending like a girl in one of the classes I teach[4] who, after reading the sentence, yelled out loud "How so? I'm a girl and I'm definitely not into riding or dancing. I play ice hockey!" (my translation). On the other hand, all the pupils do not necessarily question the stereotyping, and, if the teacher does not discuss the matter with the pupils, there is a risk that for some of them a "typical girl" is the only thing they will remember after studying chapter 5A.

Similarly to the preparative section of the first chapter in *Key 7*, also the preparative section of the first chapter in *Key 8* (8) conveys highly stereotypical representations of boys and girls. It introduces six teenagers, three girls and three boys, in the form of short poems that reveal the name and the nationality of the characters in the following chapter. In addition, each character is given "a special game", referring to their hobbies and interests. In these poems, girls are related to, again, riding and dancing. One of them does not have "a special game". The boys, in turn, are related to Olympic Games, fishing and football, which follows the traditional pattern. In the actual *Key Text* under the title *Young poets*, all of them are related to poetry as they are represented as "the six finalists in this year's Euroradio Poetry Contest" (10). In the body text they introduce their home countries and are given no special characteristics, but in the quotations next to each of their picture, there is a clear distinction in the attitudes of two finalists, a girl and a boy. The girl says that "I honestly don't mind if I win or not. The most important thing is poetry itself", whereas the boy on the following page says "I love poetry. And I'll do my best to win tonight" (10–11). On the third page, there is also a girl who says

[4] A girl on the 7th grade in Jalasjärven yläaste in 2011.

that she is hoping to win the competition, but adds to that "for my country and for my family". This suggests that in *Key English* textbooks male characters are considered as more competitive than female ones. This insight is reaffirmed in chapter 5A, in which Sean's diary entry starts with a description of him scoring the winning goal in a football match. He also writes that "winning tastes good" adding that "I'm the best in my school for my age" (*Key 7*: 68).

It seems that in *Key English* textbooks girls are portrayed as more interested in shopping and fashion than boys, which is in line with the traditional gender stereotypes. This division is clearly shown in chapter 6A, *Money isn't everything* (*Key 7*: 84–85) where four teenagers, two girls, two boys, and four parents, three mothers and a father, are discussing pocket money. One of the teenagers, a girl named Simone, gets distinctively more pocket money than the others. This is, a monthly allowance of 100 euros as well as two hundred euros for buying clothes, whereas two boys get a weekly allowance and the other girl does not get regular pocket money but earns money by helping her parents if needed and earns money that way. Both boys are also described helping their parents and doing household chores if they need extra money. The only exception from this is Simone. The reader is only told that Simone loves fashion and shopping and that she often uses her free time visiting the sales and hunting for bargains. On the same page, the reader also learns that Tom is not money minded, "unless it's Christmas or somebody's birthday" (*Key 7*: 84). What underlines the stereotypical difference between Tom and Simone is that Tom is not interested in brand names, and he just wears what his *mum* buys him.

Chapter 13A includes one of the most apparent examples of the authors' conscious intentions to challenge traditional gender stereotypes as it represents boys as interested in shopping and clothes. *Autumn in New England* (13A, *Key 8*: 60–61), introduces the reader an exchange student named Jon Flaherty who tells about a day he spent in a shopping mall with his host family. The chapter creates a stereotypical image of the roles of the father and the mother, which will be discussed later in the following section. The children of the family are, however, linked with specific interests that break the

traditional gender stereotypes. Rachel (13), spends her day at the cinema watching cartoons, whereas Ricky (15) is looking for clothes "different enough" with Jon (*Key 8*: 60–61). Stereotypically cartoons and movies would be considered more male interests than female ones, and, as some other representations in *Key English* textbooks (e.g. in chapters 6A and 17A) also underline, clothes more a female interest.

Technology, history and science are traditionally considered male dominated themes and subjects that men are more interested in than women. This stereotype is both maintained and challenged in *Key English* textbooks. Chapter 11A, *Life in the fast lane* (*Key 8*: 32–33, which deals with different vehicles that human beings have been able to build, starting from the invention of the wheel and ending up to airplanes, is the only chapter clearly related to history. In the text, men and their accomplishments, for example the Wright brothers, are mentioned several times but women only once in "men and women had dreamed of flying" (33). Male interest in technology is also underlined, for example, in chapter 19A, *Finntastic!* (*Key 8*: 126–127) in which Ian O'Connell, who describes his holiday in Finland and highlights that his family "hired a very good car; a large Volvo Estate which had plenty of room inside it" (126). This also seems to be somewhat disconnected with the topic as the text is supposed to focus on Finland. The stereotype of women and girls as less interested in science and technology is challenged in chapter 16A where an exchange student, Fadime Cooch, who is spending a summer in the American Southwest, tells how excited she was about visiting the NASA headquarters and meeting a real live astronaut. The astronaut is also a woman. In addition, *Key 9* (58–60) represents two women who work as a web designer and a scientist.

The references to the interests of adult female and male characters seem to include stereotypical conceptions more often than the ones of younger characters. An example of this is chapter 25A, *The Ferry Islander* (*Key* 9: 70–71) which represents adult women and men and their interests. The text consists of six letters to the editor, three of which are written by a woman and three by a man. In their letters, the women are thanking the local emergency services for their efforts in saving a cat from a tree, praising the local

health care system and requesting more money for schools, whereas men talk about the damage a lightning has caused to electric appliances and that there is too much traffic and trash around. This adds to the traditional stereotype of men being more environmentally involved and technically skilled than women and women as more interested in education and health care and needing help more often than men. It is also noteworthy that most of the women are thanking for something, whereas men are complaining or warning the others of something.

Relationships between female and male characters are explicitly represented only in *Key 9*. In chapters 20A–23A, four teenagers who are at an orientation camp in Canada at the beginning of their exchange year are represented as developing close relationships. Although Marinetta and Miko as well as Juan and Coco are said to spend a lot of time together, it is underlined that they are only friends. Their roles in the relationships are, however, clearly stereotypical. The boys are represented as the ones who help and comfort the girls and give them advice, whereas girls are shown as weak and ignorant, as the ones needing help and support. In chapter 21A, for example, Marinetta finds some berries and asks from Miko if they are edible. Miko checks this from a book and gives Marinetta permission to eat them (22). In 22A (*Key 9*: 31–32), Coco, in turn, is worrying about drowning when they go canoeing, while Juan is calming her down by saying "Don't worry [...] I'll be there, right beside you" and puts " his hand on her shoulder" (32). Coco, however, shows some determination, and the discussion goes on as follows:

(5)

Juan: Look. If you can't do it, you can't do it. That's all there is to it.
Coco: Do you really think I would give up that easily.
Juan: Well, no. Of course, not. I mean...
Coco: Make sure the Internet is switched off. Good night!

Coco rose and left for her room with her head held high. (*Key 9*: 32)

As Example 5 shows, Coco leaves the room not accepting the stereotypical role she is given as the weak girl who is afraid of water. This is not the only case, where it seems

that the text has first been based on stereotypical assumptions of a girl being more timid than the boys, which is challenged afterwards by adding a different end to the story. The pupils are, however, more likely to identify with the stereotypical representation they might have already internalized than to remember the end of the story, especially as the *Key Text* does not tell what actually happened when Coco and Juan went canoeing.

In conclusion, the analysis showed that female and male characters appear equally often in *Key English* textbooks, but that they are often related to somewhat stereotypical characteristics and interests. Traditional gender stereotypes are also occasionally challenged as, for instance, a girl is mentioned playing football in the national team and a boy to be interested in buying clothes. These seem, however, to be exceptions and the boys are generally presented as brave, active and outgoing, interested in sports and technology, whereas the girls are kind and caring and interested in clothes, art and relationships.

The characteristics and interests female and male characters are related to, play an important role in conveying and maintaining traditional stereotypes in school textbooks. Besides them, a possible gender bias, even a more explicit one, may be found in the occupational and social roles given to women and men in textbooks. They will be discussed in the following section.

4.2 Social and Occupational Roles

Besides the relatively equal visibility and descriptions of female and male characters in *Key English* textbooks, the present study explored their occupational and social roles. First, the focus was on the social roles women and men were attached to. In this part of the analysis, also the characters that were only mentioned in passing, but were not pilot characters were taken into account.

Approximately 67% of the masculine common nouns and 70% of the feminine common nouns in *Key English* textbooks were related to the social role of the characters in the family. The textbook thus presented women and men relatively equally in family roles. The most common family roles of males in all three textbooks were *father* (23 references), *brother* (8), *boyfriend* (5) and *granddad* (2). Other relational or social roles given to male characters were *son* (1), *lad* (1), *gentlemen* (1) and *Mr* (1). The most common family roles represented be women were *mother* (26 references), *sister* (8), *grandma* (4) and *girlfriend* (2). Other forms referring to the social roles of women were *wife* (1), *daughter* (1), *Miss* (1), *lady* (2) and *honey* (1).

It seemed that, in terms of numbers, both women and men were given a variety of social roles and that the occurrence of different roles in the books was relatively equal: *father* was mentioned 23 and *mother* 26 times, *brother* and *sister* both 8 times, *son* and *daughter* both once. Only *grandma* was mentioned twice as often as *granddad*, and one female character was referred to as *wife*, stating a marital status. No equivalent male (e.g. husband, fiancé) were introduced. On the other hand, *boyfriend* was used five times, whereas *girlfriend* was mentioned only twice and, also noteworthy is that, adult male characters were occasionally referred to as *boyfriends*. For example, in chapter 2A (*Key 7*: 24–25), a character called Sam tells that her/his "mum's new boyfriend is allergic to dogs". Contrary to the results of previous studies, it seems that *Key English textbooks* represent men more often in relation to women than vice versa. A closer reading of the texts gave, again, a better picture of the way in which women and men and girls and boys are seen in *Key English* textbooks.

All in all, parents were quite often represented in the textbooks. Either *mum* or *dad* or both were referred to in 16 of all 28 chapters. It was also noted that in *Key 9* parents were mentioned in only three chapters, whereas *Key 7* and *8* had only few chapters with no reference to mother or father. This may be due to the topics which in *Key 7* and *8* deal with family a great deal more often than the ones in *Key 9*. Though parents are present in the texts, which is natural as the books are targeted at pupils, they are seldom pilot characters. Usually they are represented in relation to their children as care takers

or boundary setters. Still, they also offer a role model for their children who seem to invariably respect their parents in *Key English* textbooks.

According to the representations in the textbooks, fathers seem to be given the traditional role as the supporters of the family and they are not represented taking part in domestic work as often as mothers. An example of this is represented in chapter 19A where a boy describes a day his family spent at the Linnanmäki amusement park and tells that his father "spent a fortune there" (*Key 8*: 126). In chapter 26A, the father, Phil, states that "I work hard, I feed my kids, I read good books" (*Key 9*: 79). This, again, reveals another viewpoint to the role fathers are given in the society depicted in *Key English* textbooks. Mothers, instead, are more often mentioned in the domestic context, taking care of the children or the house. *Mom* is the one who, for example, drives the children to school (*Key 7*: 8), tells them to keep their room tidy (*Key 7*: 11) and chooses the clothes especially for the boys (*Key 7*: 84, 96). Although the mother is said to drive the children to school, chapter 19A suggests that the one who drives the car on a family vacation is the father, and this is taken for granted as Ian tells that "[i]t felt really funny driving on the wrong side of the road [in Finland], but Dad soon got used to it" (*Key 9*: 126).

Also grandparents and are mentioned as part of the families represented in *Key English* textbooks, and they invariably seem to be close to their grandchildren. In chapter 4A (*Key English*: 51), one of the children taking part in the chat conversation tells that his grandpa is the best friend he'll ever have (chapter 10A; *Key 8*:21–22), a 13 year old Johan is going on a holiday to Las Palmas with his grandmother and, in chapter 19A (*Key 9*: 126–127), the granddad of the pilot character Ian has won tickets to Finland in a lottery and given them to Ian's family because he himself is too old to travel. As these examples show, the grandparents represented in the books are, for instance, best friends with their grandchildren and travelling abroad. Johan's grandmother is actually mistakenly assumed to be Johan's mother because she "looked so young" (*Key 8*: 22). This may be considered as challenging the traditional stereotype of grandparents as old and frail.

In the analysis, it was noted that fathers are often directly quoted by their children in *Key English* textbooks. In chapter 6A (*Key 7*: 85), a girl, Maureen, tells that "nobody gets anything without doing something – that's what Dad says, anyway" and in chapter 15A, another boy, Nolan, repeats what his host father has said about Hollywood ("Hollywood is a real place, full of unreal people", *Key 8*: 80). In chapter 16A (*Key 8*: 89), Fadime Cooch is given the following line:

> (6) Nevada is also famous for another reason: Las Vegas, the gambling capital of the world. But *my host dad said* that he wouldn't visit there if it were the last place on earth. So we saved our money. (*Key 8*: 89, my italics.)

Also one of the pilot characters in chapter 19A quotes his father when he describes their trip to Linnanmäki by saying that "dad said he spent a fortune there" (*Key 8*: 126). In the light of these examples, fathers can be considered as being not only the economic decision makers but also the thought or opinion leaders in the families. Mothers, in turn, are quoted only once in all three books and only in a domestic context. This happens in chapter 1A where a teenage boy tells about his life and says that "mom keeps telling us to keep our things tidy" (*Key 7*: 11). It is also noteworthy, that whereas the father's opinions and thoughts are considered to represent the truth by the children, the mother's opinions or requests are not similarly followed. The mother's request for keeping things tidy, for instance, is completely overlooked by her son who says "we just keep the door closed" (*Key 7*: 11).

The distribution of family responsibilities in a family are explicitly represented in chapter 13A (*Key 8*: 60–61). In this chapter, an exchange student, John Flaherty, tells about his day in a shopping centre with his American host family. He says it was the mother who went shopping for groceries, whereas the father "rushed off to the hardware and garden stores" (60). Mother also took care of the youngest child who she left under a babysitter's supervision, while she went off to buy the groceries. (60–61) Both parents are given the traditional family role, mother taking care of the food and the children, and father dealing with the things outside the house. Moreover, to underline this, at the beginning of the story, it is told that this is how millions of Americans do their

shopping. The reader cannot be sure what the parents actually thought of this task division nor what the father actually bought, but due to the word selection "dad *rushed off* to the hardware and garden stores" and to the fact that only the amount of money *he had spent* on tools and garden equipment (over 500 dollars) is mentioned, it is easy to get the idea that the father actually enjoyed his task more than the mother. She went on "a massive shopping spree" and bought "enough food and household goods for a family of ten in Belfast" only because it was her duty (60–61).

The analysis showed that mothers are rarely mentioned in relation to their work outside the house. The work of a mother is named only once, "Mom works for the local bakery […]" (*Key 9*: 118). Fathers, instead, are more often given an occupational role (e.g. decorator in *Key 7*: 85; firefighter in *Key 8*: 118–119) besides their family role as a father. In chapter 10A, Ian reveals that they are travelling to Finland because his "dad has been there on business [and] knows a lot people there" (*Key 8*: 21). In the following extract from chapter 6A (*Key 7*: 85), Maureen describes her attitude to money:

> (7) I think children should earn their pocket money. Nobody gets anything without doing something – that's what Dad says, anyway. If I'm really hard up, he will always find work for me. He's a decorator, so sometimes I help him with the painting. (*Key 7*: 85.)

In this example, Maureen's father is clearly the economic head of the family and teaches his children how to earn and use money. He is given a clear family role but also a profession. (Example 7.) In the same text, three other parents, mothers, are represented, and all of them are telling how much they give their children pocket money. Instead of a profession, one of the mothers is said to be a single parent, which again underlines the role of the women as a mother and a carer. What also makes the case noteworthy, is that instead of telling how this single mother gets the money and where she works, her son says that he will buy his *mum* a big house somewhere if he, one day, becomes a millionaire. (84–85.)

All in all, professions were not mentioned that often in *Key English* textbooks. This may be because choosing one's own field is not of current interest of the pupils in the lower secondary school, especially in the lower grades. This view is supported by the fact that only one fifth of all professions mentioned in the textbooks were depicted in *Key* 7, and over half of them in *Key 9*. The three textbooks introduce altogether 54 occupations, most of which (41) are gender unspecific. Both female and male characters are given ten different occupational roles. Ten of the pilot characters are given a profession, this is, five women and five men. In the light of mere statistics, again, it seems that both genders are equally treated, women are represented in occupational roles as often as men, and that this aspect of gender neutrality has been carefully considered by the authors. Also a closer look at the occupations shows the intentions of challenging the stereotypes.

The most often mentioned profession was a teacher. More precisely, male characters in *Key English* textbooks represented the occupations of a gym-teacher (*Key 7*: 34), an on-line moderator (*Key 7*: 50), a decorator (*Key 7*: 85), a reporter (*Key 8*: 21), a sales clerk (*Key 8*: 61), a boxer (*Key 8*: 101), a firefighter (*Key 8*: 119; *Key 9*: 70), a cameraman (*Key 9*: 11) and a nurse (*Key 9*: 59). Female characters, in turn, were given the occupations of a head teacher (*Key 7*: 36), a teacher (*Key 7*: 103), a dancer (*Key 7*: 68), a fundraiser (*Key 7*: 96–97), a waitress (*Key 9*: 61), a sales girl (*Key 8*: 61), an astronaut (*Key 8*: 90), a baker (*Key 9*: 118), a web designer (*Key 9*: 58) and a life-scientist (*Key 9*: 60).

In relation to their professions, men were twice explicitly described as heroes whereas no female heroes were identified. In chapter 18A, *Heroes* (*Key 8*: 118–119), a young girl, Melissa Esposito, tells about the September 11 attacks and about her father who worked as a firefighter in New York City when the towers of the World Trade Centre collapsed. The text refers to all firefighters and police officers who were there that day as heroes but focuses on Melissa's father. Melissa describes her father by saying "he would do anything to help save the lives of people and animals" (119). To draw the

contrast, Melissa's mum is said to be working at the local bakery. The textbooks give, thus, the impression that women cannot be heroes.

Otherwise the occupational roles represented in *Key Texts* did not seem to follow the stereotypes of women working within the fields of social and health care, education and services and men in industrial fields, in manufacturing and transportation. There are, however, representations that confirm the traditional stereotypes as, for instance, a woman is represented in a leading post in the *school* context (*head teacher*) and a man is again related to sports as a gym teacher. Both are mentioned in the same chapter (3A, *Key 7*: 34–36). Still, stereotypes are also challenged as women are given occupational roles, for example, on the fields of science and technology. *Key 8* mentions an astronaut who is a female, her occupational role being far from the traditional stereotypes (16A, *Key 8*: 90). Also male occupational stereotypes are challenged as men are represented in professions that are traditionally considered as feminine, such as a nurse (*Key 9*: 59) and a decorator (*Key 7*: 85).

The clearest concurrent portrayals of female and male professions were found in chapter 24A (*Key 9*: 58–60), where the authors have distinctly paid attention to the possible gender bias and stereotypical representations of male and female professions. The chapter introduces two women, Jenny and Pia, who work as a web designer and a life scientist, and one man, Dave, who is a nurse. Their professions are totally contrary to the stereotypical occupational roles of men and women. The difficulties young women often encounter in combining their career and family life is, however, also brought up in the text as Jenny says: "I don't think I will be working like this when I'm thirty. Having a family would change things, I suppose. You can't be away from home twelve hours a day, including weekends. It can break up homes." (58.) This is something Dave does not necessarily have to worry about even though he works long hours. His worries, instead, seem to follow the stereotype of men being more economically oriented as he says: "I think I'm in the right job. Mind you, I could do with a bit more money" (59).

The traditional division of the labour market can also be seen in some of the occupations as the only professional athlete (boxer) is a man, the waitress is a woman, firefighters are only men, and most of the teachers, women. The sexism inherent in some of the occupational terms is discussed in the following section among other forms of overt sexisms found in *Key English* textbooks.

4.3 Sexist Language

Gender bias is conveyed through textbooks by relating occupational roles with only one gender. In addition, naming professions in a sexist way, maintains gender inequality. It is sexist to use common occupational words in forms that refer to only one gender (Michel 1986: 53–54). The analysis showed that professions represented in *Key English* textbooks are mostly gender neutral. Some occupational words only in masculine or feminine forms were, however, found, including waitress, sales girl, cameraman, repairman and waiter. On the one hand, the sexism of these terms depends on the context in which case, for example, naming a male character a camera*man* is not sexist in the same way as naming a female character a camera*man* would be. On the other hand, the usage of such gendered terms may be questioned as alternative forms are available, and it is the authors' choice to write about a sales girl or a sales person. By using gender neutral terms in such cases, the authors could avoid conveying any kind of stereotypical gender conceptions.

As noted in section 3.4, it is also sexist to use a masculine pronoun or common noun to refer to people in general (Michel 1986: 53–54). The authors of *Key English* textbooks seem to have taken this into account, but some sexism still remains in the texts. Generic constructions, a male pronoun or noun, used when referring to all human beings or to a person with unidentifiable sex, were found in three *Key Texts* or their preparative sections. In chapter 4A (*Key 7*: 49), the male pronoun *his* is used as a generic pronoun when referring to a friend in a questionnaire as follows:

(8) If your *friend* tells you that *his* mother is seriously ill and asks you not to tell anyone about it, do you...
a) tell your parents?
b) tell no one?
c) tell your best friend but ask him or her not to tell anyone else? (*Key 7*: 49, my italics.)

It is not self-evident that the friend a pupil answering the questionnaire is thinking of is a male, and a more gender neutral option *his/her* or *her/his* could have been used. In *Key 9* (69), in the preparative section of chapter 25A there is a similar questionnaire and *a friend* is similarly referred to with the male generic pronoun *his* as follows:

(9) What would you do if you were on a crowded bus and an elderly lady got on?
a) I'd give her my seat right away.
b) I would ask my *friend* to give her *his* seat.
c) I'd look out of the window. (*Key 9*: 69, my italics.)

In this case, it is more understandable that the authors have chosen the male pronoun as it is proceeded by a female pronoun and it would cause unnecessary repetition if *her* was used again. This problem could, however, be avoided by changing the gender of the person who is getting on the bus. Distracting repetition would thus be reduced as the second option would read as "I would ask my friend to give *him his/her* seat. Some might claim that it is important to keep the text as simple as possible and, that adding another pronoun to every part of the text where one appears would make the text complicated. This, however, does not seem to be what the authors have been thinking as the answer alternatives of the preceding question are include both genders (e.g. *I would leave him or her alone*) and there is enough space on the page. Retained this way this part of the questionnaire conveys the idea of the masculine pronoun as the norm and as more neutral than the feminine one, which is in the realm of sexist language use.

Besides the usage of a masculine pronoun to refer to people in general, the common noun *man* is also used when referring to all human beings in *Key 8* (32–34). Chapter 11A which deals with the history and development of different vehicles human beings have built begins as follows:

(10) On land, early *man* had only one slow way of getting from one place to another – on foot. When *he* learned how to tame such animals as camels and horses, *he* was able to ride on their back. (*Key 8*:32–34, my italics.)

The use of *man* may be acceptable in the case of a common practice, but questionable in expressions like this, telling about the history of civilization to which both men and women have contributed. It is also possible that the authors have consciously used the old style in a text that deals with historical events and achievements, attained by only men and leaving it to the teachers to discuss the complexity of the language with the pupils. It cannot be, however, guaranteed that this will happen, and such a conscious maintenance of sexist language in a school textbook should be questioned as it is one feature that maintains a gender bias in the textbooks.

Despite some cases where a masculine pronoun or noun is used to refer to people in general, *Key English* textbooks are generally neutral in terms of gender. It even seems that the use of gender specific pronouns is avoided in such cases where alternatives needed to be given. Constructions such as *him/her*, *he or she*, *girls and boys* were found only in three chapters. An issue that still should be taken into account, however, is the prioritization of genders, which is also considered a feature of sexist language. In *Key English* textbooks, the male pronoun is consistently mentioned first in all cases where both female and male pronouns are given. The consistency could be seen as a positive thing from the perspective of the layout, for example, but the focus being on the gender neutrality of the language, the order in which male and female pronouns appear in the text should vary.

Another form of prioritization, also related to sexist language, is the prioritisation of either gender in introducing characters in such phrases where both genders are represented. *Key English* textbooks introduced, for example, "*Sean* and Sharon Sebastian" (*Key 7*: 68), "*Max*, Jill and Emma" (*Key 7*: 97), "*brothers* or sisters" (*Key 7*: 8), "*"Boyfriends are boyfriends*. Girlfriends are girlfriends" (*Key 7*: 51) and "Every *boy* and girl's mobile phone should have a call limit" (*Key 7*: 83), "Many *men* and women

had dreamed of flying" (*Key 8*: 33). Out of altogether 18 cases introducing female and male characters in pairs or in groups, only in 7 the female character is mentioned first. Of such cases where proper names are used, a female character is prioritized only once ("*Sarah*, Paul, Earl and Pat" in *Key 7*: 96). Common nouns such as *brother and sister*, *girls and boys*, *men and women*, are used in nine of the cases and only in two of them the female term is mentioned first. What is also notable is that the phrase "mum and dad" is always in that order, the female character, "mum", being prioritised. This adds to the earlier discussion of women being introduced more often in the role of a mother than men are introduced as fathers, underlining the perception of women having a more important family role than men.

In the present study, prioritisation was also analysed in terms of the appearance of the characters in the texts. Of all the 28 *Key Texts*, 19 represented both male and female characters and, in 12 of them, the female character was introduced or spoke first. It seems, thus, that if male characters are more often introduced first in the phrases inside the texts, female characters are prioritized when in the chapters as a whole. Three chapters represent only male characters and three only female characters. Three remaining chapters are narrated by an anonymous narrator with no identifiable gender.

In conclusion, there seems to be a clear tendency to avoid the use of sexist language in the *Key English* series. Some cases of the generic usage of the male pronoun *his* and the noun *man* were, however, detected. Also some occupational words are used in forms referring to merely one gender. In addition, it was noted that there is a tendency of introducing masculine characters before feminine characters in both dual pronoun constructions such as him/her and in other word pairs (e.g. girls and boys), as well as, on the narrative level of the texts.

4.4 Women and Men in *Key English* Illustrations

Besides scrutinising gender representations inherent in the language, the present study paid attention to the prevalence of female and male characters in the illustrations of *Key Texts*. The purpose of the content analysis of the illustrations in *Key English* was to study whether women and men are equally treated in the books in quantitative terms. In addition, family roles, activities and occupations they were related to were focused on. The analysis covered only the photographs depicting realistic male or female characters in the textbooks, excluding, for example, the *Moomin* cartoon strip in *Key 8* (129; see Appendix 3). Other pictures were left out of the study as the character's sex was not explicit in drawings. Photographs representing realistic characters were also considered easier for the pupils to identify with than drawings. Characters appearing in photographs with an ambiguous sex were also left out of the account.

Moreover, all pictures portraying sports were considered as representing a hobby instead of a profession. A few pictures depicting Indian culture (women washing clothes in a river, *Key 8*: 42) or historical events were also excluded from the analysis as the role of the women is very different in them than it is in contemporary Finland (or England / the US) and this kind of extreme portrayals were not considered having an influence on pupils conceptions of gender roles in Finland. In addition, the pictures of celebrities (e.g. Princess Diana) were left out since they were considered individuals representing something that is far away from the reality the pupils live in. The pictures on the covers of the books were analysed separately as they were considered more important than other pictures because they are repeatedly seen by the pupils always when they handle the books.

The *Key Texts* of the three textbooks included altogether 190 pictures. The content analysis of the illustrations indicated that in around 38% (72) of the pictures represent a female character whereas male characters were portrayed in and 35% (67) of the pictures. In the light of these statistics, both genders are relatively equally represented in the *Key English* illustrations. The numbers are also somewhat balanced in all three

books. The pilot characters are represented also in the illustrations in 14 out of 28 *Key Texts* and, of all 76 central characters, 37 (20 female and 17 male protagonists) were introduced in pictures as well.

In most of the illustrations, girls and boys or women and men were portrayed in action (subjects), doing something instead of just smiling at the camera (objects). The most popular topic for illustrations seemed to be sports, and in most of the pictures, it is men who are engaging in sports. Much of the sports roles appear in chapter 5A (*Key 7*: 66–70) which focuses on hobbies and introduces several sports. Altogether, women or girls are portrayed doing sports or dancing in only 5 pictures whereas 13 pictures had men or boys doing sports. It was also noted that male sports roles tend to show more variation than the ones of female characters. Male characters are depicted in eight different sports roles compared to the female characters' six (see Appendix 1 for examples).

Only a few professions are portrayed in *Key Text* illustrations, and women and men are relatively equally represented in them. Male characters are given the occupational roles of an actor (*Key 9*: 106) and a nurse (*Key 9*: 59), whereas female characters are portrayed as working in a clothing store (*Key 7*: 98), on a computer (a web designer; *Key 9*: 58) and as a TV reporter (*Key 9*: 76). This shows that occupational stereotypes are challenged in the illustrations of *Key English* textbooks as they are used in many texts.

Otherwise, the illustrations of *Key English* textbooks seem to portray men and women, girls and boys, in rather stereotypical roles. In one picture, for example, a little boy is shopping in a grocery store with his mother (*Key 8*: 60) and, in another, a family is watching television together on a couch, and the mother has two of the children under her arms whereas the father is almost looking away from them and holds his hand on his forehead instead of holding one of the children (*Key 9*: 78). When boys are portrayed playing beach volley, jumping in the lake for a swim and driving a jet ski, girls are hugging each other, reading a book, shopping for clothes or listening to music (see Appendix 1).

Most of the pictures dealing with clothes and shopping are of females. There is, however, one photo, where a girl and a boy are window shopping together (*Key 7*: 82). It is noteworthy, that only female characters are portrayed with pets (*Key 7*: 24) and shopping for groceries (*Key 8*: 60) as well as reading newspapers or books (*Key 9*: 77, 79). Only women are also represented as mothers alone with children and, if men are portrayed as fathers, the mother is always along in the picture (e.g. *Key 9*: 78). Surprisingly, only boys are represented doing household chores (*Key 7*: 86).

Photographs portraying friendship include both female and male characters. In a few pictures, friendship between girls and boys is portrayed as they are shown to hold hands or sitting next to each other (e.g. *Key 8*: 100–101). Representations of friendship between the same sex characters are, however, more common, and the nature of friendship between girls seems to differ from the friendship between boys. Girls are also more often portrayed to have a closer friendship than boys who, instead, seem to spend time in bigger groups and, while girls are portrayed embracing and sitting close to each other, boys are playing or just spending time together (see Appendix 1). A clear contrast between the two sexes is represented in *Key 7* (48–49) where there are two pictures, one with three girls and another with two boys. The girls are embracing each other, whereas one of the boys seems to hold the other in a headlock and points at him with his wrist. Both boys and girls are smiling and clearly having fun, but the pictures clearly convey a stereotypical idea of boys joking, playing and cavorting with their friends, while girls will chat and show their attachment more explicitly.

In some cases, stereotypical conceptions are also conveyed through the layout of the text. Whereas girls are writing their thoughts in traditional diaries, boys' thoughts and stories are more often represented in the form of an e-mail. For instance in chapter 15A (*Warm regards from America*, *Key 8*: 79–80), a male exchange student, Nolan Campbell, has written three e-mails to his family about his life in San Francisco. Chapter 5A (*Key 7*: 68–69), in turn, consists of four diary entries by twins Sean and Sharon, and Sharon's diary seems to be a traditional one, whereas Sean writes on a computer. In addition, Beryl's notes in chapter 14A (*Key 8*: 69–70) are represented in a

form of a traditional diary, which seems to be related to female characters in all the books. The difference is shown in the layout of the pages and remains to be consistent throughout the books.

On the covers of the books, both male and female characters are portrayed in 10 pictures and, thus, represented equally in terms of appearance (see Appendix 2). Contrary to the representations in other pictures, cover illustrations represent female characters more often in a sporting role than male characters. Women or girls are portrayed walking with surf boards and hiking whereas boys are playing football in one picture. Girls are also related to playing balalaika and spending time with friends in a concert or other similar events, while football is the only spare time activity related to boys. The observation of the professions men and women are related to in cover illustrations, however, suggests the opposite as five male characters and only one female character are portrayed in an occupational role. The roles men are given are the ones of a police officer, a businessman, a carpenter and a pizza deliverer, whereas the only woman shown in an occupational role is a TV reporter. Most of the pictures representing free time activities are on the cover of *Key 7* and the ones depicting professional roles on the cover of *Key 9.* A quick glance over the front cover of the latter one leads to a misleading conception of men dominating all fields of life as the only pictures portraying women are on the back cover.

In conclusion, the quantitative analysis of the pictures showed that females and males are relatively equally visible in textbook illustrations, with some exceptions of, for example, on the cover of *Key 9.* Male characters dominate the sporting roles in the illustrations, and women are portrayed as mothers more often than men as fathers. Moreover, both sexes are represented in rather stereotypical roles (e.g. girls shopping, boys fishing, women working at a clothes store and men as police officers). Gender stereotypes are conveyed not only through the pictures, but sometimes also through the layout of the *Key Texts*. These biases should be taken into consideration when modifying the books and editing new study material as the unproportioned representation of males may lead to the view of masculinity representing the norm.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the present study has been to explore whether *Key English* textbooks convey and maintain a gender bias and stereotypical representations of women and men, thus, implementing the hidden curriculum, that is, the unrecognized and unintended information, values, and beliefs that are part of the learning process. Altogether three textbooks were analysed. The analysis aimed at scrutinizing the most important and prominent features that contribute to gender ideology: the prevalence of female and male characters in the textbooks, their occupational and social roles and interests and the possible sexist language and stereotypes through which gender inequality would be conveyed and maintained.

Based on the results of the previous studies, the outcome of the present study was a positive surprise as the situation has distinctively improved. It, however, showed that, despite all the actions taken in order to increase gender equality in education, there still is sexism in Finnish EFL textbooks, and they are not fully in line with the objectives of gender equality represented in the core curriculum and in *Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008–2011*. Nevertheless, sexism and stereotypical gender representations are perhaps more difficult to detect as the forms are less explicit than before. Whereas previous studies have, for example, indicated clear female invisibility in textbooks, this bias has been corrected and inequalities lay deeper in the word and sentence level in the texts with female and male characters relatively equally present in them.

In general, the textbooks seemed to convey gender stereotypes through the hidden curriculum as they often depicted males in occupational and social roles that included responsibility and power, while the females were portrayed in nurturing roles and taking care of others. Female characters were also represented as more family oriented than male characters, whereas mothers did not have an occupation as often as the fathers did. The most obvious gender stereotypes were found in *Key 7* (2002), which is published 7 years earlier than the other two, which might explain why gender representations and

equality have not been considered as carefully in *Key 7* as in the two other books. The present study covered only the *Key Texts* and illustrations of three *Key English* textbooks, but the result may be considered as representing the overall trend of the books.

It was noted that traditional gender stereotypes are also often challenged in the textbooks as an implication on the increased knowledge of the issue. This is, however, done only superficially, and some of the cases seem a bit too obvious as if a story had been first written and the characters changed later. There is a clear requisition for real and authentic examples of equal gender representations. Another suggestion in order to improve the equality of the books is that the authors could try ensuring the equality of gender representations in the *Key Texts* as they are the ones that are receive most attention in the classroom to in schools due to, for instance, the lack of time. During the analysis, it was noted that the books often approach the same subject from a different point of view in the B sections of the chapters. Chapter 3A, where a girl tells about her school and studies, for instance, is followed by chapter 3B in which a boy, in turn, tells about his school and studies (*Key* 7: 36–41). If these two could be integrated it could increase gender equality in practice.

Although it seems a simple task to change and remove sexist and stereotyped representations from the books, the hidden curriculum works on several levels and improving the books is not necessarily enough. As Michel (1986: 66–70) has noted already in the 1980's, teachers may not have enough knowledge in order to be able to detect sexism in textbooks, and they may themselves have stereotypical conceptions of gender. This may still hold true and it is, thus, important to educate and empower the teachers to make them able to evaluate and question gender representations given in the study material and discuss them with the pupils if needed.

On the basis of the analysis, it seems that *Key English* textbooks aim at reflecting the reality instead of offering more advanced views of, for example, gender related family roles. This is shown through a number of representations which are in line with what

surveys have proven to be the real situation. The sports girls and boys are related to, for instance, go hand in hand with the contemporary situation (girls favouring horse riding and dancing and boys football and ice hockey) disclosed in a recent survey by *Kansallinen liikuntatutkimus 2009–2010* (Suomen Liikunta ja Urheilu 2010: 9).

On the one hand, it is one of the purposes of the EFL textbooks to reflect the contemporary society but, on the other hand, learning materials have the potential for generating new understandings on, for instance, gender. While balancing between these two objectives, the primary question is, why create differences between men and women, girls and boys, if girls want to play ice hockey as well as the boys, for instance, as it is the differences in representation that create the difference also in reality. This question arose several times during the analysis as several unequal gender representations were so clear that the authors could certainly have avoided using them if they had been aware of them. A depictive example of this kind of authentic material could be a *Moomin* comic strip (*Key 8*: 129; Appendix 3) which was not included in the actual study because of its unrealistic characters but which includes an extreme example of stereotypical gender representations. In the strip, Moomintroll and Snufkin are camping and rejoicing in having "no *womenfolk* around". Snufkin also mentions that he "can't imagine women coming here [to the wilderness]". In addition, Moomintroll mentions that the bread they are baking over hot stones is different from "Snork Maiden's rock cakes". Regardless of the end of the strip where Moomintroll seems to be missing home, it seems that the women are relatively strongly diminished in the strip and regarded as not being able to survive in the wilderness the way men are. It is noteworthy, that beside the strip it reads that "Tove Jansson drew the comic strip Moomin for the Evening News, London, from 1953 to 1959" which lets the reader assume that the strip itself is from the 1950's. It can, however, be questioned if this fact will be taken into consideration by the teachers and the pupils. More importantly, the selection of the strip may be questioned, as there are certainly a large number of *Moomin* comic strips to choose from.

It also seems, as Robinson (2008: 229) has stated, that education and teaching materials continue to deny that sexuality is an integral part of a child's identity, even though school makes significant contribution to the pupils' sexuality as it is a social construction. In this sense, the books do not reflect the realities and possible complexities of children's lives. Despite the prevalent conception that sexuality is irrelevant to children, textbooks consistently construct children as heteronormative subjects with heterosexual futures.

There are a few examples of other than nuclear family in *Key English* textbooks, which clearly reflects the reality of modern society and can be considered as one of the advances of the series. Sexual minorities, however, are entirely ignored as only two genders are represented in the three books. *Key English* series, thus, seems to be entirely heteronormative. This is clearly against the objective of equality in relation to sexual orientation as there are no objects for identification for adolescents, boys and girls who are still searching their sexuality. On the one hand, this is understandable as too prominent deviations from social norms and myths may actually get the pupils' attention from the learning contents and distract the learning process. As a teacher, it is easy to picture a situation where pupils would only pay attention to, for example, a picture representing a family with two fathers or mothers and ignoring the actual learning contents, for instance, the grammar. One the other hand, current issues should, however, be considered in school irrespective of the subject taught as they represent the reality nowadays. If the study material or the teacher is not ready to acknowledge it, they are depriving equal opportunities of the pupils as human beings.

All teachers use textbooks and other study materials in different ways. Some may follow and repeat exactly what the textbook says, whereas others may analyse the contents critically and utilise them according to their best understanding. Increasing the awareness about the possible gender bias in textbooks among textbook authors and teachers may help to reduce inequality between men and women in society, which was one of the objectives of this study, as well. Nonetheless, also pupils may explicitly react to gender representations offered by the textbooks and regard them biased. It is,

however, extremely unlikely that they would actually demand changes to the books. As Helakorpi (2011) has stated, there might be demand for textbook education, similar to media education that already has established itself in the Finnish education system, among the pupils. They should themselves be taught to critically evaluate, for instance, gender representations in textbooks instead of taking them for granted as part of the hidden curriculum.

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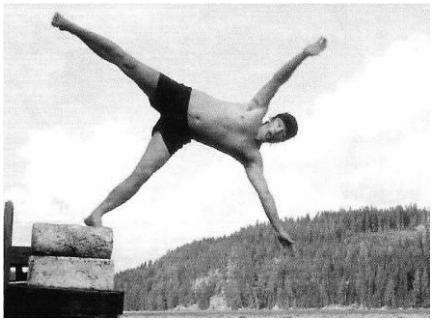
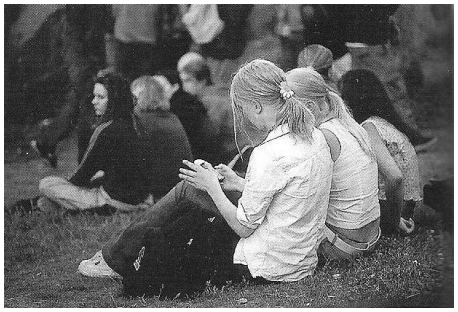
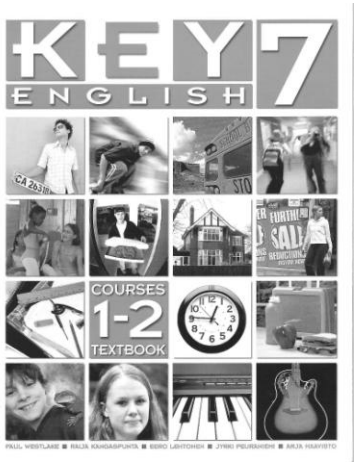
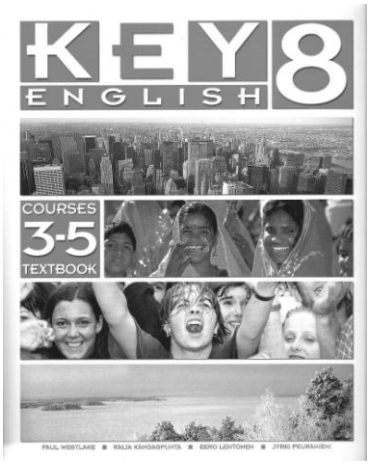
Appendix 1. Examples of pictures representing female/male characters in *Key English* textbooks

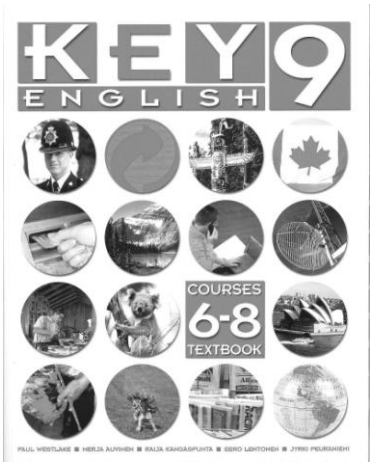




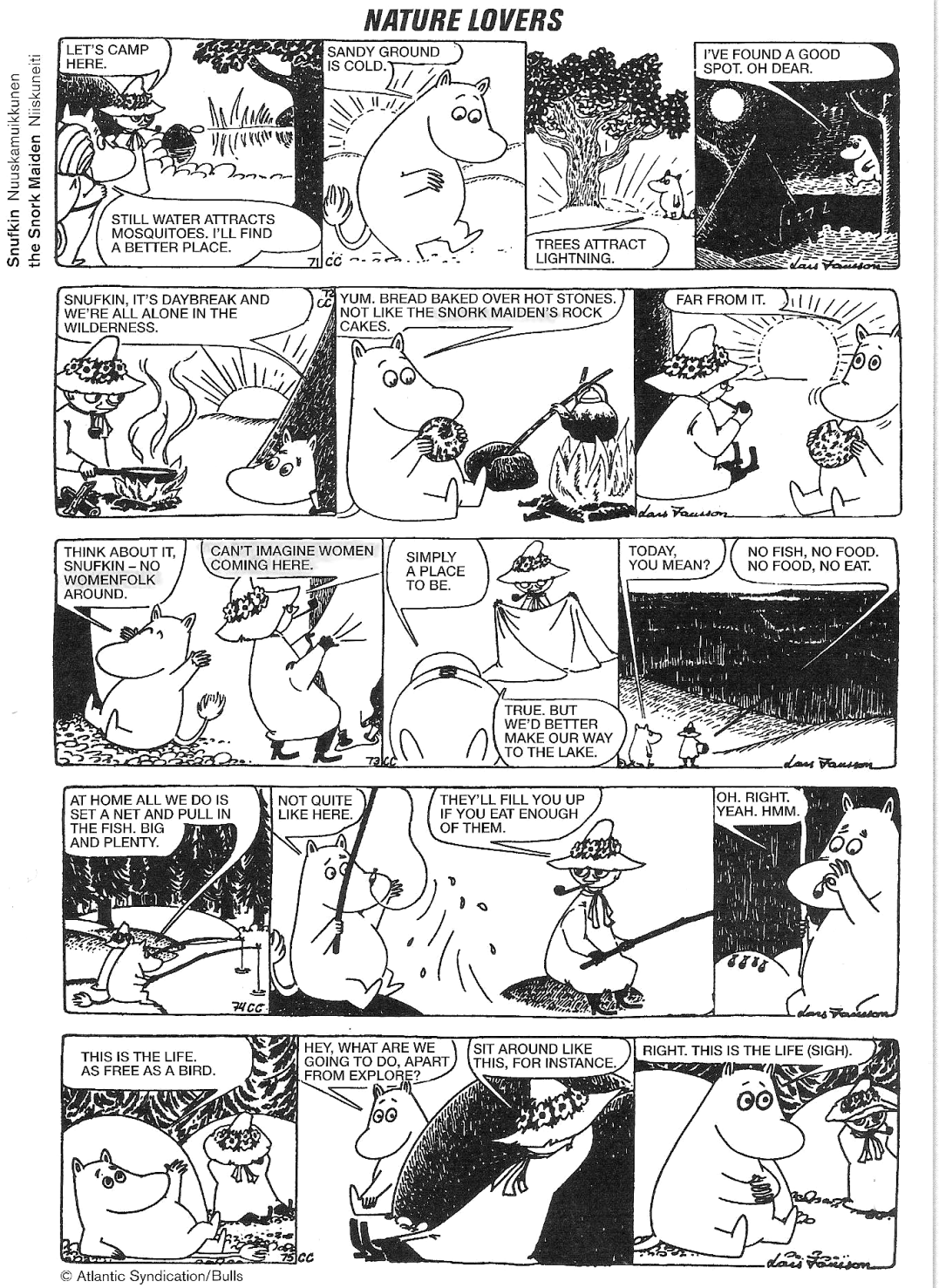
Appendix 2. The covers of *Key English* textbooks







Appendix 3. *Moomin* cartoon script from *Key English 8*



Tove Jansson drew the comic strip Moomin for the Evening News, London, from 1953 to 1959. After that, her brother Lars Jansson continued the work.