

(Im)balanced gender representations of *Top* and *Megafon*:  
Analysis of the English and Swedish textbooks for the Finnish  
comprehensive school from the perspective of the National  
Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014

Master's Thesis

Taina Takamäki

University of Jyväskylä  
Department of Languages and Communication  
English and Swedish  
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<p>Tiivistelmä - Abstract</p> <p>Tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää tapaa, jolla sukupuolet esitetään yläkoulun pitkän englannin kielen <i>Top</i>-kirjasarjan sekä ruotsin lyhyen kielen <i>Megafon</i>-kirjasarjan tekstikirjoissa. Lähtökohtana on tutkia sukupuolten näkyvyyttä ja ilmentymiä vuoden 2014 peruskoulun opetussuunnitelman perusteiden tavoitteisiin peilaten, jossa monin eri tavoin korostetaan sukupuolten välistä tasa-arvoa ja siihen pyrkimistä. Tutkielman teoreettinen viitekehys nojautuu feministiseen kriittiseen diskurssianalyysiin. Materiaali koostuu valikoiduista kuvista ja teksteistä, joita analysoidaan laadullisesti määrällisiä laskelmia apuna käyttäen.</p> <p>Kuvia analysoitiin tekemällä laskelmia naisten ja miesten määristä, samoin kuin heidän ammateistaan, harrastamistaan urheilulajeista, mielenkiinnon kohteista ja aktiviteeteista sekä vuorovaikutuksesta ja tunteista. Tekstejä analysoitiin osaksi samoin teemoin, kuten naisten ja miesten määrien, dialogien, ammattien ja harrastusten osalta. Lisäksi teksteistä tarkasteltiin erisnimiä ja pronomineja, kuten 3. persoonan persoonapronomineja, joista sekä englannin että ruotsin kielessä käy ilmi sukupuoli. Lisäksi teksteistä poimittiin sukupuolta ilmaisevia substantiiveja, kuten perhesuhteisiin liittyviä sanoja. Ensisijaisuuttakin tutkittiin, eli esiintyykö useamman nimen listassa ensimmäisenä mies vai nainen.</p> <p><i>Top</i>-kirjasarjassa miesten osuus oli ylivoimainen verrattuna naisiin. Miessukupuoli oli ylliedustettuna lähes jokaisessa kategoriassa niin kuvissa kuin teksteissäkin, mm. ihmishahmojen määrissä, ammateissa, urheilussa, kiinnostusten kohteissa, aktiviteeteissa sekä dialogeissa, pronomineissa että substantiiveissa. Naisten määrä ylitti selkeästi miesten määrän kuvien osalta vain kotiin liittyvässä kategoriassa. <i>Megafon</i>issa sitä vastoin sukupuolet esitettiin huomattavasti tasa-arvoisemmin noudattaen opetussuunnitelman tasa-arvotavoitetta. Ylilyöntejä tapahtui vain muutamissa kategorioissa miesten osalta kuten ammateissa sekä kiinnostuksen kohteissa. Samaan tapaan naiset ylittivät selkeästi miesten määrän vain kahdessa kategoriassa eli vuorovaikutusta ja sukupuolta ilmaisevien substantiivien kohdalla.</p> <p><i>Top</i>-kirjasarja noudattaa siten useiden aikaisempien tutkimustulosten mukaista linjaa eli miesten ylliedustusta sekä naissukupuoleen liitettyjä stereotyyppisiä ilmentymiä. <i>Megafon</i> puolestaan mukailee pääsääntöisesti opetussuunnitelman linjaa sukupuolten tasa-arvoisesta kohtelusta. Tutkimusten mukaan sukupuolten stereotyyppiset ilmentymät oppikirjoissa vaikuttavat negatiivisesti oppilaiden identiteettiin ja ajatuksiin sukupuolirooleista. Tästä syystä kustantajien tulisi oppikirjoja laatiessaan ja opettajien oppikirjoja valitessaan tiedostaa sukupuolten stereotyyppisten ilmentymien olemassaolo ja vaikuttaa omilla toimillaan siten, että sukupuolten stereotyyppisiä ilmaisuja ei oppikirjoissa enää esiintyisi. Pienilläkin korjauksilla ja toisenlaisilla valinnoilla, kuten päähenkilöiden sukupuolten määrän tasaamisella oppikirjoja laadittaessa voitaisiin saada positiivista muutosta aikaan aliedustetun ja stereotyyppisten ilmentymien kohteena olevan sukupuolen hyväksi. Tällä tavoin sukupuolten tasa-arvotavoite pystyttäisiin toteuttamaan oppikirjoissa ja opetuksessa opetussuunnitelman mukaisesti ja samalla edistää suomalaisen yhteiskunnan tasa-arvotavoitteeseen pääsemistä.</p>	
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# 1 Introduction

*“Education shall promote civilization and equality in society...”* is stated in the Finnish Basic Education Act (Basic Education Act 1998). However, we have now entered the 2020s and gender equality between women and men is still under discussion (World Economic Forum 2019). European Commission states in its Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 that *“Gender inequality is a global problem”* (European Commission 2020: 20). Hence, gender inequalities need to be addressed and taken action against nationally by the government and the surrounding society but also on an international level (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2017: 7). The women’s liberation movement was the initial significant start toward gender equality already six decades ago, from the 1960s onwards (Dow 2014: 2). As it is commonly acknowledged, fixed gender roles were profoundly embedded in Western societies: men were considered the head of the house bringing the money in the family and women had a supporting role as caretakers and homemakers. This kind of mindset is, however, becoming outdated in the Western societies, but a lot of work is still needed on our way toward perfect equality between the genders (Attila et al. 2017). In addition, *“the genders”* is not as fixed a concept as it has been. Nowadays, when discussing gender equality, one should also consider gender fluidity, in contrast to gender binary. Gender binary as a concept restricts gender classes to only two, while gender fluidity refers to a gender that varies over time (Anderson 2018).

Now, in the 21st century, the approach toward gender equality is expedited by a multitude of national and international laws and treaties. Regarding international treaties, one of the most important cornerstones was The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, which the UN adopted stating that all nations are obliged to ensure that men and women have equal economic, social, educational, civil and political rights (The UN 1979). The most important national law regarding gender equality was implemented in 1986, aiming to prevent any discrimination based on gender and especially, to promote the working status of women at Finnish workplaces (Finlex 1986). Due to persistent work for gender equality for the past six centuries the Finnish society has indeed changed for women, as women experience less unequal treatment in a multitude of sectors,

reaching top professions at all the levels of society, and domestically, housework duties are shared more equally (Attila et al. 2017).

The concept of gender equality permeates through the whole society, from individuals to families as well as the public sector. One important sector in our society that should promote gender equality is our compulsory education. Children in Finland start school at the age of seven (Basic Education Act 1998) and after that the school world belongs inseparably in their lives for the next 10 years. Therefore, it is not indifferent what kind of values the schools and the teachers represent and promote. It is thus extremely important to regularly evaluate the different stages of our school system regarding if and how they promote gender equality. In Finland the public education system is regulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Basic Education Act 1998). The Ministry of Education and Culture establishes a national curriculum for the schools to comply with. National curricula have been established already for 50 years, with the first one dated 1970 (NCCBE 1970). In the 1970s gender equality was not yet generally promoted with the graveness of today (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2017). Under the umbrella of the national curriculum, the schools are, however, allowed to create a more detailed and practical local curriculum, which sets the guidelines for everyday teaching and learning aims. The local school principals and municipal officers have then the responsibility to ensure that gender equality is promoted in teaching as stated in the most recent Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education which was introduced in 2014 (hereafter referred to as the NCCBE 2014). Sometimes it is also referred to, for instance by publishers, as The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2016 after the year of its implementation. In practice, the NCCBE 2014 has been gradually implemented in upper comprehensive school in 2017, 2018 and 2019 by the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI 2014). Gender equality is defined in much more detail in the objectives of the current curriculum (NCCBE 2014) than in any of the previous ones.

Increasing awareness and legislation have been, and still are, the major tools in our efforts to achieve gender equality. Still, even if the guidelines in the national curriculum are toward the right direction, the practical procedures can be something completely different (Kuoksa 2019; Lahelma and Tainio 2019). This is why guidelines are not sufficient, and, instead, laws are needed to support real change. Internationally,

one important cornerstone addressing children's rights in schools has been the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child in (1990) which acknowledged children's right to gender-neutral education. In Finland, already the earlier Finnish National Core Curricula for basic education 1985, 1994 and 2004 (NCCBE 1985; 1994; 2004) list equality as one of the core foundations of basic education. The aim is to teach boys and girls such skills so that they are able to participate in societal activities with equal rights and responsibilities, including both family life and work.

Since the NCCBE 2014, schoolbook publishers have revised schoolbooks for the comprehensive school in accordance with the newest curriculum. At first, all the revised schoolbooks have been labeled as "in accordance with the 2016 curriculum" implying that the contents of the schoolbooks have been examined and hence, convey the ideology of the 2016 curriculum. In general, school materials, such as school textbooks, are in a key role in students' learning process. Sadker and Zittleman (2007: 144) discovered that students in the USA use textbooks for 80 to 95 percent of the classroom time. Kallio and Rehn (2003: 90) confirmed that due to the paramount importance of textbooks in the learning process, the content of the school materials is of great importance and therefore, it is essential in what way the genders are represented in learning materials. Moreover, according to several studies, stereotypical and biased representations have still existed in school materials during the last decade and even the recent time (Porreca 1984; Lahelma 1992; Metso 1992; Kallio and Rehn 2003; Ylikiiskilä; Ohlander 2010; Tainio and Teräs 2010; Kuoksa 2019). There are long traditions of stereotypical approaches to the genders, and children have been exposed in an adverse way to gender biases, gender stereotypes and sexism through textbooks

However, it is important to be aware that the learning process of students at schools is not only based on the official curriculum, but values and beliefs are also conveyed through a hidden curriculum (Broady 1989; Kallio and Rehn 2003: 87) in addition to the teaching of the various school subjects. A hidden curriculum consists of attitudes and norms to which students are, often unconsciously, exposed to by their teachers and learning materials. When girls and boys are treated differently on the basis of their gender within the hidden curriculum, the concept is sometimes addressed as a double hidden curriculum (Gordon and Lahelma 1992: 316-317; Kallio and Rehn 2003: 87;

Laakkonen 2007: 27). Therefore, from the gender equality perspective, it is important to acknowledge that students learn gender equality not only from the practices and perceptions of the entire school system, including school materials, textbooks and pictures, but also from teachers', other school staff's and fellow students' actions and attitudes toward boys and girls (Broady 1989; Metso 1992; Jääskeläinen et al. 2015).

The purpose of the present study is to examine the *Top 7*, 8 and 9 English language textbooks and *Megafon 1*, 2 and 3 Swedish language textbooks for comprehensive school from the perspective of gender representations compared with the goals of the NCCBE 2014. I was introduced to this topic about gender studies a few years ago when I did a small study on the *Top 7* textbook from the perspective of gender representations. As the newest NCCBE 2014 has been gradually executed in comprehensive school in 2016 - 2019 and, this caught my attention, according to the publisher and their marketing statements, all the comprehensive schoolbooks have been revised accordingly. Hence, I got interested and decided I wanted to do more research regarding gender in education. My thesis is a double thesis consisting of an English part and a Swedish part and for the Swedish part I chose a Swedish language textbook series *Megafon*. I have also become acquainted with both of these textbook series during my teacher education and when substituting at upper comprehensive school.

I have previously analyzed the *Top 7* textbook, which inspired me to continue studying this theme more thoroughly. I chose to analyze the rest of the textbooks of the *Top*-series, *Top 8* and *Top 9*, as well as the *Megafon* textbooks since they are both published by Otava Ltd. For this reason, it is interesting to see if gender balance is similar in these two books as they are published by same publisher. My overarching objective is not only to study gender representation equality in specific chosen textbooks but also to increase overall awareness of the importance of balanced gender representations.

The specific research questions are:

- 1) From the gender equality point of view, in what way are the genders portrayed in the texts and illustrations of the textbook series *Top* and *Megafon*?
- 2) To what extent are the goals of the NCCBE 2014 achieved from the perspective of gender equality?

- 3) What kinds of differences are there in gender representations between the English and Swedish language book series?

As theoretical framework of this study, I use Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (Lazar 2007, 2017). Moreover, with reference to Michel's (1986) and Brugeilles and Cromer's (2009) methodological principles in textbook analysis, I use a qualitative analysis method with the help of quantitative calculations when analyzing the findings of the research of the illustrations and texts of the *Top* and *Megafon* textbooks. The dominance of the genders is studied while the characters' roles and their specific actions and relations are investigated. Gender bias is studied with respect to occupations, sports, arts and other hobbies, home-related activities, travel and adventure as well as social activities and activism. Additionally, proper nouns, gendered pronouns and nouns and firstness in the texts are examined. Firstness refers to the order in which females and males appear in a list of two or several people. Furthermore, any other features connected to gender are evaluated.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. The first chapter introduces my thesis topic and poses the research questions. In the second chapter, the theoretical framework of my study, the FCDA, as well as the concepts related with gender and sex are introduced. Furthermore, gender in education is discussed, with a focus on how gender is portrayed in textbooks. Thereafter, the laws and regulations related with gender equality and the historical development of the National Core Curricula for Basic Education are reviewed, and especially the most current one, the NCCBE 2014, is explained. In the third chapter, the research design is introduced from the perspective of the research questions. The fourth chapter goes through the findings of my study mostly from a quantitative perspective and the fifth discusses them with a more qualitative view. The thesis ends with concluding remarks.

## **2 Theoretical framework**

The main concepts, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis are introduced in this chapter as well as what feminism means as a concept. Next, the concepts of gender and sex are explained, along with other terminology related with gender identity. The main focus is on what kind of a role

textbooks and education in general play in learning gender. Finally, the laws and regulations concerning gender equality in education are reviewed, starting from international and European level regulations, with more details on Sweden and especially Finland.

## **2.1 CDA and FCDA**

This study is conducted according to *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis*, the FCDA, (Lazar 2005, 2007, 2017) as the theoretical framework of my thesis. The primary objective is to critically explore gendered discourses in two language textbooks with a feminist viewpoint. I chose this approach based on previous research (Palmu 1992; Lahelma 1992; Tainio and Teräs 2010; Snellman and Toivonen 2011) according to which several textbooks used in Finland contain clear gendered stereotypes that are discriminatory toward women. The FCDA falls under the umbrella of the more general theoretical framework *Critical Discourse Analysis*, the CDA, which is a form of discourse analysis characterized by a critical viewpoint to linguistic and social discourse research. I find it important to understand the principles of the CDA before discussing the FCDA in more detail. According to the founders of the CDA, Fairclough (2011) and Van Dijk (1993), the CDA as a true social scientific discipline aims at critically investigating social inequality and representations of power and dominance and their manifestations in processes of written and spoken discourses. In addition to raising consciousness and revealing social injustices, the CDA aims at accomplishing a societal change which is the measure of success the CDA. (Van Dijk 1993; Fairclough 2011). Moreover, Fairclough (2011) and Van Dijk (1993) argue that a notable stance against social injustice ought to be taken when researching social problems in order to achieve change. This being said, one of the goals of this study is change, if needed. The CDA's objectives partly overlap with the objectives of the FCDA as CDA also focuses on emancipatory issues by confronting discursive social problems caused by gender, race or, for example, poverty. (Fairclough 2011: 126).

As implied above, the FCDA is the CDA with a feminist emphasis, per se (Lazar 2005). The mission is to critically scrutinize and expose women's subordinate position in the world compared with men and, especially, to discover how patriarchal gender bias is represented in discourses as well as social conventions. (Lazar 2007: 145). The present study could have, however, also been classified under the wider umbrella of

the CDA, but Lazar (2007: 143-144) brings up three reasons why it is important to advance the FCDA by categorizing the feminist ideology of the CDA as its own discipline. Firstly, there is already an ample amount of gender studies in the CDA, like this study, which intrinsically fall under the category of the FCDA. However, not all of the CDA research with a gender focus is necessarily motivated by a feminist viewpoint, which is the premise of the FCDA. Secondly, it is important in the field of the FCDA to have common general feminist principles, which to follow when doing research on gender issues, including theorizing and analyzing the data. Thirdly, Lazar sees it is essential for the feminist CDA to obtain group visibility and to have a collective voice in the field of the CDA in order for the FCDA to be recognized as a true scientific discipline of its own.

Lazar introduced six interconnected principles (Lazar 2017: 373-375) which form the theoretical framework for this study, out of which the first five she introduced already earlier (Lazar 2005, 2014). The first principle is the ideological nature of sex, which states that humans are divided into two categories, men and women, which are in line with the nature of their sexual difference. However, today in 2020, we do acknowledge the existence of a third sex, intersex, and also other forms of gender identities, but because the third sex is not officially recognized in the Finnish legislation, I comply here with Lazar's ideology about the two sexes as this study's main aim is to address the disparity between men and women. Indeed, asymmetry in gender representation has been conformed in several previous school textbook studies (Porreca 1984; Michel 1986; Mcleod and Norrby 2002; Blumberg 2007; Tainio and Teräs 2010; Aoumeur 2011; Snellman and Toivonen 2016; İncikabı and Ulusoy 2019) and hence, will be taken under careful scrutiny in this study as the one of the three research questions.

Secondly, Lazar states 'power' as a key factor in critical gender studies (Lazar 2005). A patriarchal social system is still a reality in our society, not only in developing countries such as African countries (Moshi 2017) and Pakistan (Sujith and Narayanan 2019) but also in Western 'white' countries (Liu 2017). Men continue to have privileges over women in many aspects of life based on their gender only, therefore power relations and masculine dominance ought to be critically investigated. Lazar (2017) points out in her third principle that the FCDA and the CDA view construction and maintaining of discourses in a similar classical way: they stem from social

practices which in turn contributes to forming social identities. Hence, in this study the gendered characteristics of the dialogues in the school textbooks are essential to place under careful scrutiny because of their impact on the students' social identities.

The fourth principle considers the FCDA to take interest in practicing critical reflection. Through people's and researchers' critical mind in gender politics it is possible to achieve change in society, which is an important long-term aim of this and similar studies. In the fifth principle Lazar states that the FCDA is a scholarship which practices analytical feminist activism. According to the results of previous research on gender representations in school textbooks, which were still found to be partly biased, the ideology of analytical feminist activism needs to be executed in order to make a change in the school world. The sixth principle of the FCDA, which was later on added by Lazar (2017: 375), concerns transnationalism. Gender struggles are similar, yet different across many parts of the world and asymmetrical gender relations are a true global concern (Lazar 2017). Hence, feminist politics needs to be truly transnational and receptive to these still currently very different gender equality statuses worldwide to effectively promote gender equality in discourse both locally and globally.

As far as I know based on the literature research I conducted, no concrete or detailed research strategies have been outlined in the scholarly research papers and textbooks concerning the FCDA and the CDA. Hence, in the spirit of Lazar's sixth principle, transnationalism and local contextualized data analysis, I make use of the international organization UNESCO's two methodological guides (Michel 1986; Brugeilles and Cromer 2009) and their preferences, for what is essential in the process of eliminating gender inequalities from school textbooks. My categorization of the data will be explained in the Methodology section 3.3 and clarified in detail in the Analysis of the illustrations 3.3.1 and Analysis of the texts -sections 3.3.2 of this chapter.

As mentioned above, power relations play a significant role in gender equality. According to Foucault, the pioneer of power relation research: "*Where there is power, there is resistance*" (Foucault 1976: 95). He also stated that: "*Our discourse shapes our reality*", meaning our discourse and languages include issues of power. For Foucault, symbols, such as male pronouns as a generic, reflect society's views of power. Therefore, there is a great deal of significance to what kind of gender

representations our children and adolescents are exposed to. How we speak and write about the world are affected by these power relations, and especially how these gender representations are perceived.

The concept of *hegemony* is closely related to the concept of power. Van Dijk (1993: 255) relates hegemony closely to the CDA and defines it as a concept by citing Gramsci (1971) and Hall et al. (1977): “*If the minds of the dominated can be influenced in such a way that they accept dominance, and act in the interest of the powerful out of their own will, we will use the term hegemony.*” He also states that promoting acceptance and legitimacy of consensus is a major feature of discourse that involves dominance (Van Dijk 1993: 255). Many more or less subtle forms of dominance seem to be so persistent that they seem natural until they begin to be challenged. The results of my research will show if this thesis is one that fights against hegemony; do the power relations in *Top* and *Megafon* seem equal or is there a need for improvement. It might be noteworthy that both the *Top* and *Megafon* series are written by women.

## **2.2 Gender development and gender in education**

This section starts by defining the key concepts, sex and gender, that are the basis of categorizing humans into two classes, males and females. The various non-binary categories and gender fluidity are also defined. Thereafter, the way children learn gender from their immediate surroundings and, especially, at school is discussed. A special focus is on textbooks, which is the main topic of this thesis. Furthermore, the concept of feminism and sexism are defined and explained, and what they have to do with heteronormativity and imbalanced stereotypes in textbooks, and more generally, in society.

### **2.2.1 Gender and sex**

Gender and sex are often misunderstood as being interchangeable terms. The *sex* of the baby is determined by physical features stemming from the baby’s chromosomes; the baby is either a girl, a boy or intersex (Harper 2007: 7). In Finland a child is always classified as either a boy or a girl. However, in 2020, a citizens’ initiative (Initiative 6455, 2020) was brought to the Finnish Parliament in order to change this, with the aim to change to social security number to become sex neutral. In comparison, for

example in Germany, a child can be classified as intersex after birth since 2018 (Deutsche Welle 2018), and in the Netherlands the citizens can have a sex neutral passport (Dutch expat news 2018).

Gender, however, is not dependent on the individual's sex, *per se*. *Gender* is a culturally and socially constructed manifestation of the individual's inner feeling of which sex they perceive themselves to be (Syrjäläinen and Kujala 2010). In addition to males and females there is also a so-called third category, non-binary, which I take into account in my analysis. The non-binary category includes individuals who do not belong to the classical men or women categories due to their gender (Matsuno and Budge 2017). In addition to non-binary, the terms *enby*, which originates from n.b. as non-binary, and *genderqueer* are also commonly used for this category. For instance, a girl can experience herself as a boy and vice versa. An individual can also experience oneself as *androgynous*, having simultaneously feminine and masculine features but not necessarily in equal amounts (Boldizar 1991; Weigel 2020). As mentioned in the Introduction, the perception of gender can also vary over time, giving rise to the concept of *gender fluidity* (Anderson, 2018).

Today there is an ample amount of discussion revolving around the concept of gender (Attila et al. 2018). This the case especially here in Finland where our current government aims to raise Finland to become number one in the world when considering gender equality (Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös 2020). There is an increasing consensus that children should not be exposed to behavior typically only to their own sex. When a child is born, as a girl, a boy or intersex, they are a 'tabula rasa', a clean slate, who start to absorb patterns of behavior, influences and attitudes from their immediate surroundings, as generally acknowledged (Martin and Ruble 2004). They do it by watching, listening to and mimicking people they are surrounded by. From the early years on, it is not only the parents in the child's life who teach the child, but also the whole society around the child. In fact, society has a huge impact on the child's life and partly, it is legislated by the law. For example, a child must have an education and in Finland it is obligatory to study one year in pre-school at the age of six and nine years in comprehensive school starting from the age seven (Basic Education Act 1998). For this magnitude of a role that school has in the child's life, it is not irrelevant what kind of learning materials they are exposed to (Blumberg 2007).

### 2.2.2 Socialization and learning gender

According to Maher and Ward (2002: 1) children learn gender role identity and expectations at early ages. Not only do school-age children become aware of gender stereotypes and engage in gendered activities but they also start to adopt personality characteristics that show the ways they have identified with their understandings of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. Children use gender differences as a way to organize their social worlds (Maher and Ward 2002: 1). This process through which individuals learn the gender norms of their society and develop a *gender identity* is called *gender socialization* (Stockard 2006). What is more, gender socialization is defined as the process how a person learns to become a member of any group (ibid.). In socialization the fundamental and cultural roles in society, such as gender roles, are transferred from generation to generation through generally accepted gender stereotypical behavior models. Such gendered stereotypes are, in a way, summaries of expectations and attitudes of the contemporary society, which can change along with general cultural changes. (Einsenstein 1983). We constantly signal these attitudes and perceptions to children through thousands of everyday gestures without paying any attention to them (Grabrucker 1991).

The general progress in gender equality has naturally also changed the way the parents influence the development of children's gender identity development. Oakley (1972) discussed in her contemporary study the different ways how people learn to act 'normal', that is, in a feminine or masculine way. Furthermore, she states that as soon as a baby is born, the parents tend to treat it differently depending on if it is a boy or a girl. According to Oakley (1972), the different treatment of boys and girls is most visible in the choice of toys and, for example, color of clothes. Moreover, she explains how essentially important it is what mothers do with their children, however, the children also compare their parents with other adults and make further observations about how to act feminine or masculine. However, the trend of treating boys and girls differently has changed gradually in the recent times as new principles and practices of parenting have been brought into use and parents have started to raise their children in a more gender-neutral way (Davis and Hines 2020).

In addition to the core and extended family, childcare, school and friends, are important in shaping the gender identity. Hence, the school years are especially important in the gender socialization process. In Finland, the school system's aim is to generate a school community where every student is treated equally (NCCBE 2014). However, earlier, learning materials in school, such as textbooks, reinforced gender stereotypes, as concluded e.g. by Blumberg (2007). On the other hand, even if biased stereotyping still clearly exists, some promising evolution in the gender representations of textbooks has seen light: The 2017 Finnish Equality Barometer surveyed the opinions of students on textbooks: only 36% of female and 25% of male students had the opinion that the textbooks used by their teachers include gender biased stereotyping.

### **2.2.3 Feminism, sexism and sexist stereotypes**

Merriam-Webster (2019) defines *feminism* as 1) “*the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes*” and 2) “*as organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests.*” Whelehan (1985) reviewed the main developments of the history of feminism. The term was originally invented by Charles Fourier in 1837. The so-called first wave of feminism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century fought mainly for women's legal rights, such as the right to vote. The rise of feminism was further accelerated by the women's liberation movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, called also the second wave of feminism. This movement was concerned with all aspects of life, including politics, work, family and sexuality. This time period is also when the first critical analyses about gender bias in textbooks appeared (Weitzman et al. 1972). My thesis, with the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (Lazar 2005) view, is aligned with both definitions of feminism mentioned above (Michel 1986).

The term *sexism* was introduced in the 1970s (Graham 1975, cited in Porreca 1984: 705). Merriam Webster defines sexism as 1) “*prejudice or discrimination based on sex*” and 2) “*behavior, conditions, or attitudes that foster stereotypes of social roles based on sex*” (Merriam Webster 2019). Based on these definitions, one could redefine feminism as activities aiming at abolishing sexism. The form of feminism relevant for this thesis is *linguistic sexism*, that is, how sexism through written or spoken language is used to convey sexist attitudes and values (Porreca 1984: 705), often very subtly visible in textbooks used in school.

The bias in how genders have been treated in textbooks revolves around the concept of *stereotype*. Merriam Webster (2019) defines the word stereotype as “*a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment*”. Here, group refers to any type of grouping, by e.g. gender, ethnicity or religion. *Sexist stereotypes* are obviously related to gender and refer to, for example, physical characteristics, emotional qualities or position in society (Michel 1986: 15). What is more, sexist stereotypes often have depicted women as inferior to men. Sexist stereotypes can be further sub-classified into *explicit and implicit sexist stereotypes* (Michel 1986: 16). According to Michel (1986) implicit refers to attitudes and/or behavior: for example, boys may be praised more easily on achieving good results in school and for girls achieving good grades is ‘normal’ as they are expected to study hard and be conscientious. Explicit stereotyping, on the other hand, is reflected openly in either verbal or written discourse, by using discriminative language, for example, by school staff calling specific school subjects as ‘typical male subjects’ or ‘typical female subjects’ or openly expressing a personal opinion that boys are better than girls in some subjects.

One further source of stereotyping is related to the concept of *heteronormativity* (Robinson 2016; Rossi 2015), which implies men and women as heterosexuals, men are masculine and women feminine, as well as sees classically typical male and female behavior as normal. Heterosexuality is considered a fixed and immutable sexual orientation (Rossi 2015). School textbooks rarely include discourse of homosexuality or non-binary characters, which in a way establishes heteronormativity as the normal and for this reason, has received criticism in previous research (Kumpumäki 2020). This means that in school, for instance, the ideology of heteronormativity can agitate discriminative behavior among ‘normal heterosexuals’ to tease or bully those who look or behave different or for instance, belong to the LGBTQ community.

#### **2.2.4 Textbooks as an educational resource**

As already mentioned earlier, school forms one of the most important elements in children’s lives. Hence, it is important for schools to evaluate and be aware of the practices within the school concerning the genders and, for example, how gender

equality is manifested in learning materials. In Finland the teachers select the textbooks for their students (Kallio and Rehn 2003: 91) which means that the students have no saying in what kind of material they learn from. As a consequence, the students are exposed to the contents and ideologies of those textbooks chosen by their teachers as Tainio (2012: 212) points out. For this reason, it is important that the teachers are aware of the contents and ideologies of the textbooks that they choose and, especially, of the attitudes concerning gender roles and equality that they convey to the students. Furthermore, to ensure as equal compulsory education as possible education is regulated by the National Core Curricula as well as laws and regulations which will be discussed later in sections 2.3 and 2.4.

The importance of the role of the textbooks in Finland is confirmed by Pitkänen-Huhta (2003: 45) and Taalas et al. (2011) who state that the main sources for teaching materials in schools are still textbooks. In studies conducted at schools in the USA it was found that students spend as much as 80 % (Blumberg 2007: 354), and even up to 95% (Sadker and Zittleman 2007: 144), of classroom time learning from textbooks. In Finland It is thus clear that textbook contents have an impact, because so much time is spent studying them not only in school but also at home. In fact, Sunderland et al. (2002: 224) mention that textbooks as a genre are special in the sense that the texts are not complete books in themselves but instead, they are typically rather short and supplemented with illustrations. What is more, the texts are meant to be read and studied alone or with a pair or in small groups which means that they are studied intensively (Sunderland et al. 2002: 225).

Brugeilles and Cromer (2009: 6) argue that textbooks, for their important role in education, ought to be in the crux of education policy, firstly, through national and international policies, secondly, through implementers of the gender equal policies, for instance policy-initiators, publishing houses and distributors and thirdly, through school staff, which are the teachers and everyone working in school and who ought to cooperate with communities, students and their families. Brugeilles and Cromer (2009: 39) highlight the role of textbooks for their representation of society overall and also how they express values, especially gender sensitive values. Accordingly, Brugeilles and Cromer (2009: 71-87) emphasize the importance of everyone who is involved in the textbook creating process. When describing the basic units of the textbook chain,

Brugeilles and Cromer (2009: 71-87) use a term *Actors*. The Actors are, for example, publishers, teachers, and students, and they function in *Interactive clusters*. Brugeilles and Cromer (ibid.) determine three pivotal Interactive clusters: 1) publishing cluster including, for example, authors, book designers and illustrators; 2) education policy cluster representing the government and the Ministry of Education via curricula and textbook and gender experts and 3) utilization cluster containing for instance, students, school community and parents. Alongside these international clusters there are two additional spheres: university sphere and media sphere (ibid.). Consequently, if all of the actors within the interactive clusters are trained, for example, to be aware of gender inequalities in textbooks and to act accordingly by promoting egalitarian goals, the chances of eliminating inequality from textbooks would increase significantly (Brugeilles and Cromer 2009: 71-87). In contrast, if failing in this mission, textbooks can even legitimize biased societal and gender representations. (Brugeilles and Cromer 2009: 39).

Kaufman and Bohner (2014) present an example on the importance of choice of wording in textbooks by studying masculine generics (MG) which is one of the central concepts in feminist language critique. It is used when man or other designations for men are used for people whose sex is unknown, groups of people or even for people in general. Therefore, using MG leads perceivers to internalize overrepresentation of males as 'the norm'. Kaufman and Bohner (2014: 11) conducted an experiment in which 195 university students from Chile read short stories in Spanish with different ways to refer to the protagonists of the stories: masculine generics or through gender-aware designations. When the students were asked to give names to the protagonists, which represents how they review the protagonists' sex, a clear male bias was evoked with MG, in contrast to the alternative designation. These results lead Kaufman and Bohner (2014: 15) to conclude that the choice of words in textbooks matter and MG as a form of discourse does have an impact on social identities as Lazar argues (Lazar 2017: 373-375). Hence, in the spirit of the FCDA, increasing the use of gender-neutral language is important in school in order to achieve the goals of gender equal education of the NCCBE 2014 (NCCBE 2014: 14-18).

### **2.2.5 The role of the teacher**

The Board of Education has taken a number of steps in order to educate teachers how to recognize gender inequalities and how to promote gender equality in primary and secondary education. (EDUFI 2014) Accordingly, due to the existence of the hidden and double hidden curriculum, it is imperative that teachers and schools are aware of covert features of the hidden curricula. Jääskeläinen (2015: 18-19) wrote guidelines for promoting gender equality in comprehensive school. Jääskeläinen (ibid.) emphasizes that teachers ought to understand social and cultural factors that mold children's gender development. Teachers should also recognize their own tendencies to view and treat students according to their sex. Moreover, students ought to be given space to grow as an individual without stereotypical gender expectations. Also, traditional gender restrictions should be paid special attention to, especially in cases in which a student is uncertain about their sexual identity. Jääskeläinen (ibid.) further argues that teacher should promote gender equality both in class and in the whole school community in order that any patterns conserving gender bias or discrimination against sexual minorities could be systematically removed.

Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) provide practical instructions to teachers who face a situation in which gender equality in their learning materials is unachievable because there might not simply be gender equal learning material available. This is, indeed, a situation which teachers can face along their teaching career, as gender equality does not prevail yet in textbooks in many countries in the world, as revealed in the section 2.5 of this thesis concerning previous research on the topic. Brugeilles and Cromer's (2009) message is that in addition to the goal of non-sexist language teaching and study materials, more can be done, if those goals cannot be achieved. Accordingly, if teachers have to use learning materials which expose students to gender inequality teachers can correct and explain these discrepancies in class in order to eliminate any kinds of discriminatory gendered representations. However, Brugeilles and Cromer's (2009) note that if a teacher is not aware of any such discrimination in the textbooks or does not pay attention to it, using such gender biased learning materials can promote unequal gender attitudes among the students in school. In Sweden, the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) conducted a study on how gender equality objectives are implemented in Swedish pre-schools (Nordenfors 2020). In most preschools examined, the staff do not work systematically from a gender perspective

when carrying out activities, planning the environment and materials, and in conversations about attitudes. In about half of the preschools, the staff do not guide boys and girls to try different activities, toys and equipment, especially in the free play.

Gender awareness in teacher education in Finland has also been studied by Lahelma and Tainio (2019) who studied the impact of a national project TASUKO (2008–2011), which stands for Equality and gender awareness in teacher training. The project included studying the curriculum of teacher education and interviewing teachers in one teacher education unit. Finnish teacher education brings up gender issues in teaching to some extent but some educators do not include gender issues at all in their teaching. One of the main conclusions according to Lahelma and Tainio (2019) was that promotion of gender equality in Finnish teacher education suffers from poor resources, that is, when universities are under pressure for resources and teacher educators under pressure for time, gender issues are dismissed.

### **2.3 Laws and regulations**

This section deals with international treaties and programs and national laws and regulations that have functioned as a means of trying to ensure sexual equality since the upsurge of the feminist movement in the 1960s. Internationally, the United Nations via its independent agency, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, also known as the UNESCO, took action already in 1960 by holding a Convention against Discrimination in Education. In the convention the State Parties committed to common goals, such as “*to develop and apply a national policy which... will tend to promote equality of opportunity and of treatment in the matter of education.*” (UNESCO 1960). The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was held in 1979, manifesting that necessary measures need to be taken by the State Parties to attain gender equality and to ensure equal educational rights for women and men (UNESCO 1979). Moreover, in 1986 UNESCO published a book *Down with stereotypes!*, with a goal of bringing awareness and providing tools to battle against stereotypical treatment of the genders in school textbooks and children’s literature (Michel, 1986). Additionally, an internationally important corner stone of children’s rights was the UN’s Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), which emphasized children’s right to gender-neutral education. Strong egalitarian goals are included also in UNESCO’s methodological

guide *Promoting Gender Equality through Textbooks*, written by Carole Brugeilles and Sylvie Cromer, on which this thesis leans on (Brugeilles and Cromer 2009). In Finland there is a UNESCO network, UNITWIN (Network on Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity in Education) which, in a global setting, will promote equality and social justice in teacher education and will enhance teacher education for equality and social justice globally, in partner countries and regions. (UNITWIN 2018).

In Finland, gender equality is regarded as a fundamental human right and a core value, which is promoted by the government in all its decision-making. The foundation of gender equality in Finland is in the Constitution of Finland (Finlex 1999) which states that no-one should be discriminated based on any personal reason including sex, age, language, race or religion. In 1986, legislators enacted a law, *The Act on Equality between Women and Men* (Finlex 1986), whose main objectives are to prevent discrimination based on gender, to promote equality between women and men, and thus, to improve the status of women, particularly in working life. Furthermore, it is the objective of this Act to prevent discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression. The act was supplemented in 2014 (§5) stating that education providers shall ensure that girls and boys as well as women and men have equal opportunities for education, training and professional development, and that teaching, research and instructional material support the attainment of the objectives of the Act. In addition, educational institutions should prepare a gender equality plan annually in cooperation with staff and students. Jääskeläinen et al. (2015) reviewed the requirements of the act and gave guidelines how to practically implement gender equality promoting measures in the various stages of Finnish basic education. As already stated in the introduction, also the *Basic Education Act* (21.8.1998/628) states that education should promote equality. In teacher training in Finland these issues were a special focus in the TASUKO-project (Hynninen 2011), in which gender equality consciousness was promoted in all teacher education in Finland. One of the topics of the project was gender equality in textbooks and other study materials (Hynninen 2011: 46-48).

Gender equality politics is coordinated in Finland by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, that guides promoting gender equality by equality programs that are initiated each government term. The Finnish equality politics is based on the Act of

Equality between women and men (Finlex 1986). Moreover, equality politics derive from policy definitions by the Finnish government as well as international and European treaties and legislation. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health publishes regularly in every four years a Government Action Plan for Gender Equality; the latest plan was published by the government in June, 2020, for the years 2020-2023. In this latest plan it is declared that according to the decision-in-principle of the government and the government program of Prime Minister Marin, Finland is to be raised as the top country globally when it comes to gender equality. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2020).

In Sweden, in 1991, a law was made on gender equality (The Equal Opportunities Act 1991: 433) that focused on equality regarding working life and terms of employment. This law was later replaced by the Discrimination Act (2008: 567). The purpose of this Act is to combat any kind of discrimination in Sweden and thus, to promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age. The act has several similarities to the corresponding Act in Finland. The parts of the Act concerning education were listed already earlier in the Act Prohibiting Discrimination and Other Degrading Treatment of Children and School Students (2006: 67). Any education provider is obliged to draw up a plan each year containing an overview of the measures needed to promote equal rights and opportunities for the children or students, regardless of sex or sexual orientation. In 2008, already 96% of comprehensive schools and 93% of high schools had designed such a plan (Skolverket 2009). The Discrimination Act also established the Equality Ombudsman (DO) firstly, to combat discrimination on grounds of sex, gender, religion and ethics among others, and secondly, to supervise compliance with the Act (Discrimination Act 2008: 567). In 2008, the Swedish Government created a gender equality program for Swedish schools, including establishing a special gender equality committee, with its main task to enhance knowledge and awareness of gender equality in schools (Skolverket 2009).

In the European Union, overall gender equality is still far away. The European Institute for Gender Equality publishes annually a report summarizing the developments regarding gender equality in the EU. In their most recent report (Barbieri et al. 2020) it is stated that the Gender Equality Index in 2020 is 67.9 with an increase of

approximately 1 point every 2 years. As 100 points represents perfect equality, with the current pace it would take more than 60 years to achieve it. The core domains that make up the index are work, money, knowledge, time, power and health. There are large differences in gender equality within the EU. The countries with highest index, Sweden (83.8), Denmark (77.4), France (75.1), Finland (74.7) and the Netherlands (74.1) represent best overall gender equality while Greece (52.2), Hungary (53.0), Romania (54.4), Slovakia (55.5) and Poland (55.8) represent the worst countries in this respect. This year, the commission issued a new gender equality strategy (European Commission 2020) in order to speed up this important process.

## **2.4 National Curriculum for Basic Education 2014 and earlier curricula**

At national level, according to Lahelma (1992: 16), the international treaties, which are elaborated at the beginning of the previous section, were the reason why an equality goal was set in the Finnish education legislation. Lahelma (ibid.) also mentions that in Sweden such a goal was included in the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education already in 1969. In the first Finnish national core curriculum for basic education in 1970, which consists of two reports of total 700 pages (Komiteamietintö 1970), no mentions of gender equality exist. Instead, a gender equality as a goal was mentioned for the first time in 1978 to concern secondary school education (Lahelma 1992: 16). Similarly, in the following years, in 1983 and 1987, the goal of gender equality was inscribed into the laws concerning basic, secondary and vocational education (Law 476/1983; Law 477/1983; Law 487/1987). Gender equality as a general goal was stated for the first time in the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 1985. In 1988 the Council for Gender Equality defined promoting equality as one of the missions of our school system (Lahelma 1992: 16). The Finnish National Agency for Education ordered comprehensive schools to devise a local equality plan in 2017 to support gender equality. These plans are a part of the Finnish Act on Equality between Women and Men (Finlex 1986) as mentioned in the previous section. In accordance, the education providers are responsible for ensuring that each educational institution prepares a gender equality plan annually in cooperation with

staff and students. The gender equality plan may be incorporated into the curriculum or some other plan drawn up by the educational institution.

The gender equality plan must include:

- 1) an assessment of the gender equality situation within the institution;
- 2) the necessary measures to promote gender equality and to ensure the prevention and elimination of sexual and gender-based harassment.
- 3) a review of the extent to which measures previously included in it have been implemented and of the results achieved.

As already mentioned earlier, the first National Core Curriculum for Basic Education was drafted based on two committee reports, *Komitean mietintö I* and *II*, in 1970 and the curriculum came into effect in 1971 (NCCBE 1970). Thereafter, four new national core curricula have been composed, in 1985, 1994, 2004 and 2014. These curricula are evaluated one by one in particular from the gender equality perspective in the following paragraphs. Referring to the earlier statement of this section, there are no mentions of gender equality as a goal nor in general in the first Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education in 1970, implemented in 1971 (NCCBE 1971).

The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 1985 includes gender equality by stating that the promotion of equality in school means not only learning gender equal attitudes but also equality in schools' educational offerings. A special emphasis should be put into providing equal supply of education and participation possibilities for boys and girls and arranging teaching in such a way that it reflects the personalities of the students as well as possible (NCCBE 1985: 12). Furthermore, it is stated that the upbringing of children and youth should always be based on equality. Those human qualities that promote on one hand empathy and on the other hand self-awareness, self-expression ability and overall self-esteem should be encouraged. Promoting gender equality should be considered as one of the main objectives of the school community that involves both school and home. (NCCBE 1985: 14). The gender equality aim is further repeated in the 1985 National Core Curriculum also under the subject specific sections for history, social studies, ethics and guidance counseling.

The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education in 1994 states equality as one of the central themes in any core values discussion, whether or not one considers gender, race or wealth (NCCBE 1994: 13). It is clearly stated that gender equality is one of the core values of education. Gender equality as one of the primary aims of education means that girls and boys achieve equal abilities to function with equal rights and responsibilities both in family and work life as well as in society in general (NCCBE 1994: 14). One peculiar feature of the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 1994, though, is that equality is specifically mentioned in only two of the subjects, guidance counseling and home economics.

The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004 addresses gender equality by defining human rights and equality as core values of basic education (NCCBE 2004: 12). Furthermore, it is stated that such values for basic education promote both individual and geographical equality. Education should carefully consider differences in learning abilities and promote gender equality by teaching both girls and boys with equal abilities to function with equal rights and responsibilities both in family and work life as well as in society in general (NCCBE 2004: 12). Both equality and justice are core ingredients when growing up as a human being (NCCBE 2004: 36). The theme 'humans and technology' included a central aim to consider both moral and ethical equality issues related to technology. The equality aims were mentioned specifically in the sections dealing with ethics and guidance counseling.

The newest Finnish national core curriculum for basic education, NCCBE 2014, emphasizes on several occasions the equal treatment of girls and boys in school and also highlights their right to gender equal education and gender equal learning materials, highlighted in paragraph 2.1 below. Gender equality is also mentioned as a goal in almost all of the subjects: mother tongue and literature, languages, environmental studies, physics, chemistry, physical education ja guidance counseling. It is stated in section 2.1 of the NCCBE 2014 (NCCBE 2014: 14) as follows:

(1) *“Pursuant to the Constitution of Finland and the Non-Discrimination Act, nobody may be discriminated against on the basis of gender... or sexual orientation...” The Act on Equality between Women and Men obliges all educational institutions to ensure that women and men have equal opportunities*

*for education and training. Instruction and the study material used shall support the attainment of the objectives of the Act.”*

(2) *“The legal basis of basic education is also found in the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child.”*

(3) *“The development of basic education is guided by the goals of extensive principles of equality and equity. Education contributes to promoting economic, social, regional and gender equality.”*

In section 3.1 of the NCCBE 2014 (ibid.) the mission of basic education is addressed:

(4) *“The social task of basic education is to promote equity, equality and justice. Basic education builds up human and social capital.”*

(5) *“Basic education offers the pupils possibilities for versatile development of their competence.”*

(6) *“The mission of basic education is to prevent inequality and exclusion and to promote gender equality.”*

Furthermore, the NCCBE 2014 is pivotal compared to the earlier curricula as it includes in section 3.1 the concept of *gender diversity*, for the first time:

(7) *“Basic education encourages girls and boys to study different subjects equally and promotes information and understanding of the diversity of gender. Each pupil is supported in recognizing their personal potential and selecting learning paths without role models determined by gender.”*

In section 15.4.3 of the NCCBE 2014 concerning second national language and foreign language studies it is stated in the NCCBE 2014:

(8) *“Gender equality is strengthened in language choices and language learning by providing information about language learning opportunities that appeal to*

*different types of pupils, by encouraging pupils to make decision based on genuine interest regardless of gender...”*

Hence, as one can see, it is strongly emphasized in the NCCBE 2014 that all sexes and genders should be treated equally. Each person as well as each student and child at school experience their sexuality in their own way. Education should be conscious when considering sexuality and each subject should promote gender equality in their own way. These fundamental perspectives are the basis for my analysis in my thesis when scrutinizing gender representations of *Top* and *Megafon*, as discussed later in chapter 4.

The previous text in this section deals with official documents and instructions promoting gender equality such as laws, regulations and core curricula. However, as referred to in the introduction section, students are taught in school also many other things, in addition to the subjects themselves, which are not mentioned in the official curricula. Such skills include, for example, waiting in line, being silent and attentive, not caring about the other students around you as well as doing things that are not interesting at all. This is called *a hidden curriculum* (Broady 1989: 96). The phenomenon of hidden curricula is significant and can have significant consequences as it is not written down and recognized officially in the core curriculum. According to Broady (1989: 99), it depends greatly on the school and its teachers, what exactly is taught in school. For example, if a student has not done their homework, how is the situation solved? With insults or constructive practices by the teacher? Whichever way it is, it teaches the student how to behave in situations like that. Consequently, these kinds of incidents form the school's curriculum in practice, which is known as the hidden curriculum.

There is also a hidden curriculum with a sexist perspective for the school staff to mind and be aware of. This curriculum can also be called *a double hidden curriculum* (Kallio and Rehn 2003: 87). For instance, young girls absorb unconsciously attitudes and perceptions from schoolbooks and the environment around them, for example in the school premises. Due to the double hidden curriculum, such as sexist utterances or sexist practices by the teachers or sexist learning materials, girls and boys may subconsciously and unwillingly learn harmful gender roles or to under-evaluate

themselves which can cause a lower self-esteem (Kallio and Rehn 2003: 87). Moreover, students will also learn how different occupations are valued by the school staff or which sex most commonly performs certain occupations in school, for instance, school nurse or school janitor. Palmu (1992: 303) notes that promoting equality in school requires that school textbooks should not include any hidden curricula which contradicts the pursuit for gender equality.

## **2.5 Gender in textbooks**

As listed in the previous section, an ample amount actions, laws and treaties, have been conducted during the last decades in order that the treatment of the genders would manifest equally in our everyday life and in education. In this section I will address previous research results of textbooks in four parts. First, I will address previous research results on gender in textbooks in Finland; Second, I will review research results of Finnish master's theses on gender representations; Thirdly, I will discuss our neighboring country Sweden's research revolving around learning materials and last, I will address international research and findings.

The 1960s and 1970s can be considered a starting period for textbook analysis because it is the time when women's liberation movement started and along with the strengthening of feminism attention was started to be drawn to the stereotypical representations of women in textbook texts and images. (Lahelma 2014) However, there seems to be a small research gap in this specific field which addresses gender representations in textbooks in Finland. Research is somewhat scarce in the last decade, as mentioned by Tainio and Teräs in 2010 (Tainio and Teräs 2010: 11) Based on my own observations most research in Finland has been conducted by the Finnish National Board of Education and at Finnish universities as the subject has been studied diversely in master's theses. As Lazar (2017: 375) states, it is essential to act and join forces transnationally, locally and globally, in order to bring about change in this relevant matter. Indeed, in contrast to the situation in Finland, there is plenty of research internationally on gender representations in textbooks. However, the studies and their results differ greatly depending on geographical location and cultural background. I will be addressing them briefly at the end of this chapter.

## **Finland**

Palmu (1992: 304-305) analyzed three alphabet books for primary education and noticed that the chapter titles in the books included more male referents than female ones. Furthermore, in the titles referring to males a majority were proper nouns including the last name, e.g. Aleksis Kivi, while the titles referring to women considered mostly family relations, e.g. grandma's wool socks. She also noted that most of the gender specific expression in texts referred to boys. The amount of gender specific illustrations in the alphabet books was roughly equal for males and females. But when considering fantasy characters over about 70% depicted male characters. The difference was even bigger for animal characters: the fraction of male characters was more than 75%. The families are shown to be very traditional and equal with respect to gender in terms of numbers, with one mother and one father and typically equal numbers of sons and daughters, however, there are clear differences in how different activities are depicted. The mothers are typically shown to take care of other members of the families while the fathers, in comparison, participate in an ample amount of activities, e.g. coming from work, going to town, hunting with a dog. Furthermore, many times the dad-character is able to take it easy while the mom is always doing some kind of household chores, often housework with an apron on. What is more, women have only one occupation in the alphabet books: teacher while men have much larger scale of occupations: seller, blacksmith, writer, poet and statesman.

One of the pioneering studies of learning materials in Finland, with a gender representation focus, is the analysis of textbooks on environmental studies by Lahelma (1992) reviewed in Tainio and Teräs (2010: 10). She analyzed textbooks on environmental studies, civic education, social studies, guidance counseling and history as well as the national core curricula (Lahelma 1992). One of her main findings is that females are typically depicted as caretakers while males are shown to have more societally important roles and, overall, more societal responsibility and power. The working life is shown as rather biased, in a way that the so-called traditional males' jobs are more visible than those of females. Males are also depicted more often as professionals. Females and their circle of life remain quite invisible especially in the history books. Males represent a clear majority in the figures illustrating normal people with 93 males and only 11 females. As her main conclusion she states that gender

equality is not realized in textbooks and thus they do not promote gender neutral vocational planning and selection (Lahelma 1992).

According to a study commissioned by the Finnish National Agency for Education (Tainio and Teräs 2010), the male gender is still more prominent than the female gender in most learning materials. Tainio and Teräs (2010) studied the expression and construction of genders in textbooks of mathematics, mother tongue and literature for the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades as well as in all compulsory school teaching material in guidance counseling, totalling 51 works. The result was that all learning materials depict more men, boys and masculine characters than women, girls or feminine characters. Masculine characters account for 57% of images in all educational materials compared with 35.8% of feminine characters. The rest of the characters are either androgynous (gender-neutral, non-binary or gender-queer) or unidentifiable, that is, the gender of the character is not detectable. However, the main result is that the number of masculine images and gendered words representing masculine characters is higher than the corresponding female ones. It is important to note that the differences are systematic: in total numbers, men are present in the majority in the materials of all the subjects studied and in all grades.

One of the main accomplishments of the TASUKO project (Hynninen 2011), mentioned already earlier, was a review of the existing Finnish literature on gender bias in textbooks (Snellman and Toivonen 2011). A general conclusion was again that males are quantitatively dominant in textbooks used in Finland. In addition, the male image created in the discourse is more societally influential and powerful than that of females.

### **Master's theses in Finland**

Hjorth (1997) studied the English textbook series for Finnish upper secondary schools *Passwords* and discovered that males are overrepresented both in illustrations and in texts. In some coursebooks the underrepresentation of females is further underlined by the fact that the number of females is equal to the number of unidentified characters, that is, characters whose sex is not identifiable. Males tend to be presented as more active and in more varied and more imaginative activities than females. In addition,

males are more often seen in illustrations that are connected with work, and their occupational activities are also more varied than those of the females. At home and in home-related activities are the only activities in which the number of females exceeds the number of males. (Hjorth 1997: 89-91).

In 2003 Kallio and Rehn discovered that there were no female academics presented in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade mathematics books (Kallio and Rehn 2003: 88). Furthermore, in pictures and in texts the stereotypical male life circle, interests and hobbies were dominant. Males were presented in traditional male jobs and fame and power were highlighted when females, in turn, were mostly responsible of the household work and children. Men and boys were presented as active and successful in their professions, while women and girls were predominantly passive bystanders. Generally, the range of male activities is wider than that of females. (Kallio and Rehn 2003). Similar conclusions were presented also in the thesis by Piironen (2004), who studied the English language textbook series *News Headlines Courses 1-8*. She found a clear imbalance in gender representation as females were especially under-represented in occupational roles and over-represented in family roles. In addition, 71% of the characters were male and 70% of the text expressions designating gender referred to males.

The thesis work by Kujanpää (2015: 36) considered gendered expressions of two school textbooks Finnish *Smart Moves 3* and Mexican *Take Care! 2* with a special focus on pronouns. She observed that 53% of the total pronouns were the masculine pronoun *he* and the remaining 47% the feminine pronoun *she* in *Take Care! 2*, exhibiting a rather balanced gender representation with respect to pronouns. In contrast, in *Smart Moves 3* there is a great gender imbalance in gendered pronouns as of the 130 gendered pronouns males represent the majority with 62% and females a clear minority with 38%.

On the contrary to most other studies of this kind, Siren (2018) found no or very little biased gender stereotyping related to professions and hobbies in seven *Open Road* textbooks, that are designed for teaching English to high school students. Even if men were slightly overrepresented both in illustrations and as characters, women were presented in socially important positions, such as a president, a professional athlete and an inventor. In addition to Siren (2018), a positive development in the prevalence

of gender bias was discovered by Mikander and Ruotsalainen (2010) who compared alphabetical and reading books for the first grades of elementary school mother tongue and literature education in three different decades: the 60s', 80s and 00s, focusing on how genders are depicted in both texts and illustrations. They found that the bias in gender representation has decreased significantly in the 00s compared with the 80s and especially the 60s.

Of the thesis I found on gender representations in textbooks the one by Kuoksa (2019) resembled my research approach most, especially regarding the texts, such as pronouns and nouns. Kuoksa (2019: appendix 2) studied in her master's thesis the quantities of male and female pronouns (*she, he, her, him, hers and his*) in four English as a foreign language textbooks used in primary schools: *Yippee! 3 and 5* and *Go for it! 3 and 5*. The fractions of male and female pronouns were approximately 60% and 40%, respectively. The thesis also considered the amounts of other gendered words, such as *woman, women, man, men, boy, boys, girl, girls, Mr, Mrs, Ms, lady, ladies, gentleman and gentlemen*. Of such terms, around 65% can be associated with males and 35% with females. The analysis was also qualitative in the sense that gendered words were studied also with respect to the context they appeared in. Male-related terms appeared more frequently than those of females in almost all categories, with the exception of *lady/ladies* and *gentleman/gentlemen*, as well as the plural forms *girls* and *boys*, where female terms prevailed. When looking at personal pronouns and other terms, some features of gendered language were also observed, such as using the male term *man* to describe people in general and using the term *girl* from an adult woman.

When looking at the words related to parenthood, Kuoksa (2019) found that, contrary to the results of many previous studies, male-related parenting terms represented around 60% of all parenting terms. In addition to the quantitative review, parenting terms were also studied qualitatively, which revealed both stereotypical and non-stereotypical descriptions of both males and females as parents. The thesis also investigated the gender distribution of the characters featured in the books and the characteristics of the main characters. A quantitative review of the characters showed that there were fewer female characters in books than male characters, but female characters appeared more often than male characters. However, when looking at the

gender distribution of the main characters in the books, the number of female and male characters was roughly equal.

What is more, Kuoksa (2019) studied how professional roles are distributed among the genders. Stereotypically male professions appeared more in textbooks than those that are stereotypically female. Furthermore, when looking at the total prevalence of mentioned occupations, the difference was even more noticeable. In order to obtain a truthful picture of the gendered role of books, the stereotypicality of occupations was next compared with the gender of the person appearing in their books. This review showed that males appeared in more professional roles than females, but the professional roles played by males were more stereotypical than the female roles.

## **Sweden**

Because my thesis is a double thesis considering both English and Swedish, I have also considered the possible gender bias in textbooks used in Sweden. Ylikiiskilä (2004) researched 18 Swedish grammar schoolbooks meant for university students and younger in the time frame 1912 to 2003. He discovered that the fractions of female and male referents in example sentences were 28% and 72%, respectively, so almost three times as many men than women were represented in the example sentences. However, when he compared the grammar book from 1912 to the one from 2003 he found a significant improvement as the number of female referents in example sentences had increased from 16,7 to 45,9 %. When Ylikiiskilä (2014: 404-405) compared nouns referring to females and males he noticed that firstly, family words such as sister (*syster*), wife (*fru*), mother (*mamma* and *mor*) and secondly, nouns which refer to females in different ages such as girl (*flicka*), woman (*kvinna*), lady (*dam*) and older woman (*tant*), constituted together 82,3 % of the total occurrences of the feminine nouns in the grammar books and in addition, the words student (*student*) and high school student (*gymnasist*) lacked completely and there was only one student (*elev*) referring to a female person. Ylikiiskilä (*ibid.*) discusses that these figures seem to be indicating 'women's place' when it comes to the 18 grammar books he studied. What is more, Ylikiiskilä discovered that males were occupation-wise heavily overrepresented as males had 172 occupations with an occurrence of 552 times and females had 43 occupations with an occurrence of 88 times. The majority of the female

occupations revolved around health and social care such as midwife (barnmorska) and nurse (sjuksköterska), home-related work e.g. housemaid (hembiträde) and hostess (värdinna) or indoor work e.g. secretary (sekreterare) and waiter (servitris). In comparison, males were presented in large numbers in occupations with power and prestige, e.g. professor (professor), chairman (ordförande), boss (chef) and president (president) among others. According to Ylikiiskilä (ibid.) 3 out of 18 grammar books stand out positively when scrutinizing female occupations.

Similar results were found also in the studies by Berge and Widding (2006) and Ohlander (2010). Berge and Widding (2006: 29) discovered that males exceed the number of females in the 24 textbooks of the Swedish comprehensive school they conducted a research on. Moreover, they discovered that males are overrepresented compared to females both in number and in performed activities in the textbooks. However, they noticed that gender equality does permeate the themes in the textbooks, as females and males are presented in similar kind of activities which, indeed, is in compliance with the Swedish National Agency for Education. Ohlander (2010), on the other hand, analyzed gender balance in two history books for high school students, *Människan Genom Tiderna* (2003) and *Alla Tiders Historia* (2008), and two books used by comprehensive school students, *SO Direkt. Historia. Ämnesboken* (2007) and *Sofi Historia* (2005). Her main focus was to discover how gender equality is defined in the four textbooks and additionally, to what extent the term equality is used and what exactly the meaning given to it is. Another major interest of Ohlander (2010) was how females and males are treated and portrayed in relation to each other. Are, for example, both women and men subjects and/or protagonists in the texts? The main overall conclusion was that males dominate in history textbooks, as already mentioned in Tainio and Teräs (2010), and that history teaching, if it follows the teaching materials examined here, can hardly contribute to giving girls positive self-images or female role models in history.

As an example of a different type of discourse, I refer here to the publication by Lindstrand et al. (2017) who studied in a recently published article a tv-series *Mike the Knight* which was aired regularly on the Swedish public children's channel, *Barnkanalen*, and popular among preschool-aged children in Sweden. The main characters of the series are 10-year-old Mike, who is a knight-in-training, and his sister

Evie. Mike is represented as being brave, adventurous, active, responsible and central to the different stories. Evie is represented as either inactive or a failure, as a cause of trouble, as comic and as 'close to nature'. A clear conclusion is that the gender representations of boys and girls are very different in terms of their roles in the tv series and as well as character traits. Hence, Lindstrand et al. (2017) argues that this is the reason why it is essential for preschools to be aware of unequal gender representations and treat children with more focus on gender equality. When children enter preschool, they already have reassumptions of gender relations. Their concepts of sex are predominantly binary, that is, for them, there are only two categories to belong in, either boy or girl. According to Lindstrand et al. (2017), boys and men have leading roles far more often than girls or women and appear in the center while girls are in the periphery. As a consequence, this means that children adopt stereotypical presentations of the power relations already early in their lives.

### **International**

Hartman and Judd (1978) studied four and Porreca (1984) fifteen English as a Second Language (EFL) textbooks, used in the USA. The analysis of Hartman and Judd (1978) was almost purely qualitative while Porreca's analysis combined a more thorough quantitative analysis with the qualitative one. Both authors came to the conclusion that males heavily outnumbered females in the texts of ESL textbooks. The fraction of female characters in the texts of the textbooks analyzed by Porreca (1984) ranged from 33% to 36%. However, the quantitative calculation does not tell the whole story as in some textbooks women were presented only in a specific section of the book, not throughout the book. The chapters in those sections were then specifically titled in the context of women's issues. There were no women in some chapters – for instance, in a chapter about famous people (Porreca 1984: 714). Porreca (1984: 719) also found that women are significantly less visible than men in occupational roles. For each working woman appearing in the text, there are six male workers. The total fraction of occupations for females was 15% for the 15 textbooks studied. Porreca (1984) also found that in the texts of the textbooks the diversity of occupations for women was limited compared to men. The fraction of female gendered nouns in the texts was 33%. Moreover, the fraction of female characters in the illustrations was 34%.

The quantitative analysis by Hartman and Judd (1978) covered only titles, that is, the use of *Mr.*, *Mrs.* and *Ms.*, as well as first names. They found that males were referred to as *Mr.* and last name in 35% of the cases while the corresponding number for women was 10%. This means that women were referred to with first name only much more than men. In nouns, such as proper names, titles or non-generic, male referents clearly dominated female referents as the fraction of male pronouns in texts was 64% and that of female 37% (Hartman and Judd 1978: 385) and even as 73% male referents to 27% referents (Hartman and Judd 1978: 385). In a more qualitative sense, on form of gender bias in texts is the use of masculine words as generic (Porreca 1984: 708), which is rooted in the English grammar itself. It is reflected in the use of generic masculine words when talking about humans such as man or mankind or the use of masculine pronouns when the sex is unknown. In one of the books Porreca (1984) studied, there was a story about “The Mexican, a person who shuts himself away to protect *himself*: his face is a mask and so is his smile.” Hence, one falsely might think that the story is about a male Mexican because of the masculine generic construction. In addition, according to Hartman and Judd (1978: 383) women have also been the butt of jokes. They discovered that women were ridiculed in texts, for instance: “*Like a woman, it (the weather) is very changeable.*” (Baskoff 1971 in Hartman and Judd 1978: 385). In that sentence one can also see that female characters were also depicted having stereotypical emotional reactions which also Hartman and Judd (1978: 383) discovered.

In terms of firstness females were mentioned first in 25% of the sentences, tables or dialogues where both females and males were mentioned (Porreca 1984: 719). According to Hartman and Judd (1978: 390) when masculine and feminine words are paired, the masculine word comes *always* first and the female second, e.g. *husband and wife, male and female, brother and sister; ladies and gentlemen* was the only exception to the rule in their study. Both Hartman and Judd (1978: 390) and Porreca (1985: 714) stated that placing male name first in front of the female name, it ‘reinforces the second-place status of women and could, with only a little effort, be avoided by mixing the order.’

In some parts of the world no attention is paid to gender balance in teaching materials even today. As an example of this serves the study by Pillay (2018: table 2), who examined ESL textbooks used in four southern African countries (Lesotho, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Swaziland). The study focused on the concept of firstness and found that female firstness astoundingly accounted only for 1-2%. Brugeilles and Cromer (2009: 33) conducted a research on texts of textbooks in four countries: Togo, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire and Tunisia. They discovered that male characters' overrepresentation in the textbooks is substantial, between 67,6% and 76,4% of the total amount of characters. This kind of vast exclusion of females leads to the situation in which girl students have hardly any foundation for female projection and identification and, in turn, boy students have few female role models. These studies reflect the vast differences in different cultures and shows that in some parts of the world no attention is paid to gender balance in teaching materials even today.

As an example of our neighboring country, Norway, Michel (1986: 27) discovered evident discrimination against girls in Norwegian school textbooks, a country which has had a long-established tradition of textbook monitoring. Girls and women were found to be mentioned less frequently in texts and appeared also less frequently in the illustrations. The roles of females, especially professionally, were also more restricted than those of males. Moreover, the Norwegian science textbooks were found to encourage boys to choose science subjects (Michel 1986: 28). As an example of a very different type of country, a Zambian study, which was also reviewed by Michel (1986: 28), revealed that both primary and secondary school textbooks were completely male dominant.

As shown in the Zambian study mentioned above, the gender balance in ESL textbooks used in Finland and other western countries can be very different compared to the textbooks used in other cultures where the role of women in society, in general, is very unequal. Aoumeur (2011) used the FCDA approach to study three Arabic language textbooks used in Algeria with exactly the same primary aims as my thesis. She found that in most of the analyzed textbooks, gender roles reflect traditional, stereotypical and binary male/female division. Patriarchal assumptions about gender are still deeply rooted. In most of the texts females and males are shown stuck in their traditional role models. The girl is shown as an extension of her mother, she is never shown playing

outdoor games. The mother is never shown having an autonomous life. She is rather passive and invisible. The father is the breadwinner. He is depicted as the most dominant of all. Unlike the girl, the boy is very adventurous and clever as well.

Incikabi and Ulusoy (2019) compared gender bias in Singaporean, Australian and Turkish mathematics textbooks. Male content dominated the textbooks in all three countries studied. The fraction of textbooks which did not contain any gender imbalance was 9% of the books studied. The textbooks had more male content in all of the studied countries. The gender balance is, however, better achieved in the Australian textbooks compared with the Singaporean and Turkish ones. In the Australian textbooks the gender representations of girls and boys is found equal stating mathematics is a subject suitable for girls and boys equally. In general, there seems to be an awareness of the importance of avoiding gender stereotyping in the studied Australian textbooks on mathematics. For example, being a police officer and cooking at home are depicted as both female and male tasks which is not the case in Singaporean and Turkish textbooks. Singapore represents the other end with the largest discrepancy in female and male representation of the three countries studied.

UNESCO (Michel 1986) published a report aiming at removing sexism in children's literature and school textbooks. The report was also aimed to become a practical guide for planners, writers, illustrators and publishers of textbooks to eliminate any sexual prejudice in education. The overall finding based on existing textbooks was that sexist stereotyping tends to deny the worth of women and girls and overemphasize the importance on men and boys (Michel 1986: 15). UNESCO also published a comprehensive international study that reviewed existing scientific literature on gender bias in textbooks worldwide (Blumberg 2015). Her main findings were that females were strongly underrepresented and nearly always depicted in highly stereotyped roles in the home. In addition, in the relatively few cases portraying women in non-domestic occupations or activities, these were overwhelmingly quite traditional. Moreover, girls and women were usually portrayed in passive roles and often watched while more active and confident boys and men undertook exciting and worthwhile activities and occupations. The greatest bias, according to Blumberg (2015), was found in textbooks used in third world and Arab countries.

More gender-unequal countries such as OECD countries and countries in the global north, however, tended to have somewhat less gender bias and stereotyping. The improvement over time with respect to gender equality in textbooks is more often slow than rapid. Gender equality as a theme is continuously raising international research interest especially in countries with a strong gender representation bias in school textbooks, such as Iran (Lee and Mahmoudi-Gahrouei 2000) and the Philippines (Curaming and Curaming 2020). Especially in the Islamic culture of male predominance, the societal situation of confining females to family and home is reflected in textbooks despite the fact that school teachers have expressed a strong need for textbook changes in order to establish gender equality in education and to provide equal learning opportunities to students.

In summary, textbooks form the core of learning materials with which students spend most of their time with, as explained in section 2.2.4., highlighting the importance of balanced gender treatment in textbooks and thus motivating this thesis. The analysis of previous research on gender representation in textbooks, however, clearly shows significant imbalance regarding most of the categories studied, as reviewed in section 2.5. Males outnumber females in almost all of the textbooks studied in the listed references. In addition, males are typically depicted in socially more important occupations and also more active in their free time while women are typically shown as caretakers and participating in household duties. The discrepancy is highest in textbooks used in developing countries. There is a wealth of scientific literature on ESL textbooks used in different parts of the world. Unfortunately, however, there seems to be a lack of peer reviewed research considering textbooks currently used in Finland, and studies on the effect on textbook content of the most recent National Core Curriculum on Basic Education (NCCBE 2014) can be found in only a small number of BSc and MSc theses. Based on these, gender equality has improved in the last 50 years, there is still bias even in the textbooks used in Finland. In the following three chapters, I will first present my research design (Chapter 3) on evaluating two book series, *Top* and *Megafon*, used currently in Finnish upper secondary schools and then show both the quantitative (Chapter 4) and qualitative results (Chapter 5) of my analysis.

### 3 The research design

This section provides an overview of the research design conducted in this study. Firstly, the research questions are determined. Secondly, the materials and the specific parts of the textbooks chosen for the study are presented. The study comprises two language book series which the comprehensive schools in Finland can choose as their studying materials: *Top* 7-9 for the English language studies and *Megafon* 1-3 for the Swedish language studies. Thirdly, the theoretical framework of this study, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, is introduced. Fourthly, the main methodological decisions for analysing the results of this study are discussed and lastly, the main stages of the analysis are presented.

#### 3.1 The research questions

The main goal for this study is to examine gender representations in the English and Swedish language textbooks, which are constructed according to the principles of the newest national core curriculum for basic education, that is, National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014 (called the NCCBE 2014 in the context of this study). As mentioned in the introduction, I have studied earlier the gender representations of *Top* 7 and I was intrigued to continue studying gender representations as through my teacher experience I understood how important the portrayals of the genders in textbooks are and how much of an impact they can have on students. Moreover, when I started to conduct my study, all of the learning materials, including the *Top* and *Megafon* language book series, had just been revised according to the newest National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014 and hence, learning materials were specifically referred to “as in accordance with the new National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2016”. I found that it was a good starting point for my research.

The specific research questions are:

1. From the gender equality point of view, in what way are the genders portrayed in the texts and illustrations of the textbook series *Top* and *Megafon*?

2. To what extent are the goals of the NCCBE 2014 achieved from the perspective of gender equality?
3. What kinds of differences can be detected in gender representations between the English and Swedish language book series?

### 3.2 Textbook composition

The material for the present study consists of two language book series for the Finnish upper comprehensive school. The first series comprises three English as a foreign language textbooks (EFL) called *Top*, compiled by Aija Blom, Zoe Chandler, Jaana Lumiala, Marjo Pajunen and Eija Raitala. The second series comprises three Swedish as a second national language textbooks called *Megafon*, compiled by Anna Blom, Mikaela Friis, Sari Kokkonen, Siiri Liukkala and Sari Pukonen. Hence, all of the authors are women so the premise is equal in that respect. There are three textbooks in the two series and they are called *Top* 7, 8, and 9 and *Megafon* 1, 2, and 3. Each textbook is paired with a workbook but the workbooks are not included in the study. Students who start studying the *Top* book series have already been studying English in comprehensive school for 4-6 years, depending on the school's language offerings. Studying English as the A1 language, that is, the first foreign language, in Finland is optional; instead of English, you can study another language, such as French or German. The second series comprises three Swedish as second national language textbooks called *Megafon*. In Finland, studying Swedish is compulsory at least as a B1 language, starting from 6<sup>th</sup> grade because Swedish is another official language in addition to Finnish. For this reason, the themes and level of difficulty in general are easier and the length of texts and vocabulary shorter in *Megafon* than in *Top*.

In the following, I will introduce the contents of the English textbook series, *Top* 7-9. All of the textbooks of the *Top* series follow a certain similar pattern. The textbook themes are designed to introduce the students to certain English-speaking countries and to each theme belong themed texts and exercises. *Top* 7 starts with two themes: The UK and the USA. *Top* 8 takes up three countries: Australia, Canada and the Caribbean. Accordingly, *Top* 9 comprises three countries, Africa, India and New Zealand, as its theme. The *Top* textbooks are divided into different sections. In *Top* 7, there are 16 main chapters and in *Top* 8 and 9 there are 18 main chapters which can result to a different amount of data. Moreover, after each chapter in all three textbooks

there is a page-long Talk to me! -discussion exercise. Discussion exercises are then followed by a bonus text. The chapters, discussion exercises and bonus texts are the sections, which are, according to my experience, practiced most in class and, for that reason, they are included in the study. In addition, there are from three to four Board games in each textbook, which are included in the study, as well as from two to three Fact or fiction -texts followed by a Quiz section about the respective countries. All the sections follow the theme of the textbook accordingly.

What are not included in the analysis of *Top* are occasional song lyrics at the end of each country theme as they have not been written by the authors and hence, bear no relevance in this study. In addition, they are scarce in number in the textbooks and for that reason they are omitted. Similarly, at the end of each country theme there is an extra text which seem to be intended for the more advanced students and that is why those texts are omitted. This rule applies to all of the *Top 7-9* textbooks. Furthermore, the vocabulary and grammar sections of the textbooks are excluded. In case they would be included, the amount of material for the study would be too excessive.

In the following, some personal observations of the *Top* textbooks are provided. The first observation from the perspective of gender that can draw one's attention is that on the covers of the three *Top* textbooks, there were altogether eleven adolescent students and out of those eleven students four were females (36%) and seven (64%) males. Although, the covers are excluded from the study, this fact in itself attracts attention. Generally, the *Top* textbooks are colorful, full of illustrations, there are plenty of people in the illustrations. Furthermore, the texts are mostly in a form of dialogue.

Next, the Swedish textbooks, *Megafon 1-3* are introduced. There is a *Megafon* workbook for each *Megafon* textbook, but because of the magnitude of material, they are not included in the study. The themes in the textbooks start from the very basics and proceed slowly to more complex texts. There are eight main chapters in each *Megafon 1-3* textbook. In addition, there are multiple other sections in the textbooks that are included in the study, such as discussion exercises (Textprat in the book) which follow the main chapters; picture vocabulary (Bildtorget) and related discussions (Bildprat); Chat with Elias och Maxine (Snacka med Elias och Maxine) and extra text

(Plustext). In addition, there are a few map-shaped board games and also facts and culture-related ‘Welcome to’ sections concerning the Nordic countries in *Megafon*. I consider all of the above listed sections to be essential for learning in class and therefore, they were selected for the study.

What is not included in the study is Culture Square (Kulturtorget) as the texts in these sections are in Finnish. Accordingly, I have not included the extracts of lyrics from the Song pages (Sång) nor the Literature extracts on the literature pages (Litteratur) for the reason that they are not written by the authors. These art pages are positioned at the end of each chapter entity. However, I have tallied and categorized the names of the artists, whose art pieces, lyrics or literature, are presented on the Song (Sång) and Literature (Litteratur) pages. This is because the authors of *Megafon* have chosen the artists appearing in the book to represent the Swedish culture and it is interesting to see who the artists are and which gender they represent. On the whole, the amount of Song (Sång) and Literature (Litteratur) sections in *Megafon* is considerably vaster when comparing that with *Top*. Similarly to *Top*, about half of *Megafon* comprises grammar and vocabulary sections, which are not included in the study.

The first impressions when glancing at the cover pages of the *Megafon* and *Top* are different. In *Megafon* there are six young adolescents on the covers out of which three are females and three males, i.e. 50/50 in terms of percentages, in contrast with the uneven gender distribution in *Top*. This immediately raised a question whether the gender distribution of the cover pages follows the alignment of the entire content of both book series. Both textbooks seem also very student-friendly, with ample amount of illustrations, colors, characters and texts with varying fonts and font colors.

### **3.3 Methodology**

In this section the methodological choices for the analysis are explained. This study makes use of both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods. Quantitative analysis method such as gathering data by calculations can be combined with a qualitative analysis method (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009). Hirsjärvi et al. also states that these two types of analysis methods can be used as a means of completing each other. In addition, the purpose of this thesis is to draw conclusions and reveal something new based on the

calculations and evaluation of the textbooks which also fits into the description of the qualitative study. Hirsjärvi et al. (2009).

### **3.3.1 Qualitative analysis method of the illustrations**

The purpose of this study is to investigate, interpret and understand the underlying gendered manifestations in the textbooks. Hence, the method of analyzing the data collected in this study utilizes quantitative methods, such as counting the number of several categorized female and male characters, to support the qualitative approach of the study.

According to Michel (1986) and Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) it is essential to gather statistics of female and male characters when conducting a textbook analysis. Michel (1986: 49) argues that there are three obligatory steps to take in a textbook analysis: firstly, a quantitative study, that is, to count the number of female and male characters and draw conclusions from the results. Secondly, based on the quantitative analysis, to analyze the data qualitatively by description and interpretation, and lastly, to scrutinize the texts from the perspective of gender equality, for instance, vocabulary and concealed sexist messages. Michel (1986: 49-58) provides a listing of features and themes according to which the research material can be categorized from the point of view of gender equality, such as marital and family status of females and males, their level of employment, occupations, their involvement in domestic tasks, hobbies, sports, and games, exploration and adventures, also engagement in different kinds of activities, e.g. professional, political, social, leisure and artistic activities and lastly, positive or negative emotions. What is more, the third category of Michel (*ibid.*) includes research on sexism in vocabulary and grammar, e.g. calculating and evaluating the number of feminine and masculine nouns and pronouns and other gendered nouns, in texts.

Brugeilles and Cromer (2009: 48) state that the need to follow the curriculum tends to steer the designing of textbooks. They also emphasize the role of the textbook characters as a means of conveying gendered representations. Brugeilles and Cromer (2009: 48) are on the same lines with Michel (1986) as according to them there are certain steps to be taken when evaluating textbooks. The starting point is that both texts and illustrations ought to be scrutinized. In the evaluation process one ought to

investigate gender parity by compiling a list of characters and scrutinizing their characteristics. Moreover, the balance of roles ought to be studied and their involvement in different areas in life, such as private/family and public/professional. During the evaluation process one can make use of pre-established grids and summary tables. After taking these steps, it is possible to draw conclusion of the diversity of situations in which the characters are presented and as a consequence, to reveal the gender system and possible gender inequalities. As a general guideline, Brugeilles and Cromer (2009: 49) mention in that there is not only one template for categorizing the gathered data but one can pick the categories of their own choosing. Categories can also be added. My choice of categorization is explained below.

I have used both approaches to a certain extent in my study which I will explain in the following sections. I started the qualitative research of this study with the help of quantitative research by tallying the characters in the pictures. The countable human characters are images of actual people or hand drawn portrays of people. Statues or sculptures of people are omitted because they are not of living human beings. Moreover, masses of people, for instance, in a picture where there is plenty of audience, are not included in the study. Only the persons who are clearly detectable are counted.

The characters were then divided into four categories: female, male, unidentified and non-binary. To include a female or a male character in the statistics, the gender of a character was to be non-negotiable. In a case when gender is not detectable due to, for example, the position of the character, or style of drawing, the character is counted as unidentified. Furthermore, in the non-binary category is included a person who clearly wants to be neither gender, also known as an androgyne or a genderqueer. After counting the characters and their actions the results were analyzed qualitatively. The following categories are included in the analysis of the illustrations:

- 1) Number of characters
- 2) Occupations
- 3) Sports
- 4) Arts
- 5) Home-related activities

- 6) Travel
- 7) Social activities and activism
- 8) Interaction and emotions

When scrutinizing the illustrations, I have not taken into account the information provided in the texts around the illustration telling about the events or people, e.g. when there are two young people doing something in a picture, I do not read the text in order to gain more information; I evaluate the illustration only. The purpose of this is to keep the analysis of illustrations and texts separate. Only when there are illustrations of celebrities, authors or band members who are unknown to me, I have looked up the names from the caption because otherwise important information would be missing.

### **3.3.2 Qualitative analysis method of the texts**

To be able to conduct an exhaustive inventory of textbooks it is necessary, in addition to the illustrations, to investigate thoroughly the texts in order to reveal possible inherent sexist properties in the textbooks (Michel 1986; Brugeilles and Cromer 2009). Following Michel's (1986) guidelines and in the same way as with the illustrations, I started the analysis of the texts by calculating and categorizing the number of female and male characters and their occupations and hobbies, also gendered pronouns and nouns and firstness were counted (see list below). The texts in both textbook series, *Top* and *Megafon*, are mostly based on dialogues involving the main characters. The number of female and male dialogues is counted in order to determine the prevalence of male and female characters in the texts. There were no unidentifiable or non-binary dialogues in neither of the textbook series. The following categories are included in the analysis of the texts:

- 1) Main characters
- 2) Dialogues
- 3) Occupations
- 4) Hobbies
- 5) Gendered pronouns and nouns
  - Proper nouns and gendered pronouns (He, she, his, her...)
  - Family-related nouns (Father, mother...)

-Nouns designating males and females (Chick, lad...)

6) Firstness (position on a list of names)

## 4 Findings

My aim is to discover in what way the genders are presented in the illustrations and written discourses in three English as a foreign language textbooks (EFL) *Top* 7, 8 and 9, and three Swedish as a second national language textbooks *Megafon* 1, 2 and 3 from the gender equality point of view. Both textbook series are published by Otava Ltd. Additionally, the texts and illustrations are analyzed in order to discover whether the gender equality goals of the NCCBE 2014 are achieved and if these currently used schoolbooks still contain gender stereotypes as previous research more or less show. Furthermore, the lens through which I examine the gathered data is FDCA, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, that is, the feminist point of view, however, I occasionally do bring up stereotypical presentations of the male gender because gender equality applies all genders. The feminist point-of-view promotes gender equality overall (Merriam-Webster 2019). However, the FCDA's main perspective is the rights of women, especially the subordinate position of women in discourse (Lazar 2005).

The analysis of the gathered data is divided into two parts. Firstly, in this chapter, I will present all of the results based on quantitative calculations and listings concerning the texts and the illustrations of *Top* and *Megafon*. Secondly, in the next chapter, Analysis and discussion, I will provide qualitative analysis of the results and discuss them under specific themes. In the English textbooks I chose to analyze all the core texts, plus the Talk to me! discussion exercises as well as the bonus texts. In addition to written texts, all illustrations from the abovementioned parts were scrutinized. The board games are analyzed only according to the pictures as there is no text in them. In the Swedish textbooks, in addition to the core text chapters, I analyze the following sections: discussion practice sections (textprat, bildprat), picture vocabulary (bildtorget), short casual conversation texts (Snacka med Elias & Maxine) and extra texts (PLUStext). The analysis includes both text and illustrations. I chose to not include the section 'Culture Market' (Kulturtorget), because it is in Finnish and thus, not a part of the material to be studied intensively

from a linguistic point of view. In the Material section, 2.2, I have explained more exhaustively the reasoning on collecting the data.

Before starting with my analysis, I address the publisher's goals for *Top* and *Megafon*. Both series are emphasized to be in accordance with the objectives of the NCCBE 2014 (Otava oppimisen palvelut, *Top*; Otava oppimisen palvelut, *Megafon*). The publisher, though, uses the alternative term NCCBE 2016 instead of the NCCBE 2014. Here are a few excerpts from the publisher's web page describing the goals of *Top*:

(9) *“The student is an active actor and learns to set goals and solve problems both independently and together with others.”*

(10) *“Learning takes place in interaction with other students and the teacher. It is about doing, alone and together, and it is about thinking, planning and exploring.”*

(11) *“Interaction and collaboration skills are developed by working in pairs and small groups”*

The publisher's goals for *Megafon* are almost literally the same with *Top*:

(12) *“A student is an active actor who is able to set goals and evaluate their own actions and learning. Learning takes place in collaboration with other students and the teacher. Students regularly set goals for themselves and evaluate their own learning from the beginning, both individually and in a group.”*

With regard to gender equality or equality in general, these issues are not mentioned in the objectives of *Top* or *Megafon*.

The actual findings are discussed in sections 4.1 and 4.2., considering first the illustrations and then the texts. A collection of the analyzed data is shown in the following table, Table 4.1. It contains the percentage fractions of males and females for all analyzed categories. Furthermore, the percentages are color coded in such a way that male overrepresentation (fraction > 60%) is colored blue, slight overrepresentation with light blue (fraction between 55% and 60%), and similar coloring for females in orange. Those table boxes that are balanced with respect to gender are left white.

Table 4.1: Percentage fractions of males and females in different categories (see following sections 4.1 and 4.2 for details).

		TOP%	TOP%	TOP%	TOP%	MEGAF%	MEGAF%	MEGAF%	MEGAF%
TYPE	CATEGORY	male: tot	male:prev	fem:tot	fem:prev	male: tot	male:prev	fem:tot	fem:prev
Illustrations	Total	63.4		36.6		49.2		50.8	
Illustrations	Occupations	72.1	80.9	27.9	19.1	54.5	67.4	45.5	32.6
Illustrations	Sports	63.6	79.1	36.4	20.9	46.2	51.2	53.8	48.8
Illustrations	Arts	66.6		33.3		44		56	
Illustrations	Home-related act	8.3		91.7		44.0		56.0	
Illustrations	Travel, adv. & expl.	77.8		22.2		66.7		33.3	
Illustrations	Interaction	53.1		46.9		39.6		60.4	
Illustrations	Emotions	58.5		41.5		43.5		56.5	
Texts	Main characters	60.4	60.4	39.6	39.6	45.9	48.4	54.1	51.6
Texts	Dialogues		61.1		38.9		45.0		55.0
Texts	Occupations	71.1	66.7	28.9	33.3	70.0	73.7	30.0	26.3
Texts	Hobbies	52.5	59.0	47.5	41.0	45.8	48.3	54.2	51.7
Texts	Proper nouns		64.6		35.4		49.1		50.9
Texts	Gendered pronouns		74.1		25.9		50.0		50.0
Texts	Family related nouns		48.1		51.9		44.2		55.8
Texts	Nouns desig. m/f	65.0		35.0		35.3		64.7	
Texts	Firstness	65.0		35.0		58.5		41.5	

## 4.1 Findings of the illustrations

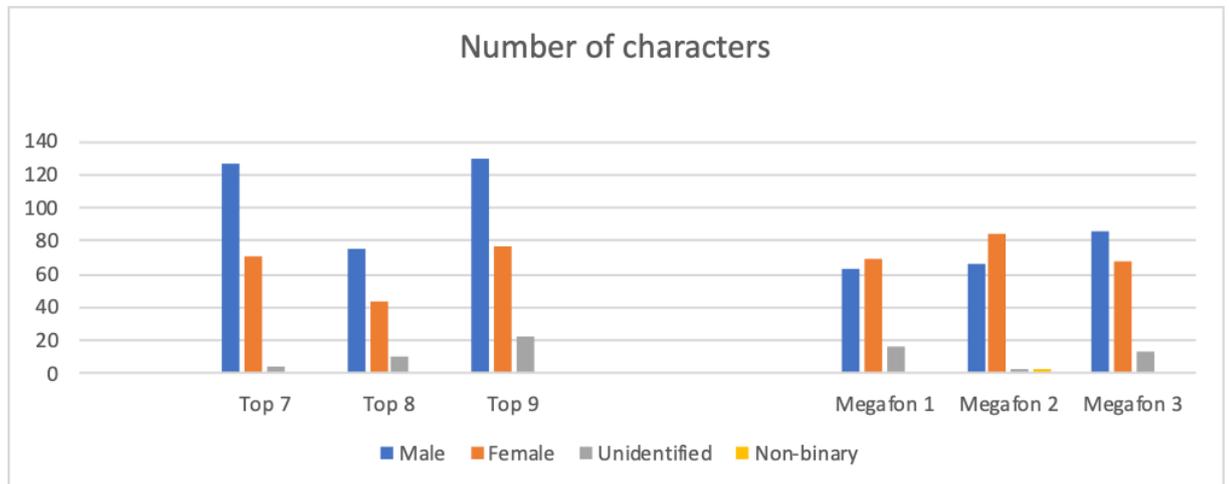
In this chapter I will present the gathered data concerning the illustrations. Part of the results are also elucidated graphically. When considering the results of the quantitative analysis it is important to note that the two textbook series, the English *Top* and the Swedish *Megafon*, differ in a way that the *Top* series is meant for students who have already studied English at least for three years in elementary school and hence, *Top* has longer texts and larger vocabulary. As a consequence, there are fundamental differences in the tallied amounts in many categories between the two series per se, for example, in the amount of hobbies or occupations. Otherwise the two textbook series are constructed in a rather similar way with the core chapters, exercises and extra texts. The order of presentation is as follows: 1. Number and type of characters, 2. Occupations presented in the illustrations, 3. Sports, 4. Arts, 5. Home-related activities, 6. Travel, adventure and exploration, 7. Social activities and activism and 8. Interaction and emotions.

#### 4.1.1 Number of the characters

A recommended way to start a textbook analysis is to count the characters of the textbooks (Michel 1986: 49; Brugeilles and Cromer 2009: 48) In the English *Top* textbooks the total number of characters is 562 out of which there are 332 male and 192 female characters, which means that only 37% of the characters, that can be assigned either the male or female sex, are female (see figure 4.1. below). There are 38 characters which I categorized as unidentified, as their gender was unrecognizable, and zero characters belonged to the non-binary category. As a brief reminder, characters who are counted into the non-binary category are the characters who identify themselves as neither male nor female or both male and female.

On the whole, exclusion of females in this kind of concrete way has been witnessed for centuries already by numerous researchers, for example, by Hartman and Judd (1975; Porreca (1985); Michel (1986); Lahelma (1992); Piironen (2004); Ylikiiskilä (2004); Brugeilles and Cromer (2009); Tainio and Teräs (2010); Snellman and Toivonen (2011) and Blumberg (2015) who all detected unambiguous male dominance in numbers compared to that of females: the fraction of males is mainly 60-70 %. Ylikiiskilä (2004) discovered that the average ratio of males is 72 % in the example sentences of the grammar books he studied. However, there is a positive exception as Palmu (1992) discovered that in over 1000 illustrations she studied the number of females and males were, in fact, equal. Nonetheless, the discrepancy between the genders in the illustrations of *Top* is clearly in conflict with the curriculum as it is stated in the section 2.1 of the NCCBE 2014 that nobody ought to be discriminated based on gender (NCCBE 2014: 14-16) and that students have a right to gender equal study materials which is stated in section 2.2. As a distinctive male dominance is detected in the illustrations of *Top*, consequently, according to the ideology of the FCDA, masculine dominance and power relations should be firstly, critically assessed and revealed and secondly, dismantled and resulting in change as Lazar (2017: 373-375) argues. Lazar (ibid.) and Foucault (1991) both argue that discourse shapes people's reality and hence, it is imperative that the discourse of male dominance is abolished from the learning materials in order to ensure as that the students in school are not under the influence of stereotypical and unequal gender representations. Otherwise, there is a possibility that their social identity becomes skewed from the gender point of view.

Figure 4.1. The number of male, female, unidentified and non-binary genders of the characters in the illustrations in *Top* and *Megafon*



In the illustrations of the Swedish *Megafon* textbooks the total number of characters is 475 out of which there are 223 female and 216 male characters. The percentage of female characters is thus 51%, indicating rather perfect equality with respect to gender representation *Megafon*. In contrast to *Top*, in two *Megafon* textbooks out of three, *Megafon 1* and *2*, the number of females exceed the number of males. Consequently, these results are well aligned with the NCCBE 2014's aims, that is, the goal of gender equality in education and studying materials which is stated in the sections 2.1, and 3.1 of the NCCBE 2014 (NCCBE 2014: 14-18). From the FCDA point of view, these gender equal findings of *Megafon* are precisely the social practices which contribute to students forming positive social identities as Lazar explains in her third principle (Lazar 2017: 373-375). These findings are also a positive development compared, for example, with earlier widely used international Swedish language textbooks *Nybörjarsvenska* and *På Svenska* in which McLeod and Norrby (2002) found a clear gender imbalance in Swedish language international learning materials.

The number of unidentified characters in the illustrations of *Megafon* is 33 and as for non-binary it is 3. Hence, the number of unidentified persons is approximately equal in both *Top* and *Megafon* series. Additionally, similarly to *Top*, the number

of non-binary characters is practically non-existent in *Megafon* as there are only 3 non-binary persons in the illustrations of *Megafon*.

#### 4.1.2 Occupational roles

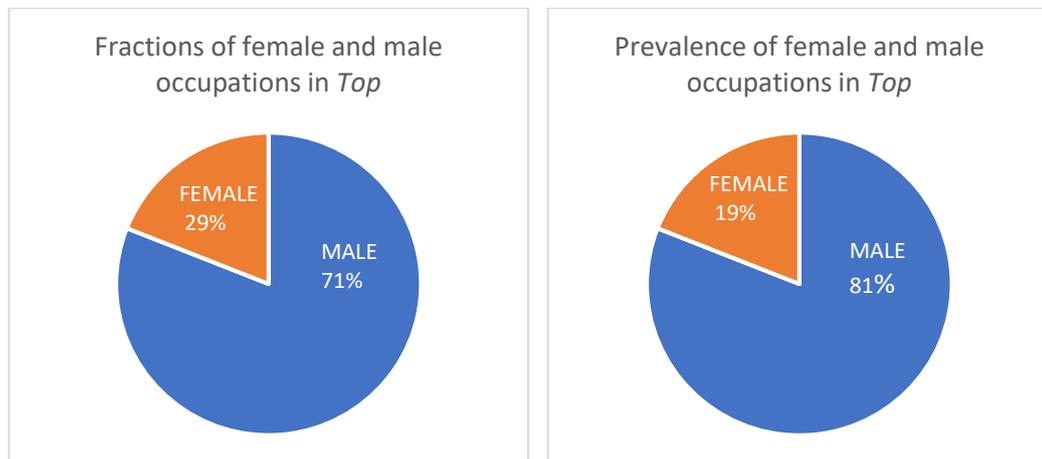


Figure 4.2. Fractions in percentages of female and male occupations in *Top*, shown as both total number of different occupations *and total prevalence of occupations*

In *Top* textbooks males are connected to 31 occupations and females to 12 occupations, which constitutes a blatant overrepresentation of the male occupations with 71% of the occupations assigned to men. Even more striking numbers are discovered when addressing the prevalence of occupations, featuring the total number of the occurrences of the occupations in the *Top* textbooks. The numbers are 76 for men and 18 for women, which account for 81% and 19%, respectively. Similar results of male dominance in the amounts and types of the occupations of the genders have been reached by Hjorth (1997), Michel (1986), Brugeilles and Cromer (2009), Ylikiiskilä (2014) and Kuoksa (2019). According to Kuoksa's (2009) findings, when evaluating and comparing stereotypical male occupations to the combined number of neutral and female occupations, males dominated even then. Ylikiiskilä, in turn, discovered males being heavily overrepresented in comparison to females, with 80% of the different occupations and 86% of the total prevalence.

Furthermore, when analyzing occupational roles of the characters, I make use of Kennison and Trofe's (2003) study, which they conducted among undergraduate

students at Oklahoma State University. In their study occupations were rated in a scale of 1 to 7, in a way that number 1 refers to 'pure female occupation' and number 7 to 'pure male occupation'. A rating of 4 therefore refers to a perfectly gender neutral occupation. In table 4.2 I have listed those occupations that were found both in the illustrations of the textbooks *Top* and *Megafon* and the occupations study by Kennison and Trofe (2003). The left column shows the rating done by females and the right column the rating done by men, both listed in score order. The occupations with rating 5.00-7.00 are color-coded blue, with 3.00-4.99 gray and with 1.00-2.99 red, representing those occupations that the students perceived as mostly male, neutral and mostly female, respectively. The average rating for all occupations was 4.63, reflecting that the list of occupations is slightly biased toward typical male occupations. This is reflected also by the color coding: there are many more professions perceived as male compared to female, especially according to the evaluation done by male students. Furthermore, females evaluate many of the occupations with a lower point score than males. The largest differences in the evaluation done by females compared with males were regarding professional athlete (score by females 5.2, score by males 5.9), politician (score by females 5.1, score by males 5.8) and professor (score by females 4.6, score by males 5.1). Consequently, it would be fair from the perspective of gender equality that professions would be equally presented in the textbooks.

occupation	rating by females	occupation	rating by males
priest	6.8	football coach	6.95
football coach	6.75	football player	6.7
football player	6.65	auto mechanic	6.6
auto mechanic	6.45	baseball player	6.60
construction worker	6.35	construction worker	6.45
baseball player	6.20	priest	6.45
farmer	6.2	fisher	6.25
fisher	6.05	farmer	6.2
plumber	6.05	plumber	6.2
fireman	6	guard	6.15
guard	6	fireman	6.1
private detective	5.95	private detective	6.05
pilot	5.9	professional athlete	5.9
astronaut	5.65	astronaut	5.85
architect	5.55	politician	5.8
police officer	5.55	governor	5.7
engineer	5.35	engineer	5.65
governor	5.35	pilot	5.5
professional athlete	5.2	police officer	5.45
politician	5.1	chef	5.4
comedian	4.95	comedian	5.35
composer	4.9	composer	5.3
surgeon	4.9	surgeon	5.25
judge	4.75	architect	5.1
doctor	4.65	professor	5.1
professor	4.6	judge	4.65
chef	4.55	lawyer	4.65
writer	4.25	doctor	4.6
lawyer	4.2	psychiatrist	4.25
journalist	4.15	artist	4.05
veterinarian	4.05	writer	4.05
tour guide	4	singer	4.00
cook	3.95	author	3.95
animal caretaker	3.9	tour guide	3.95
author	3.9	journalist	3.9
psychiatrist	3.85	cook	3.85
artist	3.8	clerk	3.75
clerk	3.8	baker	3.65
singer	3.75	veterinarian	3.65
baker	3.3	animal caretaker	3.4
dancer	2.35	dancer	2.55
nurse	2.3	kindergarten teacher	2.4
school teacher	2.3	nurse	2.35
hairdresser	2.1	school teacher	2.2
florist	1.95	florist	2.15
kindergarten teacher	1.95	hairdresser	1.65
ballet dancer	1.65	cosmetologist	1.6
cosmetologist	1.45	ballet dancer	1.4

Table 4.2: Rating of occupations in the illustrations in *Top* and *Megafon* according to the study by Kennison and Trofe (2003). A score of 7 represent a totally male and 1 a totally female perceived occupation. Blue color coding means a mostly male, orange a mostly female and gray a neutral occupation.

In the illustrations of *Top* male characters work in various fields, for example, in arts and entertainment, e.g. *actor, ballet dancer, musician, singer, rapper, performer, radio host and adventure journalist*. Arts and entertainment are clearly the largest group in the category of occupations as the prevalence of this group is 28 (37%) out of the total 76 male occupational prevalence. Office work is in the second place with the prevalence of 13 (17%) occupational incidents, e.g. *call center worker, clerk, office worker and officer*. The third largest work group is in the field of transportation with the prevalence of 12 (16%) occupational incidents, e.g. *train personnel, tram driver, rickshaw and tuk-tuk driver*. Males also work in traditional fields such as primary sector e.g. *farmer, fisher, lumber jack and shepherd*. Furthermore, males are presented with jobs in the fields of technology and science, e.g. *astronaut and professor*, commerce, e.g. *seller and tyre recycler*, security, e.g. *policeman, private detective and guard*, animal care, e.g. *animal caretaker and ravenmaster*. Males also hold a few miscellaneous jobs such as *cook, florist and newspaper deliverer*. Note that all of these professions are not included in the analysis of Kennison and Trofe (2003) so they are not listed in Table 4.2. Students and students are also counted in the occupation category as it is young people's "work" to go to school but the amount was sub-categorized into its own category from the factual list of occupations. There are 21 male students or graduates altogether in the illustrations in *Top* which exceeds clearly their female counterparts who are presented as students or graduates 6 times. In addition, fictional characters were also counted in the occupation category, as the role of a fictional character is their "job". There was only one fictional superhero character, Spider-man, in the illustrations of *Top* which conforms to gender equality as there is no dominance of either gender in fictional characters.

Even though males possess both a larger number of different occupations as well as prevalence than females, most of the occupations themselves are quite neutral as there are no highest leaders of the establishment, e.g. there are no male heads of state or other leaders or bosses in *Top* nor are there bankers, doctors or attorneys, which have been considered traditional male dominated jobs back in the 'old days'. Both males and females can work equally well in most of these occupations even if the study by Kennison and Trofe (2003) revealed quite traditional attitudes among the students interviewed, resulting in a rather small fraction of the occupations classified as neutral. In addition, the construction field is missing completely and in the field of education,

there is only one professor representing that field. However, the transportation field which is typically male dominated, is well represented. On the other hand, traditional occupational roles aren't being broken as there are no male nurses in the illustrations, nor there are no male cleaners.

As mentioned above, the number of females presented with an occupation in the illustrations in *Top*, is significantly lower than the number of males. Female characters were presented having 12 different occupations with a total prevalence of 18. The largest group belong to the field of arts and entertainment, e. g. *actress, celebrity, musician and singer*, the prevalence being 6. Female characters are working in some similar fields as their male counterparts, such as primary sector, e.g. *field workers*, commerce, e.g. *scarf seller*, and security, e.g. *policewoman and game warden*. In addition to male working fields, in one chapter there were 3 female characters illustrated as *Good Samaritans*. This amount of volunteer work is in my opinion a neutral amount of volunteer work as females and males do equal amount of volunteer work in Finland (Tilastokeskus 2017). Moreover, in the field of journalism there is one female *journalist* and one *interviewer* in the illustrations. There is also 1 female *doctor* in the illustrations and one female as a *furniture tester*. Based on the above list of occupations in *Top*, no glass ceilings are being broken, as there are no females presented in jobs with power, in high office or in executive roles. Nor are there stereotypical female occupations mentioned, such as nurses, teachers or hairdressers.

When it comes to female students or graduates, they are also scarce compared to their male counterparts as the prevalence is only 6 for female students in the illustrations of *Top*, compared with 21 male students. The fraction of female students is thus only 22% which is aligned with the overall imbalanced amounts of female and male occupations. A similar discrepancy in the number of female and male students was also reported by Ylikiiskilä (2014: 404-405). He found that female counterparts for students lacked completely except for one incident, one female pupil, in his study of 18 grammar books. *Top's* imbalance in gender representations does not follow Lazar's principles for the FCDA as the small number of female students compared to male students in the illustrations of *Top* is an evidence of male dominance and male power and should be critically reflected as Lazar's fourth principle instructs (Lazar 2017: 373-375). What is more, the NCCBE 2014's goals are not achieved as the numbers of female and male

students are not presented in a gender equal manner which is one of the major principles of the NCCBE 2014 when it concerns students' rights to gender equal education and learning materials (NCCBE 2014: 14-16).

The fact that the fraction of female occupations is clearly less than that of males features a strong contrast compared to the egalitarian goals of the NCCBE 2014 whose mission is to support each student to achieve their personal potential and to choose learning paths without being restricted by stereotypical role models (NCCBE 2014: 18). What is more, in real life, women are nowadays more educated than men in Finland (Official Statistics of Finland 2019). Thus, from that perspective and certainly from the FCDA perspective it is contradictive in all ways, that females are clearly less connected with occupations in number and in prevalence.

Only one female fictional character was found, Lara Croft, the Tomb Rider, which complies with the amount of male fictional character in *Top*. All in all, this finding means that the fictional characters in *Top* are nearly non-existent and in that way gender equality is achieved as there are only few female and male fictional characters in the textbooks. This finding is a positive one compared to, for instance, Palmu's (1992: 304-305) findings according to which male fantasy characters accounted for 78% of the total.

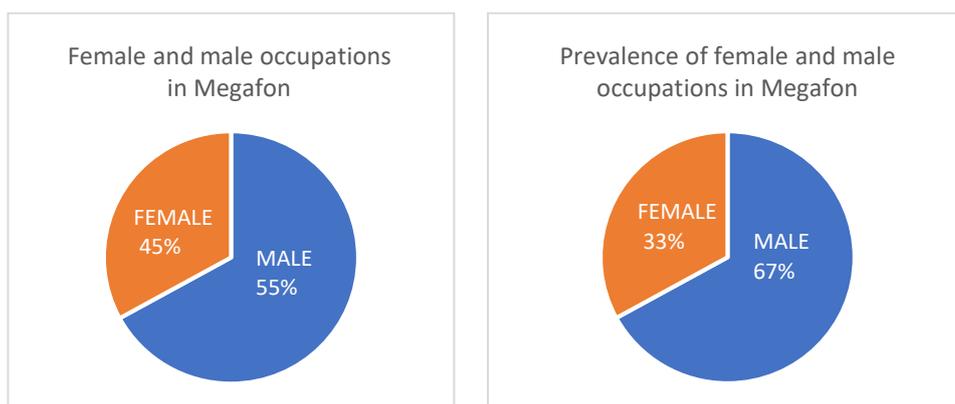


Figure 4.3. Fractions in percentages of female and male occupations in *Megafon*, shown as both total number of different occupations *and total prevalence of occupations*

In *Megafon* there are 24 different occupations in connection to males, with a total prevalence of 64. The largest group within male occupations is arts and entertainment, e.g. actor, musician, singer and rapper with a prevalence of 31 (48%). The second

largest group is occupations linked to sports *e.g. baseball and ice hockey*, with the prevalence of 8 (13%). Moreover, males also worked in the field of journalism, *e.g. writer, author TV-anchor, journalist*, culinary arts, *e.g. chef, cook and baker*, business and information technology, *e.g. developer of mobile games, entrepreneur, business man* and multiple miscellaneous occupations which are especially in the past perceived as traditional male jobs *e.g. doctor, engineer, architect, furniture architect and lawyer*. The egalitarian ideology has, in fact, progressed in such a way that, these are no longer thought as being male occupations. The same goes for some other occupations, *e.g. police officer, politician, taxi driver and hairdresser*. What is more, there are 6 male students and in addition, 3 fictional male characters in *Megafon* *e.g. a male deity figure*, and two male figures depicting characteristics of volcanoes.

Most of these occupations in connection to males in *Megafon* were rated gender neutral according to the study by Kennison and Trofe (2003), see Table 4.2. The only exceptions are the occupations related to sports, police officer, engineer, architect, and auto mechanic, which were perceived as more male occupations. The highest point score in Table 4.2. of the professions shown in the illustrations in *Megafon* was given to auto mechanic which represents a strongly male-dominant working industry. This is, however, a profession with an increasing amount of female workers also, so when scrutinizing the types of occupations males have in *Megafon*, I find that presenting occupations still includes some classic stereotyping, although, there are no males in socially powerful positions or in executive roles.

The number of different occupations females were connected with was 20 with a total prevalence of 31. The largest working group for females was in the entertainment and arts field. *e.g. actress, musician, singer, rapper or author* with a prevalence of 12 (60%). The second largest group of females in the illustrations were presented working in the health sector, *e.g. nurse, health care assistant, heart surgeon, psychologist, doctor, veterinarian*, with a prevalence of 7 (35%). Women also work in the sports field, *e.g. soccer player, football coach professional athlete*, and education, *e.g. teacher and kindergarten teacher*. One female worked as a *tour guide*, which is considered a gender neutral job (Kennison and Trofe 2003) There were a few occupations which are traditionally conceived as female occupations such as *stewardess, hairdresser and cosmetologist*. The only non-traditional female occupation in the illustrations is

*construction worker*. Moreover, there are 7 female students altogether and in addition, similarly to male fictional characters, 2 fictional female characters depicting characteristics of volcanoes. The only clearly non-binary characters in *Megafon*, and actually in the whole study including *Top*, were presented with an occupation as actors. There were 3 of them pictured in a movie advertisement. There were also unidentifiable characters in the illustrations of *Megafon* who were connected with 6 occupations, such as documentarian, fireman, game designer, pilot, police and taxi driver. The number of unidentified characters is in general so small and irrelevant to the whole that unidentified characters are listed only in this category of occupations and nowhere else.

Overall, the goals of the NCCBE 2014 (NCCBE 2014: 14-18) concerning non-biased gender representations in education and language materials are achieved in the number of different kinds of occupations in the illustrations of *Megafon*. The gender equal presentation of females and males in the illustrations of *Megafon* is also in accordance with the findings of Siren (2018). Siren (2018) encountered either non-existent or only few stereotypical gender representations concerning professions. Additionally, females in *Megafon* were presented in eminent professions. Furthermore, from the feminist point of view, there is no sign of hegemony or skewed power relations in *Megafon* which aligns with the FCDA. However, the prevalence of the occupational roles of the genders in the illustrations of *Megafon* conforms to a complete opposite result as the fraction of males is 67.4%, more than twice that of females. Multitude of several previous comply with this findings as male dominance prevails in occupational roles in learning materials, for example, such phenomenon encountered Palmu (1992) and Hjorth (1997) Kallio and Rehn (2003) and Kuoksa (2019) observed male dominance in occupational roles. The overrepresentations of males in the prevalence of male occupations does not align either with the goals of the NCCBE 2014 as it is stated in the section 2.2. (NBBCE 2014: 18) that the mission of education in Finland is to promotes gender equality.

### **4.1.3 Sports**

In *Top*, male characters were presented with 14 different sports with a total prevalence of 34. The largest group in this category was *football* and *soccer* players with 9 (26%) incidents out of 34 and in the second place were *ice hockey* players with 6 (18%)

incidents. There were also other team sports played by males, *e.g. rugby, cricket and Finnish baseball*. If a team was doing some sport, it was counted as one sport event. Altogether, males were connected 21 times with team sports. In addition, males were depicted engaging in individual sports such as *jogging, hiking, skateboarding, doing yoga, boat rowing and hammer throwing*. There was also one male participating a crazy sports event as he was *racing down a hill in a cow costume*.

In turn, females were presented doing 8 different sports with a prevalence of 9. The underrepresentation of females in this category is undisputed, as this prevalence represents only 21% of the total occurrences of people doing sports in the figures of *Top*. Furthermore, contrary to males, who engaged in more than half of the incidents in team sports, females were depicted doing only individual sports, *e.g. scuba diving, surfing, hiking, ice skating, doing yoga and sky diving*. There was also one female *camel rider* in the illustrations in the *Top* series. The fact is that, at the present time, female team sports do not attract audiences or sponsors to the same degree than male team sports (Ainoamittari 2019). According to Ainoamittari (2019), for example, in Finland the average attendance in the male football league was around 2600 people, while in the female league it was only around 280. In addition, the statistics show that female team players are also lower paid than their male counterparts. Consequently, this kind of difference in sports between males and females ought to be taken into careful consideration and ironed out in the textbooks and additionally, promote female sports in numbers and types of sports. Such action should in particular be taken for the reason that female team sports, such as ice hockey, football, volleyball and basketball are becoming more and more popular not only as hobbies but also competitively (Ainoamittari 2019).

In the illustrations of *Megafon* males were portrayed of doing 12 different kinds of sports with a total prevalence of 22. Out of these 22 sports incidents the number of male team sports incidents was 13 (59%), *e.g. football, floor ball, ice hockey and Finnish baseball*. Male characters were also doing individual sports, such as *body building, orienteering, biking, hiking, skateboarding, walking, ice fishing and ice swimming*. The female characters in *Megafon* outnumbered the male characters in sports by doing 14 types of sports with a prevalence of 21. The largest group of female sports is dance sports with a prevalence of 7 (33%), *e.g. ballet and dance*, which are

considered team sports. In addition, females were doing other team sports, *e.g. floor ball and football*. The prevalence of females engaging in team sports is 10 (48%) in total which is almost half of the total incidents in team sports. Females were also depicted in doing several individual sports, *e.g. biking, Nordic walking, cross-country skiing, mountain climbing, playing tennis, snowboarding and motorcycling*.

Judging by the findings concerning sports in *Top* and *Megafon*, in *Top* males are presented distinctly more active in sports both in number and in variety than females. Moreover, team sports are described only as male hobbies in *Top*. Hence, females are pictured clearly less active than males which can be condemned as sexist according to Michel (1986: 52). Similarly, females have also been presented in less active roles according to previous research, such as Kallio and Rehn (2003). These stereotypical manifestations of the genders in *Top* do not follow the egalitarian goals of the NCCBE 2014 (NCCBE 2014: 14-18) according to which boys and girls ought to not to be discriminated by the gender, stated in the section 2.1. (NCCBE 2014: 14) From the feminist point of view, the clear underrepresentation of females ought to be reconsidered as it complies with male dominance and does not represent a gender equal example of social practices. *Megafon*, in turn, succeeds in conveying that males and females are follows clearly the objectives of the NCCBE 2014 as females and males are depicted active in sports and in a variety of sports, although, females were portrayed being less active in team sports than males which could be resolved easily by just doing changes in the activities of females.

#### **4.1.4 Arts**

In the illustrations of *Top*, individuals were engaged in different types of arts, often with the purpose of performing in front of an audience. In *Top* males were connected in 36 incidents of different types of performing arts, for example dancing *e.g. dancing in Maori or African style, imitating, juggling or being an aerialist or performing as a clown*, playing an instrument, *e.g. didgeridoo, sitar, bagpipe or saxophone*, photographing, videographing or doing handcrafts or arts, *e.g. painting graffiti*. The number of females engaged in Arts in *Top* is exactly half of the number of males, which is 18 incidents (33% of 54 incidents in total). These incidents include such arts as dance arts *e.g. dancing in Native American, Indian, Maori or Hawaii style*, playing an instrument, *e.g. playing the cello*. Videographing and photographing were popular

in Arts, the prevalence of which was 6. There were also a few miscellaneous types of doing Arts, e.g. *doing face-painting and being a magician*.

In the illustrations of *Megafon* males were engaged 11 times in arts-related roles. These roles consisted of dance arts, e.g. *ballet*, and playing an instrument, e.g. *guitar and drums*, arts, e.g. *painting graffiti*, and photographing. Females were connected in art-related roles 14 times in *Megafon*, which corresponds to 56% of the 25 art-related roles in total. The category of dance arts was the largest group with a prevalence of 9 including e.g. *ballet* and in the second place came music, such as *singing in a choir*.

In conclusion, in both *Top* and *Megafon* the genders are depicted in the same types of activities as, for instance, dancing, playing an instrument and photographing. Additionally, in *Megafon* the genders are also presented equally in numbers. Michel (1986: 52) argues that sexism is prevalent if females are portrayed in a passive role as spectators in the field of arts and males, in turn, are portrayed actively engaged in different types of arts. For this reason, it can be concluded that this is not the case in either of the textbook series. However, in contrast to the balanced manifestations of the genders in *Megafon* in arts, there is an imbalance in *Top*. The imbalance of the genders in *Top* is not in relation to being passive or active as both genders are depicted active in performing arts but the overrepresentation of males. When comparing the number of females performing arts to that of males a gender discrepancy can be detected. This imbalance in the presentation contradicts the NCCBE 2014's goals of gender equal education and learning materials (NCCBE 2014: 14-18). In addition, the quantitative imbalance of the genders calls for the FCDA in order to raise awareness of the omission of females and as a consequent, to contribute to the reconstruction of the discourses in the textbooks in a way that they do not cause harm to students' identities or ideas of gender roles in school (Lazar 2017: 373-375). *Megafon*, in turn, succeeds in conveying the gender equal representation of the genders when it concerns arts and accordingly, follows the objectives of NCCBE 2014.

#### **4.1.5 Home-related activities**

This subcategory of interests includes home-related chores and activities, such as cooking and eating at home, watching TV and listening to the radio at home, taking care of the children and pets, cleaning the house and renovating, shopping, recycling

and clothing management. Home-related chores have traditionally been 'women's tasks' and still women take care of a majority of these chores even if both parents work. (Tilastokeskus 2019). In *Top* the list of males engaged in home-related activities was short, including only one incident, in which one male character is doing dusting. In contrast to the one incident of males in home-related activities, the number of females in connection with home-related activities was 11, corresponding to 92% of all home-related activities in *Top*. Those activities comprised e.g. *shopping, cleaning, recycling and cooking*.

In the illustrations of *Megafon*, males were engaged in home-related activities 14 times. There was one larger group in this category, with a prevalence of 5 which included activities with dining, e.g. *cooking, folding napkins and setting the table*. Males were also involved in other basic household chores, e.g. *grocery shopping, washing clothes and taking out the trash*. Moreover, males were depicted in caring roles such as pushing a stroller and taking care of a pet rat. In turn, females were engaged 12 times in home-related activities, 46% of the 26 times in total that home activities were depicted. There was no specific prominent group in this category. The activities consisted mostly of indoor household chores, e.g. *cleaning, vacuuming, emptying the dishwasher, hanging up clothes, making the bed, gutting a fish, making a sandwich and folding napkins*. Outdoor home chores comprised e.g. *mowing the lawn* and outside the home e.g. *shopping*.

Again, as in the previous categories, gender equality does not prevail in the least in *Top* as in this category the representation of the genders can be condemned as sexist and stereotypical as males are clearly excluded from the home-related activities of the illustrations (Michel 1986: 51). *Top*'s one incident of a male engaging himself in a home-related activity compared to the 11 incidents of females depicted in home-related activities, portrays females in an old-fashioned and stereotypical setting. This kind of gender biased representation of the genders is evidently in contradiction with the goals of the NCCBE 2014 as it is emphasized in the sections 2.1, 2.2 and 3.1 of the NCCBE 2014 that gender equality in education and in learning materials is one of the main missions of basic education (NCCBE 2014: 14-18). Reflecting the ideology of the FCDA, it is important that this kind of male privilege and discrepancy in the manifestations of the genders is revealed and hopefully, as a result, removed, as Lazar

indicates in her second and third principle of the FCDA (Lazar 2017: 373-375). However, similar research results on unequal gender representations have been detected, for example, by Hjorth (1997) and Piironen (2004). In strong contrast, *Megafon* succeeds in the mission of basic education, that is, presenting and treating the genders in a gender equal way in learning materials (NCCBE 2014: 14-18). In the illustrations of *Megafon*, females and males are both equally involved in home-related activities and moreover, the types of chores they do are alike: shopping, cleaning, cooking and folding napkins, to mention a few. This outcome indicates that gender equality prevails perfectly in *Megafon* in this category.

#### 4.1.6 Travel, adventure and exploration

In the illustrations of *Top* males are linked to Travel, adventure and exploration category 28 times. These activities include *e.g. geocaching, beachcombing, snowshoe hiking, backpacking, encountering polar bears, being a pirate, barrel riding at Niagara Falls and travelling on a cloud*. In addition, there are a few renowned characters depicted in the illustrations, *e.g. adventurer Riku Rantala, explorer Christopher Columbus and the movie character Gandalf in the movie of the Lord of the Rings* representing adventure. One character is dressed as an astronaut. Accordingly, females are linked to the Travel, adventure and exploration theme 8 times, which is only 22% of the occurrences, *i.e. significantly less than males*. Females are involved in similar activities as males, *e.g. geocaching, hiking, being a pirate and travelling on a cloud*. One female is heavily equipped with camping gear insinuating going *camping*. According to previous research, males have been portrayed more adventurous and thrill seeking than females in textbooks (Hjorth 1997; Blumberg 2015; Lindstrand et al. 2017). This feature is also a basis for sexism as Michel (1986: 52) indicates. This imbalanced result of *Top* concerning travel and adventures indicates that, as in other already mentioned categories, the NCCBE 2014's goals are not attained as the number of females and males are clearly unbalanced, favoring males. Renowned female characters are also lacking completely. Furthermore, females adventuring in *Top* are presented with a male companion 6 times out of 8 which makes up 75 % of the total. The corresponding number of males is 14 which means that 50 % of adventurous males are portrayed together with a female. From the FCDA point of view, females ought to be presented in an equal manner as males, in numbers and

actions as the asymmetry in gender representations of *Top* emphasizing the active role of males, is a sign of male dominance and patriarchy (Lazar 2017: 373-375).

In this category there are only 4 occasions involving males in *Megafon*. These activities comprised e.g. *being a tourist, traveling, and guiding a ghost walk*. The equivalent number of females in this category is 2, consisting of *being a tourist and travelling*. Consequently, when there are only a few incidents of both genders in this category and the difference between the number of males and females is so little, it can be concluded that there is no gender bias in this category in *Megafon*.

#### **4.1.7 Social activities and activism**

Into this category of social activities and activism I have included political, religious and environmental activities and social activism of the characters. More specifically, in the category such characters are included who are themselves the performers, initiators or participants in some kind of political, religious, environmental, infrastructural or social activity. In *Top 9* in the Africa section, for example, there are a few males who are depicted addressing and solving poverty and infrastructure problems by bringing electricity into the villages via inventing new devices and technologies. In one occasion an African male is involved in protecting the environment by collecting used tyres and recycling them. In another occasion an African male is involved in protecting the wildlife by taking care of rhinos. Furthermore, males are depicted in religious activities in the Indian section in *Top 9*. e.g. performing some kind of holy ceremony with incense. One male dressed in a religious attire is depicted commuting on the subway. In two occasions males were involved in a social event, i.e. in a TV interview for an unknown cause. There is also a big picture of a Native American male which, per se, implies political, religious and social controversy, especially against historical background. In principle, males are not depicted engaging in extraordinary activities or in an extraordinary way any big social movements or protests, for example, a climate change.

In this category females, just like males, are connected in environmental activism by, e.g. inventing a solar bottle bulb using garbage and religious activities by e.g. praying at the Ganges river. It can also be noted here, as it was also mentioned earlier in the Home-related category, that a few females were involved in recycling clothes, which

falls into this particular category of protecting environment. There are also three females doing voluntary work as Good Samaritans in Africa in *Top 9*. Furthermore, a few females are attending public speaking events, either as a listener or an orator, and, in addition, there is a female who is a member of a film crew and taking part of a public social event whose cause is unknown. In summary, there are no females or males strongly taking sides of anything particular in the pictures nor are there pictured any social movements supporting a specific cause that they were involved in, and thus, gender equality is in balance and follows the aims of gender equality of the NCCBE 2014 stated in section 3.1 (NCCBE 2014: 18).

In *Megafon* there was only one male character linked to [this](#) theme, that is, Jani Toivola, a politician who is being interviewed about bullying, among other themes, which can be interpreted as both social and political activism. Females, in turn, were connected two times with this theme. The other female was representing peace movement, the good side of life, and the other female was Goth, representing the dark and mysterious side of life. Both of them are wearing specific garments and accessories and making hand gestures symbolic to their preferred genre. Similar to *Top*, there are no discrepancies in actions or in numbers concerning the social engagements in this category. In conclusion, gender equality is manifested in *Megafon*.

#### **4.1.8 Interaction and Emotions**

In the category of Interaction I counted all the incidents where there is some kind of direct interaction between two or more persons, i.e. engaging in conversation with someone, talking on the phone or on the computer with someone, listening, interacting using body language or hand gestures, greeting or hugging someone. These statistics are all based on non-verbal communication in the illustrations except in the case of the skateboarder boy and the girlish girl who appear simultaneously as a pair almost in every chapter. The verbal communication of those two is robustly linked to their non-verbal interaction that I wanted to take into account also their verbal interaction, e.g. asking questions of each other, making comments about each other and so on. However, “interaction” when the textbooks character is seemingly “talking” or gesturing directly to the reader is not counted in the category of Interaction. This is the case in an ample number of the illustrations. In *Top* males interact 68 times with someone, e.g. *asking for help, greeting, arguing, being interviewed or photographing*

someone. The number of females falling into this category is 60 in *Top*, e.g. *asking questions, explaining something to somebody, pointing out something to somebody*. On the whole, the way the genders are presented in this category in *Top* the objectives of gender equality of the NCCBE 2014 are being followed (NCCBE 2014: 14-18) as the percentage fractions of females and males are 47% and 53%, respectively. Overall, the very neutrally presented gender roles falling into this category do not show striking differences in the number of incidents or types of interactions.

In the analysis of the category Interaction I followed the same principles in *Megafon* as in *Top*. However, compared with the non-verbal interaction in the pictures, which comprises most of the occurrences, there is much less verbal communication in *Megafon* compared with *Top*, adding up to only a few occasions. Similarly to *Top*, these verbal expressions are embedded inseparably into the interaction in the illustration, such as, for example, when Elias is complimenting Maxine's sweater in chapter 5 in *Megafon* 1. Furthermore, they are all located outside the core texts. Overall, males are presented in interaction with someone 38 times in the illustrations of *Megafon*. These incidents include e.g. *chatting, hanging out with girls, kissing, eating a hamburger with someone and listening to music by sharing headphones*. Females, in turn, were interacting with someone 58 times. These interactions have similarities compared with men, as females often interact with men and vice versa. This is, however, not always the case. Females also engage in interactions such as *hanging out with friends, giving instructions, texting, kissing, going to a festival, dining with a friend and having coffee with someone*. Males have been depicted more active according to the previous results (Michel 1986; Brugeilles and Cromer 2009) The results of *Megafon* indicate that females are depicted being more active in the illustrations with 60% of the appearances which is opposite to the previous results. The gender equality goals of the NCCBE 2014 concern both boys and girls which is stated in section 3.1 and hence, there is slight discrepancy in the balance of the gender representations in *Megafon*, this time favoring females.

Emotions are marked down when there is a face shown with some kind of emotion, e.g. smiling or being puzzled, horrified, agitated or pondering, for example. In the illustrations of *Top* there are 127 males (58%) pictured showing emotion on their faces and accordingly, females 90 times (42%). In comparison, in *Megafon* the numbers

account for 84 males (44%) and for 109 females (56%). In *Top*, however, more emotional expressions are presented on male faces compared with female faces. In *Megafon* males were pictured with emotion on their face in a greater extent than women, however, the difference is not very significant. The premise of this category was to evaluate whether there are differences between the genders in showing emotions as according to earlier studies females have been portrayed more emotional and sensitive than males (Michel 1986: 53-94). In *Top* the result is opposite to the previous research results of Michel (1986) as males are depicted more emotional. In contrast, in *Megafon* females are portrayed clearly more emotional than males which conforms to the previous findings of Michel (1986). It can be concluded that both book series contain only slight gender discrepancy when it comes to showing emotions. According to the NCCBE 2014 gender equal learning materials the goals are met adequately.

## **4.2 Findings of the texts**

In this chapter I will present the quantitative analysis concerning the texts. The order of presentation is as follows: 1. Main characters, 2. Dialogues, 3. Occupational roles, 4. Hobbies, 5. Gendered pronouns and nouns and 6. Firstness. In each category I discuss the findings with respect to the theoretical framework, FCDA (section 2.1), previous research (section 2.5) and the guidelines of National Core Curriculum (section 2.4).

### **4.2.1 Main characters**

In the *Top* textbooks there are 52 core chapters altogether; 16 chapters in *Top 7*, 18 chapters in both *Top 8* and *Top 9*. In the texts of *Top* there are 19 female main characters in total, who appear 90 times in the role of a main character in *Top*. Accordingly, in the texts of *Top* there are 29 main male characters in total who appear 137 times in total in the texts. The percentage fraction for the appearances of female main characters is thus 40%. By the main characters I mean non-fictional characters who have a significant role in the texts, some of whom are conversing via dialogues, telling a story or expressing an opinion e.g. Zoe, Noah, Xenia, Vijay, Penny and Christine in the first chapter in *Top 7*. An example of a non-dialogue text and its characters can be found in chapter 11 in *Top 7* where the main characters are Luke,

Becky, Eric, Tyler, Mandy and Tiffany. What is not counted as a main character is a person who appears in the text just once or twice, has clearly a minor or fictional role or is an animal character e.g. Grandma Latima, Grandfather Kavi or Gordon, the dog, in chapter 5 in *Top 7*.

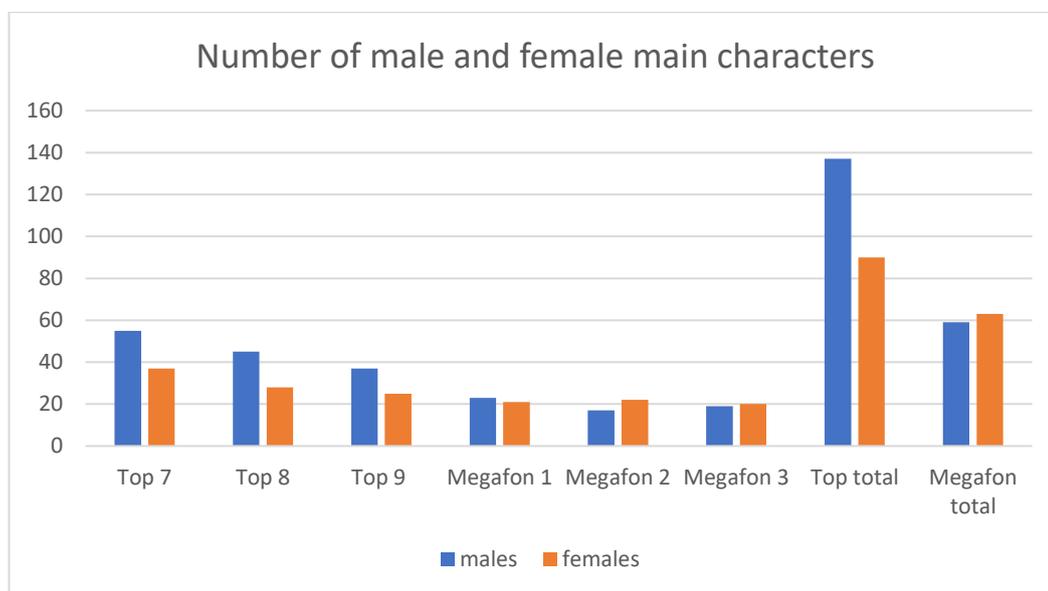


Figure 4.4. The number of male and female main characters in *Top* and *Megafon*

The same categorization and data gathering methods apply to *Megafon* as to *Top*. The texts in *Megafon* are partly based on dialogues and partly on plain texts, in which the main character's story is told without any dialogues. In *Megafon* the number of main female characters is 20 and they appear 63 times in the texts of *Megafon*. Accordingly, the number of main male characters is 17 who appear 59 times in the texts of *Megafon*. The percentage fraction of female appearances is thus 52%, indicating almost perfectly equal gender balance. These numbers as well as their distribution in the different books is illustrated in Figure 4.4. The percentage fraction of female appearances is thus 52%. To provide an example, *Pasi*, *Jesse*, *Emil*, *Filippa*, *Kristin* and *Tina* are counted as main characters in chapter 1 in *Megafon 1*. However, nonindividuals and animals are excluded from the study, such as *Megafon and Sf Kidz* in the dialogues of chapter 1 in *Megafon 1*. As with the illustrations, *Top* contradicts the objectives of the NCCBE 2014 in both numbers and prevalence with respect to gender distribution of the main characters. As the corresponding gender distribution in *Megafon* is balanced, it follows the egalitarian principles of the NCCBE 2014.

### 4.2.2 Dialogues

In *Top*, 37 texts out of 52 in the core chapters are in a form of dialogues. The dialogues are clearly marked with the main characters' names in front of the dialogue and the names are also color-coded. Therefore, as the dialogues play such an important role in the texts, I wanted to calculate the number of total lines spoken by females and males in the dialogues. In *Top* the number of female lines in the core chapters is 199 and males 313, corresponding to 39% and 61% for the females and males, respectively. These total numbers as well as the distribution of the female and male lines in the books studied is depicted in Figure 4.4. This finding conforms to previous research of gender inequality in gender representations, as discussed earlier Section 2.5, especially in *Top 9* there is a huge difference between the number of males and females: 40 female lines versus 102 male ones which means that only 28% of the lines in dialogues are female. I also calculated the numbers of chapters with only women, only men and both women and men. The result shows that out of 52 chapters in total in *Top*, there are 35 chapters with both genders, 5 chapters with only females and 11 chapters with only males. A particularly gender biased textbook is *Top 8* with 10 chapters with both genders but there are 7 chapters which are male-only, that is, including only males in the chapter, and what is more, there are no female-only chapters in *Top 8*.

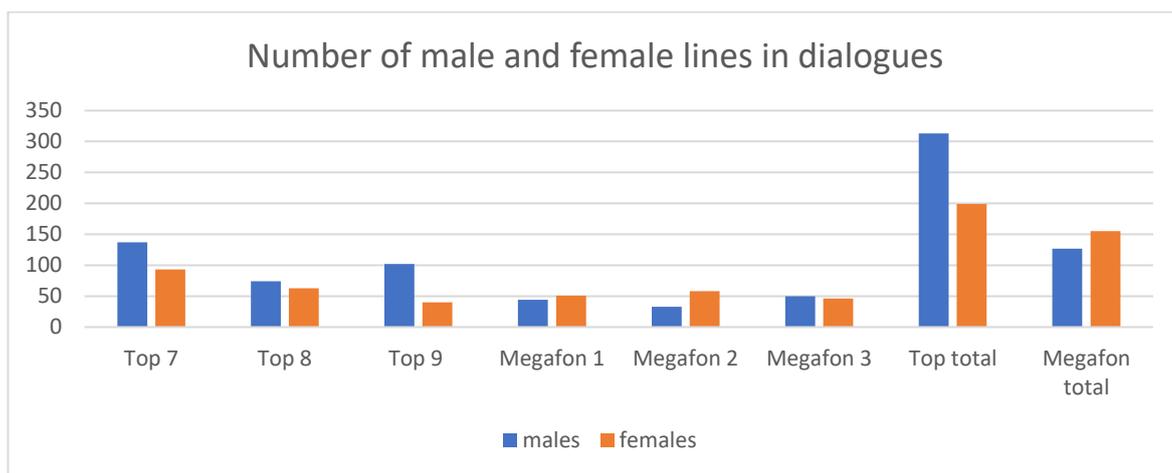


Figure 4.5. The number of male and female lines in the dialogues in *Top* and *Megafon*

In *Megafon* the number of chapters with dialogue is not as large as in *Top*, with 10 chapters out of 24 in total. For the sake of comparison, I calculated the number of male

and female lines in dialogues. Elias and Maxine's dialogues in *Snacka med Elias och Maxine* are excluded from this tally because the discursive setting with Elias and Maxine is unchanging. In *Megafon* the number of female lines in the dialogues in the chapters is 155 and the number of male dialogues is 127. Thus the number of female dialogues exceeds that of men, corresponding to 55% of the lines in total, in contrast to the *Top* textbook series. Of the 24 chapters in *Megafon*, 8 include female/male dialogues, 9 female-only dialogues and 7 male-only dialogues, thus the dialogues are quite evenly distributed among females and males.

### 4.2.3 Occupational roles

In the texts of *Top* females are connected with 13 different kinds of occupations with a prevalence of 18. Females are employed in high profile professions such as *Governor General, Prime Minister and Chief Justice*. Furthermore, females are employed in several different occupations requiring a higher education, such as *doctor, professor and headmistress* and in the security field, *e.g. police officer and guard*. There are also a few miscellaneous jobs, *e.g. athlete, furniture tester, magician and web designer*. Females are also involved in volunteer work such as *Good Samaritans. The Queen* is also mentioned which implies to a female full-time job. Males, in turn, are connected with 32 different kinds of occupations with a prevalence of 36. Males have a great variety of occupations and they work in the field of arts, *e.g. musician, sculpturer, actor and artist*, manual labor, *e.g. farm worker, plumber, cowboy and gold digger*, high profile jobs, *e.g. professor, member of the university staff, priest, archaeologist and the King*, business, *e.g. clerk, seller, businessman and entrepreneur*, office work, *e.g. call center worker, museum worker and nuclear plant worker*, and sports, *e.g. jockey, sprinter, commentator and sports administrator*. There are also a few exotic occupations such as *Ravenmaster, carer of the guard dogs and adventurer and explorer*. Environmental issues are addressed by one male who is working as a *recycler*. Males work also as a stand-up comedian and a waiter. Summarizing, one can say that especially in terms of numbers there is a clear gender imbalance both in the number of occupations (females 29%) and total prevalence (females 33%). There are some fictional human characters in *Top*, *e.g. Snow White, the Seven Dwarfs, Homer and Marge Simpson* but they play such a small role in the textbooks and hence, are not counted in.

In *Megafon* there are 3 occupations connected with females with a prevalence of 5. All of these occupations are linked to the entertainment field, which are *dancer, party organizer and vocalist*. Accordingly, males are employed in 7 different occupations in texts with a prevalence of 14. The largest group in this category is the field of arts, such as *artist, composer, musician, singer and rapper* with a prevalence of 8. There are also 3 male *ice hockey players* and a male *video game developer, politician and sausage seller*. Even though the count for both genders is small, there is a clear gender imbalance with females accounting for only 30% of the occupations and 26% of the total prevalence.

In summary, in terms of numbers both *Top* and *Megafon* present unequal gender representations with respect to occupations in the texts. However, a positive thing is that the type of occupations do not differ very much, and especially *Top*, which in many other categories shows a very biased gender representation, includes women in high profile professions. Several of these professions connected with women, e.g. *professor, police officer, guard and athlete* were actually rated as typically male professions in Table 4.2. (Kennison and Trofe 2003).

#### 4.2.4 Hobbies

Females are presented with 19 different hobbies with a total prevalence of 25 in *Top*. These hobbies include a variety of sports with 8 (42%) occurrences, this group being the largest in the category of hobbies, e.g. *dance, yoga, extreme sports, zorbing and skateboarding*. Arts in a form of music are also mentioned as female hobbies, e.g. *listening to music, playing the guitar, the keyboard, the violin and the piano*. Travelling and hanging around with friends are also mentioned, and in addition, *volunteer work. Computer games, blog writing, collecting photos of famous people's pets and manga* are also described as female hobbies in the texts of *Top*. Even one do-it-yourself incident are linked as a female hobby, that is, *building a motorized armchair*. In contrast, there are 21 different types of male hobbies mentioned. The prevalence of these hobbies is 36. Similarly to female sports, the largest group of male hobbies is sports with 10 incidents, e.g. *football, ice hockey, cricket and zorbing*. In the category of Arts male hobbies are *art, graffiti painting, listening to music, watching films, singing, playing in the band, playing an instrument, the drums and the bass*. *Beachcombing, geocaching, board games and handicrafts* are also hobbies of males.

One male has environmental construction as a hobby, that is, building a wind turbine for an African village providing electricity to the villagers. The main sports mentioned in the texts of *Top* are quite traditional in terms of how they are practiced among the genders: football, ice hockey and cricket for men, yoga and dancing for women.

In *Megafon* there are 11 male hobbies with a total prevalence of 14. The male hobbies are quite typical for males, e.g. *fishing, hunting, sawing wood and driving a snowmobile*. In the sports category for males is counted *parkour, orienteering, floorball and football*. Also *watching sports* was mentioned as a male hobby. Male musical hobbies are e.g. *playing an instrument, the piano and the guitar*. The most striking male hobby mentioned in *Megafon* that contradicts traditional gender roles is *sewing clothes*. In *Megafon* there are 13 female hobbies mentioned with a total prevalence of 15, sports being the largest group of hobbies with 12 occurrences e.g. *bandy, ice skating, skiing, cycling, swimming, paddling, dancing, jazz dancing, ballet and walking*. *Going to theater, reading books and fashion* were also mentioned as female hobbies.

Regarding hobbies, the egalitarian ideology of the NCCBE (2014) prevails rather well in a quantitative sense. Of the 61 times hobbies are mentioned in the texts, 41% of them are assigned to women and 59% to men. In *Megafon*, the distribution of hobbies is more equal as female hobbies account for 52% of the 29 in total. In a qualitative sense, as mentioned above, the stereotypical view of how people perceive female and male hobbies, is reflected in both book series *Top* and *Megafon*.

#### 4.2.5 Gendered pronouns and nouns

In this section I present the results of the calculated gendered pronouns and nouns of the texts of *Top* and *Megafon*. Pronouns, such as proper and gendered pronouns, play an important role in the textbooks because, in contrary to the neuter personal pronouns of the Finnish language, gender is identifiable in singular third pronouns in the English and Swedish language. Thus, the number of male and female pronouns can be considered a valid indicator of gender equality. Nowadays there is also an epicene singular pronoun for gender neutral expressions and for example, for a non-binary person, e.g. “*This is my friend, Kate. I met them at work.*” In the Swedish language, there is also a gender-neutral personal pronoun *hen*. *Hen* is a singular pronoun which

can be used instead of *hon (she)* or *han (he)*. However, the textbooks I investigated do not contain these kinds of gender-neutral or non-binary expressions.

#### Proper nouns and gendered pronouns

According to the findings, there is a clear difference in the results between *Top* and *Megafon* when examining gendered pronouns, see Figure 4.6. below. The *Top* texts have 819 proper nouns altogether, of which 529 (65%) are male names and 290 (35%) are female nouns. Hence, the percentage of males is disproportionately high and gender equality clearly does not prevail. Similar results were obtained by Kuoksa (2019) and Piironen (2004: 48). In *Megafon* females account for 228 (51%) of the total 448 proper nouns. Males, in turn, account for 220 (49%) of them. Thus, *Megafon* manages to achieve the goal of gender equality in accordance with the NCCBE 2014 goals.

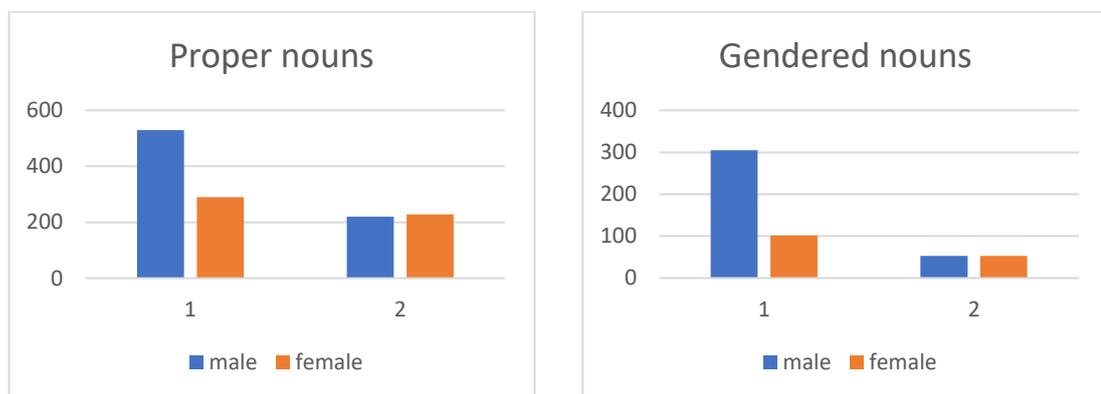


Figure 4.6. Male and female proper nouns and gendered nouns in *Top* and *Megafon*.

There are 247 personal pronouns *she* and *he* in total in *Top*, of which there are 151 pronouns *she* and 196 pronouns *he* which means that the number of male he accounts for 79% of these personal pronouns. In the category of possessive pronouns, her/hers and his, and objective pronouns, her and him, in *Top* the male fraction is 65%. These numbers and percentages are presented in detail in Table 4.2.

Table 4.3. Numbers and percentages of gendered pronouns in *Top*.

<i>TOP</i> gendered pronouns	Female	Male	Total
She/He (subject)	51 (21%)	196 (79%)	247
Her, hers/His (possessive)	35 (35%)	66 (65%)	101
Her/Him (objective)	15 (34%)	29 (66%)	44
Herself/Himself (reflexive pr.)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Total	102 (26%)	292 (74%)	394

In contrast, there are 106 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns altogether in *Megafon* and in this category the distribution is equal between the feminine and the masculine pronouns. The differences between the genders within this category are minor and therefore, *Megafon* is in line with the goals of the NCCBE 2014.

Table 4.4. Numbers and percentages of gendered pronouns in *Megafon*.

<i>MEGAFON</i> gendered pronouns	Female	Male	Total
She ( <i>Hon</i> )/He ( <i>Han</i> )	42 (53%)	37 (47%)	79
Her, hers ( <i>Hennes</i> )/His ( <i>Hans</i> ) (possessive)	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	8
Her ( <i>Henne</i> )/Him, his ( <i>Honom</i> ) (objective)	9 (47%)	10 (53%)	19
Total	53 (50%)	53 (50%)	106

As mentioned before, Kuoksa (2019), discovered that male gendered pronouns accounted for 60% of all common pronouns. Similarly, other words related to the male gender, accounted for 65% of all other gendered words.

#### Family-related nouns

The category of family-related nouns of *Top* is a rare exception where the number of female words exceeds the one of males, although barely. Of the total 79 family-related nouns feminine nouns account for 41 (52%), and masculine noun account for 38 (48%). Within this category there are three masculine nouns which exceed the respective feminine nouns: *dad*, *uncle* and *son*. Correspondingly, the feminine nouns *sister* and *grandmother* exceed the respective masculine nouns. *Godmother*, *niece* and

*cousin* (female cousin) have no masculine equivalent. Nevertheless, as the difference between the genders is minimal, the goals of the NCCBE 2014 are met.

Table 4.5. Numbers and percentages of family-related nouns in *Top*.

<i>TOP</i>	Female	Male	Total
Mom/Dad	19 (45%)	23 (55%)	42
Sister/Brother	9 (56%)	7 (44%)	16
Godmother/Godfather	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2
Niece/Nephew	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
Aunt/Uncle	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	5
Grandmother/Grandfather	4 (57%)	3 (43%)	7
Daughter/Son	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3
Cousin	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3
Total	41 (52%)	38 (48%)	79

Similarly to *Top*, in *Megafon* there are no major differences between the genders in family-related words, see Table 4.6. There are 43 family-related nouns in *Megafon*, of which 24 (56%) are feminine and 19 (44%) masculine nouns. From the NCCBE 2014 and FCDA point of view, the goals of gender equality are attained.

Table 4.6. Numbers and percentages of family-related nouns in *Megafon*.

<i>MEGAFON</i>	Female	Male	Total
Mom ( <i>Mamma</i> )/Dad ( <i>Pappa</i> )	13 (54%)	11 (46%)	24
Sister ( <i>Syster</i> )/Brother ( <i>Bror</i> )	11 (61%)	7 (39%)	18
Grandmother ( <i>Mormor, farmor</i> )/Grandfather ( <i>Morfar, farfar</i> )	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Total	24 (56%)	19 (44%)	43

#### Nouns designating gender

In *Top* females were referred to as *love, mystery woman, chick* and four times *wife* which is 7 in total; wife being the most common noun. Males in turn were addressed as *guy, lad and dude*. Moreover, there were *Englishmen, Scotsmen* and a *gentleman* referring to males in *Top*. *Sister's boyfriend* was also mentioned as well as *king* and *cowboys*. These nouns occurred 13 times in total, of which most common nouns were the ones which designated a person's nationality. One noteworthy feature is the lack of *husband* as a male referrer. Ylikiiskilä found (2014: 404-405) that when examining

nouns referring to females, family words and nouns in relation to females in different ages constituted together 82,3 % of the female nouns in that category.

In *Megafon* females are referred to as *wife (fru)*, *girl (tjej)*, *girlfriend (tjejkompis, flickvän)* and *neighbour girl (grannflicka)*. The most common noun in that category is *girl (tjej)* with the prevalence of 11. Similarly, the most common nouns designating males in *Megafon* are *boy (kille)* and *boyfriend (pojkvän)* with the respective prevalence of 3, 6 in total. Males are also referred to as *sausage selling old chap (korvgubbe)*, *dear (gulle)*, *king (kung)* and *prince (prins)*. Similarly to *Top*, there is no mentioning of *husband (make)* albeit there is *wife (fru)* mentioned in the text.

#### 4.2.6 Firstness

I studied firstness by evaluating the position of female and male names appearing in a sentence in a form of list, for example, “Sami, Vijay and Zoe”, “mother and father” or “sisters and brothers” or if the names appeared in dialogues I would register the name who starts the dialogue or in addition, if the name is positioned in table I would count the first name from left to right or from top to bottom. This is to see whether previous research results, which state that in name lists male names comes always first, prevail in *Top* and *Megafon* (Hartman and Judd 1978; Porreca 1985; Pillay and Maistry 2018). According to Pillay and Maistry (2018) females have second-place status when they conducted a study on firstness.

According to my findings, there is a partial gender imbalance in firstness. The greatest imbalance in firstness is in one of the textbooks, *Top 7*, where 36 male names were placed first in a name list in contrary to 21 females placed first, which means a male bias in firstness of 63%. In *Top 8* females and males were positioned equally as both feminine and masculine names were placed first 18 times. In *Top 9* female names exceeded male names as female names were positioned first 19 times as the respective number of males is 14, corresponding to a female firstness of 58%. Adding up, in the *Top* series altogether there are males positioned first 68 times and females positioned first 58 times. The percentages of firstness are thus 54% and 46% for males and females, respectively, reflecting a rather equal balance between the genders. Hence in terms of firstness, the *Top* series complies quite nicely with the objectives of the NCCBE 2014 (NCCBE 2014: 14-18).

This category was exceptional in *Megafon* as in all of the three textbooks the number of name lists with males being placed first exceeds the number of female names placed first. There were name lists positioning females and males 106 times in total in *Megafon* out of which males were positioned first in 62 (58%) occasions and females in 44 (42%).



Here is an example of firstness in *Megafon*. In the title Elias always comes first, that is 24 times versus Maxine's 0 times in the first place and, to be more precise, 24 times positioned in the second place. At the bottom of the illustration one can see the name pair Elias and Maxine which are the titles of the dialogues below, unseen here. Elias is placed first on the left 10 times and Maxine is placed second 8 times when they are together. In addition to Maxine, there are two incidents when aunt Monika (Moster Monika) and Niila talk with Elias and at those times the two females are placed first on the left side.

Hence, the imbalance toward female gender in *Megafon* in this category can be explained by the section Talk with Elias and Maxine (Snacka med Elias och Maxine) of each chapter. In the text itself, Elias is often mentioned first or positioned first in a dialogue. This section of the chapter has such an important place in the textbook and in addition, it is rehearsed to a great extent as it is a text with the purpose of intensive oral practice. The danger in here is to what Porreca (1984) and Pillay and Maistry (2018) argue: male firstness can subconsciously cause the feeling of female secondness among the school girls which violates the goal of the NCCBE 2014. However, as Porreca (1984) states this can be easily corrected by changing the places of the names in turns, in this case: "Talk with Maxine and Elias" and in the next chapter "Elias and Maxine".

## 5 Analysis and discussion

In this chapter, which summarizes the qualitative research part of my thesis, I will interpret and discuss the results I find most significant or discrepant with the goals of gender equality. Along the way when gathering the data and conducting the analysis, I have also come up with some suggestions on how more egalitarian representations could be achieved in textbooks. The research questions presented in the Introduction chapter will be answered relying on the quantitative analysis presented in the previous chapter. I have evaluated three textbooks of the English schoolbook series *Top* and three textbooks of the Swedish schoolbook series *Megafon* for the Finnish comprehensive school from the perspective of gender representations in relation to gender equality.

As elaborated in section 2.5 of this thesis, numerous scholars have previously encountered societal discrimination on the basis of gender in school learning materials. UNESCO has addressed this shortcoming by publishing practical guides and developing ways to eliminate sexism in children's literature and schoolbooks already since the 80s (Michel 1986; Brugeilles and Cromer 2009). According to Michel (1986) and Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) learning materials have contained plenty of stereotypical portrayals of females and in addition, vast exclusion of females has been a common phenomenon. Hence, it is necessary to continue the assessment of learning materials from the gender equality perspective as long as egalitarian goals are not met. In addition, all the instances, or the Actors, (as explained in section 2.2.3) involved in the process of composing a textbook have an important role when it comes to gender equality as Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) argue.

At a national level, the curriculum constructed by the Finnish National Agency for Education plays a pivotal role in promoting gender equality as it comprises the objectives for the education (Basic Education Act 1998). Indeed, as I have elucidated in detail in section 2.4, the NCCBE 2014 declares in an unprecedented way that students shall not be discriminated based on their gender or sexual orientation and what is more, the learning materials used in school have to support achieving the egalitarian goals of the Act on Equality between women and men (NCCBE 2014: 14). Moreover,

Lazar (2007, 2017), who is a scholar and an advocate for the feminist critical discourse analysis, FDCA, discusses the importance of exposing women's subordinate position compared with men through the FCDA which is the theoretical framework of this thesis.

The answer to the first research question “*From the gender equality point of view, in what way are the genders portrayed in the texts and illustrations of the textbook series Top and Megafon?*” is, as shown in the previous chapter, chapter 4, that the gender representations are for the most part in balance in *Megafon* and for the most part in imbalance in *Top* from the perspective of gender equality. I will continue with this theme as in the following section I will address the main differences of *Top* and *Megafon* and along the way I will be answering to the third research question on the differences of the gender representations between the two book series.

### **Differences between *Top* and *Megafon***

On the basis of the findings presented in the previous chapter it is apparent that there are clear gender inequalities in the textbooks of the English schoolbook series *Top* as male gender is distinctly dominant in most of the categories in the illustrations and texts of *Top*. Accordingly, there are apparent manifestations of stereotypical portrayals of females throughout the *Top* textbooks which are not in accordance of the NCCBE 2014's gender equality goals. In contrast, gender equality is in general achieved more proficiently in *Megafon* than in *Top* as *Megafon*'s gendered discourses conform mainly to the egalitarian objectives of the NCCBE 2014.

*Megafon*'s gender equal ideology manifests unequivocally in the percentages of different different categories. Overall, the percentage fractions of males and females in *Megafon* vary between 45 to 55 percent (see table 4.1). In *Top*, on the other hand, there is clearly more variance as the fraction of males is typically above 60 percent and that of women below 40 percent. Male domination prevails only in two categories in *Megafon*: in Occupations and in Travel, adventure and exploration categories of the illustrations. Similarly, in *Top*, males are overrepresented in the same two categories as in *Megafon* and in addition, males dominate in numerous other categories in *Top* such as Total number of the characters in the illustrations, Sports, Arts, Main

characters in the texts, Dialogues, Proper nouns, Gendered nouns, Nouns designating gender and Firstness.

Similarly to the male dominant categories in *Megafon*, female domination prevails also in two categories in *Megafon*: Interaction and Nouns designating gender (see Table 4.1). This means that as a whole *Megafon*'s gender representations are in line with the goal of equality which conforms to the objectives of the NCCBE 2014 and the egalitarian ideology of the feminist perspective. Conversely, in *Top* females are mainly underrepresented except for the category Home-related activities where females account for up to 91,7 %. An equal distribution of the genders is conformed in the categories of Social activity and activism, Interaction, Emotions, Hobbies and Family-related nouns. Summing up, females are mainly disadvantaged by the male dominance in *Top* as the list of the male dominant categories of *Top* is lengthy.

The results elaborated in the previous paragraphs on the differences of gender representations between *Top* and *Megafon* makes one ponder the reasons for such significant differences. Gender equality has been an important goal for education for many decades set by the Finnish laws and curricula (Basic Education Act 1998) and especially the newest curriculum explicitly stresses the importance of gender equal learning materials (NCCBE 2014) as declared in section 2.4. Nonetheless, both book series are published by the same publishing company. What is more, mentions of the balanced gender representations as an objective are missing from the publisher's official goals even though it is emphasized on the publisher's web page that both book series are revised in accordance with the goals of the NCCBE 2014 (Otava oppimisen palvelut 2020). However, the general goal setting of the publisher concerning *Top* and *Megafon* is largely congruent (ibid.) even though the outcome is distinctly diverse. This might implicate a state of hegemony: an unconscious acceptance of patriarchal state of affairs in the minds of the authors of *Top* by submitting to male dominance and power in gender relations and representations.

Siren (2018) studied gender representations of *Open Road*, Otava's English book series and found a discrepancy in gender representations favoring males. She (2018: 45) discussed whether the fact that the majority of the authors of the textbooks were men had something to do with the overrepresentation of males as characters and in the

illustrations. However, all the authors of *Top* and *Megafon* are women and therefore, this line of thought has no relevance to the findings of this thesis. I even contemplated the differences of the two textbook series between the respective cultures, British/American and Swedish. Sweden is a more equal country than, for example, Britain, (Barbieri et al., 2020) but both textbook series are composed and published in Finland and based on the last names the authors are mainly Finnish.

Overall, in learning materials, such as textbooks, a lot of weight is put, on the one hand, on layout as images of the learning materials, especially those of textbooks, seem varied, colorful and of high quality, and on the other hand, the texts seem diverse and highly educational in terms of grammar and vocabulary. However, on the whole, if a strong gender stereotype exists in a school textbook, the entirety is not competent enough when it comes to the goals of gender equality of the NCCBE 2014 nor it reaches adequate level of quality from the perspective of the FCDA (NCCBE 2014; Lazar 2017; Michel 1986; Brugeilles and Cromer 2009). As Michel (1986), Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) and Lazar (2017) argue, awareness of gender inequalities existing in learning materials is the key in order to initiate and achieve change toward egalitarian society. Hence, the findings of this study which reveal hegemonic and hidden curriculum of *Top* manifesting patriarchal ideology, male dominance, sexism and female subordination in learning materials, can only have an effect if this message is passed on. Indeed, the turn toward change concerns all the agents in the publishing process starting from the composers and authors of learning materials continuing to the school staff whose role in the choosing process of the materials is central when advocating for gender equal learning materials (Brugeilles and Cromer 2009: 71-87).

When the NCCBE 2014's ideology of gender equality and numerous studies on the effects of stereotypes on students' identity and self-esteem are considered carefully, updating the learning materials to match with the goals of gender equality of the NCCBE 2014 (NCCBE 2014) ought to have enough basis to be self-evident. Such actions could be taken by justifying the number and the sexes of the main characters in the illustrations and additionally, the gendered pronouns and nouns in texts. Moreover, the roles of the main characters ought to be carefully revisited by making sure that the genders are presented in equally adventurous, active, serious, conscientious or goofy roles. Overall, the theme of gender equality included in the

publisher's official objectives of *Top* and *Megafon* would suit perfectly with the NCCBE 2014 gender equality goals. However, *Top*'s imbalanced gender representations would have to be attended to before doing that.

### **Male-only and female-only chapters**

One visible feature of *Top* is that in *Top 8* there is a Canada themed section which consists of male-only chapters, that is, chapters 7-12. In addition, chapter 1 is a male-only chapter. This means that 7 out of 18 chapters are male-only in *Top 8*. A male-only chapter means that there are no female characters in the chapter. In contrast, female-only chapters are non-existent in *Top 8*. While conducting my research this odd feature instigated me to scrutinize all of the textbooks from this point of view and the result is as follows: There are 9 female-only and 7 male-only chapters in the three *Megafon* textbooks. In turn, in *Top* there are 5 female-only and 13 male-only chapters. Hence, *Top 8* shines with male superiority in this matter. It makes me wonder the reasons behind this. The male characters in the Canada themed section are playing ice-hockey, writing on laptop, exploring the Arctic and the Canadian territory. They are also beachcombing and attending a crazy sports event. Furthermore, chapter 1 is also a male-only chapter which tells about Riku Rantala who is a celebrity, TV-person and a famous adventurer. Nonetheless, no sensible reason can be detected why these chapters completely lack female characters as in my opinion, it could not be in relation to Canadians or Canadian culture either. However, this trait is hard not to notice when studying *Top 8*, that striking it is. Although, it is hard to believe that the choice is intentional. Overall, this fights against the gender equality objectives of the NCCBE 2014 and what comes to the FCDA, this kind of male-dominant discourse is not in accordance with the feminist principles (Lazar 2017). Hence, as Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) recommend, the male characters in the illustrations ought to be could be partly replaced by females or, similarly to *Megafon*

### **Occupational roles**

As noted in section 4.1.2 and 4.2.3, there are major differences in the numbers and prevalence of male and female occupations in both *Top* and *Megafon*. There is a clear bias with male dominance which is imperative to correct. According to my personal experience here in Finland, which is also conformed by the study by Kennison and Trofe (2003) for college students in USA, and globally by the Global Gender Gap

Forum (2020), it seems that there has been a gradual change in the attitudes concerning the professions of women and men. While, for example, car mechanics are still mostly men and nurses mostly women, the fact that a man is a nurse and a woman is a car mechanic is not necessarily longer considered such a miraculous or unacceptable thing. In other words, it might be that we are struggling with numbers today rather than with attitudes, that is, to get more males into female-dominated sectors and females into male-dominated sectors. On the other hand, as it has already been discussed in section 2.2.2, children and adolescents adopt attitudes from their environment and if they see in practice that women work mostly in as nurses, that is, traditional women's fields and men in traditional men's fields, it is up to us adults to ascertain mainstreaming of gender equality in a way that gender discrimination due to anti-mainstream occupational choices must not be accepted, but gender equality must be defended and promoted in career choices as it is emphasized in the section the NCCBE 2014 emphasizes in s Language learning, for example, in a form of learning materials such as textbooks, grammar and workbooks, suits very well for that.

In every chapter of *Megafon* there is a section called *bildtorget* which is a one-page picture dictionary. In *Megafon 3*, chapter 6, there is a picture vocabulary presenting a vocabulary of occupations. In the pictures, females are presented in the following occupations or roles: psychologist, psychologist's patient, female figure having her hair cut, nurse, health care assistant, cosmetologist, cosmetologist's client, veterinarian, stewardess, actress, teacher, kindergarten teacher and professional athlete. Males, in turn, are connected with occupations or roles such as: architect, lawyer, musician, cook, hairdresser, patient, entrepreneur, taxi driver, doctor, engineer, polis, journalist, auto mechanic and furniture architect. As one can see, the division of the occupations is very traditional with stereotypical male professions assigned to males and traditional female professions to females, as shown in Table 4.2 according to the study by Kennison and Trofe (2003). It is important that this kind of clear bias should be removed so that future textbooks would be more gender equal.

### **Family relations**

Similarly to the results of this study, Hjorth (1997), Michel (1986) and Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) discovered that females are depicted with home-related activities such as taking care of the family and children more often than males. According to the

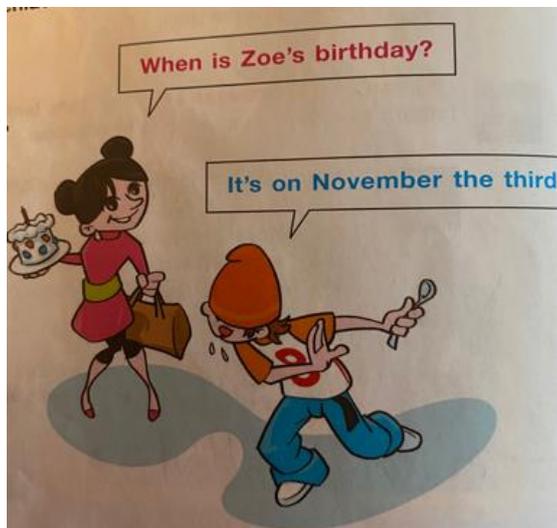
results of this study (see section 4.1.5), family-related activities of females in texts are a rare exception to the overall underrepresentation of females in *Top*. Indeed, female domination (92%) is exceptionally strong in this category as for example, there are no adult males presented with a child or family member in *Top*. Females, however, are presented with a child or close relative four times in total. These four incidents are all presented in *Top 7*: for instance, in chapter 7, a mother, son and goddaughter are shopping for clothes and there is a male seller with whom they are negotiating the price. This kind of family setting, mother-son, mother-goddaughter, occurs in 3 chapters which is somewhat significant and in addition, these three chapters are situated right after the seven male-only chapters. Hence, the contradiction from the feminist point of view seems even bigger. Even though the number of females in this category is not high but it is significant because the result resonates with the past gender stereotypes which present females mostly in relation with family and domestic chores. Conclusively, there are discrepancies when reflecting these results with the ideology of gender equality of the NCCBE 2014 and FCDA. Firstly, it is positive that there are for once more females in this category than males but on the other hand, the category is stereotypically and historically assigned to females who have been portrayed homebound. Secondly, females are far too overrepresented in number from the gender equality point of view. Hence, my recommendation would be that in the future and in the same way as females, males would also be depicted with family members and close relatives.

### **The (im)balance of the genders in *Top* and *Megafon***

In the following I will present a few assorted extracts describing events and interaction between the genders which I consider are worth mentioning from the gender equality perspective. The detail that first caught my attention (see figures below) in the illustrations of *Top* was a pair of a boy and a girl who are present in most chapters. The boy is a skateboarder who seems relaxed and is dressed casually. The girl, in turn, is dressed up with a classy looking handbag and high heels. The positioning of her legs, together with her overall appearance, somehow indicates that she is a bimbo. This boy and girl pair, in my opinion, maintains the traditional perception that women put a lot of time and effort on dressing up and their physical appearance compared to men who are relaxed and casual. In many occasions, but not in all, the roles and dialogues of the girl and boy emphasize traditional roles, where women, for instance, cook, clean

and serve food while men are more in a receiving role and, overall, more active than females and having hobbies, as it is insinuated in picture 2 below.

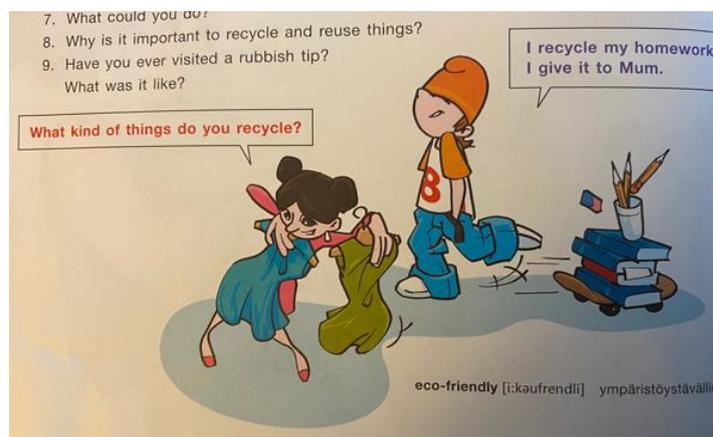
1) Top 7, Chapter 1



2) Top 8, Chapter 3



3) Top 9, Chapter 2

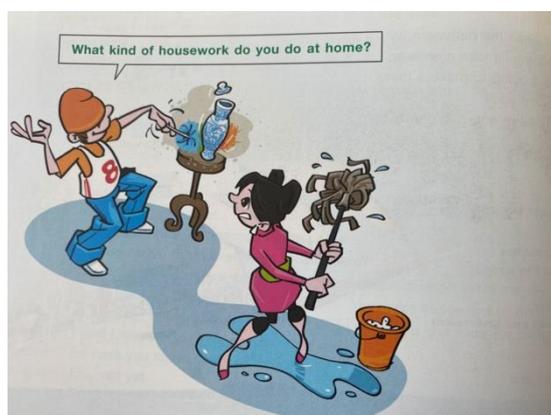


- 1) The girl serves cake to the boy, who is ready to eat with a spoon in his hand. Women have traditionally been more responsible for cooking than men (Ipsos Mori 2014). The boy has a chill and casual appearance, while the girl is neatly dressed.
- 2) The girl requests an answer in a frustrated style while the boy takes it easy and acts like he is a conductor. Women are traditionally depicted as overly emotional compared to men (Hartman and Judd 1978: 386).
- 3) The girl exhibits responsibility while boy shows negligence toward homework.

One might ask, why the appearances are not vice-versa so that the boy would wear a nice coat and the girl for example relaxed sweat pants and a t-shirt. Additionally, the dialogues seem often similarly stereotypical; the girl is the one who is asking and the boy is the one who is answering and hence, the boy is depicted somewhat more knowledgeable and the girl less knowledgeable (see picture 1 above) or in general, the girl is more talkative and she is the one who is the instigator in a conversation or interaction. In picture 2 the girl also seems to be quite frustrated with the boy who takes it calmly. This characteristic where women are more emotional and nervous than men is one of the classical stereotypes (Hartman and Judd 1978; Michel 1986: 17, 53; Feldman Barrett et al. 1998) (picture 2). On the other hand, one negative male stereotype is depicted in picture 3 above, showing the boy's negative attitude toward homework. Women are, in fact, higher educated in Finland in all age groups under 65 years (Tilastokeskus 2019) and because of this discrepancy in education, in my opinion, it is not a good idea to reinforce the indifferent attitude of males toward education.

Another incident concerning the girl and boy pair is the one (see picture below) which involves males in relation to home-related activities. This is, indeed, the one and only incident where a male person is linked to the category of Home-related activities. Although, there is another male depicted with a broom in *Top* but he was only playing with the broom, not doing the actual brooming.

*Top* 8, Chapter 14, page 14



In the picture a young woman is fretting with mopping (which actually is more work than dusting) while the young man seems to be very relaxed when dusting. The woman's facial expression shows distraught and frustration while the young man

playfully fumbles with a vase. A positive thing about the illustrations is the fact that both characters are cleaning, however, the attitude in the illustrations is such that the overall responsibility seems to be on the shoulders of the young woman. This means that quantitatively the gender representation is equal, but not qualitatively.

Here are a few more examples of the dialogues between the girl and the boy shown above:

Girl to the boy:

(13) *“That looks great on you.”* (Top 7, p. 38)

The girl looks prissy, she is almost tiptoeing, her legs exaggeratedly ‘girlishly’ positioned, she is holding a handbag and holding her hands primly together. The boy is wearing an oversized jacket with a ‘Punk’ backpatch. He tries to keep his cool despite the unfitting jacket. The girl’s looks and her statement represent stereotypical manifestations of females who pay attention to appearance and that appearance is everything. According to Michel (1986: 61-62) this kind of stereotypical and conventional representation of a female and her attributes can be condemned as sexism.

Boy to the girl:

(14) *“I like to take it easy.”* (Top 8, p. 16).

The boy is laying down on his back, his hands are behind his neck and he is just chilling. The girl is standing up, pondering. The stereotype here is that males are more easy-going, relaxed and do not take things so seriously while females are more collected as Michel (1986) points out.

Girl to the boy:

(15) *“What are your plans for the future?”* (Top 9, p. 42).

The girl is holding a crystal ball in her hands. The boy is wearing a spacesuit. The girl does not have an occupation. The boy is an astronaut; hence, anything is possible for

him. As for the girl, the message here is that she can just check her future from the crystal ball.

The excerpts (13-15) above show stereotypical representations of females. What is more, the two characters are almost always positioned next to oral exercises. They catch one's attention because of their distinctive appearance which I assume is the exact purpose of these figures but from the FCDA point of view, these characters are disturbingly stereotypical and indeed, can be harmful as social practices form social identities (Fairclough 2011; Lazar 2005, 2007, 2017). Moreover, young adolescents adopt these stereotypical attitudes consciously or unconsciously and thus, it is important that the discourses of learning materials follow egalitarian principles. As a consequence, these characters and their discourse contradict the NCCBE 2014's gender equality goals and according to the FCDA's principles, these kinds of stereotypical gender representations should be addressed and eliminated discontinued (Lazar 2007, 2017).

Moreover, especially in *Top*, there are a few chapters which require special attention. Underneath, I have picked a few excerpts and will discuss them one at a time. The first example is from the bonus text of chapter 4, *Top 7*.

Chapter 4, *Top 7*:

(16) Vijay: “*Everyone in my family plays football, even my sisters.*”.

(17) Vijay: “*As soon as I learnt to walk, Dad taught me to kick a ball.*”

The mentioning that females play football is adequate but the word *even* strikes out in the dialogue in which it is insinuated that females are not interested in football and they do not play football. Numerous scholars have previously found similar type of male dominance and stereotypical female expressions when it comes to personal activities and hobbies (Michel 1986; Brugeilles and Cromer 2009; Lindstrand et al. 2007). My suggestion in this case would be that the words: “*even my sister*” are eliminated and thus with this kind of small correction the sentence will be gender balanced.

Chapter 7, *Top 7*:

(18) Zoe to Sami: *“Vijay will only get you into trouble.”*

(19) Zoe to Sami: *“Stop right there, Sami. Don't ask Vijay anything about clothes!”*

(20) Zoe to Vijay: *“Calm down, Vijay, not everyone is as excited about football as you are.”*

(21) Vijay to Zoe: *“Calm down, Zoe, not everyone is as excited about school as you are.”*

The stereotype presented here is similar to the previous one: females are not into football but they know all about clothes. Furthermore, males get into trouble and females are the ones who get excited about school.

Chapter 9 *Top 7*:

Olivia and Gonzo attended an ‘Online Oscars’ competition and won second prize.

(22) Gonzo: *“I love adventure! My dream is to visit every state in the USA – and then every country in the world!”*

(23) Olivia: *“I want to work in TV, so I made a documentary about our road trip – and all the trouble Gonzo caused.”*

Again, similar kinds of stereotypes are depicted here as previously. Males are adventurous, goofy and keeping fun in mind. Females are responsible and goal oriented. Olivia made even a documentary about their road trip because she wants to work in TV. Michel (1986) specifically points out that when the genders are presented with the same kinds of characteristics, is it being goofy or adventurous or goal oriented, there is no sexism. But when a person is presented in a stereotypical way only, then that can be called sexism. The balance in the representations of the genders is what counts. (Michel 1986).

The title of chapter 13 in *Top 7* (is “Gonzo & Olivia’s awesome road trip – Episode #13” which insinuates that both, Gonzo and Olivia, are on a road trip. In addition, there are 7 subtitles in the chapter in which Gonzo, and supposedly also Olivia, are enlightening the reader with their experiences of various sights of the USA. In reality, Gonzo’s adventures are told under 6 of the 7 subtitles, such as ‘The Niagara Falls’,

‘The Grand Canyon’, ‘Redwood National Park’, just to name a few. Olivia is nearly invisible, one comment under one subtitle only.

Olivia:

(24) *“Olivia found this really scary, so she put an earthquake survival kit in the car: a flashlight, matches, water and lots of food”*

Gonzo:

(25) *“At its deepest point, the Grand Canyon is 1.83 kilometers deep. Gonzo didn’t believe this, so he did a test. He dropped a ball into the Canyon to see if it would bounce back up. It didn’t. And he got a fine!”*

*“Gonzo wanted to toast some marshmallows over the lava, but the guide said it was too dangerous.”*

Olivia is scared and cautious and packs a lot of food and water along, that is, caring for others on many levels. Gonzo is adventurous and fearless, even insanely brave as his actions are illegal and dangerous and as a result of his actions, he gets a fine. These are extremely stereotypical expressions of the genders. Girls are delicate, nurturing and emotional; boys are impulsive and do whatever comes to mind, even illegalities (Michel 1986; Brugeilles and Cromer 2009).

In chapter 14 of *Top* (*Top 7*, pp. 74-75) Olivia and Gonzo are trying geocaching. Olivia is depicted as calm and down-to-earth but Gonzo is asking foolish questions from the leader and joking around. Here are a few examples and excerpts of their conversation and the happenings.

(26) Olivia’s comment on Gonzo’s goofing around: *“Calm down, I’m so embarrassed.”*

(27) Gonzo, in turn, is attracted to one girl’s appearance and says to Olivia:

*“Check out that girl over there!” I hope I get her as my partner.”*

(28) ... a while later Gonzo says to Olivia: *“Hah! You got the old lady and I got the cute chick!”*

(29) After Gonzo had fallen into a brook and gotten all wet, Olivia takes care of him. She gives advice to Gonzo: *“Don’t scratch those nettle burns. It only makes them itch more.”*

(30) She soothes Gonzo down as he is very disappointed at the course of events: *“Don’t worry. When we get back, I’ll make you a big banana smoothie.”*

Again, girls are the ones who behave, are responsible and nurturing. Men are attracted to women by their appearance, which means that women think that they, in fact, ought to do it. In addition, men goof around and get hurt. These are common stereotypical representations of females which is stated by Michel (1986: 59-63) and Brugeilles and Cromer (2009: 48) which are not in accordance with the objective of gender equal learning materials of the NCCBE 2014.

Chapter 14 in *Top 8* (*Top 8*, pp. 74-75) is a chapter about duty rota on a yacht, which includes doing laundry, mopping, vacuuming, shopping and all kinds of other housework. The main characters are Abigail, Owen and Steffi. What caught my attention is that this is the only chapter in *Top 8* with females only in the illustrations, Abigail and Steffi. In addition, this chapter is almost right after the string of male-only chapters. When conducting my analysis, this particular observation made me frustrated, to say the least, and I instantly marked the chapter with a red flag. In the text Owen is not present until Steffi loses her nerves and the girls start to fight about the chores. Steffi is angry at Abigail because Abigail is not doing her chores properly and Steffi accuses Abigail of being lazy.

(31) Owen’s first comment is: *“Calm down, Steffi.”*

(32) Steffi to Owen: *“And you’re just as bad.”*

(33) Owen to Steffi: *“What do you mean? I’ve done all of my chores, haven’t I?”*

(34) Steffi to Owen: *“Yes, but you didn’t do them properly. You mopped the floor really badly yesterday, so I had to do it again. You make our team look bad.”*

So, Steffi loses her nerves and accuses also Owen of being lazy and incapable, and that his work has to be redone. Judging by the happenings in the scene, one can detect two stereotypical features depicting females: on the one hand, females are and feel the need to be in charge of household duties and secondly, females are emotional, they lose their temper and complain about cleaning and even redo it. These depictions do not strengthen gender equality concerning household duties which still need amending when examining the distribution of household chores in Finland (Tasa-arvobarometri 2017) In addition, a young girl getting agitated over household duties can also strengthen the textbook's hegemonistic ideology that it is fine to act this way and that the pressure is exerted on girls when it comes to household chores.

Steffi's bad mood continues in the next chapters as follows:

Chapter 16, *Top 8* (*Top 8*, pp. 82-82)

(35) Doctor: *"Does it hurt anywhere else?"*

(36) Steffi: *"My knee is sore. I hurt myself when I fell over. I tripped over Abigail's bikini. She left it in the middle of the floor."*

(37) Doctor: *"And how did you get that cut on your arm?"*

(38) Steffi: *"I don't know – but I'm sure it was Abigail's fault somehow!"*

The story continues in the next chapter. It is mentioned in chapter 17 of *Top 8* (*Top 8*, pp. 86-87), that the two fighting girls, Steffi and Abigail, have made up, which shows a positive example of how disputes should be resolved. However, right after this remark, Abigail's criticizing continues:

(39) Owen: *"Let's go and say hi."*

(40) Abigail: *"Let's not. Steffi is so bossy. That fight was all her fault."*

(41) Owen: *"Come on, we should make an effort to get along. We're going to be stuck on the yacht together for another two weeks."*

(42) Abigail: *"Whatever."*

The chapter ends with a closing sentence:

(43) *"Oh dear, it looks like there's going to be more drama on board ship tonight!"*

In summary, what happens here is that, on the one hand, the argument is mentioned to have been resolved, but on the other hand, arguing still continues and Owen, in a calming manner, is trying to act as a mediator between the girls. This story line does not continue in the following chapters. To depict females as emotional, overemotional or instable in learning materials has already been discovered and documented as long ago as in the 70s by Hartmann and Judd (1978: 386). It is noteworthy to point out that there are no such arguments between males in any chapter in the *Top* series and indeed, the arguing of the girls occurs in three chapters. Michel (1986: 61) states that gender equality prevails if the genders are presented with the similar amount of positive and negative psychological characteristics. Consequently, it can be concluded that the above described arguing of the girls is not in accordance with the goals of gender equality from the feminist point of view as it presents females as overemotional and instable and males as sensible mediators and no examples of opposite roles have been presented. In a similar way, presenting females as hypersensitive and quarrelsome does not follow the gender equality objectives of the NCCBE 2014 which states that the missions of the basic education is, among others, to promote gender equality and to encourage students to reach their full potential without being restricted by their gender (NCCBE 2014: 18). To prevent this kind of stereotypical representation of the female gender is either to present males in a similar mood and then to show how arguments are resolved peacefully or eliminate this kind of behavior from the female psychological characteristics of *Top*.

The next example which shows stereotypical representations of the genders is from chapter 11 of *Top 9* (*Top 9*, pp. 56-57). The main characters, Maya and Ganesh, are debating the topic 'That British rule was a good thing for India.' In the debate, Ganesh mentions cricket as the best gift to India. In Maya's opinion cricket is the most boring sport in the world:

(44) She says: *"In my opinion, it's a curse rather than a blessing."*

(45) Ganesh comments Maya's comment: *"Cricket is obviously too sophisticated for Maya to understand."*

These dialogues strengthen the old-fashioned stereotypical way of thinking: according to males, females are too simple to understand sports. Furthermore, the text insinuates that females do not like sports and they do not do sports. Even though it is only cricket they are talking about and even though they are debating. In addition, the text suggests that it is okay for young girls to feel this way. When reflecting Maya and Ganesh's statements and attitudes on the gender equality goals of the NCCBE 2014 which state that education ought to promote economic, social and gender equality it is not acceptable to expose young adolescent girls and boys to these kinds of stereotypical insinuations (NCCBE 2014: 14). In *Top* this kind of stereotypical categorization of the genders could be eliminated by presenting and encouraging all the students being into sports despite of their gender.

In *Top 9*, in chapter 14, Anna, Daniel and Christian are in the dressing room transforming into their roles as they taking part of a show called "This is your life". Every performance is different as the performing characters are based on real people in the audience. An hour before the show the director gives the competing characters the information for their performance. The characters are as follows:

(46) Christian's role: *Logan, age 25. I'm a jockey and my main hobby is DIY.*

(47) Anna's role: *Moraq, age 40. I'm a furniture tester and I have seven cats.*

(48) Daniel's role: *Angus, age 82. I'm a retired plumber who plays a lot of golf.*

Accordingly, there is a younger man with a job, jockey, and a hobby, DIY. The retired man has had a job, he has been a plumber, and he has a hobby, golf. Hence, all the occupations and hobbies they are depicted with are plausible, typical even, and proper. In turn, the middle-aged woman's occupation is a furniture tester. It is bit surprising I must say. I myself have never heard of a furniture tester as an occupation, so maybe it can be labeled as atypical. As for the hobby, the woman has seven cats which inevitably insinuates that the woman is 'a cat lady' which is not necessarily a positive thing. In fact, Cambridge dictionary defines 'A cat lady' as "A woman who has a lot of cats, especially a woman who lives alone and is considered to be slightly strange." I agree with the connotation. Hence, the woman's occupation and hobby could have easily been, for instance, a member of a hotel staff, doctor or entrepreneur and her hobby could have been something with sports similarly with the males for example,

tennis, bowling or running. I would recommend to remove the role of the cat lady from the text and change the role to the similar one of the males or to depict a male character with the similar kind of eccentric role. These actions align with Michel's (1986) and Brugeilles and Cromer's (2009) recommendations of abolishing gender inequalities from textbooks as they emphasize the importance of similar presentations of the genders in textbooks.

Another significant discrepancy which I detected concerns the board games in *Top*. There are two culturally-themed and map-shaped games in *Top*. The first one is of the British Isles and the second one is of the USA. They are positioned at the beginning of respective themes in the textbooks and additionally, there are culturally-themed city games, New York and London. The games' layout is colorful and they look fun to play and at the same time, provide valuable and interesting information about the target country, its culture and people. As a teacher I would gladly let my students play these games and let them be introduced to the respective countries by this kind of cool way. However, a problem arises when reflecting the gender representations of the games on the goals of the NCCBE 2014 and the ideology of the FCDA. There are plenty of features, primarily concerning the various characters of the games, which are extremely unequally presented in the games. In total, there are 66 characters in the four games, out of which there are 38 males (58%), 9 females (14%) and 19 unidentified characters (28%). This is an interesting fact that even unidentified characters clearly exceed the number of females. One might want to ask what kind of message is conveyed by the fact that females are indeed less visible than the unidentified? All in all, gender representations in the board games clearly not align with the gender equality goals of the NCCBE 2014 nor they are presented in an acceptable way from the feminist point of view. In contrast, there are board games in *Megafon* but the pictures concentrate on featuring typical cultural phenomena without human characters and hence, no gender imbalance can be detected. Hence, as Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) recommend the equal presentation of females and males in textbooks, the male characters in the illustrations could be partly replaced by females or, in the same way as in *Megafon*, human characters could be removed completely.

Another issue meriting attention is that there are only three non-binary persons altogether in all of the six textbooks and they are presented in one picture, in the

*Megafon 2* textbook. We live in a time where the treatment of females and males is under careful scrutiny and in progress toward gender equal society but we can also often encounter demands of equal treatment of LGBTQ communities on the news and social media. For example, as a suggestion for further development of *Megafon*, the next aim could be gender diversity, now that harmful stereotypical and unequal gender representations are almost non-existent.

### **Summing up**

The main purpose of this chapter was to illustrate and discuss some distinctive qualitative features of stereotypical representations detected in *Top* and *Megafon*. However, examples that portray traditional male dominance are almost non-existent in *Megafon* so that gender equality manifests mostly in an exemplary way in *Megafon*, as stated numerous of times in this thesis. Gender representations in *Top*, however, are far from being gender equal and that is the reason for the myriads of examples from *Top* in this chapter. These characterizations of *Top* and *Megafon* illustrate the whole of the results of my thesis. While gender representations are equally distributed in *Megafon*, they are almost completely the opposite in *Top*. This also answers the first and third research questions of my thesis which are about the way the genders are presented in the texts and illustrations in *Top* and *Megafon* and in what way do they differ. The clear difference in gender representation balance is especially interesting since the book series are published by the same publisher.

This type of a qualitative analysis has its challenges as the approach is mostly subjective. When analyzing the pictures and texts and contemplating the roles and events of females and males through the lens of the NCCBE 2014 it was from time to time hard to pinpoint the inequality. Occasionally I turned to my family for an opinion about the features I thought were contributing to gender inequalities. Sometimes it helped and sometimes it did not. The need for more opinions resulted in an idea which could be a niche for further research: learning materials such as language textbooks and grammar books, could be subjected to research by interviewing publishers, authors, teachers, students and parents about their opinions about specific gender representations of the materials. After all, it could be useful to include every actor (Brugeilles and Cromer 2009) in the chain when conducting research as increased knowledge and awareness are the keys for change. Another limitation of this thesis is

the fact that I was not able to do research on all of the books of *Top* and *Megafon* nor on all of the sections of the books. I was forced to omit the workbooks from both book series from my analysis and also the grammar parts and some other texts from the textbooks due to the fact that there would have been too much material otherwise.

The qualitative study also supports the findings of the quantitative part by providing a clear answer to my second research question, how the goals of NCCBE are achieved from the perspective of gender equality. For most part, *Megafon* fulfills the goals well, while *Top* does not. As these are official goals for education in Finland, this type of an analysis, which should, in my opinion, be done for all textbooks used in the Finnish education system, is valuable for textbook publishers.

## 6 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to discover in what way the genders are presented in the English *Top* and in the Swedish *Megafon* textbooks for the Finnish comprehensive school from the perspective of the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014, referred to as the NCCBE 2014 after the year of its implementation. The NCCBE 2014 takes a stronger stance than ever before when comparing it with previous Finnish curricula to abolish gender inequalities from the Finnish comprehensive school system. Indeed, the NCCBE 2014's relation to sexes and genders is pivotal as this is the first time the concept of *gender diversity* is introduced in a Finnish curriculum for basic education. The differences between the English and Swedish textbooks were also scrutinized throughout the study, thus providing answers to the third research question about the differences between the gender representations of *Top* and *Megafon*. The theoretical framework of this thesis is based on the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, FCDA, whose main ideology is, under the umbrella of Critical Discourse Analysis, CDA, to address unequal discursive practices of the genders, hegemony and also heteronormativity of societies. The themes and categorization of the data for this study were principally chosen based on two UNESCO's publications, *Down with stereotypes! Eliminating sexism from children's literature and school textbooks* (Michel 1986) and *Promoting Gender Equality through Textbooks. A methodological guide* (Brugeilles and Cromer 2009).

School is an important and lengthy time-period for students to learn gender and for that reason, it would be imperative that the gender treatment in textbooks is equal with respect to the genders. This is especially crucial since textbooks form the core of learning materials with which students spend most of their time with. Based on the background research for my thesis, it became evident that significant inequalities have existed and still exist in the ways how the genders are depicted in different occupations, hobbies or other activities. In almost all of the references that I studied for my thesis and which I have referred to, males outnumbered females. Males are also typically shown to work in more esteemed professions and in professions requiring higher education. In addition, according to previous research, males are often depicted to be more active in their free time than females who are typically shown as caretakers and doing household duties. However, the gender balance is not the same in various parts of the world. Inequality is severest in textbooks used in developing countries. The main focus of this thesis is textbooks used in Finland. However, according to my experience, there seems to be some kind of deficiency in peer reviewed research in Finland considering gender balance in currently used foreign language textbooks. However, based on the research that was available, even though gender equality in Finland has improved during the last 50 years, males and females are still not treated equally in the textbooks used in Finland.

Textbook analysis ought to include a systematic analysis of texts, in addition to illustrations. Hence, I studied the texts of *Top* and *Megafon* and they were analyzed partly on the same themes as the illustrations, for instance, the number of females and males and their occupations and hobbies. In addition, dialogues, proper names and gendered pronouns in texts were examined, such as 3<sup>rd</sup> person personal pronouns, which, opposite to Finnish, indicate gender in both English and Swedish. In addition, nouns expressing gender and family-related words were scrutinized. Firstness, which indicates whether a female or a male name appears first in a list of several names, was also evaluated. Various earlier studies have shown that feminine pronouns and nouns have been clearly underrepresented in textbooks and learning materials in schools.

The material comprises illustrations and texts of *Top* and *Megafon* which are analyzed qualitatively with the help of quantitative calculations. The illustrations were analyzed by making calculations of categorized data such as the numbers of females and males,

occupations, sports, interests, activities and interactions. According to the findings (see table 4.1) in the *Top* textbooks males were excessively overrepresented in the following categories of the illustrations: 1) Number of characters, 2) Occupations, 3) Sports, 4) Arts, and 5) Travel, adventure and exploration. There was slight gender imbalance favoring males in the category Emotions. Gender equal portrayals in the illustrations of *Top* were manifested in three categories: Interaction, Social activities and activism and Family-related nouns. Females, in turn, dominated only in one category of *Top*, that is, Home-related activities. This rare exception to the rule of profound male dominance in the illustrations of *Top*, is far from being satisfactory. Indeed, these unequal gender representations fight strongly against the goals of the NCCBE 2014 concerning gender equality. In accordance, the FCDA's target of interest, hegemony, seems to prevail.

In the illustrations of *Megafon* the gender division was unequivocally more evenly distributed than in *Top*. Females dominated clearly in one category, that is, Interaction. Slight female dominance could be detected in the categories of Arts, Home-related activities and Emotions. On the other hand, male characters clearly exceeded female characters only in few categories: firstly, in Occupations and secondly, in the category of Travel, adventure and exploration. The following categories follow the gender equality goals of the NCCBE 2014: 1) Total number of characters 2) Sports, 3) Arts, 4) Home-related activities, 5) Travel, adventure and exploration and 6) Social activities and activism. Overall, gender balance manifests equally in the illustrations of *Megafon*, which is in line with the NCCBE 2014's gender equality goals and the principles of the critical feminist perspective.

In the texts of *Top*, females clearly exceed males only in one category, that is, in the category of Family-related nouns. The result aligns with the findings of the analysis of the illustrations, where females exceed males only in one category which revolves around domestic circles, that is, in the category of Home-related activities. Males dominate females excessively in the following categories: 1) Number of male characters, 2) Dialogues, 3) Occupations, 4) Proper nouns, 5) Gendered pronouns, 6) Nouns designating gender and, lastly, 7) Firstness. Gender equality prevailed in two categories in the texts of *Top*: Hobbies and Family-related nouns. It is noteworthy to point out that females did not dominate in any category in the texts of *Top*. In turn, the

gender representations in the texts of *Megafon* deviate clearly from the gender equality goals of the NCCBE 2014 only in one category which is Occupations. Additionally, a minor discrepancy favoring males can be detected in the category of Firstness. Similarly, a meager dominance of females exists in the categories of Dialogues and Family-related nouns. In all other categories of the texts of *Megafon* the genders were presented equally. Overall, the division of the genders in the texts were similarly aligned as in the illustrations of *Top* and *Megafon*. Again, in the texts of *Megafon* the genders were presented noticeably more equally than in *Top* thus following the goal of equality of the curriculum, with only a few exceptions. The texts of *Top* followed the lines of numerous previous research results, that is, overrepresentation of males and stereotypical manifestations of the genders nearly in all of the examined categories.

When the results of this study are reflected on the second research question of this thesis concerning the extent the goals of the NCCBE 2014 are achieved from the perspective of gender equality, the answer is evident. *Top*'s gender representations are overly unequal and do not align with the gender equality goals of the NCCBE 2014. It is unequivocally stated in the NCCBE 2014 that nobody should be discriminated against on the basis of gender. It is also stated in the NCCBE 2014 that the mission of basic education is to prevent gender inequality and exclusion and to promote equality of the genders. Moreover, section 2.1 of the NCCBE 2014 declares that learning materials ought to be supported by gender equality. In paragraph 15.4.3. of the NCCBE 2014 concerning language learning it is also stated that gender equality ought to be strengthened in language choices and language learning. Hence, there is a strong rationale for the actions which the publisher ought to take in order to eliminate gender inequalities in *Top*. From the FCDA point of view, *Top*'s representations of the genders prove that feminist critical discourse analysis is, indeed, greatly needed in order to fight against hegemony which means a voluntary acceptance of and surrendering to male dominance and belongs to the FCDA's sphere of influence and action. *Megafon*, on the other hand, proved to be positively gender balanced and thus fulfills its mission of gender equality by aligning with the NCCBE 2014 goals. The answer to the question why the gender representations are so different in *Top* and *Megafon*, especially when the publisher of both book series is the same and in both series the authors are all women, remains obscure. Indeed, more research could be

conducted with the authors and publishers of contemporary schoolbooks. Furthermore, an interesting field of research could be the gender representations in grammar books or work books of schoolbook series and the example sentences in them.

The reasons for gender equal representations in the textbooks are already discussed from the NCCBE 2014 and FCDA point of view but, of course, there are more deep-rooted reasons for gender equal policies. So, why to advocate gender equality in textbooks? Firstly, to empower not only girls but also boys in a way that both genders feel secure expressing their whole selves genuinely in class. Secondly, as discussed above, studies show that gender stereotypes in textbooks affect negatively students' identities and way of thinking and thirdly, to abolish old-fashioned stereotypical stigmas of the gender roles. School materials should take the spotlight off of the differences of the genders and enhance uniformity of the genders. Hence, stress the fact that anything is possible if one just sets their mind to it.

Critical opinions may also arise. I have defended my feminist perspective while doing my research. I have been asked whether this pursuit of gender equality means that we ought to close our eyes from the factual differences of the genders in school. As we all know, there are physical differences when it comes to the genders: men cannot give birth to a child or breastfeed a baby or in general, women exhibit less physical strength. However, as discourses shape reality, language classes are the place where these kinds of differences of the genders do not have to be specifically stressed. On the contrary, the equality and the uniformity of the genders, which is clearly stated in the NCCBE 2014, can be cherished in language classes in a myriad of ways.

For the above-mentioned reasons, when publishers compose learning materials and teacher select schoolbooks for their students, both parties ought to be aware of the existence of gender stereotypes and take action to prevent gender inequalities from appearing. In that way, publishers and teachers can support the shift toward a more egalitarian society and school system and as a consequence, they can ensure that the manifestation of gender equality in learning materials is aligned with the objectives of the contemporary curriculum. I will also do my part as an educator as I will deliver this thesis to the publisher and inform them of my findings. Additionally, I also want

to follow the transnational ideology of Lazar and of the FCDA, as I will inform my fellow educators abroad of these results and hopefully, discuss the results with them.

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