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Multiculturalism in the Book Series Pensionaatti Onnela [Boarding House Onnela]

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ABSTRACT

Tutkimuksessa perehdytään Pensionaatti Onnela –kirjasarjan monikulttuurisuuteen. Sarja on Eppu Nuotion ja Tuutikki Tolosen kirjoittama, ja sitä pidetään yleisesti monikulttuurisena kirjasarjana, joten tutkimuksen tavoitteena on selvittää, kuinka monikulttuurisuus ja maahanmuutto ilmenevät sarjan kirjoissa. Tutkimusaineisto koostuu kirjasarjan neljästä osasta, joista ensimmäinen ilmestyi vuonna 2007 ja uusin vuonna 2011. Tutkimusmenetelmänä käytetään laadullista ja määrällistä sisällönanalyysiä sekä diskurssianalyysiä.

Tutkimuksen teoriaosuus tarkastelee monikulttuurisuutta, maahanmuuttoa, lasten kirjallisuutta sekä monikulttuurisia lasten kirjoja. Analyysivaiheessa selvitetään, mitä kansallisuuksia kirjoissa esiintyy, miten eri kansallisuuksien edustajia kuvataan, mitä kieliä sarjassa puhutaan ja missä yhteyksissä eri kieliä käytetään. Lisäksi tarkastellaan kirjoissa esiintyviä kulttuurieroja ja niistä aiheutuvia ongelmatilanteita sekä tutkitaan, mitä maahanmuuttoon liittyviä seikkoja tuodaan esiin. Lopuksi pohditaan, vastaavatko Pensionaatti Onnela –sarjan kirjat monikulttuurisen lasten kirjan määritelmää.

Pensionaatti Onnela –kirjasarjan kirjoissa esiintyy 33 keskeistä henkilöhahmoa, jotka edustavat seitsemää eri kansallisuutta. Hahmojen kuvauksen todettiin keskittyvän hahmokohtaisiin ominaisuuksiin eikä laajoja, tiettyä kansallisuutta koskevia yleistyksiä havaittu, vaikka joitakin tyypillisiä, tiettyyn kansaan tai kulttuuriin usein yhdistettyjä adjektiivejä löydettiin. Kirjasarjassa käytetään suomen lisäksi kahdeksaa muuta kieltä. Vieraita kieliä käytettiin muun muassa esittäytymiseen, huudahduksissa, selityksissä sekä lyhyissä keskusteluissa. Kielenkäyttötilanteet vaihtelivat, mutta usein vierasta kieltä puhuivat hahmot, joiden äidinkieli oli jokin muu kieli kuin suomi. Sarjasta löydettiin 27 kulttuurieroihin liittyvää tilannetta. Kulttuurierot nousivat esiin pääasiassa suomalaisten ja argentiinalaisten hahmojen kanssa käymisessä, joten havaitut erot liittynevät erityisesti näihin kansallisuuksiin. Myös maahanmuutto ja siihen liittyvät kysymykset havaittiin keskeiseksi aihepiiriksi. Kulttuurierot ja maahanmuuttoon liittyvät seikat aiheuttivat joitakin ongelmatilanteita, ja sekä paikalliset hahmot että maahanmuuttajat joutuivat sopeutumaan sarjan aikana. Pensionaatti Onnela –kirjasarjan todettiin vastaavan monikulttuurisen lasten kirjallisuuden määritelmää. Kirjoissa tuodaan esiin erilaisia kokemuksia ja taustoja. Lisäksi sarjan kirjat lisäävät lasten tietoisuutta eri kulttuureista ja antavat lapsille mahdollisuuden tarkastella asioita uusista näkökulmista.

KEYWORDS: multiculturalism, immigration, reading, multicultural children's literature

1 INTRODUCTION

During the last 20 years the Finnish society has seen a steady rise in the amount of non-citizens living in Finland. The growth in the number of foreign residents was especially strong during the last decade of 20th century: there were 91 074 non-citizens living in Finland in 2000 compared with the substantially smaller number of 26 255 in 1990. The numbers have continued rising after the year 2000, and in 2010 there were already 167 954 foreigners living in Finland. Also the number of those with a mother tongue other than Finnish, Swedish or Lappish (Saame) has increased from 24 783 in 1990 to 224 388 in 2010. (Statistics Finland 2011a; Statistics Finland 2011b.) Still, the population group born outside of Finland is modest compared to other European countries (for instance Tuori 2009: 27). The change in population structure is most obvious in the larger cities where the population is more heterogeneous than before: there are people from different cultural backgrounds, people speak different languages and look different. Finland has become a culturally diverse society.

As the Finnish society has become more and more multicultural, also children's daily life has become more multicultural. According to YLE News multiculturalism is a commonplace in Finnish day care centers and schools. The literary field, however, has reacted slowly and multiculturalism is not a commonly seen theme in children's books. Nevertheless, teachers demand children's books in which the multicultural aspects of Finnish society are being brought out naturally, and children from different cultural backgrounds act together. (Mansikka 2010.) In addition, there is a clear need for children's and youth books that would present the cultures of immigrants and would tell about their everyday lives, dreams and past (Volotinen 2003: 78).

Luckily the situation is changing. In October 2010, a mere seven months after the first news article, YLE reported that immigration and multiculturalism are central themes also in children's books, though not always necessarily in the form of human characters (Wallius 2010). In addition to YLE, also Helsingin Sanomat has written about multicultural children's books. In June 2010 three new children's books were introduced in the newspaper's cultural pages. These books can be seen as a turning

point in the Finnish children's literature as the main characters have an immigrant background but also other issues are present. As was stated in the article: "New children's books discuss multiculturalism but do not turn characters' ethnical background into a problem." (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2010: n.p., my translation.)

An example of this new type of children's books, even though not mentioned in the article in Helsingin Sanomat, is book series Pensionaatti Onnela [Boarding House Onnela]. It is a multicultural and -lingual book series for children and youth. The series is written by Eppu Nuotio and Tuutikki Tolonen and includes four books, published between 2007 and 2011. Along the lines of the above-mentioned article, also in Boarding House Onnela multiculturalism is constantly present, as the characters come from different cultures and speak different languages, but it is not seen as a problem even though cultures occasionally clash in the books. Instead, or perhaps besides cultural issues, each book introduces a separate topic that is central in the story.

1.1 Previous research

Research on children's literature is fairly recent phenomenon in the academic world (Hearne 1988: 27). To promote academic research and scholarship in children's literature, professional, international organizations were established in the 1970s, and during 1980s and 1990s research on children's literature increased in many countries. More children's books were published, and renewed interest within research community led to new studies examining children's literature. (Galda, Ash & Cullinan 2001; O'Sullivan 2010: 66, 140). However, although primary sources for academic studies were rich and fine-tuned in the 1980s, critical research was still in an early stage. Nevertheless, masters and doctoral level research did examine children's literature frequently, and covered topics such as family roles, personal problems, ethnic representation, cultural issues, violence, and poverty. (Hearne 1988: 28–29.) Central figures in the international discussion of children's and youth literature were English Jacqueline Rose, Swedish Vivi Edström and Israeli Zohar Shavit whose studies were first representatives of new research in narratology (Edström and Shavit) and in

theoretical research (Rose). The trend set in the 1980s continued during the 1990s: well-known scholars such as Peter Hunt and Rebecca Lukens published general overviews of children's literature but critical studies were still to be seen. (Rättyä 2003b: 184, 187.) Also reference works in English were published in the 1990s, and more have followed during the first decade of the 21st century (O'Sullivan 2010: 292).

Although historically mainly conducted by librarians and educators of children, the research on children's literature has developed into an interdisciplinary subject that interests scholars for instance in the fields of literature, education, history, psychology and anthropology, each with its own emphasis and focus. However, during the 20th century many researchers focused on language, and at the turn of the century especially the problems of language use, children's fiction and ideology were discussed. (Hearne 1988: 27–28; Williams 2000: 111–112; Thomas 2011: 5.) The Finnish research on children's and youth literature has over the years followed the trends of international research in the field (Rättyä 2003b: 170). According to Havaste (2003: 146) only about a dozen books concerning children's and juvenile literature and literary research were available in Finland before 1960s, exploring either the entire sphere of children's literature or the classics. Also Rättyä (2003b: 184) writes that most publications have been general overviews, even after the 1960s. Still, several article collections and historical books are available, and articles about the Finnish children's literature have appeared also in annuals. (Rättyä 2003b: 174, 177, 191.)

In the Finnish field of children's literature the first doctoral thesis about children's literature was published already in 1947 when Kaarina Laurent studied Zacharias Topelius as a poet of fairy tales during Romanticism. The dissertation, however, was not followed by others until nearly 50 years later. After the 1990s new dissertations have appeared, covering topics such as Finnish children's literature in the 19th century, translation of children's literature, and Tarzan and the masculine identity. (Havaste 2003: 146–147.) Children's and juvenile literature has been a more common topic in licentiate level research. Rättyä (2003b: 179) mentions for instance Leila Lotti's licentiate work, published in 1970, that discussed the image of society in Finnish juvenile novels. Licentiate level research has also examined the life of the Finnish writer

Anni Swan, published in 1958, and Finnish children's literature between 1543 and 1950, published in 1981. More recently Kaisu Rättyä has studied narrative solutions and the development of identity in Jukka Parkkinen's books but, as stated in the beginning, the number of publications is still low. (Havaste 2003: 146; Rättyä 2003b: 192.)

In contrast to the doctoral and licentiate level, in master's level theses children's and juvenile literature has been extensively studied in Finland. Popular topics in the beginning of 21st century were Tove Jansson, Zacharius Topelius and similar classics but also modern juvenile literature has interested students, and especially fantasy literature has begun to emerge as a topic. (Havaste 2003: 146.) Rättyä (2003b: 193) lists as the most common topics intertextuality, identity, relationships, narrative solutions, and questions related to world view.

As Finland has become multicultural fairly recently and Finnish multicultural children's literature seems to be in its developmental stage, it is no wonder that multicultural children's books have not been under much scrutiny yet. Some studies have been conducted though. Eveliina Kontio (2007) has studied multiculturalism in children's picture books in her master's thesis in early childhood education, and in addition Tomoko Watanabe (2009) has investigated the Finnish national identity and its relation to Finland's multicultural integration in children's picture book Tatu and Patu's Finland in his master's thesis in intercultural studies in communication and administration. However, these both concentrated on picture books. This research will focus on multicultural children's/youth novels which, to my current knowledge, is an area that has not been researched yet.

1.2 Research problem and material

This study explores the multicultural aspects of book series Boarding House Onnela. The aim of the study is to find out how multiculturalism and immigration are represented in the books of this particular book series. There are several specific research questions to be answered in order to achieve the objective. Firstly, through

literary review, it will be described what a multicultural children's book actually is. After this is clarified, the study will proceed to analyze the books of Boarding House Onnela. The research will examine how many different nationalities are presented, how they are described, how many languages are spoken in the books and in what contexts they are used. In addition the study will view the cultural differences and problem situations presented. As the books tell about a girl and her great-grandfather who migrate from Argentina to Finland, it will also be studied which aspects of immigration are included in the books and how they are portrayed. Lastly, it will be discussed how well the books fit into the definition of multicultural children's books. The hypothesis is that the books focus on Finnish and Argentinian characters and in consequence the most used foreign language is Spanish. Foreign languages are not expected to have a significant meaning for the storyline. It is also assumed that the description of the nationalities is somewhat stereotypic.

Research material consists of four books of the book series Boarding House Onnela. The first book, called *Delfinan matka-arkku* [Delfina's travelling case], was published in 2007, the second, called *Täytettyjen tomaattien talvi* [The winter of filled tomatoes] in 2008 and the third, named *Kaukaisten rakkauksien kirja* [The book of distant loves] in 2010. The latest and fourth book, *Delfinan kellokesä* [Delfina's clock summer], was published in October 2011.

In *Delfina's travelling case* 12-years-old Delfina and her great-grandfather Ernesto arrive from Argentina to a small Finnish town called Heinäkumpu. They've come to re-open Boarding House Onnela which belongs to Ernesto's family but has been closed for 80 years; since the family moved to Argentina. Delfina becomes the manager of Onnela and hires Wasker, who lives next door, as an assistant. When the first international guests arrive, also problems start to arise as Finnish and Argentinian cultures clash.

The winter of filled tomatoes is a story about the dark and chilly autumn of Finland. Delfina struggles with the weather and finds it challenging to adapt to obligatory schoolgoing. She would rather be managing Onnela where difficulties follow one another. However, new guests brighten the mood and slowly the troublesome autumn

turns into early winter. Finnish and Argentinian customs merge into one as everyone in Onnela prepares for Christmas celebration.

The book of distant loves introduces more issues that relate to immigration. Ernesto is homesick and wishes to return to his hometown in Argentina. Delfina would prefer to stay in Heinäkumpu but Ernesto has decided that they will leave Onnela behind and move back to Argentina. After Delfina and Ernesto have left, their friend Wasker is miserable until an opportunity to travel to Argentina opens up. Once there, it becomes clear that the return has not been easy neither for Ernesto nor for Delfina and things have to change before everyone will be happy again.

In the newest book, *Delfina's clock summer*, Delfina, Ernesto and Wasker are back in Heinäkumpu and Onnela is as busy as ever when the summer vacation begins. But life rarely stays the same for long in Heinäkumpu. When several changes occur at once, both Delfina and Wasker find themselves in a new situation that requires them to adjust yet again. This time, however, adjustment proves to be more difficult than expected.

The Boarding House Onnela series is written by Eppu Nuotio and Tuutikki Tolonen. Eppu Nuotio is known as an author, actor, teacher, translator, director, and dramaturge. She has written children's books, novels, plays and scripts for television as well as lyrics and scripts for music videos. (Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava 2012a.) During the past years she has focused on children's books and detective novels. Her books aim to address social issues: for example multiculturalism is central both in the Onnela –series and in her detective novels. (Tiitto 2008.) Tuutikki Tolonen is a teacher and a writer. Besides the books written together with Eppu Nuotio she has written features, reviews and articles for several publications and has received the State Prize for Children's Culture. (Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava 2012b.)

1.3 Research methodology

This research will be both qualitative and quantitative in its nature. In qualitative research the aim is for instance to describe an event, to understand a certain activity or to provide a meaningful interpretation of a phenomenon. It studies singular occurrences with reference to their full context and attempts to study the subject of research as comprehensively as possible and to generate clear and consistent information from fragmentary research material. (Jensen 2002c: 255; Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2007: 157; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 85, 108.) This implies that qualitative research is often inductive in its nature as it proceeds from single instances to a general principle or law. The researcher aims to study the data in detail and reveal the unexpected instead of testing a theory or a hypothesis. (Jensen 2002c: 259; Hirsjärvi et al. 2007:160.) Even though qualitative research does not usually test theories, theory is still employed in the research for example as a broad explanation for behavior and attitudes. Theory might also serve as an overall orienting lens or perspective that shapes the study, while some qualitative studies claim not to use any explicit theory. However, it can be argued that some conceptual structure is always needed as the starting point of the research. (Cresswell 2009: 61–64.)

In qualitative research the data used is typically collected either through interviews and/or observation, or the research material might be composed of pre-existing documents, such as written texts, movies or computer games (Jensen 2002b: 239, 243–244). Once the data is available, there are several means to conduct the analysis: for example thematic coding, grounded theory, discourse analysis, content analysis and conversation analysis are typical methods to be used in qualitative studies. This versatility can be seen as strength of qualitative research. If one way of analyzing does not work for a particular research, the researcher can adapt another strategy in order to get meaningful results. (Eskola & Suoranta 2000: 144, 160–161; Jensen 2002b: 251.)

According to Gunter (2002: 211, 230) quantitative research examines primarily cause and effect relationships through numerical data. It can also be used when the recurrence of events needs to be proved. Quantitative research is a means for testing theories as

well as hypotheses that have been derived from some general ‘law’ and is therefore often deductive. (Jensen 2002c: 255, 262; Cresswell 2009: 4.) As the objective is to test a theory, the theory forms a framework for the study and guides the development of hypotheses. The data collected is used to either confirm or reject the hypotheses and thus the theory. (Gunter 2002: 234; Cresswell 2009: 55.)

Quantitative studies are the traditional type of research and rules and systematic, ready-made procedures are available for the researcher. Research material can be collected for instance through experiments and surveys. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2007: 186; Cresswell 2009: 19.) Quantitative research simplifies phenomena to numerical data. However, measurement can occur at several levels: data can simply be used to categorize and rank the subject under study, or it can be used to measure the relationships and to discover causal connections among the variables. The aim of most quantitative research is to create new knowledge by exposing these connections and demonstrating their universality. However, in practice the availability of resources and the necessary ethical and other considerations limit the research and an ideal research design is not always feasible. (Gunter 2002: 234.)

The differences between qualitative and quantitative research have been under discussion for long although the two approaches are not as different as they might appear. It is true that in general quantitative research employs numbers while qualitative studies work with words and is therefore often called ‘hard’ research in contrast to ‘soft’, qualitative research (Bauer, Gaskell & Allum 2000: 7; Cresswell 2009: 3.) However, the approaches should not be viewed as opposites but instead an idea of a continuum should be used, qualitative and quantitative research being the extremes between which a single research settles (Hirsjärvi et al. 2007: 131; Cresswell 2009: 3). Qualitative and quantitative research can also be seen as complimentary to each other if for instance the qualitative study is used as a preliminary study for the quantitative research or vice versa. In addition the two can be used side by side in one research. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2007: 132–133.) It is also possible to combine both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to create a mixed method that is stronger and better suited

for the research at hand and provides a better understanding than quantitative or qualitative approach by itself (Cresswell 2009: 4, 18).

1.3.1 Content analysis

According to White and March (2006: 23) there are multiple definitions of content analysis. An early definition, quoted by several writers, was originally used by Berelson in 1952. It states that content analysis is a research technique that is used "for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication." (for instance Bauer 2000: 133; Gunter 2002: 220 or Larsen 2002: 118.) Another definition was presented in 1969 by Holsti who saw that any technique that identified specified characteristics of messages objectively and systematically and that was used for making inferences could be categorized as content analysis (Bauer 2000: 133). Also Krippendorf's definition from 1980 is widely cited in literature. According to Krippendorf, content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid references from data to their context (for instance Bauer 2000: 133; Gunter 2002: 220 or White & Marsh 2006: 23, 27). Weber was following Krippendorf when he defined content analysis as a research methodology that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences about sender, the message and the audience from the text, whereas Kerlinger's definition is more similar to Berelson's as it defines content analysis as "a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantifiable manner for the purpose of measuring variables" (Bauer 2000: 133; Gunter 2002: 220).

The different definitions presented show some similarities but no firm definition that would be agreed on within the field exists (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1277). Therefore, content analysis can be seen as a very general approach that can be applied to several problems. As a technique it was first used in the 1950s in mass communication research, especially in the analysis of newspapers, but has since been employed in many different research fields and covered cultural artifacts of all kinds. (Bauer 2000: 147; White & Marsh 2006: 22–23.) As this suggests, content analysis can be used to analyze both written and visual messages as well as sounds: for example books, interviews,

conversations, television programs or corporate memos can be used as a research material (Bauer 2000: 136; Larsen 2002: 118; Elo & Kyngäs 2008: 107; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 103).

Content analysis aims to provide a clear and general description of the phenomena under study. This is done by condensing the research material into few content-related concepts or categories that describe the phenomena and represent the material in a reliable manner. Content analysis is often seen as a flexible research method as there are no strict rules or guidelines for data analysis. It rarely proceeds in a linear fashion which makes it – in addition to flexibility – also a challenging and complex research method. (Elo & Kyngäs 2008: 108–109, 112–113; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 103, 108.) Still, it can be used to analyze large amounts of data and it allows the researcher to construct indicators of worldviews, values, and stereotypes that can enhance understanding of the subject under research (Bauer 2000: 134, 147; Elo & Kyngäs 2008: 108).

The weakness of content analysis is that though it organizes the research material into categories it does not draw any conclusions. Therefore it can be argued that content analysis merely constructs categories of potential meaning instead of understanding the actual meaning. (Bauer 2000: 148; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 103.) It has also been criticized as being too simple for detailed statistical analysis and thus not appropriate for quantitative research while at the same time others view it as not sufficiently qualitative (Elo & Kyngäs 2008: 108). However, as content analysis is a flexible method, it can be used both in qualitative and quantitative way, or the qualitative can supplement the quantitative or vice versa (Gunter 2002: 220; White & Marsh 2006: 22; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 121). Even though the nature of qualitative and quantitative content analysis as well as the boundary between the two is controversial, some basic guidelines are available: in general qualitative content analysis describes the content of the document verbally and focuses on the meaning while quantitative content analysis quantifies the content of the document and concentrates on the numerical data obtained, for example on the frequencies of certain words and phrases (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1278; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 105–106). Content analysis can also be used in

conjunction with other research methods if it does not cover all aspects of the study alone (White & Marsh 2006: 23).

1.3.2 Discourse analysis

One option that can be used in combination with content analysis is discourse analysis. The term discourse, when used in everyday speech, usually simply refers to language in use or more precisely to concrete and coherent uses of language and other signs for communication (Cook 2001: 6, Schrøder 2002: 106). According to Cook (2001: 6–7) almost anything can be considered as a discourse: a grunt, a conversation, a note, a novel or a legal case are all discourses – it does not have be grammatically correct as long as it is used to communicate something and is considered coherent in the context. In a broader sense, discourse refers to sets of ideas and the ways to express them, to underlying concepts, to a way to view the world. When understood in this sense, discourse includes pieces of text or talk which affect and are affected by the social context which they belong to as well as the ideas behind the text or talk. (Schrøder 2002: 106; Phillips & Di Domenico 2009: 550.)

As with discourse, there are several approaches also to discourse analysis. According to Van Dijk (1991: 111) the main interest of discourse analysts is meaning. A more common view, shared by several writers, is that discourse analysis is the study of how language constitutes reality (for instance Cook 2003: 127; Hirsjärvi et al. 2007: 220 or Phillips & Di Domenico 2009: 549–551). According to Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara (2007: 220) this view originates from the French philosophy and the research of Michael Foucault especially. Whether discourse analysis also aims to display social phenomena seems to be debatable. Cook (2003: 127) sees this as a part of discourse analysis whereas Phillips and Di Domenico (2009: 551) write that it does not focus on how language reveals reality, nor is interested to understand or interpret it.

Another central aspect of discourse analysis is the examination of the contexts and the cultural influences that impact the language in use. The context has an influence on the language but the language also affects the context. This two-way relationship is the

subject of discourse analysis. (Stubbs 1983: 1; McCarthy 1991: 5, 7; Phillips & Di Domenico 2009: 550–551.) According to Cook (2001: 6; 2003: 127) through the study of context discourse analysts strive to reveal what gives discourse coherence, what makes it meaningful and unified. The coherence is often found in the organization of language above the sentence or clause. Discourse analysis therefore often studies larger linguistic units such as written texts or conversations. (Stubbs 1983: 1.) In this study discourse analysis is seen similar to the ideas of Cook: discourse analysis is used to study how language constitutes and portrays reality and to examine the context of language use.

Discourse analysis can be used for different purposes and therefore different perspectives can be distinguished based on whether the focus is on the text or the context and whether the analysis is more descriptive or critical (see picture 1). However, the perspectives – interpretive structuralism, critical discourse analysis, critical linguistic analysis and social linguistic analysis – are not strict categories as instead of clear boundaries the change from one perspective to another is more gradual. (Phillips & Di Domenico 2009: 552–553.) The study at hand falls under the social linguistic perspective as the approach to be used is more descriptive than critical and focuses more on the text than context.

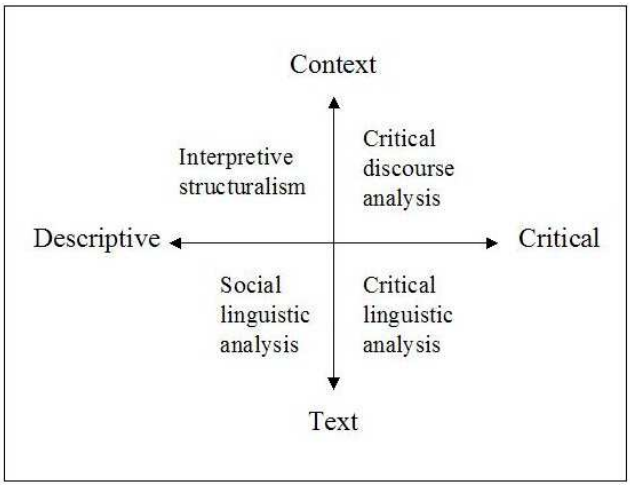


Figure 1. Different approaches to discourse analysis (Phillips & Di Domenico 2009: 552).

As with content analysis, the challenge of discourse analysis is that once the research material has been collected, no standardized methods for analyzing the data are available (Phillips & Di Domenico 2009: 560). Thus the analysis phase can be time-consuming (Hirsjärvi et al. 2007: 221). The research material for discourse analysis is similar to content analysis and can include for example written texts of all kinds, pictures, symbols and other artifacts as well as spoken data such as informal conversation or highly institutionalized forms of talk. The focus can be on the form or on the thematic content of the units of analysis. (McCarthy 1991: 5; Jensen 2002b: 248; Phillips & Di Domenico 2009: 551.) However, according to Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara (2007: 221) the difference to content analysis is that with discourse analysis the researcher does not need a large amount of material as the results obtained can be significant even when the amount of data used is fairly small.

1.3.3 Research method and the structure of the study

According to Jensen (2002a: 207) discourse analysis is a qualitative method to analyze texts while content analysis is quantitative. In this research content analysis will be used also qualitatively as the content will be examined not only through numbers but also through descriptive approach. However, the descriptive part of the study uses both qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis – the methods will be used side by side throughout the research. Quantitative content analysis will be employed in order to find out how many nationalities are portrayed and how many languages are spoken in the books. How different nationalities are described and the context(s) in which different languages are used is then studied through discourse analysis. Qualitative content analysis will be used to examine the cultural differences and problem situations presented as well as the aspects of immigration included in the stories while discourse analysis will be applied to study how the aspects of immigration are portrayed.

The thesis is divided into five main chapters. The first chapter is the introduction chapter which includes research problem, an introduction to the material used in research and the research method. Also previous studies conducted in the field are discussed in the first chapter. Introduction is followed by a literary review of the

theoretical background of the research topic. The literary review is divided into two parts. The first part, that is the second chapter of the thesis, introduces the concepts of multiculturalism and immigration as these are the main themes in the book series Boarding House Onnela. Children's literature and especially multicultural children's books are discussed in the second part which is the third chapter of the thesis. The analysis of the research material and the results of the research are presented in chapter four. The final chapter includes conclusions and possible other topics that need to be discussed.

2 MULTICULTURALISM

Although multiculturalism is often connected to globalization and migration, it is not a new phenomenon (Talib 2002: 37; Hakkarainen 2010: 220). As the Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture (2003: 184) states, all human societies through times have been to a certain extend multicultural as differences in gender, generation, and/or ethnic group have always existed. In modern societies varying ways of life and lifestyles with hardly anything in common exist side by side while also active travelling has resulted in more and more people being influenced by diverse cultural experiences (Welsch 1999: 195; Schaetti, Ramsey & Watanabe 2009: 128). Thus it can be said that all people are multicultural beings: everyone is influenced by more than one single culture and operates in a variety of contexts (Cortés & Wilkinson 2009: 19; Baldock 2010: 30).

2.1 Different aspects of multiculturalism

The term multiculturalism is commonly used, yet difficult to define. Typically multiculturalism is used to refer to the existence of culturally different (minority) groups within one society. In these situations the concept describes the existing circumstances. (Virta 2008: 43–44; Hakkarainen 2010: 220.) Multiculturalism can also be used as a normative concept when used in the context of politics and strategies that aim at securing equality and ethnic diversity. Thus multiculturalism can be seen as a set of approaches that attempt to incorporate immigrants and ethnic minorities and enable their participation in society. (Virta 2008: 43–44; Vertovec & Wessendorf 2010: 4.) In the Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture (2003: 183–184) multiculturalism is defined more broadly as the coexistence of different cultural experiences within a group – albeit it is being specified that the term is generally used with reference to those societies in which originally independent groups have come to cohabit for political, economic or social reasons.

Although multiculturalism is typically connected to immigration and ethnic groups, it is not necessarily related to these. Multicultural society does not require the groups

coexisting within the society to be different in terms of ethnicity or language spoken but instead essential is that it is possible to distinguish several separate cultures within a society and that the differences are acknowledged and affect the way the society is organized – whether the groups differ in terms of ethnicity, religion or social background does not matter. (Lepola 2000: 199–200, 266; Järvelä 2010: 37.) This, however, is fairly broad view of multiculturalism. As this research focuses on the aspects of multiculturalism that derive from immigration, also here the discussion will be limited to multiculturalism related to ethnicity and immigration.

According to Gopalakrishnan (2011: 22, 24) the aim of multiculturalism has been to understand, accept and appreciate cultural differences and recognize cultures and ethnicities that are not part of the majority. It is based in human rights movement that strives to challenge traditional views and replace earlier uncivil and undemocratic relations of hierarchy and exclusion. However, especially in schools and media multiculturalism is often oversimplified and seen only as a celebration of ethnocultural diversity. This approach is intended to encourage citizens to acknowledge the array of customs and traditions existing in a society but as such ignores the problems caused by economic and political inequality – problems which cannot be overcome by applauding for cultural difference. (Kymolicka 2010: 33–34, 37–39.) Therefore it is essential for a multicultural society that different groups are acknowledged politically and also members of minority groups are allowed to act on all fields of society (Talib 2002: 139; Hirvonen 2010: 101). In order to enable this, several institutional initiatives have been launched during the last decades, aiming for instance to promote equal opportunity and eliminate barriers to full participation in society, allow unrestricted access to public services as well as recognize cultural identities (Vertovec & Wessendorf 2010: 3–4). Through these multiculturalism can been used as a means to achieve social justice and equality (Hirvonen 2010: 101; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 22, 24).

When discussing multiculturalism, it needs to be kept in mind that the concept is controversial and often considered to be problematic. The problems are caused for instance by a view that multiculturalism defines different cultures as uniform, homogeneous communities that live side by side as separate and restricted groups

without interaction, thus reinforcing the barriers between groups and furthering the development of ghettos and decreasing interaction and integration. (Welsch 1999: 196–197; Rantonen & Savolainen 2010: 18.) In addition to (ethnic) separatism, it has been claimed that multiculturalism has led to a lack of interest in social integration and hence to social isolation. (Kymolicka 2010: 33–34; Vertovec & Wessendorf 2010: 7.) These challenges posed by multiculturalism should be confronted openly and at the same acknowledge the positive, enriching effects of multiculturalism (Talib 2002: 138–139). According to Lepola (2000: 205) in ideal multicultural society ethnic groups both preserve their own cultural traditions and adapt to the culture of the host society. In addition, multiculturalism requires that also the host society adapts and questions, re-evaluates and changes the self evident truths it possesses if needed. As cultural encounters are not simple, there is always a possibility of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Cultural conflicts, however, are not necessarily negative but instead can offer an opportunity for valuable debate and discussion. (Talib 2002: 138–139; Talib 2003: 28.)

Also to be considered is where and when multiculturalism can exist or if it can exist at all. Dudek (2011: 156) presents the ideas of Stanley Fish who has made a distinction between boutique multiculturalism and strong multiculturalism in his 1997 article "Boutique Multiculturalism, or Why Liberals Are Incapable of Thinking about Hate Speech." Boutique multiculturalism accepts cultural difference only at a surface level – including for instance food and festivals – and considers the universal humanity to be more influential for identity while strong multiculturalism considers cultural difference to be central for human identity. Fish argues that it is not possible to accept cultural differences at a deep level in extreme cases and thus multiculturalism cannot exist. (Dudek 2011: 156.) Also Talib (2002: 140) has pondered the challenges that deep ethical and moral questions pose for multicultural society. She tackles these challenges by suggesting a relativistic approach that would require an understanding of the reasons behind different cultural practices but not necessarily accepting the practices, leading to critical tolerance which would enable mutual understanding and multiculturalism. However, also Talib writes that truly multicultural society is not possible without true tolerance. (Talib 2002: 141.)

As the term multiculturalism is often seen to be broad and the concept controversial, similar terms with more precise meanings have been used in literature to avoid the problems associated with multiculturalism. For instance interculturalism and transculturalism can be used either to replace multiculturalism or together with it. Shortly, interculturalism stresses close interaction between cultures yet sees cultures to remain independent with distinct identities while transculturism emphasizes cultural exchange, adoption of cultural influences and hybrid cultures. (Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture 2003: 184; Hakkarainen 2010: 221; Rantonen & Savolainen 2010: 30–31.) Unlike multiculturalism that is claimed to view cultures as separate and homogeneous transculturality approaches cultures as interconnected, entangled and inclusive, thus responding to the changed cultural conditions where mixes, permeations and networks have replaced the idea of detached cultures. The new cultural forms pass through traditional cultural boundaries and encompass several ways of life and cultures while also emerging from one another. Transculturality understands the ability of these modern cultural entities to link and undergo transition and sees the entities forming networks that overlap in some aspects while differing in others, hence providing a more accurate picture of the current relations between cultures. (Welsch 1999: 197–205.)

In addition to interculturalism and transculturality term pluriculturalism or cultural pluralism is often used as a synonym of multiculturalism referring “to a tolerant and positive political and conceptual approach to the coexistence of different ethnic groups in the same society.” The two can also be distinguished: in that case pluriculturalism is viewed as a situation where cultural groups create several cultural points of reference through interaction – a mix of interculturalism and transculturalism – whereas multiculturalism separates cultural groups and assumes only little interaction between the groups (Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture 2003: 219). Throughout this research the terms multiculturalism and multicultural are used. These terms were chosen as they are most commonly used both in everyday speech and in literature. The definition applied is: Multicultural society is a society in which culturally different groups coexist, are acknowledged politically and treated equally. The aim is that the groups are able to preserve their own cultural traditions as well as adapt to the host society which also adapts where necessary. This is achieved through active interaction

and cultural exchange. It is recognized that the latter part of the definition describes transculturality, and thus the definition is a combination of multiculturalism and transculturality as this best serves the research. The term that will mainly be used is multiculturalism, and transculturality will be used where necessary for clarity.

2.2 Immigration as a source of multiculturalism

During the last decades globalization and migration have molded European cities into multicultural communities. However, it is often forgotten that Europe has been receiving migrants for a long time, and for instance African cultures were present in Europe already during the Roman Empire. (Hakkarainen 2010: 220; Rantonen & Savolainen 2010: 11.) Also Finland is typically cited to have become multicultural quite recently as the immigration has increased even though cultural minorities that have existed in Finland for centuries such as Swedish speaking Finns, Sami people, Romanis, Jews, and Tatars are often mentioned when multiculturalism in Finland is being discussed (Lepola 2000: 266; Järvelä 2010: 33).

In summary migration, whether within one country or from one country to another, is defined as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence (Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture 2003: 176). However, to find a suitable definition for immigrant or immigration is not as easy as might seem as immigrants are not a homogeneous group of people. They come from different countries and ethnic groups and have different reasons for their immigration. Some migrants move to another country to work and live there permanently, some work in a foreign country for a while but do not at any point plan to stay although typically the term immigrant is used when referring to people who do intent to settle in another country for a long term. (Liebkind 1994: 10; Talib 2002: 18.) A large amount of immigrants are refugees. Refugees migrate because they have no choice not to – refugee is a person who is seeking for asylum in a foreign country. Refugees have had to escape their country of origin because of a serious threat to their lives or freedom caused by natural catastrophe, war or persecution due to religion, social status or political opinion. (Talib 2002: 18; Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity

and Culture 2003: 282.) To further classify immigrants, generations are used. First generation immigrants have migrated themselves while second generation immigrants have been born in a country where they live but their parents, or one parent, have migrated. In practice, however, there is a great difference if both parents are immigrants or if one parent is native and one immigrant. (Liebkind 1994: 10.)

Finland became an immigration country in 1981 when for the first time in history more people moved to Finland than left from Finland. The change, however, began to show only in the 1990s when the amount of immigrants tripled. The increasing trend has continued during the 2000s. (Latomaa 2010: 47.) The first immigrants to Finland were from Chile and Vietnam in the 1970s. During the 1990s the biggest immigration groups were Somalis and Kurds and more recently immigration especially from Russia and Estonia has increased while foreign employees for instance for IT sector have been recruited from India and China. Nevertheless, compared to other European countries immigration to Finland is marginal and the amount of immigrants is among the lowest in Europe. (Järvelä 2010: 33; Rantonen 2010: 164.)

Migrating does not simply involve relocating but also readjustment. Migrants might need to learn a new language, understand new value orientations, build up social networks or acquire skills necessary to function in the economy and labor market. (Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture 2003: 177). The process of transformation and adaptation is called acculturation. Although the term is a general term for cultural change that happens within cultures when groups with different cultural backgrounds interact with and influence each other, it is today typically used when discussing immigration. Acculturation process can concern an individual or a social group, for example a family. In both cases individual differences affect the process and thus the processes and outcomes vary from case to case. (Talib 2002: 25; Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture 2003: 1; Berry 2007: 69.)

As mentioned above, acculturation does not always happen the same way. Typical types of acculturation are assimilation, adaptation (adjustment), integration, marginalization and separatism (isolation). In the context of migration, assimilation refers to the

absorption of the values and cultural models of the dominant (host) culture and rejecting those of one's native culture, leading to inclusion in the host society. (Talib 2002: 25–26; Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture 2003: 19–20.) Assimilation is a one-way process that aims at the disappearance of cultural differences. It was formerly favored view in immigration politics as it was considered to be a natural way for immigrants to adjust to their new environment. However, assimilation has been criticized because it tends to deny cultural differences and keep the community as homogenous as possible by ensuring that the whole population shares the same basic values. (Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture 2003: 19; Rantonen & Savolainen 2010: 18.)

Adaptation, or adjustment, is a complex process in which both the immigrant and the host society change in order to reduce conflict and enhance well-being. As all societies have to adapt to their environment and thus change constantly, adaptation is always a bi-directional process. In an immigration context it might involve tension, resistance, rejection and isolation from one or both sides. Although adaptation is required from both parties, it is sometimes seen as a strong form of assimilation leading to a negative image and criticism. (Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture 2003: 3–4.) Integration is a form of acculturation that results in tranquil coexistence of different cultures within one society. It is a gradual process involving both the immigrants and the host society who mutually compare and exchange values and behavioral models. (Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture 2003: 151–152.) According to Talib (2002: 26) the immigrants who have migrated voluntarily are most likely to integrate their own values with those of the host culture and are thus able to achieve integration. However, experience has shown that successful integration does require some adjustment to the host culture in addition to respect of one's cultural background and values (Talib 2002: 26–27).

Adaptation to a new culture is not easy. According to Matinheikki-Kokko (1997: 14) immigrants tend to integrate into their own ethnic community instead of the host society and only gradually find their place in the host society. As people react differently to change, the adaptation process varies from person to person. The change is commonly greater for those who come from a culture that is very far from the new, host culture. In

the new environment immigrant needs to find his or her own identity again. This can be difficult as immigrants are easily seen and treated simply as representatives of a certain nation and thus being foreign becomes the main part of one's identity. (Puusaari 1997: 21.)

Often immigrants do not understand the new cultural environment well but are not familiar with the old one anymore either. Living between two cultures is typical especially for second generation immigrants who might face problems when trying to understand two cultures simultaneously even though they do not necessarily have much knowledge about the native culture of their parents. In contrast first generation immigrants, particularly parents who do not manage to learn the language or cultural models well enough to take actively part in the society, tend to try to live as much as possible exactly as they did in their native country. With the help of modern communication networks they are able to follow the news and events of their country of origin in real time and thus manage to live in two separate worlds at the same time. (Talib 2002: 27–28.)

Adjustment to a new culture is a long process that takes place over time. The changes that happen in an individual can be quite undemanding behavioral shifts, such as a different way of dressing or eating, or they can be more problematic and cause uncertainty, anxiety, and even depression. (Puusaari 1997: 24; Berry 2007: 70–71.) According to Talib (2002: 28–29) immigrants do not usually accept the new culture entirely but instead develop their own version of it, and as the ties to the past and ancestors weaken, most start to pick the best from the cultures they are experiencing hence maximizing the benefits. (Talib 2002: 28–29). Furthermore, with time and experience individuals develop cultural flexibility and learn to adjust their behavior according to the cultural context of the situations and thus become able to live effectively in multiple cultures and use several languages at the same time, without loosing their original cultural identity (Talib 2003: 25; Thomas 2008: 43).

2.3 The usability of stereotypes

Stereotype is a simple generalization about a group of individuals. It is not a personal opinion but rather a shared perception which enables those using the stereotype to categorize members of a group and create expectations according to which the group can be treated. Stereotypes can also be defined as beliefs about characteristics of a certain group and can describe either mental representations or real differences between the groups – usually referred to as "us" and "them." In everyday usage stereotypes are usually understood as negative attitudes towards certain social groups, and it is recognized that they are irrationally based. (Lehtonen 2005: 63, 67–70.) Although stereotype is often defined as generalization, these two can also be separated from each other. According to Gupta (2009: 150) generalizations are fluid ideas that make trends and patterns visible and adapt as new information is obtained while stereotypes are fixed, unchangeable, and applied to an entire group.

Even though most people recognize that stereotypes are inaccurate and misleading, stereotypes are still used. When meeting new people or facing new situations, there is usually uncertainty in the air that needs to be reduced in order to cope with the unknown. For this existing knowledge, such as stereotypes, is used. The less is known about the new people, their culture, or the general situation, the more stereotypes are used to produce expectations which help prepare for the situation and possible surprises. Stereotypes also help manage and understand complex reality by simplifying social information. (Lehtonen 2005: 63, 66; Gupta 2009: 149.)

Typical of stereotyping is the claim that an in-group (members of the same social group as one) and an out-group (members of other social group than which one belongs to) posses different qualities. Out-groups are seen as more homogeneous than one's in-group and the members of the out-group are thought to have less desirable features than the members of the in-group. When stereotypes concern countries or nations, they appear as distinctive characteristics assigned to a country or a nation and/or its people by outsiders. A country or a nation is seen as an entity that has personality, feelings and certain ways of reacting in different situations. Physical aspects, such as typical outfit,

as well as personality and behavior are assumed to be shared by the members of this entity, and form the image that becomes the stereotype in the minds of those outside the entity. (Lehtonen 2005: 62.)

3 CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

It can be said that literature is something written. However, then one would not regard oral literature – for example recitation, theatre, or song lyrics – as literature. More important than the format is the stability of the chain or group of words. For a text to be considered as literature it should be somehow bordered: a book, a poem, an audio tape, a digital file, or a memory trace can all be used as examples of literature. Also public availability can be a requirement for a piece to be considered literature. (Korhonen 2001: 22.)

Children's literature is literature that is read by or to children while also being written and published for them (see for example Hellsing 1999: 19; Clark 2011: 14; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 3–4). Which one of these aspects is the defining element is debatable. Some scholars have argued that any text read by or to a child should be labeled as children's literature while others feel that the intention – that the text is written and published for children – is an essential part of the definition. Some feel that also children's age should be considered and limit children's literature to those books that are read by children under about age fifteen. (Clark 2011: 14; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 4; Hunt 2011: 42.) Anyway, it is clear that children's literature is not easily defined and it is not agreed on whether books written originally for adults but adopted by children – such as Robinson Crusoe (Defoe 1719) – or books marketed by a publisher for children even though not written for them should be included in children's literature or not. (Clark 2011: 14–15; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 4.)

Youth, or young adult, literature can, if needed, be separated from children's literature and is usually defined as literature meant for young people the same way as children's literature is for children without identifying a specific age group. Youth literature can also refer to literature favored by the youth or in some cases to literature that has been written by young adults. (Mehtonen 2001: 51.) In addition the term can be associated with books published and marketed for young adults and with books that focus on lives of young protagonists since especially in Finland as well as in Sweden the age of the

protagonists has been an integral part of the definition both for scholars and publishers (Rättyä 2003b: 173, 180).

3.1 Reading and child readers

Reading is thought to be a profound, individual experience; a lonely pleasure that allows one to explore the world, to discover himself and even become someone else for a while. (Cullingford 1998: 3, 8; Lukens 2007: xi). People, regardless of age, read to pass time, to understand, to be entertained, to be comforted, to get a coherent picture of the real world, and to be reminded of the shared human experience (Cullingford 1998: 2–3, 12). When it comes to books both adults and children desire action, incidents, questions and answers, and glimpses of happy and unhappy outcomes because through these they get a sense of structure and wholeness. In addition books offer an interpretation of the world and a meaning as well as help an individual accept the circumstances and understand the complexities of life. (Cullingford 1998: 9; Lukens 2007: 99.)

Reading is an interactive process in which both the text and the reader are involved. While previously the author and especially the text were thought to have the dominant role, the focus has more recently turned towards the reader who is seen as an active interpreter, adding his or her own personal background into the process. However, even with the controlling position considered to be with the reader, it can be argued that the individual reactions to the text are dictated to some extent by the text. Each reader is different, has his or her own interests and concerns, and thus takes something different from the text but the text still gives its own insight, enabling the individual interpretations by the reader. The reader is entirely in control only when he or she chooses to read or not, to believe the text or reject it. (Cullingford 1998: 4, 7–10, 28.)

Reading can be an essential part of childhood. Still, for most children, reading causes mixed feelings due to the early challenge of interpreting the letters into sound, and they prefer to read undemanding, repetitive, and familiar texts, usually seeking books that

reflect their own experiences. Children could also be called restless readers: if a story is not satisfying they might interpret the text as they wish and become easily bored if the book does not meet their expectations. (Cullingford 1998: 3, 9, 11–13; Nieminen 2009: 292.) However, on the positive side, children tend to be more open than adults to experimenting with a variety of literary forms and are willing to read everything from poetry and folktales to adventure and fantasy (Lukens 2007: 9).

Often children read a lot but the texts they read are more or less of the same kind. This makes it difficult to know whether the books reflect children's taste or form it. Children prefer to read books that are familiar and popular, easy to read and in fashion which is quite often in contrast with what adults, for instance teachers, would like them to read. Thus children learn, at an early age, to separate those books that they want to read from those that they should read. They begin to approach emotionally and intellectually more demanding books as unrewarding and unnecessary reading and tend to associate those with school. (Cullingford 1998: 3, 190.)

Despite the fact that children have clear tastes, they are rarely consulted. Instead adults discover the favorites of children indirectly, by observing which books children like to read and re-read. (Cullingford 1998: 53–54.) Some studies, however, have been conducted and though generalization is difficult, some tendencies are recognizable. For example before age 9 there are no significant differences in reading preferences between boys and girls but after this, between ages 10 and 13, differences are substantial. While both like to read mystery, other types of literature do not appeal to both girls and boys: girls like to read fantasy and animal stories as well as stories about people whereas boys prefer action, adventure and sport stories. For young readers also other characteristics of a book than the topic may matter. For example short books with short chapters, illustrations, episodic, easily followed plots and a few main characters as well as books based on television or movies are intriguing and may impact on the reading choices of children. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 25.)

3.2 Viewpoints on literature

The concept of literature is a product of western thinking and can be viewed from several different standpoints. Literature can be seen as belonging to the sphere of imagination to a point that some have considered all fictional text to be literature and all literature to be fictional. However, the normal use of the term includes also nonfiction. Others see it as something scientific that is used to study the social reality and convey information. Still, the most central matter is the interaction between the text and the reader – the experience brought about by literature. (Korhonen 2001: 12, 16–18.)

When approaching literature, people are aware that certain conventions exist. For instance it is known that literature depicts either fictional or real world and can sometimes take liberties both with cognitive and moral obligations. (Korhonen 2001: 19.) According to Cook (2003: 61) literature represents the values of the society which it stems from but it also often criticizes those same values. Literature is part of the social practice, and therefore texts are always tied to the time and place where they were produced. For example the Finnish classic *Unknown Soldier* by Väinö Linna is not read and interpreted the same way today as it was when it was first published in 1945. The changed historical situation, the movie and theatre adaptations as well as the transformation of the lines into well-known phrases all affect the current reading of the novel. (Keskinen 2001: 100; Korhonen 2001: 11.)

Literary research can be divided into three sections. History of literature focuses, as the name suggests, on history, literary theory studies types or genres of literature as well as textualism, and textual analysis, which includes interpretation, criticism and reading, refers to the study of single books or texts and of the writings of a certain author. However, none of these can function in isolation and need the others to form the whole. In addition to these, also the non-academic discussion of literature that occurs daily among those who read, write and publish books, is part of literary research. (Korhonen 2001: 24, 32–33.)

3.2.1 Central concepts of literary studies

Three concepts are central when literature and books are discussed: text, narrative, and story. The first one, text, is simply a medium used to transfer, or communicate, the narrative from a sender to the recipient. It can be for example oral or written representation. (Ikonen 2001: 186.) Narrative and story are often used as synonyms in everyday speech but in the theory of narratives they are separate concepts: narrative can be defined as a description of at least two events which are not prerequisites of each other while story is the more concrete chain of events or content of the narrative (Chatman 1978: 19; Ikonen 2001: 184–185). According to Chatman (1978: 19, 146), who present a structuralist view of narrative, narrative is a structure formed by story and discourse: story comprises of events and existents, that is characters and setting, while discourse is the expression – the means by which the content is expressed. Although the elements of a narrative, that is events and existents, are individual and discrete, the events are typically related or follow each other logically which creates a feeling of continuity and differentiates narrative from a description of a random group of events. Thus narrative can be viewed as an entity or a whole that communicates a story. (Chatman 1978: 21, 31; Ikonen 2001: 185). The concept of a plot is close to the concept of a story. Story can be approached simply as a chronology that tells what happened next. Plot organizes the chain of events into a causal entity and tells why the events happened as well as structures meanings and directs the activity towards a goal. However, the presentation of events is not necessarily linear but can vary as for example in flashbacks. (Chatman 1978: 20, 43; Ikonen 2001: 184–185, 195.)

Theme is the central idea of a text that expresses what the text is about. It can be presented through an abstract concept and the reader has to interpret the text in order to grasp the theme. The construction of the theme depends on the reader and his or her background, and consequently several themes can be distinguished from one text. Similarly to the theme, the subject answers the questions of what the text is about; what the text narrates. However, subject is more concrete than theme and can be expressed by one noun describing for instance people, places, or events. It is the objective content of

the text that is presented clearly and can be detected without interpretation. (Suomela 2001: 141–144, 150–151.)

Characters are traditionally defined as people described in literature. This is of course a controversial definition since the characters are not always human beings or remind human beings only partially. Characters especially in children's literature can, in addition to people, be animals or fantasy figures. Often these are still representations of human beings as they think and act like human beings. (Käkelä-Puumala 2001: 241; Lassén-Seger 2009: 34.) The characters are companions with whom the reader experiences the story. It was previously thought that children automatically imitate and identify with the characters of the books they read and therefore the behavior of the characters was crucial. However, nowadays it is believed that children do not copy the characters but instead control their own versions and give a personal meaning to the characters. (Cullingford 1998: 6, 20.) It is also believed that identification is based more on the events than the characters. When characters face similar situations as children do in their own lives, children get a chance to reflect their own experiences and can, through stories, gain a better understanding of the complex situations they encounter in the real world. (Cullingford 1998: 20; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 112.)

Typical characters in children's books are living toys and humanized animals. Also real animals are often present, usually as a close friend of a child protagonist. A common animal representing a human child is monkey whose animal features are mixed with human characteristics: monkey characters might live in the jungle but have houses, are able to speak, and wear clothes. The most often cited psychological explanation for animal characters is that the animal characters enable children at same time to empathize with and distance themselves from the emotionally sensitive matters presented in the books. It has also been claimed that moral lecturing is more acceptable if done in a picture book in which characters are animal representations of human beings than otherwise. (Lassén-Seger 2009: 29, 34, 39.)

3.2.2 Popular literature

The purpose of popular literature is to entertain its readers; it provides an escape from the emotional and intellectual struggles and is not contaminated with anything profound to say. The style and structure of popular books is simple and the problems faced by the characters are overcome easily leading to books that are not burdened with too much reality. Popular books are hence an easy and undemanding reading that bring excitement and action to the everyday. The writer is simply aiming to create a world that will distract the reader as easily as possible, and to please, thrill or shock the reader. (Cullingford 1998: 2, 18–19, 21, 36, 186.)

Popular literature reflects the interests of its readers and provides an insight into their desires. The books are popular because they respond to the tastes of their readers instead of trying to influence or change them, and hence offer quick gratification. They do not try to fulfill each individual attempt to make sense of the world but focus on concerns that are common to the audience and comfort by promising a happy ending. Popular books, however, also emphasize the need that exists for a certain type of entertainment. They provide an easy escape from the everyday but also indicate that there is something that the audience wants to escape from. They reflect but do not confront the issues that complicate the real life of the readers but entertain by offering an alternative of not thinking the troublesome reality. (Cullingford 1998: 2, 15, 24, 148, 187–188.)

3.3 Children's literature

Much like popular literature discussed above, also children's literature reflects the experiences of its readers and covers issues that children may face, and thus identify with, in their real lives (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 247). However, children's and young adult literature differs from most other literary categories because it is defined by its audience, not by authorship or genre (Hunt 2011: 43; Martin 2011: 9). Children's books are often written, and also bought, by adults for children, and in no other literature category is the intended audience as thoroughly excluded from the production as in

children's literature (Lassén-Seger 2009: 32; Clark 2011: 15). However, for example in Finland also children and young people have written literature for their age group to a point that it can be said to be a special feature of children's and youth literature (Grünthal 2003: 256).

In children's literature the decisions about the literature and its availability are made by adults, and therefore the nature and content of children's and young adult books depend largely on how adults see children and childhood (Lassén-Seger 2009: 34; Clark 2011: 15). According to Lassén-Seger (2009: 34) critics have for the past decades argued that children's literature expresses a nostalgic and repressed view of childhood and is thus a means of power for adults. Also Parsons (2011: 114) follows this view: he sees that children's literature reinforces the values of the culture in which it was produced and which is governed by adults. Children's books, controlled by adults, affect how children are perceived today which in turn affects how children are in the future. However, both the concept of children and the concept of childhood change with time, place, gender, and observer, and hence neither childhood nor children's literature is a stable construct. (Hunt 2011: 43.)

Hunt (2011: 43) has suggested that historical children's literature could be distinguished from contemporary children's literature as the idea of childhood has changed and thus the books written and published for children for instance two hundred years ago may seem remote from the current trends. Children's books reflect children's experiences, both positive and negative. The experiences can be set in the past, present, or future as long as they are still relevant to the present-day children. As the experiences change, so do the topics which nowadays include almost everything, also those topics that were previously considered unsuitable for children. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 4; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 3.) This has caused the boundary between children's literature and the texts written for adults to become blurred. Also the literature that crosses from adult to child or child to adult audiences influences this, and especially Harry Potter books by J. K. Rowling have resulted the phenomenon to be more apparent than before. As the boundaries become more blurred, it can even be argued that it is not necessary to

distinguish children's literature from other types of literature at all anymore. (Beckett 2011: 58; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 4.)

Nevertheless, children's literature is still important as it is a means to promote reading and literacy. Reading aloud to children helps them begin to grasp the language as well as later increases children's vocabulary. (Gopalakrishnan 2011: xiii; 49.) In addition children's books can stimulate creativity by offering a rich material of not only words but also images and rhythms (Kåreland 2009: 82). What children read and what is read to them leaves an impression and affects the values and attitudes of children. Since children are enthusiastic and curious readers, these influences can be deep and long lasting. At its best literature can help children and young adults to overcome difficult situations such as family troubles, violence and prejudice. Unfortunately it can also present negative images and stereotypes and hence crush one's self-respect. (Cullingford 1998: 77; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 101, 113.)

3.3.1 Young adult literature

Specific literature for young adults emerged when literature began to focus on individuality and self, growth, and development instead of action. *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) by J. D. Salinger is often mentioned as the first young adult novel, together with *The Lord of the Flies* (1954) by William Golding though both were originally published as books for adults. The first Finnish young adult book, *Priska* by Merja Otava, was published in 1959. While in children's books the unchangeable idyll is the norm, youth books centre around the changing identity and identity crises. (Rättyä 2003a: 99; Rättyä 2003b: 171–173.) Youth literature assists its readers on their path towards adulthood. Books offer positive role models and illustrate the diversity of the values, ethical norms and moral standards of the modern society either openly or latently. The style of writing is often racy and humorous as the books try to imitate the youth culture through the stylistic means. (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2003c: 68–70.)

Modern young adult literature discusses current issues, and it is thought that both children's and youth literature reflect the changes occurring in society quicker than

adult literature. Also topics that are elsewhere considered taboos have traditionally been present in youth literature. (Heikkilä-Halttunen & Rättyä 2003: 5, 7.) Since the 1960s common topics of young adult books have been rebellious adolescents, identity issues, conflicts between home and school, friends, gangs, hobbies, and dating. Urban surroundings and use of slang have also been typical since the early days of youth literature. (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2003c: 68; Rättyä 2003a: 98; Kåreland 2009: 76.) Furthermore, in Finland several classics of world literature, such as novels by Jonathan Swift and Migues de Cervantes Saavedra, are included in youth literature as they were first published as adaptations for youth and thus became labeled as youth literature. (Mehtonen 2001: 51.)

As the youth culture and books for young adults have evolved, forbidden topics have diminished. (Heikkilä-Halttunen & Rättyä 2003: 5.) More recently the range of topics and the problems covered in youth literature have widened to include nuclear family, grandparents, motherhood, and relationships as well as alienation, sexual identity, suicides, rapes, and abortions. Especially the later mentioned are typical in North American youth literature but can also be found in European young adult novels. (Grünn 2003: 287; Rättyä 2003b: 172.) In addition grave social problems such as drugs have lately appeared in youth literature even though it has not focused on social problems or politics since the 1970s. Ideological questions are represented by the re-appearance of religiousness. (Grünn 2003: 293.)

Along the topics also the characters presented have changed. According to Rättyä (2003a: 100) the protagonists of the youth novels of the 1990s and the early 21st century have matured and become adults instead of teenagers even though the audience of youth literature seems to be becoming younger and younger. Another visible trend is that realistic young adult literature is losing its readers to fantasy literature. Young readers switch from children's literature to fantasy and few years later to adult literature without venturing into the realms of youth literature in between. These tendencies require attention both from publishers and writers who cannot ignore the fact that reading habits of the youth have changed notably during the first years of 21st century and most likely will continue changing also in the future. (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2003c: 69.)

3.3.2 Aims and objectives of children's literature

Throughout history children's literature has been supposed to both educate and entertain children albeit the emphasis has been on transmitting knowledge (Cullingford 1998: 135; Ewers 2009: 73). It has been said that books should familiarize young children with words, concepts, sounds, and rhythms while for older children they should teach about history and science as well as offer information about different cultures, the functions of society and processes of socialization. Children's literature should also promote work ethics and good manners and train children's senses: the eyesight, the sense of hearing, and the skill of observation. (Hellsing 1999: 42, 49; Ewers 2009: 71.) In addition to these children's books should be easy to read, interesting, clear and simple yet at the same time artistic and well-written, exciting without being scary, and suitable reading for readers of various ages – preferably both for children and adults who share the same interests – though at the same time aimed at a certain age group. In general these are all valid requirements but as easily can be concluded, it is hardly possible to fulfill all of these simultaneously in one book. It is also recognized that the characteristics of a good children's book change: what was once considered to be good reading for children, might not be seen that way today. (Hellsing 1999: 49, 51, 56.)

As Ewers (2009: 65, 70, 73) points out, the most notable educational object of children's books has been, and possibly still is, to prepare children for reality. Thus literature should describe the world and human life realistically, not idealize it. The books should have experience instead of moral principles as a basis for depicting human beings, customs, and specific conditions of life and avoid stereotypic models in order to offer children a chance to develop a nonstereotypic view for instance of identities, family structures and gender roles in society. (Ewers 2009: 70; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 113.) When books introduce children to different lifestyles and require them to view situations from other perspectives than their own, children gain a capacity to think divergently and empathize. Thus they learn to appreciate and understand other people and develop a sense of social justice that is much needed in the world today. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 5–6.)

Besides educational purposes books should also help children understand themselves, offer a sense of life's unity and meaning, and assist in observing the world. Furthermore, stories develop child's imagination and through description of different eras and settings offer experiences not possible to gain in one's own life. (Lukens 2007: 4–8; Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 74.) However, enjoyment is still the most significant personal benefit received through good, entertaining books. Adults who enjoy reading often have had positive reading experiences as children, and their example also encourages children to become active readers as the reading habits of adults influence substantially on how children approach books. (Cullingford 1998: 191; Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 5.)

3.4 History of children's literature

The oldest medium for sharing literature is storytelling. For thousands of years before writing was invented oral literature flourished, and even after printed books became available the tradition of oral literature continued to exist alongside with written literature (Ihonen 2003: 13; Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 280.) However, early literature consisting for instance of ballads, folk tales, and mystery plays was not created for an adult or child audience but for both, and also after the rise of specific children's literature in the 18th century it was long thought that only literature suitable for all audiences should be published as it was assumed that all literature would be read aloud with the entire family present (Clark 2011: 16).

3.4.1 The rise of children's literature

Children's literature reflects the historical time period in which it was published and especially the idea of child and childhood of the time. During the late Middle Ages, the 16th and the 17th century, literature for children was mainly didactic: alphabet-books, other school books, and behavior guides, usually with moralistic and religious tones. (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 5–6; Sánchez-Eppler 2011: 37.) When the perception of childhood and attitude on children started to change, also children's books started to

develop. The first known publisher of children's books was John Newbury's publishing house that published *Little Goody Two Shoes* and *A Little Pretty Pocket Book* in the 1740s. Also *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, nowadays often associated with children's literature, was first published in the 18th century, in 1726. It, however, was not originally children's book and has usually been changed quite drastically in order to make it suitable reading for children. (Stallcup 2004: 87–88; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 6; Sánchez-Eppler 2011: 37.)

According to Gopalakrishnan (2011: 6) discovery of new lands and cultures in the 18th and 19th centuries caused travel and adventure topics to become common in literature. In Europe the Grimm brothers collected and wrote *Grimms' Fairy Tales* in the 19th century, and in the USA *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was published in 1876 and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in 1884, both by Mark Twain. These were originally seen as equivalent books but during 20th century *Tom Sawyer* transformed into a children's book while *Huckleberry Finn* is now known as the great American novel. (Clark 2011: 16; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 6.) Also education and schools became a central theme in children's books in the 19th century, and they continue to be popular topics today (Gruner 2011: 73). In addition to children's books, also magazines for children formed in the 19th century giving many writers and illustrators a chance to display their talents through stories about faraway lands, adventure, and discovery though also folk tales and historical fiction were common (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 6).

At the turn of the century publishing for children developed rapidly, and the first Golden Age of children's literature, during which classic stories such as *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), *Peter Pan* (1911), and *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) were published, was in progress (Bradford 2011: 178; Sorby 2011: 96). Hence by the early 20th century children's literature had become an important market, and the separation of children's literature from that targeted at adults was evident – much to the disadvantage of the first mentioned as adults stopped reading books aimed at children and only books for an adults audience came to be respected by academic circles. (Cullingford 1998: 55; Clark 2011: 16; Kidd 2011: 56). Despite the low status, during the 20th century children's literature developed into a full field of its own. Instead of relying solely on traditional

literature such as folk and fairy tales, distinct genres such as realistic fiction, modern fantasy, and poetry formed, and children's literature became to be as it is today. (Gopalakrishan 2011: 7.)

3.4.2 The early years of children's literature in Finland

During the 18th century very few children's books were published in Finland. The literacy rate was low, and those who could read, read German, French, English, and Swedish children's literature. The 19th century, and especially the start of public school system in the 1860s, brought a change. Children began to be appreciated, the society was willing to invest in them, and it became more common to publish books for children. Finnish children's and youth literature developed around mid-century when the number of both original works and translations being published increased notably. (Ihonen 2003: 13–15, 19.) Most of this literature was fiction. Folk and fairy tales were common in the 1840s and 1850s when for instance tales by H. C. Andersen and Grimm brothers were translated. In addition some children's plays and poetry were published, and in the 1870s also picture books became available as technology advanced, and picture books became affordable. (Ihonen 2003: 18–19.)

From the early years of Finnish children's literature active translating from German and English was greatly supporting the domestic production, and especially English children's literature has had a significant impact on the Finnish children's books. Also Swedish children's literature was being translated into Finnish, and occasionally translations into Finnish were made through Swedish. However, Finnish children's literature was rarely translated into Swedish. (Huhtala 2003: 38; Ihonen 2003: 16.) Once Finnish children's and young adult literature was established, it developed further in phase with other European literature. Particular for Finnish children's literature was though that it progressed alongside the literature for adults while elsewhere its development was behind that of adult literature. (Ihonen 2003: 15.)

Ihonen (2003: 19) points out that the Swedish children's literature in Finland was mainly relying on Zacharias Topelius and original Swedish production. Topelius'

collection of fairly tales and other texts written for children was published in eight volumes: in Swedish in 1865–1896 and translations into Finnish in 1874–1905. These books made Topelius children's favorite writer – a position later achieved in Finland only by Tove Jansson, the author of popular Moomin books. Topelius is the author who raised children's literature in Finland to an international level and influenced greatly the stabilizing of Finnish-Swedish children's literature. Also the general appreciation of children's literature in the end of the 19th century can be attributed to Topelius and his literary achievements. (Lehtonen 2003: 20; Orlov 2003a: 47.)

3.4.3 Finnish children's literature in the 20th century

The beginning of the 20th century witnessed changes in the Finnish children's and young adult literature. The amount of books published increased and the quality improved. The central country for children's literature was England where fantasy and nonsense books were thriving. In Finland, however, fantasy was avoided and traditional fairy tales were considered to be the most suitable literature for children. The Finnish-Swedish children's literature evolved quite differently from the Finnish literature. It included fantasy and nonsense stories already in the 1920s although the most active period of publishing was in the 1930s and 1940s. Finnish-Swedish children's books were influenced by the legacy of Topelius and hence traditional fairy tales were the most popular books, but also Finnish-Swedish modernism and foreign, especially Anglo-Saxon children's literature had an impact which can be seen in the rise of fantasy and nonsense. (Huhtala 2003: 38; Orlov 2003a: 49; Orlov 2003b: 179.)

According to Hakala (2003: 74) children's and young adult literature started to diverge from each other between the First and Second World War when the demand for youth literature increased. Finnish young adult literature was stabilized by Anni Swan whose collected works were published in 1914–1949. Books for young adults were originally meant for middle and upper class readers who had time to read and thus depicted realistically the life of those classes at that time. Noteworthy is that foreigners and people representing other than white races were kept at a distance, and hence the youth books of the 1920s and 1930s are undeniably racists when viewed from the present day

perspective. (Hakala 2003: 74, 76; Kivilaakso 2003b: 63.) While Finnish youth literature gained a stable status during the early years of the 20th century, Finnish-Swedish youth literature did not succeed as well. It was not innovative like Finnish-Swedish fairy tales, and thus the quality deteriorated during the first decades of the 20th century. After the 1940s the genre vanished almost completely. (Orlov 2003a: 57.)

1940s on the whole was not particularly encouraging time for literature. World War II eroded the quality of books, it was easy to get books published, and many writers wrote only temporarily. After the war the situation improved although war itself was not a popular topic during the last years of the 1940s or during the 1950s. (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2003a: 166–167; Rajalin 2003: 158.) The first Moomin book, *Småtrollen och den stora översvämningen* [The Moomins and the Great Flood] by Tove Jansson, was published in 1945. After this the Swedish children's literature was unquestionable controlled by the Moomins. On the Finnish side, fairy tales had been strongly influenced by folktales and the writings of Topelius but in the 1950s this changed as the British fantasy found its way into the Finnish children's and youth literature. (Huhtala 2003: 38; Orlov 2003b: 179.) In the 1950s authors were motivated to write good, quality literature for children and youth. However, the field of entertainment began to change, and the emergence of comics, movies, and eventually television affected the position of literature. (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2003a: 167–168, 172; Rättyä 2003c: 268.)

Realism became the predominant trend in the children's and youth literature in the 1960s. For instance realistic descriptions of war were published in the 1960s though the broader war descriptions did not appear until the end of the 1970s. (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2003b: 216; Rajalin 2003: 160.) Also anti-war children's and youth books were published but otherwise especially youth literature strove to be non-political. (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2003b: 221; Rajalin 2003: 160.) In children's fairy tales normal children became the most common characters instead of witches, evil elves, and princesses, and pollution of the environment became a central theme in children's books (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2003b: 228).

The books for young adults of the 1960s and 1970s were strict representatives of their era, and thus no new classics that would have lasted for generations were written. (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2003b: 218, 232.) A common theme was the migration from the Finnish countryside to the cities. With the urban milieu, the safe atmosphere of the 1960s changed to a rougher one in the 1970s, and bullying, violence and mental problems became more common topics causing the young adult literature to become more serious than before. (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2003b: 226; Rättyä 2003b: 177.) During the 1980s the realistic description and focus on problems were replaced by postmodernism, speculations of identity, and the development of self-image while 1990s introduced books that do not follow the rules of uniform moral standards. (Grünn 2003: 285, 288, 292).

Both children's and youth literature gained new respect during the 1970s and 1980s when especially the quality requirements were speculated. The public discussion was successful, and the first state awards of children's culture in Finland were given in 1986. However, the recession in the beginning of the 1990s affected also children's literature: several publishing houses of children's literature were closed and the public discussion was scarce. Most recent worry in the field has been the decrease in literacy as reading is being replaced by other leisure time activities requiring more time and devotion and thus reducing the time spent, and available for, reading. (Havaste 2003: 144–146.)

3.5 Multicultural literature

Early children's literature did not include stories about minority groups. For instance in the United States the first stories introducing other cultures than the dominant white culture appeared in the early part of the 20th century as a response to extreme stereotyping and misrepresentations and presented often the African American community which thus cleared the way for other cultures. (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 34.) However, according to Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson (2008: 154), regional stories and stories about children of minorities did not emerge in larger amounts until in the 1940s,

and only during the 1960s and 1970s books written by minorities started to achieve national recognition.

Today it is thought that literature for children should reflect all children's experiences, and thus the books should depict the diversity present in modern society. When books do show different sociocultural experiences and backgrounds, they are part of multicultural literature. (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 5.) Although multicultural literature can be defined in various ways, it is often defined as literature that considers those groups that have previously been underrepresented or overshadowed and disregarded by dominant, typically Euro-American, culture, or more simply put, tells about diverse populations and includes different perspectives. Hence this definition includes all racial, ethnic, language, and religious minorities as well as sexual minorities, different social classes, and people with disabilities. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 215–216; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 5, 29.) However, this research focuses on ethnic groups and immigration and thus the approach to multicultural literature in this chapter does not include all sociocultural aspects but rather those that are relevant for the research.

According to Gopalakrishnan (2011: 23, 34, 249) in multicultural children's literature the themes, language, characters, and illustrations reflect the experiences of different groups and give children who are members of these groups an equal representation in books and a chance to see themselves in positive depictions. As literature allows its audience to empathize with others and see things from other perspectives, multicultural children's books can help develop an awareness and understanding of people from different backgrounds and teach children to appreciate everyone, also those people who lead a life different from children's own lives. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 47, 157; Törmälehto 2010: 131–132). Multicultural literature, especially realistic fiction, can also break stereotypes, help young people realize social injustices endured by some people, and create a better understanding of history and past events. However, the ultimate goal of those producing multicultural children's literature is to guide children towards acceptance of those different from themselves, reduce prejudices between people, and thus promote global understanding. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 213, 216; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 34.)

For instance literature about immigration often describes the different aspect of immigration such as the journey, the separation from one's homeland, and feelings of loneliness and joy when starting a new life. These books thus give the readers an insight into the lives of immigrants and enable them to gain an understanding of the complex situations related to immigration. (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 10.) Multicultural literature includes also an abundance of books written by ethnic minorities. For them literature has offered a tool and a space to strengthen their ethnic identity, create a sense of solidarity, record their history, and resists the power structures of the majority. (Rantonen & Savolainen 2010: 15.)

Not all children's books are similarly multicultural as for instance representation, cultural authenticity, and range of experiences depicted can impact the degree to which a book is multicultural (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 22). The first multicultural children's books, or what are now seen as such, showed different cultures and races in illustrations and content only to introduce previously underrepresented ethnic characters and cultures. Folktales of Native American tribes or Asian folktales are examples of these stories. Over the years a more inclusive view has become an important factor though also today there are different types of multicultural children's books available. (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 23–24.)

According to Gopalakrishnan (2011: 31, 33) the border of multicultural literature is formed by books that do not encourage critical dialogue. These books show differences of class, experiences, and points of view but highlight sameness, not uniqueness, and hence illustrate only the universality of human condition. Books that depict and make readers aware of social issues and thus more empathetic and sympathetic towards a group can be called socially conscious books. They usually present one cultural group and its unique experiences, aiming at introducing the difficulties of that group to larger audience. However, socially conscious books evoke critical dialogue only occasionally and are fairly universal. The most multicultural books describe cultural traditions, languages, and experiences of a certain group in an authentic voice, from an insider's perspective. These books highlight the specific nuances and experiences that are not

universal but unique as well as show cultural conflicts and consequently further critical dialogue and question power relations. (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 31–33.)

It is debated who should or is allowed to write multicultural literature. Some argue that only insiders may write about a certain culture while others believe that also those outside the culture can contribute to multicultural literature. The question is controversial, and for instance the type of literature, degree of multiculturalism and the theme might affect who has the necessary experience and is able to depict the topic authentically. (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 21, 38.) However, the priority is to make quality multicultural children's literature available for children as literature can combat the ignorance and intolerance and show young readers that the similarities between people are more fundamental than the differences (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 230).

3.6 Categories of children's books

Children's literature can be classified in many ways. The main division is usually done between books for children's and books for young adults as has already been discussed (see for example 3.3). Both of these can be further categorized for instance according to the form or genre.

3.6.1 Picture books

Picture books are often considered to be the main category of children's literature. A simple definition would be to name any book that has pictures – either with or without words – contributing to the story to be a picture book. (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 250.) However, this definition is general and would include books that have only a cover picture, books with a couple of pictures throughout, and books that are dependent on the pictures (Lukens 2007: 39). To be more precise, books with pictures can be divided into picture books and illustrated books. Picture books have plenty of illustrations, and both pictures and words contribute to the understanding of the story. The illustrations are an integral part of the book as the story could be diminished or even confusing if there

were no pictures involved. In addition to picture books in which pictures and text together form the content, there are also wordless picture books in which the pictures tell the whole story. Illustrated books on the other hand are books that have an occasional picture here and there for example to divide the text or add interest but the illustration is not essential to the story and might serve only as decoration. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 91, 97; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 250.)

According to Lukens (2007: 40) in picture books the text reveals the story in linear progression, little by little, while the pictures expose everything at once. The illustrator transforms the words into visual form, and thus illustrator's choices – which episodes of the text are pictured and which are not – influence the story or even change it. Hence the same text can tell different stories when illustrated by different artists. (Lukens 2007: 45–46, 69.) Although illustrator can use his or her vision when creating the illustrations, the details in the pictures cannot conflict with those in the text as children observe the illustrations carefully and find possible contradictions distracting. They tend to have little tolerance for inaccurate pictures and may reject a picture if it does not please them. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 95; Nieminen 2009: 292.) In addition to telling the story, illustrations in picture books can also have value as art as the pictures can be complex, independent art works. (Lych-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 10; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 250).

Modern picture book is well established, it has a wide audience and more multicultural and realistic themes than before. In addition the content of the modern picture book can represent any genre: the stories can be historical, informational, fantasy, poetry, or of any other genre that exists. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 101; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 250.) In the 21st century graphic novels have emerged as a popular format related to picture books. Graphic novels are novel-length comic books that were originally created for adults but are now written also for elementary- and middle-school children. They are valued because they appeal to young people and especially to reluctant readers as they are visually oriented, emphasize dialogue, and are close to popular culture. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 101, 103–105.)

3.6.2 Series

Besides picture books, a clear category of children's and young adult literature is series. When books are published in series, the world created by the author extends over several books which facilitates the reading process. Cohesion results for instance from the characters, settings, themes, or target audience: the books can have either one or several uniting elements. (Rättyä 2003c: 265; Lukens 2007: 19.) Many series focus on a character. The books can emphasize character growth or have a constant, unchanging central character – in both cases the plots are separate but have similar themes. Books by L. M. Montgomery and J. R. R. Tolkien are examples of series that depict character growth as well as Harry Potter novels by J. K. Rowling while for instance in Nancy Drew series the character is unchanging. (Rättyä 2003c: 265; Lukens 2007: 20.)

The large number of books, wide production, and utilization of the same design in several books is typical for series. The books have similar topics, plots, and solutions. (Rättyä 2003c: 265.) In addition to being similar to each other, the books that belong to same series can be similar to television shows such as *Sweet Valley High* which exists both as book series and as television show. The modern series concentrate on the type of appeal, the tone, and the subject matter and thus almost anyone can write them. For instance already mentioned *Sweet Valley High* is created by Francine Pascal but in reality written by others. (Cullingford 1998: 127.) According to Lukens (2007: 20) series help young readers discover pleasure in reading and enable them to share books with each other which makes series appealing. As a result publishers have created their own series as this eases marketing and also decreases the costs of publishing books. These publisher's series can include all kinds of books from fairy tales to detective novels as the books are linked to each other through similar appearance and hence the topic, characters, or setting do not matter. (Rättyä 2003c: 265–266.)

Though short series in Finnish had been published since Topelius (see 3.4.2), the first longer Finnish series for children was *Kiljusen herrasväki* [Family Kiljunen] written by Jalmari Finne, with eight books published between 1914 and 1925. Also translated series were common and for instance Tarzan books by Edgar Rice Burroughs, the first

of which was translated and published already in 1921, have remained popular among children and youth. (Rättyä 2003c: 266.) From 1940s onward The Famous Five series by Enid Blyton and Nancy Drew books gained popularity in Finland and were followed by Nordic detective series and other series written especially for girls (Rättyä 2003c: 268). Picture books for small children have been published in series in Finland since 1970s. For instance Finnish Jason- and Minttu-series are still popular among children as well as Danish Teddy Bear Rasmus. The pace of publishing books in series has accelerated since the 1980s, and both translated series and Finnish series have increased in numbers year by year – for instance during the early years of 1990s alone 50 new Finnish serial titles were published. (Rättyä 2003c: 270, 272.)

3.6.3 Books for girls and boys

According to Hellsing (1999: 91) separate books for girls and boys have been published since the mid 19th century though some novels addressed to girls were written already in the 1700s. In Great Britain the first girls' novel was published in 1749, remarkably soon after the first children's book of any kind was published (Reid-Walsh 2011: 94). However, as an independent type of literature the books for girls and books for boys are considered to originate in the United States in the mid 1800s (Huhtala 2003: 43). According to Hakala (2003: 74) the idea of girls' and boys' books was to provide literature that recognizes the different needs and wishes of young readers, and hence women wrote typically for girls while men wrote for boys.

The first girls' books were shocking for many as the view of girls' upbringing and education was liberal. Still, the books ended with the protagonist marrying a respectable man and accepting her role as a wife and as a mother. (Hellsing 1999: 91.) The early books for girls were often religious and instructive. The focus was on education, and girls were guided towards domestic activities and social nurturing. (Huhtala 2003: 43.) An important aspect, according to Cullingford (1998: 36), was to teach the readers to become good wives and mothers and to play feminine role. Whereas girls were supposed to stay at home, boys were encouraged to go out to see the world (Huhtala 2003: 43). Through books boys were being taught to be masculine, and masculinity was

typically linked with adventure and empire (Cullingford 1998: 36; Hateley 2011: 87). Also exercise was emphasized in the late 19th century books as the modern man was supposed to be healthy both mentally and physically. (Huhtala 2003: 44).

In the Unites States girls' books began to change in the 1920s and 1930s by offering stories with more action and adventure also for girls. The domestic life became more public as girl protagonists started to have careers, were solving mysteries as in Nancy Drew books, or were settlers as in the Little House series. (Reid-Walsh 2011: 94.) In Finland, however, the books addressed to girls followed the 19th century pattern until the 1950s and books for boys even longer, until the 1960s (Huhtala 2003: 46). Thus the themes and locations stayed similar to the early girls' and boys' books with domestic and school stories for girls and adventure stories for boys (Hakala 2003: 81). From the 1950s and 1960s onward the themes started to change. Books for boys were modernized faster than girls' books, and traditional adventure and war stories were accompanied with stories about space travels, nuclear war, and other technological inventions. (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2003b: 224.)

As the books for girls and boys have changed, also the way female and male characters are depicted has changed. 20 or 30 years ago girls and women were often portrayed as passive and dependent, doing domestic work, and raising children while boys and men were shown in more positive images as independent, active, in charge of situations, and working outside home. (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 103, 107.) As children learn about the expected behavior through books, it is important that both women and men are portrayed positively in a variety of careers and with a variety of emotions. Nowadays women are presented as smart, independent, and self-assured individuals in many different career positions, and men are showing more tenderness and sensitivity than before. (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 105, 107.) However, the girls' and boys' books written 50 or even 100 years ago are still popular and read by many which suggests that the past models of behavior are still perceived as normal and affect the way children and young adults picture gender roles (Hellsing 1999: 92; Hateley 2011: 87). In addition to the altered portrayal of gender roles, also the audience of these books has changed. According to Hellsing (1999: 99) for instance the books for girls that used to be written

for and read by girls between 13 and 16 are now read by younger audience consisting of girls between 9 and 13. Furthermore, the earlier, separated books for girls and boys have often been replaced by the youth novel targeted for both sexes, thus promoting more equal starting point for reading (Kåreland 2009: 76).

3.6.4 Classics

Several children's and young adult books are known as classics: books that interest and are read by generation after generation. Classics include all kinds of books and cross all genre lines: there are classic picture books, classic books published in series, classics read by girls or boys of certain age as well as classics that represent historical fiction, realistic fiction, or fantasy. As children's literature has a fairly brief history, books that interest two or three generations can be considered as classics, and thus books from the 1920s or 1940s can already be labeled as classics. (Lukens 2007: 29.) Often books that are now known as children's classics have originally been books for an adult audience. In addition several adaptations of traditional stories have become children's classic though there are also classics that were written for children right from the start. (Kidd 2011: 52.)

According to Heikkilä-Halttunen (2003a: 170) children's classics tend to speak both to children and adults. Continuous popularity stems on the one hand from being innovative and timely, on the other hand from being committed to literary traditions. Furthermore significant theme and narrative style that is appealing and engaging to readers at all times, credible characters, and continuing reality of the conflict seem to be required for a book to become a classic. (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2003a: 169; Lukens 2007: 29.) Young adult literature is typically closely tied to time and its issues and ideologies. As a result, youth books do not convert to classics as easily as children's books. (Heikkilä-Halttunen 2003a: 174.)

3.6.5 Genres

Children's literature offers variety just like literature for adults. Although in general children's books tend to be active rather than passive, rely more on dialogue and

incidents than description and introspection, and are more likely optimistic than depressive, the books are not uniform. (Lukens 2007: 13; Hunt 2011: 45.) There are rhymes and poetry, traditional literature such as fairy tales and folktales, fantasy and science fiction, realistic fiction, historical fiction, and mystery stories but also nonfiction written for children and youth. (Lukens 2007: 30–34.) These are often called genres: simply defined as a type of literature that has a common set of characteristics. However, genres do not always have clear boundaries, and they can be overlapping with elements of each genre present in the other genres. (Lukens 2007: 13–14.) Though the use of the term genre can be controversial, it is used here in the above mentioned sense as it enables a simple categorization and is adequate for the purposes of this research.

Often children's first experience with literature is nursery or Mother Goose rhymes – short and simple stories that have been passed orally from generation to generation. Though rhymes are not poetry, they are a natural introduction to poetry and thus an introduction to literature, and as children learn language through listening and observing, poetry, especially in an oral form, is an ideal type of literature for young children. (Lukens 2007: 239–240, 266; Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 56, 70.) Modern poems describe the beauty of life and nature and view the world from child's perspective. Most common are humorous poems, nonsense, and imaginative poems although also realistic poems for children exist. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 63.)

Plays offer same benefits to young readers as other literature. They help children develop their imagination and their ability to empathize with other people. As with other literature, plays were not originally written exclusively for children but for a general audience that included both adults and children. First children's plays were written in the 20th century, with *Peter Pan* by J. M. Barrie being one of the first and most widely known children's plays. Today, more than 200 new plays for children are being published every year. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 74, 77–78, 80.)

Traditional literature is formed by the stories and poems that were shared orally for generations before eventually being written down. They do not have known or identifiable authors and are hence attributed to entire groups of people. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 119.) According to Gopalakrishnan (2011: 251) the best known

traditional stories are folktales and traditional fairy tales though also legends, myths, and fables are part of traditional literature. In addition to traditional folktales, there are nowadays also modern folktales. These are told in a similar form to traditional tales but are created by one, known person and are thus often classified as fantasy. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 138.) Although for thousands of years traditional stories were intended for both adults and children, they are today considered to be children's literature because of their use of supernatural and magic. Still, some traditional stories may introduce children to ideas more mature than they can be expected to understand, and for instance the gruesome violence occasionally found in traditional tales has been questioned, resulting in rewriting of many stories as in the Disney versions of folktales. (Lukens 2007: 142; Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 119–120.)

Literature, in which the characters, the events, or the settings are beyond the realms of possibility, is called fantasy. These stories cannot happen in the real world as for example animals talk and inanimate objects come alive, but the stories do often contain truths that help the reader understand the world. The modern folktales such as *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Emperor's New Clothes* by Danish Hans Christian Andersen are considered to be the first modern fairy tales for children, published first in 1835. In England modern fantasy for children emerged in 1865 when *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was written, under the pen-name Lewis Caroll, by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson while the first classic modern fantasy for children in the United States was *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum, published in 1900. The most recent development of modern fantasy is science fiction. The 19th century novels by Jules Verne and H. G. Wells are often considered to be the first representatives of the genre. Today science fiction appears often together with other types of fantasy as the growth of modern fantasy seems to be in narratives in which different genres are merged into one book. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 134–136.)

When a story tells about people who seem like the reader, who face situations similar to those of the reader, or who are involved in familiar activities, it belongs to realistic fiction –genre. Family is one of the main themes in realistic fiction for children. *Little Women* (1868) by Louisa M. Alcott, *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) by L. M.

Montgomery and *The Secret Garden* (1911) by Frances Hodgson Burnett were among the first family stories and remain popular even today (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 150, 153, 157.) In addition to nuclear family with mother, father, and children extended families, alternative families, divorce, blended families, foster and adopted children, and single-parent families are all present in the modern realistic fiction for children (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 155; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 111).

Realistic stories about friendship, romance stories, mysteries, and animal stories are also typical and popular topics of realistic fiction although the development of children's literature has brought previously taboo topics into focus. For instance poverty, abuse, abandonment, disabilities, drugs, and death – social issues that have always been part of children's lives – were not discussed in children's books in the past but have now became permissible topics. (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 155–159; Gopalakrishnan 2011: 175.) According to Lukens (2007: 144) also in realistic youth novels the themes have changed, and in addition to traditional romances controversial topics such as premarital sex, forced marriage, and abortion are debated in today's books.

Although many fictional children's books offer information about the world – about animals, nature, and history for instance – their main purpose is still to pleasure and to provide understanding while some books are written simply to give factual or conceptual information. These books, mainly biographies and informational books, are called nonfiction. (Lukens 2007: 288; Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 188.) Well-written nonfiction gives young readers information they desire thus satisfying their inborn curiosity to explore the world. It can also stimulate children to seek for more information and allow them to discover facts beyond the scope of school books. (Lukens 2007: 290, 307; Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson 2008: 190.)

4 MULTICULTURALISM IN THE BOARDING HOUSE ONNELA BOOKS

This research explores the multicultural aspects of book series Boarding House Onnela. The aim is to find out how multiculturalism and immigration are represented in the series. All four books published in the series will be analyzed. As in book series in general, also in the books of Boarding House Onnela the focus is on the same main characters in each book. Each book has a unique plot but the setting stays the same, and the themes presented are similar in all four books. The books are not clearly intended for girls or boys but as they concentrate on people and relationships and introduce adventure and action only occasionally, it would seem likely that they appeal more to girls than to boys. The characters of Boarding House Onnela books are ordinary people who are engaged in activities that are familiar to most young readers, and the books can be said to be a representative of the realistic fiction genre.

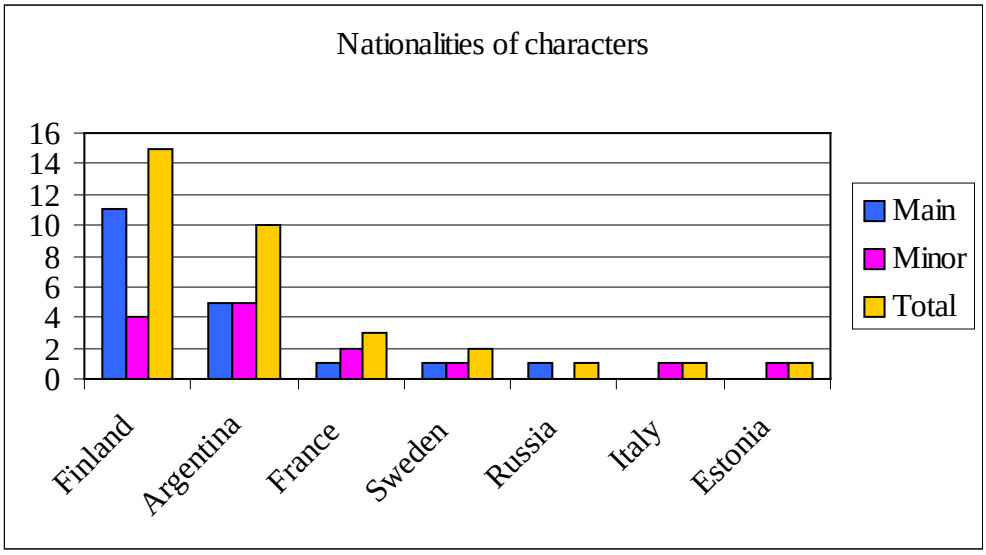
In the first part of the analysis quantitative content analysis is applied to study how many different nationalities are presented in the books. This is followed by discourse analysis that explores how the nationalities are described. The second part examines how many languages are spoken in the books via quantitative content analysis while discourse analysis is applied to find out in what context(s) different languages are used. Next qualitative content analysis is used to view the cultural differences and problem situations presented as well as to study which aspects of immigration are included in the books. The presentation of immigration is then further examined using discourse analysis. The analysis concludes with a discussion of how well the books in the series correspond with the definition of multicultural children's book.

4.1 Nationalities

The four books of the series include in total 33 central characters who represent seven different nationalities. Central characters were separated into main and minor characters by calculating how many times each character was present in a book. Characters who were involved fifteen or more times were listed as main characters. Characters who

appeared 5–14 times were classified as minor characters while those characters who were present less than five times were not included in the listing of characters as they were not seen to be central characters. The total amount of characters includes both main and minor characters: 19 of the characters are main characters at least in one of the books while 14 are in a minor role. The main characters do not necessarily have a significant role in every book but instead they might appear only in one book or are a main character in one book, a minor character in another and not present at all in the rest of the books. List of characters, their nationalities and which books each is present can be seen in appendix 1 on page 103.

Graph 1 shows the main and minor characters by nationalities. Eleven of the main characters are Finnish which is quite natural as the stories are set in Finland. Finnish characters include also members of Finland's Swedish speaking minority. The second largest group with five main characters is Argentinians while the last three main characters are from Sweden, France and Russia. Finnish are represented by four and Argentinians by five minor characters. There is also one minor character from Sweden, two from France and one from Italy and Estonia.



Graph 1. Main and minor characters by nationality.

The first book, *Delfina's travelling case*, has nine main characters and five minor characters – 14 characters in total. Eight of the characters are Finnish, four Argentinian and two Swedish. In the second book of the series, *The winter of filled tomatoes*, there are in total 17 characters: 12 main characters and 5 minor characters. The nationalities present are Finnish (eight characters), Argentinian (five characters), French (three characters) and Russian (one character). The third book, *The book of distant loves*, differs slightly from the rest of the books as half of it happens in Argentina. It is the only book of the series that has more Argentinian than Finnish characters. There are ten Argentinian and five Finnish characters. Also one character from France, one from Italy and one from Estonia are presented making the total number of characters 18. The last book of the series, *Delfina's clock summer*, shows a change in the number of nationalities towards more Finnish focus: the book has ten Finnish characters, four Argentinian and one French character. The books do not provide background as to why these particular nationalities have been chosen by the authors to be presented. Possibly the authors know people who are representatives of these nationalities, have lived in these countries or otherwise feel they are more familiar with these nationalities and countries than with some others. This, however, is entirely speculative as no factual information can be derived from the books.

The description of the characters is mostly related to the appearance, personality or behavior of the character. Finnish characters are introduced mainly by using words that describe their appearance. In the first book Julius Korva is presented as tall and thin-faced and film director has long hair and beard while in the second book Keksi-Janne is medium-sized, skinny although plump around stomach and has curly, red hair (01: 14, 95; 02: 19)[1]. In the fourth book Sara is described as dark-haired and petite, and Irene Kormilainen has curly hair (04: 125–126, 130). In addition adjectives describing the personality or behavior of a character are used: Julius Korva is nervous, Keksi-Janne and Sara nice, Irene Kormilainen friendly and energetic and Marjatta Lepokorpi strict (01: 14; 02: 19; 04: 58, 125, 130). Henkka Andersson on the other hand is introduced only using words that depict his personality or behavior. In the second book he is said to

[1] 01 refers to the first book of the series, 02 to the second, 03 to the third and 04 to the fourth book of the series.

be a mean nuisance and in the fourth book horrible, unpredictable and unfair (02: 92; 04: 8). All of the above mentioned introductions are made by the narrator (Wasker) and are hence based on his judgement. Also Delfina introduces some of the characters. She presents the film director in the first book as trustworthy and well-mannered and describes Marjatta Lepokorpi in the fourth book as prompt and efficient (01: 95; 04: 58). These introductions are not connected to the nationality of a character but based on his or her traits and do not offer particularly stereotypical view of the Finnish characters.

Also Argentinian characters are presented mostly using words that describe their appearance or personality. When abuelo Ernesto first appears in the first book of the series, he is said to be old, sturdy, and energetic while Delfina is depicted as young, shorter than abuelo, blond, and energetic (01: 30, 39). The second book presents Delfina in addition as special and abuelo Ernesto as great, special, fine, and dignified (02: 7–8). Dania and Elena are introduced in the first book as white-haired, old, nice, high-spirited, active, and sweet. In the second book their introduction is accompanied by adjectives small and slender. (01: 55, 57, 67; 02: 13.) Aunt Chela appears first time in the second book in which she is said to be blond and plump. In the third book her introduction includes only adjectives that are related to her personality or behavior: she is depicted as nice, a little scary and is said to have a bright look in her eyes. (02: 24; 03: 72–73.) The third book of the series also presents Pancho and Cristina – Pancho is said to be small with a plump stomach and black beard while Cristina is mentioned to be quiet (03: 57, 73). As with the Finnish characters, also Argentinians are introduced by the narrator, and the introduction described so far are not nationalized, and the description cannot be said to be especially stereotypical.

Swedish characters in the first book, Per and Ingrid, are not described in detail. Per is said to have curly hair and Ingrid green eyes but otherwise their appearance or personality is not being described (01: 63). In the second book French character Aurelie is depicted as tall and slim and Russian character Pjotr as quiet older gentleman (02: 131, 141). These introductions are made by the narrator. In the third book Italian character Roberto is described as a happy person by Risto, one of the Finnish characters

(03: 102). Besides the introduction of Finnish film director in the first book and Marjatta Lepokorpi in the fourth book that were made by Delfina, Roberto is the only character that is not introduced by the narrator. As with Finnish and Argentinian characters, these depictions cannot be said to be especially stereotypical.

However, also more stereotypical description does occur in the series. In addition to the already mentioned introductions, Finnish character Risto is described as quiet, serious, shy, and taciturn (01: 48; 03: 9, 208) which all can often be heard when Finnish people are discussed (see for instance Aslama & Pantti 2007: 57–58, 60). Delfina and abuelo Ernesto on the other hand are said to be especially loud, inflated, and temperamental (01: 39; 03: 18; 04: 197): all adjectives that are often linked to Latin American people. The most stereotypical views were found in the second book of the series. The book introduces French characters, or more precisely Aurelie and her parents, as cultured, sophisticated, stylish, charming, and enchanting while Russian character Pjotr is sad, heavy-hearted and melancholy (02: 132–136, 141, 146, 176). Nevertheless, the series does acknowledge personal differences as for instance one Argentinian character is described as quiet (03: 73), and mostly it is clear that the adjectives used are characteristic of one particular character.

Most characters that are present and described in the series are introduced by the narrator, Wasker. However, Wasker himself, his mother, father and grandmother are not introduced in the same manner as the other characters, possible because they are not new characters for the narrator-Wasker like the other characters are and hence do not require any comments from his point of view. Some of their qualities nevertheless are shown during the series. Wasker's mother sees Wasker as young and brisk while Delfina says Wasker is precise, attentive, and wise (01: 41, 62, 82; 02: 111; 03: 40, 89). According to Wasker his mother is curious and sensible, Delfina thinks she is wise like her son, and Risto sees Wasker's mother as efficient (01: 105; 02: 111; 04: 194). Wasker's grandmother, mormor, is said to be old, curious, forgetful, full of surprises, and wise by the narrator-Wasker and carefree by Wasker's mother (01: 105; 02: 215; 03: 34, 164; 04: 53).

Also other characters are described throughout the series after their first introduction in each book. The narrator depicts Risto as young in the first book, decorous, calm, tall, and rangy in the third book, and not reluctant or work-shy in the fourth book (01: 38; 03: 180, 208; 04: 34). Henkka Andersson is said to be arrogant and relaxed by the narrator-Wasker and difficult by the school principal in the second book of the series while in the fourth book he is perceived in a different light: Wasker's grandmother says he is nice and Wasker's parents think he is hark-working and skilful (02: 179, 197; 04: 118–120). Keksi-Janne in the second book is described as weird by Wasker's mother and mysterious by the narrator (02: 52, 117). In the fourth book the narrator mentions Sara is creative while Marjatta Lepokorpi is described by the narrator as horrible, unsmiling, and difficult, and both Marjatta and her son Kaarlo as unreliable, evil, and horrible by Delfina (04: 64–65, 187, 202).

When Delfina is being described by the narrator the adjectives used in the first book are nice, determined, creative, and happy, in the second book happy, excitable, dutiful, and annoying, and in fourth book volatile (01: 41, 43, 66, 105; 02: 53, 87, 204; 04: 211). In addition in the first book Wasker's grandmother says Delfina is skilled and in the second book Wasker's mother thinks she is sensible and charming (01: 126; 02: 50, 107). Abuelo Ernesto is depicted by the narrator as excitable and happy in the second and respectable in the third part of the series whereas Dania and Elena are described in the first book as curious by Wasker's mother and Elena as pale and skinny in the third book, again by Wasker's mother (01: 59; 02: 204; 03: 77, 167). Per and Ingrid in the first book are sensitive according to Delfina while Wasker thinks both in the third and fourth part of the series that Aurelie is creative (01: 135; 03: 110; 04: 194). Lastly, in the third book Wasker's mother describes Lennart ,who is from Estonia, as cheerful (03: 163).

As discussed above, the characters are described mainly by the narrator. The characters describe each other only in few occasions, and in these situations the adjectives that are used are always related to the personality (for instance precise, creative), behavior (for instance efficient, smart) or appearance (for instance thin) of the character and do not refer to the nationality or cultural background of the character. However, also when the

narrator describes the characters, the description is mostly related to the above mentioned features, and adjectives that could be seen as stereotypical of certain nationality or culture were rare. In summary it can be said that although stereotypical description can occasionally be found throughout the series, no excessive generalizations are made, and it is clear that the books focus on personal traits, not on stereotypes.

4.2 Languages

The books in the series are written in Finnish. In addition to Finnish, eight other languages are used throughout the series. The first book includes Swedish, Spanish, English, and German phrases, the second book Swedish, Spanish, French and Russian, the third book Swedish, Spanish, French, Estonian, and Italian and the fourth book Swedish, Spanish, English and French phrases. The exact amount of the phrases in each language used in the series can be seen in table 1.

Language	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Total
Swedish	33	18	21	28	100
Spanish	52	52	73	19	196
English	4			3	7
German	1				1
French		11	9	14	34
Russian		12			12
Estonian			6		6
Italian			1		1
Total 8	4	4	5	4	357

Table 1. Languages used in the series.

The most common foreign language is Spanish which is natural since most foreign characters are Argentinian. In total the books include 196 Spanish phrases. Also Swedish is frequently used in the books as besides the two Swedish characters in the

first book, also some of the Finnish characters are Swedish-speaking. The combined number of Swedish phrases in the series is 100. These three languages, Finnish, Spanish and Swedish, are used in every book of the series. After the introduction of the French main character in book two, French is used from time to time in rest of the books, in 34 phrases in total. Less frequently used languages are English, German, Russian, Estonian, and Italian. English phrases are included in first and fourth book of the series while German, Russian, Italian and Estonian are used only in one book of the series: German in the first, Russian in the second and Estonian and Italian in the third book. In total there are seven English phrases, one German phrase, 12 Russian phrases, six Estonian phrases and one Italian phrase. Russian phrases are written using the Cyrillic alphabet. In the end of each book there is a vocabulary where a translation of all the foreign language phrases can be found, making it possible for the reader to fully understand the text even without any foreign language skills.

The story is told in Finnish in each book of the series. The other languages are used for instance in utterances, descriptions, explanations, introductions, exclamations, short conversations, and for providing background information. Also foreign language song lyrics can be found in the books as well as the names of dishes and drinks. However, the names of dishes or drinks have not been considered to be a foreign language phrase and are hence not included in the amount of foreign phrases.

Foreign languages are not used in certain contexts that could easily be categorized but instead the foreign phrases and words are scattered through the books and can be used in any situation. English and German are used by Finnish-speaking characters while Spanish and French are used by Finnish and native speakers. Swedish, Russian, Estonian, and Italian are used only by native speakers. Most often foreign languages are used when two native speakers of a certain language interact with each other. However, for example Spanish-speaking characters, who do not speak Finnish, speak Spanish to everyone and hence the characters interacting do not always understand each other without translation, and translations from Finnish to Swedish, Spanish to Finnish, and French to Finnish are used in the story. In some cases the foreign language text is not directly translated but the content is explained in Finnish. In these situations the narrator

of the story provides the explanation. Notable is that the characters do not have one common language, for instance English, that would be understood by all but instead all characters speak either only or mainly their native language. A few of the characters are bilingual or speak a foreign language which facilitates communication. In addition some characters are learning a new language during the series, and the characters use a dictionary when they interact with each other in order to enable communication. Also gestures are used occasionally to overcome the language barrier.

Spanish is used in the series by 14 human characters: Delfina, abuelo Ernesto, Wasker, Dania, Elena, Risto, Wasker's father, aunt Chela, Pancho, shopkeeper, Manuel, Cristina, passer-by, and Wasker's mother. In addition Delfina's pet parrot Pablo uses Spanish in several occasions. The detailed number of phrases said by each character can be found in the appendix 2. Spanish phrases in the series include exclamations, introductions, explanations, requests, questions, suggestions, song lyrics, dishes, and drinks. There are also short passages, mostly conversations, in Spanish. Some of these passages are not an integral part of the story but provide more insight into it while others narrate the story and need to be understood by the reader. In these situations the content is usually explained also in Finnish, in addition to the translations found in the end of the book. The first example presents two native Spanish-speakers who discuss with each other in Spanish although a third person who does not understand Spanish is present in the situation.

(1) Pari viikkoa kuulosti minusta siis hurjan hyvältä (varsinkin, kun vertasi sitä puoleen vuoteen). Delfina kuitenkin tuhahteli kiukkuisesti. Abuelo katseli häntä keittiön ovelta huolestuneena.
”¿Qué te pasa, mi solcito?” hän kysyi.
”Nada, nada... Tengo que pensar, abuelo”, Delfina vastasi synkästi.
”¿Todo listo para la llegada de los visitantes mañana, mi corazon?” Abuelo varmisti.
”Sí, sí, no te preocupes. Todo listo.” Delfina sanoi.
”Mitä te oikein puhutte?” minä kysyin kiinnostuneena. Argentiina, tai siis espanja, kuulosti jotenkin aika hienolta.
Delfina heilautti kättään epämääräisesti.
”Ruokalistasta ja puutarhasta vain pikkuisen.” (01: 54)

(1) Few weeks sounded excellent to me (especially if compared with six months). Delfina however snorted angrily. Abuelo looked at her worriedly by the kitchen door.
”¿Qué te pasa, mi solcito?” he asked.
”Nada, nada... Tengo que pensar, abuelo”, Delfina answered gloomily.
”¿Todo listo para la llegada de los visitantes mañana, mi corazon?” Abuelo checked.
”Sí, sí, no te preocupes. Todo listo.” Delfina said.
”What are you talking about?” I asked. Argentinian, or exactly Spanish, sounded great.
Delfina waved her hand vaguely.
”About the menu and a bit about the garden.” (01: 54, my translation)

In the conversation Delfina and abuelo Ernesto talk about something that will happen later in the story. They use Spanish which is at this point in the story their only common language as abuelo Ernesto does not speak Finnish. Conversation is not translated and thus the Finnish character present in the situation does not understand what is going to happen. When he asks what the conversation is about, Delfina explains but does not translate the real content of the conversation, thus not letting the Finnish character know what is really happening. The reader, however, will have in insight if he/she looks for the translation given in the end of the book. (Example 1.) Besides the passages or phrases that are not translated in the text, the series includes also phrases that are either directly or indirectly translated in the text. In the following examples a direct translation is provided.

(2) Virnistin Delfinalle ja abuelolle.
”A desayunar, joven, aamunpalaa syömään”, abuelo sanoi ja viittoili ruokasaliin päin. (02: 233.)

(2) I grinned at Delfina and abuelo.
”A desayunar, joven, to eat breakfast”, abuelo said and signalled towards the dining room. (02: 233, my translation.)

In the second book of the series abuelo Ernesto starts to remember some Finnish which he used to speak as a child. Spanish is nevertheless still his primary language so even

though a Finnish person who does not speak Spanish is present he uses Spanish first. However, as his Finnish skills are improving, he is able to directly translate his Spanish suggestion into Finnish which provides an opportunity for Finnish speaking Wasker, as well as Finnish speaking readers, to understand exactly what abuelo wishes to be done. (Example 2.)

(3) Isä ehti vielä kuunnella läpi espanjan alkeiskurssin kaseteilta, jotka hän lainasi kirjastosta. Nyt hän osaa sanoa ”buenos días” (hyvää päivää) ja buenas tardes (hyvää iltaa) sekä hace calor (onpa kuuma) ja pari muuta asiaa. (03: 49.)

(3) Father had enough time to listen through a basic course in Spanish from the tapes he borrowed from the library. Now he can say “buenos días” (good morning) and buenas tardes (good evening) as well as hace calor (it is hot) and a couple of other things. (03: 49, my translation.)

In the third book of the series Wasker’s father is learning some Spanish phrases before he travels to Argentina with Wasker. Wasker as the narrator provides the translation. The switching of the language points out the basic Spanish skills acquired by Wasker’s father but the phrases are not essential for the story at this point. (Example 3.) Later on, at the airport in Buenos Aires, Wasker’s father’s language skills prove to be inadequate and he faces difficulties with the Argentinians who speak only Spanish.

(4) [...] Chela nyökkäsi tuimasti. Sitten hän istahti nojatuoliin ja sanoi minulle:
”Bueno, muchacho. Contáme.”
”Kerro nyt”, Delfina suomensi ja istahti huokaisten lattialle. (03: 95.)

(4) [...] Chela nodded sternly. Then she sat down and said to me:
”Bueno, muchacho. Contáme.”
”Tell me now”, Delfina translated, sighed and sat on the floor. (03: 95, my translation.)

Delfina’s aunt Chela understands but does not speak Finnish. Therefore she uses Spanish even though her request is for Wasker. Delfina translates the request directly in

order for Wasker to understand what is expected from him. (Example 4.) Direct translations as seen in the above examples enable those characters who do not speak the language in question to understand what is happening. Translations within the text also facilitate the reading process as the reader does not need to look for the translations in the end of the book – however, most of the direct translations can be found also in the vocabulary section of each book.

In addition to direct translations (examples 2–4), translations where the content of the foreign language text is explained are used. In these cases a detailed translation is provided in the vocabulary.

(5) Eräs ruotsalainen runoilija nimeltään Per sanoi minulle, että: ”En författare gör bäst i att skriva om sånt som han vet någonting om och har någonting att berätta om”. Onnelan minä ainakin tunnen ja minulla on siitä aika paljon sanottavaa. (02: 6.)

(5) A Swedish poet called Per told me that ”En författare gör bäst i att skriva om sånt som han vet någonting om och har någonting att berätta om”. Onnela is definitely something I know about and I have quite a lot to say about it. (02: 6, my translation.)

The Swedish sentence said by Per to Wasker is not directly translated as Wasker understands Swedish but Wasker as the narrator produces the essential aspects of the content of the sentence in Finnish. Hence it is not necessary for the reader to see the vocabulary section although most likely many readers still do as they might not be aware that the content of the Swedish text is told also in Finnish. (Example 5.) In general it can be argued that when no direct translation is provided, the explanations of the content of the foreign language passages best serve those readers who are able to understand some of the foreign text. These readers, even if they do not understand every foreign word, are able to recognize that the content is being explained also in Finnish and will not need to see the vocabulary section whereas those readers who do not know the foreign language in question at all will have to resort to the vocabulary in order to realize that the content is explained also in Finnish.

In addition to Per, Swedish is spoken in the series by Wasker, his grandmother, Ingrid, Wasker's mother, film director, and Sara – in total by seven characters. It is used in utterances, descriptions, explanations, exclamations, short conversations, and to provide background information. The third and fourth book include also passages where the story is momentarily told in Swedish. These passages are not explained in the text in Finnish so a reader, who does not know Swedish, needs to see the translations in the end of the book. The following excerpt from the first book of the series is one of the passages where no translation is given in the text.

(6) Minä tiedän, että Perin kirja ei ota valmistuakseen. Kuulin Ingridin puhuvan siitä puhelimessa. Hän selitti jollekulle, miksi he eivät ole kotona. ”Tystnaden är helt annorlunda här. Och det är det Per behöver just nu. Långa nätter och långa dagar med sina dikter.” (01: 108.)

(6) I know that Per's book is not finished. I hear Ingrid talk about it on the phone. She explained to someone why they are not at home. ”Tystnaden är helt annorlunda här. Och det är det Per behöver just nu. Långa nätter och långa dagar med sina dikter.” (01: 108, my translation.)

In example six native Swedish-speaker Ingid explains to someone who also speaks Swedish about Per's situation and why they are in Finland. Narrator-Wasker understands Swedish so in the story the use of Swedish does not create problems of understanding. However, those readers who do not understand Swedish need to see the translation from the vocabulary to be able to fully follow the story. (Example 6.)

Swedish is used relatively often in the series as several Finnish characters speak Swedish. The following passage is a conversation between Wasker's grandmother who is Swedish-speaking Finn and Wasker who is bilingual due to his Swedish-speaking grandmother and mother.

(7) ”Nej men nu hinner jag inte mera...”, Mormor sanoi. ”Idag kommer nämligen Marjattas son Kaarlo till Onnela. Hans uppgift är att vakta allt och alla.”
Minulta meni maito väärään kurkkuun.
”Mitä, tuleeko Marjatan poika Onnelaan?” sain köhittyä. Mormor nyökkäsi närkästyneenä ja pudisteli päätään.
”Onnela är inte som förr! Vi ska se hur länge abuelo ser genom fingrarna på det här.”
”Mitä Delfina sanoo?” kysyin.
”Det verkar vara så att Delfina kan inte göra nånting. Det är Marjatta som bestämmer om allt”, Mormor tuhahti.
Sitä minä en voinut uskoa. Tässä maailmassa ei ole ketään tai mitään, mille Delfina ei voisi tehdä jotain. (04: 76.)

(7) ”Nej men nu hinner jag inte mera...”, Mormor said. ”Idag kommer nämligen Marjattas son Kaarlo till Onnela. Hans uppgift är att vakta allt och alla.”
The milk I was drinking went down the wrong way.
“What, is Marjatta’s son coming to Onnela?” I managed to cough. Mormor nodded indignantly and shook her head.
”Onnela är inte som förr! Vi ska se hur länge abuelo ser genom fingrarna på det här.”
”What does Delfina say?” I asked.
”Det verkar vara så att Delfina kan inte göra nånting. Det är Marjatta som bestämmer om allt”, Mormor snorted.
I could not believe that. There is nothing in this world that Delfina could not do something about. (04: 76, my translation.)

Similarly to example six, also here no translation is provided although Wasker reacts to some things his grandmother says and repeats the content in Finnish. The characters in the story have no difficulties to understand each other because they both speak Swedish but as no translation of the text is given the reader needs to see the translations in the end of the book. (Example 7.) Wasker’s bilingualism is often present in the books and can be seen in the examples 5–7. The characters who speak Swedish always use Swedish with each other although some Finnish, typically in Wasker’s lines, might be mixed in the conversations as in example seven. Overall Swedish is used in the series only in situations where all characters present speak Swedish, and hence the use of Swedish differs from the use of Spanish, French, and Russian which are used also in situations where not everyone understands the language used. Thus the use of Swedish

does not create problems of understanding whereas language problems arise for instance when Spanish is spoken.

French is spoken in the series by Aurelie, Risto, and Wasker. Phrases are mainly introductions, short comments and exclamations. The fourth book has in addition short French passages which narrate the story. The content of the French passages is partly explained in Finnish but a reader, who wishes to understand everything, most likely needs translation as well.

(8) ”Moment”, Aurelie sanoi ja tarttui käsivarteeni. ”On aurait peut-être besoin d’un magicien”, hän sanoi ja hymyili. ”Risto, mets tes chaussures, on va à Onnela!” Risto ei vaikuttanut kovin innokkaalta, mutta haki itselleen kengät ja vähän lisää vaatetta. (04: 92.)

(8) “Moment”, Aurelie said and grabbed my arm. ”On aurait peut-être besoin d’un magicien”, she said and smiled. ”Risto, mets tes chaussures, on va à Onnela!” Risto did not seem too keen but went to get his shoes and more clothes. (04: 92, my translation.)

The French phrases are said by Aurelie who speaks only French. Especially the last sentence in French is essential in the story as it hints what will happen next. No direct translation or explanation of the content is provided but as the request is for Risto who knows French, it is understood. (Example 8.) However, for a reader who does not know French, the translation provided in the vocabulary is necessary.

Less frequently or very rarely used languages were Russian, English, Italian, German, and Estonian. Russian is used for introductions and descriptions by Pjotr while English is used for short exclamations and expressions by Wasker and Irene Kormilainen. As Pjotr is the only character in the books who knows Russian, Russian is used in situations where no one understands exactly what Pjotr is saying.

(9) Mies katseli meitä surumielisesti, ojensi kätensä ja sanoi tummasävyisellä, syvällä äänellään: ”Pjotr Tsiblijev. Я космонавт. Бывший космонавт.” Miehen nimi oli siis mitä ilmeisemmin Pjotr. Muusta en ymmärtänyt sanaakaan. (02: 141.)

(9) The man looked at us sadly, held out his hand and said in a dark, deep voice: ”Pjotr Tsiblijev. Я космонавт. Бывший космонавт.” Man’s name was obviously Pjotr. Of the rest I could not understand a word. (02: 141, my translation.)

In the example nine Russian is used for introduction. Pjotr who arrives at Onnela speaks only Russian so he has no choice but to use Russian when he wants to say something, regardless of whether he is being understood or not. From his introduction Narrator-Wasker is able to understand the name of the person who is introducing himself but the rest of the introduction is not understood. (Example 9.) With English the situation is quite the opposite. Some Finnish characters speak English and hence it is used occasionally, albeit only as a part of otherwise Finnish text.

(10) ”Break a leg”, Irene Kormilainen huikkasi ja huomatessaan järkyttyneen katseeni hän selitti, että tuollakin tavalla teattereissa toivotetaan ensi-iltaonnea. (04: 234.)

(10) “Break a leg”, Irene Kormilainen shouted and as she noticed the shocked look on my face she explained that it is a saying used to wish good luck in theatres on an opening night. (04: 234, my translation.)

Irene Kormilainen wishes good luck for Wasker who is not familiar with the saying and takes it literally until Irene explains what she really meant (example 10). As in this example, English is used in the books in short exclamations and expressions by Finnish characters. A direct translation is not always possible with exclamations and thus the idea, or what was actually meant by the character, needs to be explained instead. In addition to the explanation given in the text the English phrases are included in the vocabulary of the books, and the reader may check the correct Finnish equivalent.

Italian is used only in song lyrics by Roberto in the third book while German is used in the first part of the series by a Finnish lady Rauni-Ursula to name and introduce the content of a book. Estonian phrases are found in the third book. The use of Estonian differs from the rest of the infrequently used languages as in addition to a traditional saying it is used to tell the story. The content, however, is explained also in Finnish.

(11) Selitin suunnitelman solmukohdat Lennartille joka keksi heti ratkaisun: ”Ära muretse! Helistan oma emale! Ta võib söita ja tuua selle pùha vee siia kanistriga. Sinu emale meeldiks see koht väga. Siin liiguvad ringi head hinged”. Lennart siis ehdotti, että hänen äitinsä, joka asuu Lounais-Virossa, matkaisi linja-autolla sinne luostariin hakemaan sitä vettä kanisterilla ja tulisi sitten sen veden kanssa laivalla Suomeen ja sitten taas linja-autolla tänne Heinäkumpuun. (03: 133.)

(11) I explained the problems of the plan to Lennart who immediately came up with a solution: ”Ära muretse! Helistan oma emale! Ta võib söita ja tuua selle pùha vee siia kanistriga. Sinu emale meeldiks see koht väga. Siin liiguvad ringi head hinged”. Lennart suggested that his mother who lives in South-western Estonia would travel by bus to the convent to get the water and would then travel with the water canister on a ship to Finland and again by bus to Heinäkumpu. (03: 133, my translation.)

Lennart from Estonia speaks Estonian to the Finnish characters who seem to be able to understand him. However, it is not being mentioned if they have learned Estonian somewhere or whether they simply understand Estonian because the languages share some similar vocabulary. After a longer passage in Estonian, Risto who is acting as the narrator in this part of the book, explains the content in Finnish. The explanation is extensive and the reader might not even need the vocabulary provided. (Example 11.)

The use of different languages occasionally results in difficulties in the series but mostly when other languages than Finnish are used, the characters interacting are either both native speakers of the language in question or one is native speaker and another has learnt the language and knows it well. Often the phrases used are simple, and hence a basic language skills are enough to enable interaction between the characters. However, for young readers the use of different languages might be more challenging, and the

vocabulary provided in the end of the books will most likely be needed if the reader wishes to understand everything in the story.

4.3 Cultural differences and problem situations

Several cultural differences appear in the series. Most of these are differences that can quite easily be seen by an outside observer and are most likely familiar to many adults. However, some differences might require active interaction or careful observation. In both cases the books introduce situations that children are not likely to encounter in their real lives and hence increase the awareness of cultural differences among children. In Boarding House Onnela the differences occur mainly in situations where Finnish and Argentinian characters are interacting or where a Finnish character is observing an Argentinian character or vice versa. The differences found concern these particular people, and no wider generalizations can be made.

The cultural differences found in the books can be roughly grouped into five categories: interaction, customs, food, attitude, and family relations. In addition the books present differences due to geographical location which might also influence the adaptation process when migrating from one country to another, and geography is therefore considered to be sixth category. The series introduce in total 27 differences (cultural and geographical), some of which are present in more than one book. The first, second, and third book of the series include differences from five categories while the fourth, or last, book of the series presents differences only from two categories. Also the amount of differences decreases significantly towards the end of the series. The first two books contain 15 differences, and the third book shows 13 differences. The fourth book, however, differs notably as it introduces only two differences.

The first category, interaction, includes four differences. These are loudness and noise (1), manner of speaking (2), expression of opinion (3), and gestures and hand movements (4). From the viewpoint of the Finnish characters Argentinians appear to be loud and their manner of speaking is more similar to yelling than speaking (01: 39–40,

45; 02: 220; 03: 74, 183). This is emphasized by the word choices of the writer: Argentinians tend to shout, roar, yell, and scream while Finnish whisper, sigh, and speak calmly, especially in the first book of the series (01: 31–33, 44). Also opinions are expressed more strongly by the Argentinian characters than the Finnish. They are described as determined in their actions and have an opinion about everything. As conversation in general, also opinions are expressed loudly and shouting is, from the Finnish character's perspective, the common way to share one's opinions. (01: 29, 40, 43.) Active use of gestures and especially hand movements, or speaking with one's hands, are described in several situations as something that the Finnish character finds odd and different. Notable is that gesticulation is not typical only for Argentinian characters but also for the French character. (01: 129; 02: 135; 03: 11, 117, 131, 183.) The first book includes all four differences of the interaction category while the second book presents only the manner of speaking and hand movements and the third book loudness and noise and manner of speaking. In the fourth book differences related to interaction are no longer present.

The second category, named customs, is the largest group with 10 cases. It contains greeting habits, siesta, knife sharpening, beliefs, form of address, shopping, heating systems, decorations and ornaments, celebration of Christmas, and typical bed linen. Greeting habits are highlighted in each book of the series. Finnish characters find the air kisses strange, and in the first, third and fourth book it is mentioned that air kisses are an Argentinian habit (01: 147; 03: 71, 117–118; 04: 22). In the second book air kisses are given by the French character (02: 134). In the third book a situation, where Finnish and Argentinian characters meet for the first time, is presented; an Argentinian character intends to greet by giving air kisses which scares the Finnish character who finds air kisses uncomfortable and instead extends a hand. The adult characters end up shaking hands although the Argentinian character finds this confusing. Finnish child character is greeted by tousling his hair – also something that the character is not accustomed to and not comfortable with and thus tries to avoid. (03: 71, 117–118, 121, 177.)

The second custom of the group, siesta, is quite well-known habit of some cultures and typically connected to Latin cultures. Also the Argentinian characters in Boarding

House Onnela take siesta. Siesta is introduced in the first book of the series where the Argentinians remodel the house, making a lot of noise. The noise stops and Onnela becomes quiet for a few hours in the afternoon when Argentinians take siesta and sleep. After siesta the racket continues. (01: 38–39.) In addition to greeting habits and siesta, also the traditional way for knife sharpening appears in the first book. In Argentina knife grinder walks around town playing an instrument. When one hears the signal, he or she comes outside with knives that need to be sharpened and runs after the grinder. Knife grinders are not known in Finland, and a conflict arises when an Argentinian character mistakes a boy playing music on the street to be a knife grinder. (01: 76–79.) Both siesta and knife grinding are mentioned in passing also in the third book (03: 12, 183).

Beliefs, more specifically faith in saints and omens, are central in the second book of the series. Argentinian characters believe that saints will help them in difficult situations. The Finnish character finds it strange when Argentinians spend an entire day burning a candle in front of an icon, asking for help. (02: 233.) Also good and bad omens are a new phenomenon for Finnish characters. Argentinians find certain occurrences to be signs that something, good or bad, will happen and try to interpret the signs and predict what will happen in the future. In Boarding House Onnela the predictions, made by two older Argentinian characters, do come true, at least from the Argentinians' perspective. (02: 37, 42, 45, 47, 224, 246, 248.)

In addition to beliefs, the second book presents several other customs. The form of addressing people differs in school where the Finnish teacher asks Delfina to call her by her first name. Delfina is not used to this and finds it very funny and too friendly. In Argentina she has called her teachers with a title and last name, in a more dignified manner in her opinion, showing more respect. (02: 81–82.) Shopping for groceries causes confusion as well. In Argentina groceries are bought from several small shops – for instance meat from a butchery, vegetables from greengrocer's and bread from a bakery. When Delfina realizes in Finland everything is being bought from one big store, she is shocked. (02: 93–96; 03: 115–117; 121–125, 182.)

When the outside temperature starts to decrease in the fall, the Argentinians find themselves in an odd situation. They are not accustomed to heating the house and do not realize the weather will not get warmer for months but instead think it is only for a few days and try to keep the cold out by hanging thick blankets on the windows (02: 68–69). Only after Wasker explains the winter conditions and how Finnish houses have central heating and radiators in order to keep the house warm during winter, do Argentinians start to understand the importance of heating and prepare Onnela for the winter (02: 70–73, 84, 115–118). The Argentinian way for decorating for festivities on the other hand surprises the Finnish characters. Argentinians use typical Finnish decorations at unusual situations, and the lavish use of ornaments at Christmas time astonishes the Finnish characters. (02: 101–102, 264–266.) The celebration of Christmas in general differs from culture to culture. Also in Boarding House Onnela common Finnish Christmas traditions, such as gingerbread house, proclamation of Christmas peace and almond in the Christmas porridge, are not familiar to the Argentinians (02: 204–205).

The third book includes only three cultural differences from the customs category. Greeting habits and shopping were introduced also in the first and second book of the series, and thus the only custom that is shown only in the third book is the typical bed linen. In the third book two Finnish characters, Wasker and his father, travel to Argentina where Wasker pays attention to how different the bed linen is compared to the one he is used to at home. Firstly, bed linen smells very lovely. He later finds out that the smell comes from a perfume that is sprayed into the sheets. Secondly, there are no thick blankets and blanket covers like in Finland but instead two sheets: one to cover the mattress and one to be used as a cover. For cold nights a blanket is put on top of the cover sheet. This, however, is not entirely new to Wasker as his grandmother has told him that also in Finland this kind of bed linen used to be commonly used. (03: 60, 112–113.) The fourth book does not present any new customs. The only custom that appears in the book is air kisses as a greeting which, even after several references during the series, is found to be awkward by the Finnish character (04: 22).

Cultural differences related to food can be found in all four books of the series. Both Finnish and Argentinian characters are introduced to new dishes and drinks, for instance

Finnish to Argentinian empanadas (small pies), asado (grilled meat), chimichurri sauce and mate (drink made of herbs) and Argentinians to Finnish sandwiches, casseroles, gingerbread and Christmas pastries (01: 43, 119, 124; 02: 102–103, 108–109, 171–172, 204, 247, 265; 03: 21, 25, 108; 04: 34–35). Also Argentinian breakfast is new to Finnish characters who are used to eating oatmeal or sandwiches for breakfast. Pastries, croissants, cakes, and cookies surprise Wasker when he is asked to join the breakfast in Onnela for the first time. (01: 49–51.) Delfina conversely finds the fruit and vegetables in Finland to be different from what she is accustomed in Argentina: in her opinion bananas and pears seem to be raw, potatoes are tiny and tomatoes are both raw and small and in addition too pale (02: 97, 99).

Differences of attitude between Finnish and Argentinian characters are shown in the first and second book. The Finnish characters see Argentinians as undisturbed, easy-going and carefree who do not worry about anything while from Argentinians' point of view Finnish are rigorous and obey the rules too strictly (01: 62, 65–66, 116, 119, 131, 158; 02: 63, 121–122, 163). The first and third book introduce the Argentinian idea of family which can include grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins and is hence different from the Finnish idea of a family that consists of parents and children. In the third book Wasker actually makes a list of all Delfina's family members as he is having difficulties to remember all of them. (01: 180; 03: 71–76.) In addition to big families the respect towards older family members, for example grandparents, seems peculiar from Finnish characters viewpoint when they first notice this, even though for instance Wasker does value his own grandmother quite a lot (01: 35; 03: 77).

Besides cultural differences, the books introduce differences due to geographical location. These differences are seasons, weather conditions, coldness and darkness, landscape and surroundings, and nature. Seasons and weather conditions are discussed in the first, second and third book of the series. In all three books it is mentioned that the seasons in Argentina are opposite from Finland, and thus when Finland is enjoying summer, it is winter in Argentina and the other way around (01: 121; 02: 254; 03: 45–46). Although the seasons share the same names, the weather conditions of each season differ in Finland and Argentina as well. Delfina is surprised to find out that winter in

Finland is not what she is used to: in Delfina's hometown in Argentina there is no snow or frost but instead winter means rain and cold winds for a few days (02: 69–70). In contrast Wasker and his father learn that spring in Argentina is similar to the Finnish summer and are astonished when they experience how sudden and hard rain can be in Argentina compared to the rainy weather they know from Finland (03: 85, 153–155, 158). Coldness and darkness are a central topic in the second book and thus treated separately from the seasons and weather conditions. For Delfina the coldness and darkness of Finnish winter sounds terrible, and she is shocked when the temperature starts to decrease in the fall. She learns that the cold weather and darkness are a long-lasting condition, not a passing occurrence, and would prefer the extreme heat of Argentina. (02: 31, 68–72, 254–255.)

Landscape and surroundings are explored in the first and third book. In the first book Finnish landscape and scenery is introduced to Argentinians who have just arrived in Finland while in the third book Finnish characters get to know the Argentinian environment. (01: 65, 68–69; 03: 66–67, 70, 143–145, 149.) In addition in the third book the differences in the nature are presented: from Wasker's point of view for instance many plants are larger in Argentina than in Finland, and wood species are entirely different and look strange at first sight (03: 65). The fourth book of the series again differs from the first three books as it does not present any differences from the geographical location category.

As already stated, the first, second and third book of the series introduce several cultural and geographical differences while the fourth book includes very few of these. The first book focuses especially on interaction and attitude although also family and geographical questions are well presented, and the book does include at least one difference from each category defined. In the second book the emphasis is on customs while food and geography are discussed often as well. The only category that is not explored at all in the second book is family. The third book on the other hand does present family differences. In addition geographical matters and differences in interaction are central while one category, attitude, is not discussed. In contrast to the first three parts of the series, the fourth book includes in total only two cultural

differences and no geographical issues, hence appearing to shift away from the cultural matters that are central in the first three books.

All four books of the series present some problem situations related to different customs and immigration. In the first book the loudness of the new residents of Onnela is causing trouble. The noise makes people of Heinäkumpu nervous, and they are finding it difficult to adjust to the increased noise level after years of peace and quiet. For instance Wasker's parents feel at first that the noise means that their new neighbors are not trustworthy and are almost afraid of them. (01: 39, 44.) The situation worsens when a misunderstanding occurs due to a cultural difference related to knife sharpening. In the story an Argentinian character, abuelo Ernesto, comes running from Onnela, holding several knives, when he hears a boy playing an instrument outside on the street. Finnish characters, who see this, assume abuelo Ernesto tries to kill the boy, who is playing the music, and try to stop him. The situation is solved after both parties are explained the behavior of the other side. Finnish characters learn that in Argentina knife grinders walk around town playing an instrument and hence when one hears the signal, he or she comes outside with the knives that need to be sharpened and runs after the grinder. Argentinian characters in contrast learn that in Finland it is not accepted to run outside with several knives and therefore abuelo Ernesto alarmed the Finnish characters when he was seen outside with his knives. (01: 76–79.) This misunderstanding, however, causes Wasker's parents to suspect that their new neighbors are dangerous, or at least a bit crazy, and forbid Wasker from visiting Onnela as it seems not to be safe for Wasker to go to Onnela. Only after Delfina and abuelo Ernesto visit Wasker's house and apologize for their behaviour, Wasker's mother realizes that they did not mean harm, allows Wasker to visit Onnela again and starts to accept the new neighbors herself as well. (01: 82–85.)

In the second book summer ends and Wasker needs to go school. Delfina, who is also at school age, has decided not to go to school as she needs to run Onnela and assumes this is for her to decide. Wasker tells her that there is a law in Finland that requires all the children to go to school but Delfina will not budge until she receives a letter from the city informing her that she has to go to school. (02: 9–10, 46.) Still, Delfina skips school

quite often and for instance sends her great-grandfather to school to replace her (02: 121–123, 125, 154, 157–158). Eventually in mid-semester balance is found, and Delfina understands she needs to attend school regularly (02: 170, 175).

At the same time with school problems Delfina experiences a shock when she realizes she is not able to buy the same kind of tomatoes in Finland as she is used to in Argentina. She wants to make special tomatoes for Christmas but Finnish tomatoes are too small and not the right color. (02: 89, 98–99.) Consequently Delfina decides she will grow tomatoes, even though winter is coming, and she is being told it is not possible for tomatoes to grow when it is dark and cold (02: 121, 147–148). As Delfina focuses on tomatoes, she neglects her responsibilities as well as her friends, and abuelo Ernesto has to step in and settle the situation. Delfina has to adapt to the Finnish circumstances and accept the fact that the Finnish tomatoes will do. (02: 156–157, 159–161, 169, 173.)

Finnish law and regulations cause some difficulties in addition to Delfina's school issues in the second book. Two older Argentinian ladies staying at Onnela appear to outsiders to be illegal workers and will have to attend a hearing where their tourist status is confirmed (02: 222, 244, 258). Also Delfina's pet, parrot Pablo, experiences Finnish bureaucracy when he is put in quarantine after being caught flying around Onnela. An additional hygiene inspection of the house is required before Pablo is allowed to return to Onnela, and it is stated that in Finland parrot is considered to be a wild animal and therefore Pablo may not fly freely around Onnela anymore when customers are present. This, however, is not how Delfina sees the situation but she has to adapt and a cage is built for Pablo. (02: 207, 220, 259, 274.)

The third and fourth book do not present problem situations due to cultural or geographical differences but all four books of the series include some language issues. In most situations language does not hinder communication: instead deficiencies in vocabulary and occasional grammar mistakes result in peculiar word choices and strange sounding sentences which baffle the native speakers. Mistakes, however, are small and do not stop the characters from understanding each other. (01: 32, 45, 53, 115, 119; 02: 7, 11; 03: 8–9, 68, 169; 04: 24, 149, 152–153.) In addition to minor

language issues, the third and fourth book include some specific cases where poor language skills are noted to cause harm. Lack of people speaking both Finnish and Spanish is noticed in Onnela after Delfina and abuelo Ernesto travel back to Argentina in the third book of the series. Two older Argentinian ladies, Elena and Dania, have decided to stay in Onnela, but with Delfina and Ernesto gone, it is soon realized Elena and Dania do not speak any Finnish, hence leaving the people in Onnela with no common language and no possibility to communicate verbally with the Argentinian ladies who had always appeared to be actively involved in all the happenings in Onnela. (03: 129–132.)

Also Wasker and his father experience language barrier when they travel to Argentina. With no adequate knowledge of Spanish, they find communication with locals to be very difficult and resort to sign language in order to cope. (03: 52–53, 56–58, 79.) In some situations dictionary is used to overcome the difficulties caused by language (01: 185; 03: 132). However, dictionary does not solve the language issues, only eases the situations, and the final solution is found elsewhere. In the fourth book Delfina herself feels left out because of her weak Finnish skills and withdraws from her normal activities. This leads to a conflict which is settled when Wasker manages to convince Delfina that her Finnish skills are good and not the reason why Delfina was not asked to participate. (04: 23–264.) Although language issues are presented throughout the series, they are not a central topic in any of the books, and overall language is not considered to be a major problem in Boarding House Onnela books.

4.4 Aspects of immigration

As the series depicts how Delfina, an Argentinian girl, and abuelo Ernesto, Delfina's great-grandfather, come from Argentina and settle to Finland, it can be expected that some questions related to immigration will occur in the books. In the first book immigrants, or Delfina, abuelo Ernesto and two Argentinian ladies, have a positive attitude towards the new situation. Abuelo Ernesto has lived in Finland as a child and is hence a returnee. He does not speak Finnish anymore and has forgotten the Finnish

culture he once lived in. Delfina on the other hand has not lived in Finland before but knows a bit about Finland and speaks Finnish as her relatives in Argentina have taught her. Two Argentinian ladies do not have any previous connection to Finland besides having met abuelo Ernesto in Argentina.

New environment and different customs cause some confusion for all four immigrants. Things that are ordinary for people who have lived among them for years, are new for immigrants, and Argentinians marvel for instance at tree leaves, shape of the clouds, bike rack, and ice cream truck (01: 70–71). Adaptation to Finland and Finnish way of life is not easy. Abuelo Ernesto attempts to behave in Finland as he is used to in Argentina and ends up scaring Finnish people. When he realizes he has to change his ways, he feels confused and sad. (01: 76–79.) Delfina in contrast is more angry than sad when Finnish practice complicates her life and intends to find her own way, especially around Finnish bureaucracy, but eventually has to accept that some things will not work as in Argentina and she has to adjust (01: 53–54; 02: 9, 46–47, 99–100, 163, 169). Also homesickness is part of the stories. Delfina misses her relatives that were left behind, even though she knows they are well and she will meet them again (01: 180–181; 02: 24, 150; 03: 10, 170).

As usually with immigration, also in the Onnela series not only the immigrants experience new things but the people of Heinäkumpu as well. When Delfina and abuelo Ernesto arrive, they become an attraction and people walk by Onnela just to see the new Argentinian owners (01: 37). Delfina and abuelo Ernesto are described as strange and peculiar, they have to face prejudice, and are treated by some Finnish characters in a way that makes them feel alien and unwanted (01: 39, 50, 59, 70, 83, 158–159). Hence they even consider returning to Argentina for awhile but eventually decide to stay as Boarding House Onnela has become their home (01: 146–147, 194–195).

For Delfina the adaptation process becomes more difficult in the second book, and she struggles. She misses her family in Argentina and their Argentinian habits, she has to adapt to the Finnish school system, she is required to attend Finnish language course even though she feels her Finnish is good enough already, and the darkness and

coldness of the Finnish fall and winter surprise her. Finnish circumstances appear to be more different than Delfina expected, and she becomes gloomy and unhappy (02: 24, 46–47, 49, 63–64, 68, 72, 157). On the positive side her new classmates are interested in her, she finds new friends from school and is still curious about the Finnish customs and gets excited when she gets to experience something, such as snow, for the first time (02: 62, 77, 80–81, 86–88, 130–131, 203–204). Also Elena and Dania have problems adapting to the Finnish winter and stay mostly indoors in Onnela, much like other foreign guests, Aurelie from France and Pjotr from Russia, and it is noted in the book that the residents of Onnela appear to be loners and spend time mostly alone (02: 153–154). Ernesto, in contrast to other Argentinians, seems to have overcome his problems present in the first book. He starts to remember Finnish language and is thus able to communicate better than before. To further advance his Finnish skills he attends language classes in Delfina's school and becomes a success among students and even teaches some Spanish to the Finnish characters. (02: 25–26, 110, 121, 125–128, 158–159.)

The third book discusses homesickness and return to one's home country. After living in Finland for over a year, abuelo Ernesto starts to miss Argentina and his family. He cannot sleep anymore but instead sits in front of a window every night, staring into the distance, looking old and tired. In the middle of the dark fall, abuelo makes a decision to return to Argentina. Delfina would prefer to stay in Finland but has to go back with Ernesto. (03: 8–10.) However, life in Argentina does not meet their expectations. In Finland both abuelo Ernesto and Delfina were actively involved in managing Onnela but in Argentina someone else is taking care of all the chores in the family's boarding house (03: 77, 95–96). Delfina and Ernesto are left outside and seem to be bored with they lives: abuelo Ernesto simply sits outside in the garden and reads newspapers while Delfina keeps wondering and worrying how everything is going in Onnela as she is not allowed to do any work in their Argentinian boarding house (03: 87, 109–110, 114, 178–179). Delfina begins to idealize Heinäkumpu and Finland and even the things she disliked now seem wonderful (03: 180–181). In the end abuelo Ernesto decides to return to Finland and Delfina again migrates with him (03: 191–193).

In the fourth book of the series the Argentinian immigrants are quite well adjusted to their lives in Finland. Even the delicious Argentinian food that used to be served in Onnela has gradually changed and been replaced by convenience food and ready meals, typical in many Finnish households (04: 55–56). During the series it is depicted how the Argentinian immigrants slowly find their place in the Finnish society. Even though all of them are at first excited about the move and eager to experience new things, each one of them also encounters difficulties and finds adaptation to be challenging at times. Some of them learn Finnish, some do not. Some miss their home country and family so much they decide to return, only to find out they do not fit in anymore. Although for each immigrant the adaptation process progresses in its own speed, eventually they all adjust. Life in Finland becomes easier and does not center around being an immigrant anymore.

4.5 Discussion

Multicultural literature can be defined as literature that presents different sociocultural experiences and backgrounds, tells about diverse populations, and includes different perspectives (Gopalakrishnan 2011: 5, 29). Based on this definition, the Boarding House Onnela series is part of multicultural literature: it depicts various experiences of characters from different backgrounds and views events from different perspectives. The books promote awareness of different cultures and guide to accept those different from oneself. On a more specific level, the series presents an immigrant girl who tries to adapt to a new culture, hence providing the young readers who have no experience of immigration a possibility to understand the thoughts and emotions of an immigrant close to their own age and giving a chance for those who have immigrated to reflect their own experiences. However, books of Boarding House Onnela series do not actively encourage critical dialogue and are quite universal in nature. They focus mainly on two cultural groups, Finnish and Argentinians, although other groups are present as well and introduce difficulties immigrants might encounter thus making readers aware of social issues of a particular group. The books can hence be called socially conscious books (see page 45).

The impression of multiculturalism in the series is not solely created by characters from diverse backgrounds. Multiple languages are used throughout the books for different purposes, occasionally even for longer phrases or conversations, which strengthens the sensation of a multicultural environment. For some child readers the use of foreign languages might trigger an interest in learning foreign languages but it might also be an obstacle for some readers. The phrases in different languages can cause frustration especially if the child's reading skills are not fully developed yet, and for most children the need to turn the pages back and forth between the story and the vocabulary section in the end of the book will probably slow down the reading. Nevertheless, many children might also enjoy the flipping through of the book and may find the foreign language phrases and the search for translations from the vocabulary exciting while those children who have for instance Spanish as a mother tongue might be pleased to see their own first language in a book written mainly in Finnish.

Although it was found out in the research that the description of characters in the Boarding House Onnela series is only occasionally stereotypical, it can be argued that many of the cultural differences presented are based on a stereotypical view of the behavior of the members of certain cultures. However, in some cases, for instance when Wasker describes the typical Christmas in Finland to Delfina, it is mentioned that this is how this particular family or person acts and a generalization is avoided (02: 204–205). Hence the reader can assume that not everyone behaves the same way and will not form a stereotypical mental picture of a certain culture. When discussing cultural differences, it should be mentioned that amount or level of difference and discomfort experienced may depend on the cultures under scrutiny. Further, this can affect the adaptation process of immigrants as mentioned in chapter 2.2 (see page 23): the adaptation from one extreme to another will in many cases be more challenging than adapting to a culture or conditions that are very similar to the native culture of an immigrant as the change is greater. In the Boarding House Onnela series this is seen especially when the Argentinian characters need to adjust to the Finnish winter conditions.

Problems related to cultural differences are concentrated in the first and second book of the series while the majority of language problems are found in the third book of the

series. Overall, the second book introduces most of the cultural differences related to habits and practices which might reflect the adaptation process the characters are experiencing: after having spent a longer period of time in another culture, the Argentinian characters start to notice more differences, the differences begin to cause confusion and the adaptation process becomes more complicated as for instance homesickness affects the behavior and thoughts of the characters, causing conflicts and problem situations. Although some language problems or implications of defective language skills were found in all four books of the series, in the third book the language becomes here and there a barrier for communication. The cultural differences and language problems presented offer an opportunity for those young readers who have experienced problems when adjusting to a new culture or learning a new language, for instance after moving from another country to Finland, to reflect their experiences and to see that others are facing similar problems as well. In addition, native Finnish speaking readers might gain a better understanding of the difficulties a person learning a new language might encounter and will become more sympathetic towards their classmates who are struggling to learn Finnish.

The progress of the adaptation process can also be seen in the way the series develops. The fourth book which takes place approximately two years after the arrival of the Argentinian characters to Finland includes very few cultural differences or situations where immigration issues are presented. The focus has clearly moved on to other questions, and the immigrants have found their own place in the Finnish society. Through active interaction with the local community they have become friends with the Finnish characters, and both the immigrants and the Finnish people have managed to adjust to the changed conditions without loosing their own traditions. The immigrants in Heinäkumpu are treated equally and are not considered to be any different than the Finnish locals. Overall it can be said that while the first three books of the series describe the life of the immigrants, adjustment process, and the changes required from everyone in the community, the last book depicts Heinäkumpu that has transformed into transcultural society where people from different backgrounds respect and understand each other regardless of ethnicity or native language. The books construct a positive picture of immigration and multiculturalism without ignoring the possible problems

they might cause, and hence attempt to create a positive attitude towards transculturalism and promote the idea of transcultural society.

5 CONCLUSION

This research examined the multicultural aspects of book series Boarding House Onnela. The series is a representative of a new type of multicultural children's books in which multiculturalism is constantly present but is not considered to be an issue although questions related to multiculturalism are included in the books. The series consists at the time of this research of four books published between 2007 and 2011, all of which were studied in the analysis phase.

The aim of the research was to find out how multiculturalism and immigration are depicted in the books. In order to achieve this, a theoretical review of multiculturalism, children's literature, and multicultural children's books was conducted. In the analysis phase quantitative and qualitative content and discourse analysis were deployed. At first it was studied how many nationalities are introduced in the books, how they are described, how many languages are spoken and in what contexts the languages are used. The analysis then proceeded to explore the cultural differences and problem situations presented while the subsequent section focused on the aspects of immigration and their portrayal in the series. The analysis was completed by a discussion of how well the Boarding House Onnela books answer the definition of multicultural children's books.

In the analysis it was discovered that the series introduces in total 33 central characters who represent seven different nationalities. 19 of the characters were classified as main characters at least in one book while 14 characters were in a minor role. Not all 33 characters were present in every book: some characters appeared only in one book while others were central in each story. Eleven main and four minor characters were Finnish while five main and five minor characters were Argentinian. Swedish were represented by one major and one minor character and French by one main and two minor characters. In addition the books included one main character from Russia as well as one minor character from Italy and one from Estonia. The findings support the hypothesis which was that the books focus on Finnish and Argentinian characters: the study showed that 15 characters out of 33 were Finnish and 10 Argentinian.

The description of the characters was not perceived to be related to the nationality or to be especially stereotypical. Adjectives that were used described mostly the appearance, personality, or behavior of the character and were neutral by nature. However, also some stereotypical description was detected. Finnish were pictured as quiet, Argentinians as loud and French as sophisticated. Although stereotypical description was found throughout the series sporadically, also personal differences were acknowledged and no excessive generalizations were made. The description focused on personal traits, and stereotypical description was relatively scarce.

The Boarding House Onnela books are written in Finnish. In addition to Finnish eight other languages were used. The most commonly used foreign language was Spanish which was used in all four books of the series. Also Swedish was used in four books whereas French was used in three, English in two, and German, Russian, Italian, and Estonian only in one book of the series. Russian phrases were written in Cyrillic alphabet. The story was narrated mainly in Finnish, and other languages were used for narration only occasionally. When the story was told in a foreign language, it was often explained also in Finnish. Typically foreign languages were used in utterances, descriptions, explanations, introductions, exclamations, short conversations, and for providing background information. Furthermore foreign language song lyrics and the foreign names of dishes and drinks were found in the books. In order to enable a full understanding of the text, each book had a vocabulary where a translation of all the foreign language phrases could be found.

In the research it was discovered that the foreign languages were not used in certain contexts but instead the foreign phrases and words were scattered throughout the books and were used in different situations. Mostly foreign languages were used when two native speakers of a language interacted with each other. On occasion a foreign language was spoken also to characters who had no knowledge of that language. Most characters spoke either only or mainly their native language: there was no common language understood by all. Some characters were bilingual or spoke a foreign language while some were learning a new language during the series which enabled and eased communication between characters especially towards the end of the series.

In total 27 cultural differences were found in the books during the analysis. The differences were grouped into five categories: interaction, customs, food, attitude, and family relations. In addition sixth category called geography was established to cover the differences that result from geographical location. The differences appeared mainly in situations where Finnish and Argentinian characters interacted or Finnish character was observing an Argentinian character. Thus the differences found concern these particular people, and no large-scale generalizations could be made. Most differences that were presented in the books are familiar to many adults. However, children are not likely to have encountered the situations introduced in the books in their lives, and hence the books are likely to increase the awareness of cultural differences among children.

In the study it was discovered that all four books of the series presented some problem situations caused by different customs or immigration. The problems were typically settled either when a person became accustomed to or adjusted to the new situation or course of action or when the situation or the reason behind a certain behavior was explained so that a mutual understanding was reached. Adjustment and/or understanding were required both from locals and immigrants in the series. Also some language issues could be found in each book. Especially in the third and fourth book inadequate language skills caused harm and complicated the normal activities of some characters. In most situations, however, language problems did not hinder communication as the problems were small, and overall language was not seen to be a major problem in the series.

Also immigration and issues related to immigration, such as homesickness, were discovered to be central in the books. Although different customs caused confusion, the immigrants had at first a positive attitude towards the new situation. However, it soon became clear that adaptation is not easy, and each character reacted differently to the challenges encountered. Gradually the immigrants started to adapt. In the last book of the series they were quite well adjusted to their new lives and had found their place in the local community which had adjusted as well in order to accommodate the new residents.

In this research it was concluded that Boarding House Onnela series is an example of multicultural literature as the books depict various experiences of characters from distinct backgrounds and view events from diverse perspectives. In addition the impression of multiculturalism is created by the use of multiple languages throughout the books. The books promote awareness of different cultures and introduce various customs for child readers. However, it was also discovered that the last, or fourth, book of the series differs from the first three books. The number of nationalities presented as well as the number of cultural and geographical differences discussed decreased clearly in the fourth book, and although multiculturalism and immigration issues were part of the story, the focus had moved towards other questions – which can be seen as a natural development as the series develops together with the characters.

As this research concentrated to study the content of the books, in the future the research could be extended to cover other questions in order to have a better view of the multicultural children's literature and its effects. For instance a reader survey could be conducted to study who actually reads the books of the series and why, how child readers respond to the stories and do the books increase the awareness of cultural differences among children. Also a comparative research could be an option for future studies as this study focused on one book series. A comparison between Boarding House Onnela series and another multicultural book series written for children could reveal if similar themes or questions are discussed in other books and if and how the presentation of multicultural issues differs from series to series, hence bringing more insight into the field of multicultural children's literature.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Characters and their nationalities

Character	From	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4
Wasker Vadelma	FIN	M	M	M	M
Wasker's mother	FIN	M	M	M	M
Wasker's father	FIN	M	M	M	M
Mormor (grandmother)	FIN	m	m	M	M
Police chief Andersson	FIN	m			
Lawyer Julius Korva	FIN	m			
Delfina Lorena Soledad Maribel Airas	ARG	M	M	M	M
Abuelo Ernesto Airas	ARG	M	M	M	M
Risto	FIN	M	M	M	M
Dania	ARG	M	M	M	m
Elena	ARG	M	M	M	M
Per	SWE	M			
Ingrid	SWE	m			
Film director	FIN	m			
Henkka Andersson	FIN		M		M
Keksi-Janne	FIN		M		
Aunt Chela	ARG		m	M	
Johanna Kuosmanen (teacher)	FIN		m		
Aurelie	FRA		M	M	M
Pjotr	RUS		M		
Aurelie's father	FRA		m		
Aurelie's mother	FRA		m		
Pancho	ARG			m	
Cristina	ARG			m	
Lola	ARG			m	
Carolina	ARG			m	
Martina	ARG			m	
Roberto	ITA			m	
Lennart	EST			m	
Marjatta Lepokorpi	FIN				M
Kaarlo Lepokorpi	FIN				M
Sara	FIN				M
Irene Kormilainen	FIN				M
Total 33	7	14	17	18	15

Book 1 Delfina's travelling case	M = main character
Book 2 The winter of filled tomatoes	m = minor character
Book 3 The book of distant loves	
Book 4 Delfina's clock summer	

Appendix 2. Languages used.

Swedish

Character	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Total
Wasker	7	3	6	3	19
Mormor	10	13	15	21	59
Per	7	1			8
Ingrid	4				4
Wasker's mother	4	1		3	8
Film director	1				1
Sara				1	1
Total	33	18	21	28	100

Spanish

Character	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Total
Delfina	13	17	9	2	41
Abuelo	24	22	30	11	87
Pet parrot Pablo	9	5		5	19
Wasker	6	5	8		19
Dania		1			1
Elena		1			1
Risto		1			1
Wasker's father			4		4
Aunt Chela			9		9
Pancho			5		5
Shopkeeper			5		5
Manuel			1		1
Cristina			1		1
Passer-by			1		1
Wasker's mother				1	1
Total	52	52	73	19	196

French

Character	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Total
Aurelie		8	4	11	23
Risto		2	5	1	8
Wasker		1		2	3
Total		11	9	14	34

English

Character	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Total
Wasker	4			2	6
Irene Kormilainen				1	1
Total	4			3	7

Other languages

Language / Character	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Total
German / Rauni-Ursula	1				1
Russian / Pjotr		12			12
Estonian / Lennart			6		6
Italian / Roberto			1		1