

**THE REPRESENTATION OF GENDER DIVERSITY IN  
ENGLISH AND SWEDISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS IN  
FINLAND**

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# JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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<p>Tiivistelmä - Abstract</p> <p>Oppikirjat sisältävät ideologioita ja käsityksiä sekä kielistä että kielten käyttäjistä. Sukupuolta esitetään oppikirjoissa monin eri tavoin, kuten kielen, kuvien ja hahmojen kautta. Oppikirjojen esittämät sukupuolen representaatiot rakentavat käsitystä siitä, miten sukupuolen moninaisuus ymmärretään. Sukupuolen moninaisuus on terminä kuitenkin varsin monitulkintainen, minkä vuoksi sen esittäminen oppikirjoissa on hyvin tulkinnanvaraista ja pääosin epäsuoraa.</p> <p>Pro gradu -tutkielmani tavoitteena on selvittää, miten sukupuolen moninaisuutta esitetään kielten oppikirjoissa. Toimitin tutkimukseni oppikirja-analyysinä, jossa on viitteitä kriittiseen diskurssintutkimukseen. Käytin teoreettisina taustoina tutkimuksessani sukupuolentutkimusta sekä queer-tutkimusta. Tutkimukseni aineistoina käytin englannin oppikirjoja <i>Ok English 9</i> (1987) ja <i>Scene 3</i> (2019) sekä ruotsin oppikirjoja <i>Nya vindar 9</i> (1986) ja <i>Hallonbåt 3-4</i> (2017). Tutkin englannin ja ruotsin oppikirjoja 1980-luvulta sekä 2010-luvulta, minkä johdosta pystyin tekemään mielekkäitä vertailuja eri vuosikymmenten ja oppiaineiden välillä. Otin tutkimuksessani huomioon ajankohtaisen opetussuunnitelman koskien sukupuolen käsittelyä koulussa pohtiessani opetussuunnitelman yhteyttä oppimateriaaleihin.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittivat, että aineistojen tavat esittää sukupuolta ja sen moninaisuutta olivat hyvin eriävät. Sukupuolen moninaisuutta kuvattiin epäsuorasti monin eri tavoin, kuten tekstien, tehtävien, kielen, hahmojen ja kulttuuristen viittauksien kautta. Sukupuolivähemmistöjen representaatiot olivat lähes olemattomia oppikirjoissa lukuun ottamatta muutamaa poikkeusta. Kirjojen hahmot ja varsinkin julkisuuden hahmot olivat englannin oppikirjoissa suurin osa miehiä eikä muunsukupuolisia hahmoja ollut ruotsin eikä englannin kirjoissa lainkaan. Sukupuoli-ideologioita oli esillä eniten kulttuurisissa viittauksissa, kuten lauluissa ja runoissa. Osa kulttuurisista viittauksista osoittivat sukupuolta kyseenalaistavia ideologioita, mutta osa vahvistivat traditionaalisia sukupuolimalleja. Uudemmissa oppikirjoissa sukupuoli itsessään ei ollut yhtä lailla keskiössä ihmistä määrittävänä piirteenä. Scene 3 oli kirjoista ainut, joka mainitsi sukupuolivähemmistöt yhdessä tekstissään. Kirjojen vertailu keskenään osoittautui monimutkaiseksi, mutta merkityksellisiä yksittäisiä suoria tai epäsuoria havaintoja sukupuolen, sukupuoli-ideologioiden sekä sukupuolen moninaisuuden representaatioista oli löydettävissä jokaisessa kirjassa.</p>	
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The quality and contents of learning materials affects learning and teaching. Learning materials act as a set of representations that present certain values and ideologies to its readers. Learning materials, such as language textbooks, portray different kinds of people, identities, cultures, and society, and in my study, I want to find out how textbooks convey gender diversity through these themes. Because learning materials can present a very limited view of the world and only offer a small fraction of the real world, the creators of teaching materials have an essential role in portraying what the world looks like. Textbooks are often the most important learning material used in language teaching and it has been proven that language teachers rely on the textbook in their teaching even more than teachers of other subjects (Kauppinen et al., 2008).

There have been various studies done on gender representations in textbooks. Studies show that the male gender is usually the most represented gender in language textbooks (e.g., Macleod & Norrby, 2002), while female representation has for a long time been secondary and often giving a one-sided view on women and their lives (Michel, 1986). Gender equity goals presented in the curriculum are still very rarely met even in current textbooks. Gender diversity is rarely fully realized and especially gender minorities are often completely left out from textbooks (Kolman, 2020).

The aim of this study is to demonstrate how gender diversity is represented in Finnish middle school language textbooks. My choice of topic is based on my own experiences in studying gender in my earlier thesis as well as my personal interest of studying inequalities in the Finnish education system. I compare the gender diversity representations from two different decades; English and Swedish language textbooks used in the 1980s and in the 2010s. My study shows how the national curriculum is being followed and interpreted in these language textbooks.

The possible dissimilarity between English and Swedish textbooks is also a question that I am personally invested in as I am studying to become a teacher of both languages. English and Swedish have somewhat similar linguistic capabilities to express gender and diversity of gender, but cultural differences can also have an effect in how gender is talked about and represented. It is also interesting to find out what

kind of possible developments of gender representations I can find when comparing textbooks from two different decades.

After the introduction, chapters two and three offer important definitions for the key concepts in and around my study and the theoretical framework the study is situated in. The theoretical framework includes an overview of research on gender representations in textbooks, gender diversity and of previous studies. Thereafter, I present the data and methodology of the research, including the research questions. Chapter five introduces the analysis and the results of the study. To end my thesis, I discuss the results of the study and review the research process in chapter six.



## 2 KEY CONCEPTS

### 2.1 Sex and gender

The term “sex” refers to the gender assigned at birth and usually makes the distinction between the two binary genders: female and male (Baker, 2008). The sex of an infant is defined by biological factors such as chromosomes, reproductive organs, and hormones. According to Matsuno & Budge (2017) chromosomal irregularities can cause chromosomes to combine in a way that is other than XY and XX, the most used binary sex constructs. These irregularities are an example of how sex-possibilities go beyond the binary and that non-binary sexes are possible. Sex is a part of one’s identity in a juridical, medical, and reproductive way, but it must be separated from the concept of gender.

It is common and nearly standardized to use the term gender when talking about sex. For instance, it is common for a pregnant parent or a couple to host a “gender reveal party” in the US, where the sex of the baby is revealed to friends and family. “Sex” and “gender” as terms are often overlapping and hard to define in casual conversations (Baker, 2008). The lack of knowledge of these two distinctive terms has caused problematic opinions on the topic of gender and sometimes made it difficult for people to realize the gender spectrum fully (e.g., Richardson-Self, 2020). It is important to define the terms used especially in an academic context.

Sex is something we are all assigned at birth, but gender is something that we develop after birth. One’s sex rarely determines the whole identity (or gender) of a person on its own. There are endless factors that affect the development of one’s gender and gender identity. Rubin (1975) states that gender is, in theory, “a set of arrangements by which biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention” (cited in Baker, 2008: 4). Holmes (2007) focuses on the

power of social structures in the shaping of one's gender into masculine or feminine features, whereas Butler (1990) sees gender as a performance that is culturally and socially constructed behavior and is constructed in relation to the sex of a person. The gender hierarchy in our society should also be acknowledged when considering gender. Butler points out that being female is in some cultures seen as a natural indisposition, as opposed to being male. Genders outside the binary are not accepted in many contexts, even in education (Matsuno & Budge, 2017). The modernized understanding of gender as separate social phenomenon from sex was introduced by Money (1955, cited in Baker 2008: 4) already in 1955. That introduction by Money led to revealing discourses around sex and gender, which then paved the way for feminists to develop modern gender theories. I discuss the role of feminism and gender studies in more detail in section 3.1.

To fully understand what gender means it is vital to see gender as a spectrum. Matsuno & Budge (2017) explain that gender is constructed by the surrounding social interactions and discourses in relation to the internal sense of self-awareness. These processes then create gender expression, gender identity and gender. Matsuno & Budge (2017) highlight the importance of the binary of genders within these processes, even though one might reject those traditional gender roles and paradigms. The gender binary is such a rooted pattern in our society that ultimately all genders and gender identities are bound to somehow relate to it by either by reclaiming or rejecting it. Butler (1990) suggests that the gender binary system limits our understanding of both sex and gender, as the binary does not in reality exist at all but is a social construct.

Gender can be further divided into two separate categories, which are gender expression and gender identity. Matsuno & Budge (2017) explain that gender is expressed through behavior, physical appearance and other features that show to the outside world. Placing oneself in the continuum of feminine and masculine traits or rejection of those traits and the sense of one's gender can be defined as gender identity. Gender identity and gender expression can change in time and alter in different surroundings. In practice, this means that the biological sex of a person does not define the gender, gender identity or gender expression of them. In fact, non-binary or genderqueer people often feel that they shift around the gender spectrum or that they do not place themselves on that continuum at all. The individual gender representations and gender identities are endless beyond just female and male, thus naming all of them is virtually impossible. Gender identities related to the terms genderqueer and non-binary often act as umbrella terms for those who do not fit the label of female or male (Puckett & Levine, 2017).

Genderqueer as a term first came up in the late 1990s within gender and sexual minorities (Puckett & Levine, 2017). The term has various interpretations, but it is often linked to people that reconstruct the notion of the gender binary and construct

non-binary ways of expressing one's identity and gender. Matsuno & Budge (2017: 1) define the term non-binary as follows:

Non-binary is a term that defines several gender identity groups, including (but not limited to): (a) an individual whose gender identity falls between or outside male and female identities, (b) an individual who can experience being a man or woman at separate times, or (c) an individual who does not experience having a gender identity or rejects having a gender identity.

Non-binary as a term covers gender identities that do not translate exclusively to female or male. A non-binary person can also feel that they do not have a gender identity at all or that their gender identity and expression is very alternating (Matsuno & Budge, 2017: 1). In my study I have chosen to use the term non-binary to refer to these genders outside the binary instead of the term genderqueer, but either of the terms could have been used in my study.

As Matsuno & Budge (2017) put it, as of 2017, non-binary identities had not been accepted or even understood in many Western cultures yet (Matsuno & Budge, 2017: 1), thus the representation of non-binary gender identities in, for instance, the media has not been very substantial. Because gender is a social construct, the lack of representation and visibility of gender minorities makes it difficult for people to accept their own gender identity (Taylor et al., 2018) or to expand their views on gender as a whole. The bigger picture of the existence and visibility of gender minorities such as non-binary and transgender people can also be seen as a highly political movement and to even fuel social change (Monro, 2019). Butler (1990) has also reflected on how being outside the binary is a political statement on our socially constructed definition and labelling of people.

In a Finnish context, in which my research is situated in, it is noteworthy to mention that there is only one term that refers to both gender and sex: *sukupuoli*. Because of the lack of terminology, it can be difficult to sometimes interpret Finnish official publications on gender diversity and to decipher whether Finnish official publications talk about the social gender or the biological sex. For Finnish-speaking pupils it is important to let them know that even though Finnish does not separate the biological sex and the social gender as separate terms, but that other languages might. Additionally, pupils should be made aware of the phenomenon of gender.

Gender is the social phenomenon that we all take part in and what I am interested in studying in my thesis. I limit my study to only account for representations of different genders and gender identities in the study, as I am not interested in the biological features of one's sex, but rather the social and cultural aftermath of that assignment at birth. Textbooks as a part of education act as indicators of what one can be and what kind of identities are considered normal and accepted. It also speaks volumes when textbook creators do not incorporate different kinds of identities in their

textbooks and if, for example, genders outside the binary are not mentioned in any way. What is left unsaid is oftentimes more powerful than any words spoken.

## 2.2 Gender diversity

When talking about gender it is common to think of it in a very traditional binary way: one is either female or male. This binary way of perceiving gender is in fact quite the opposite of what gender diversity stands for. Gender is a diverse phenomenon which cannot be put into only two opposing groups. Gender diversity takes into consideration both gender majorities and minorities. (Gender Diversity & Intersex Centre of Expertise, 2021). Acknowledgment and representation of gender minorities such as intersex, transgender, and non-binary people is in the very heart of gender diversity work and therefore is a part of the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCCBE, 2014)

In the past gender diversity has been seen in some contexts as the inclusion of women in discourses. Because maleness has been standard and the norm in language, the inclusion of women in talk has been seen as progressive in previous research (Philips, 2014). However, as we live in the fourth wave of feminism, presenting gender variance means much more than just the equal representation of men and women. Gender minorities such as transgender and non-binary people should be presented and acknowledged when considering gender. Research around gender has not taken non-binary identities into account enough, and studying the non-binary is somewhat of a niche even today (Monro, 2019).

Men and women have been seen as two opposing social groups. Because genders are often limited to account for only men and women, the dichotomy is very apparent in the gendered world (Matsuno & Budge, 2017). Parsons & Bales (1956, cited in Holmes, 2007) acknowledge that the roles of men and women are so opposing because of societal and cultural models. Women have been seen as mothers, as expressive and emotional caregivers, whereas men have been seen as more goal-focused and instrumental breadwinners in our society (Holmes, 2007). The dichotomy has been present even in the 20th century because of how gender roles have been so strongly linked to biological features of sex that have been believed to determine men to be superior intellectually to women (Holmes, 2007). These roles are linked to the presence of the patriarchy and the traditional heteronormative family-values of the western culture. Gender is seen as a functional practice to make the nuclear family ideal happen, and it acts to divide labor. The notion of compulsory heterosexuality (Butler, 1990) and heteronormativity originally stem from the viewpoint of reproduction, as

individuals that were not profiting and reproducing the community were considered outcast.

Gender ideologies that the NCCBE presents are about inclusivity, equality, and normalization of genders in and outside the binary. The understanding of gender diversity in education makes it possible to everyone feel included and safe during education and childhood overall. Seeing gender as a spectrum, something that is not just one or the other, is still up to debate and politicized by many in Finland, including educators and people in power. Through textbooks and other discourses in school, gender diversity can be explained, depicted, and represented to children in a politically neutral setting.

### **2.3 Gender representation and gender ideology**

To understand what gender representation means we must first consider the notion of representation. Representation means more than using language to say something. Hall (1997) presents the idea of production of meaning through language as the definition of representation and the constructionist view on representation. Meaning is constructed through and via language and through the representational system of a language with endless amounts of symbols and signs (Hall, 1997). The way we use language to convey our ideas and thoughts says a lot about our understanding of the world around us besides the actual intended meaning of our speech. Representations are more than mere mentions, because they talk about society, norms and above all, power (Cameron, 2014 and Butler, 1990). To put it simply, representation is how stories and ideas of our reality are retold in texts and in different discourses, but also what stories are left out of discourses and texts.

Representations and ideologies of gender are specific to time and place (Cameron, 2014) and by examining and comparing those representations one can analyze how time and social change affect how people consider gender. For instance, representations of women have been inferior to men throughout history in many areas of life, including language textbooks (e.g., Sunderland et al., 2001). In addition, as the creation process of a textbook is quite time-consuming, the representations in them rarely match those of the time that the book is ultimately used.

Cameron (2014) presents the idea of ideology being always tied to a culture. Gender ideologies, whatever they include, are always embedded in the gender representations made within a culture and, so to say, allowed in a culture. Pietikäinen & Mäntynen (2009) merge the notion of belief and ideology, as representations do not necessarily express the reality of ideologies behind them. For instance, the discourses in language textbooks develop the gender ideologies of students through

representations, whether the students reject, accept, or contest those representations. Ideology as a term is often used to describe the belief system of a bigger group of people, but it is still evident that ideologies are individually constructed, and there is no one “feminist ideology”, for instance. Ideologies are a collection of representations which construct meanings in discourses and in culture, and, de facto, become visible only after the representations have been made (Kirsch, 2000).

### **3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this chapter I present the importance of feminism and Queer Theory, as they have an important role as the backbone of the theoretical framework in this study. In addition, I utilize previous research around textbooks, education, and gender in my study, for there is a lot that has been already researched about gender in textbooks. The National Core Curriculum for basic Education (NCCBE) and the publications made by the Finnish National Agency for Education act as my primary source of educational standards for basic education in Finland, therefore I present them as well in this chapter.

#### **3.1 Feminism and gender studies**

The past work of feminists and the field of gender studies construct the main theoretical framework for my research. Feminist perspectives aid in fully understanding and critically reflecting on the social inequalities related to gender (Bucholtz, 2003: 23). Feminism can be seen in multiple contexts in our world, including fields such as academia, social justice, education, and politics.

Bucholtz (2003) introduces the three significant bodies of feminist thought that emerged in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The three ideologies all seek the same goal, which is the equality of all genders and sexualities. For instance, liberal feminism(s) and feminists aim to make it possible for women to participate and be represented in all discourses, especially those run by male voices. Liberal feminists work within the current social structures of our world and do not seek a radical change of our social constructs, unlike radical feminists, who in some cases seek a universal and social revolution for the goal of equality. Bucholtz (2003) notes that liberal feminism has been the most effective ideology out of the three, since that body of feminist thought has for example worked for the loss of sexist language in society. Sexist

language that liberal feminists have successfully made publicly problematic has been, for instance, the use of masculine and male language as the norm and the use of gendered job-titles and names.

Mills (2008) examines the relationship between stereotypes and sexism in the realms of feminism. In her book Mills brings up that sexist language and gender stereotypes exist in time in different ways. The types of feminisms were categorized to liberal, radical, and cultural feminisms, and out of these three, liberal feminism has been seen as the “mainstream” way of executing feminist ideologies. Mills (2008) questions the disappearance of sexist language, as even though liberal feminisms have corrected sexist language and made language more “politically correct”, the way people view feminist issues may still be very much thriving in our current day. Because everyone has their own way of speaking and everyone can use language how they please, the worldview of an individual is not determined by language choices only. Not everyone has the same norms and standards as a language user.

Feminism evolves rapidly and the framework of it is considered to have evolved to its current state in four waves. First wave feminists fought for women’s right to vote and for reproductive rights of women in the late 19th century. Essentially, feminism based its roots in the independency and the human value of women. Second wave feminists challenged women’s societal, traditional and gender roles in the 1960s. It was during this time that Queer Theory (see section 3.2) and the three categories of feminism became more established. The third wave of feminism welcomed the reclaiming of the female voice and identity with free expression of sexuality and identity. In the 1990s, women took over and did as they pleased, and feminism began to go mainstream globally. As of now (2022) we are living in the very beginning of fourth-wave feminism of inclusivity, empowerment, equality, and freedom. Fourth-wave feminists consciously consider race and gender minorities in their work, which is something that was not acknowledged that much during the third wave. Even though feminism All these four waves paint a picture of how feminism has been viewed in different decades, and in my research, I acknowledge all of them in one way or another.

Understanding the definition of a stereotype is crucial for my research, as where there are representations there are almost bound to be stereotypes of some kind. Bourdieu et al. (1999) see stereotypes as views of individuals and of groups that are seen as having a range of possible set of features, roles, and narrative sequences. According to Third Wave Feminist Analysis (Mills 2003) stereotypes are often a multifaceted and a difficult thing to incorporate into research, as stereotypes are very context-based and evolve in time. Stereotypes stem from inequalities (such as discrimination of gender minorities) and understanding the reasons why stereotypes have evolved can make it possible to regard them in research. Women have been inferior to men in multiple contexts in history, but it is still meaningless to vocalize these past



stereotypes in new situations without any analysis of the context and the surrounding culture. Feminism has developed multiple different feminist theories and there is no one unified global feminism (Butler 1990). All gender issues should be analyzed in their contexts, where all the representational constraints are acknowledged and reflected on individually, with the help of previous feminist theories.

Liberal feminist ideologies are to great extent like the values presented in the current NCCBE. Gender diversity and gender awareness stem from the work of past and present modern feminists such as Butler and Mills.

### 3.2 Queer Theory

Queer Theory originated in the 1960s by revolutionary ideologies presented by feminists seeking their righteous status in the world. According to Kirsch (2000), in the field of academics and universities Queer Theory began to gain wider audience in the 1980s and the 1990s. Queer Theory was supported by individuals who were left out of the decision-making and the academic theory-building processes that were significant for them, and to which they had every right to participate in. These individuals presented mostly minorities, such as women and sexual minorities. It was the social movements- some of which were de facto queer movements - that constructed the core values of Queer Theory and opened a new field for critical social discussions in the academic world.

Queer Theory seeks to acknowledge gender minorities and sexual minorities and make the issues they face visible to the rest of the world (Pinar, 1998). Queer Theory critiques the social power structures between groups of people, between majorities and minorities. Kirsch (2000) states that queer theoretical analysis includes social movements, race, class, power, and ultimately social change (Kirsch, 2000: 18). Through social and cultural critique, queer theorists highlight the injustice and the inequity in our society. In addition, Queer Theory highlights the role of individualism as a part of the current post-modern culture (Kirsch, 2000: 4)

The notion of identity and identity-building and the representations of identity create some ideological clashes in the field of Queer Theory. Butler, an academically credited radical feminist, has wondered whether we should disregard the whole notion of identity entirely (Butler, 1990 & 1991). Identity is a complex term, and it carries multiple different interpretations to it. Identity for some can mean race or the color of one's skin, others it might stand for language and appearance. In the case of the study at hand the goal is to analyze the representations of different gender identities, which is also a very multi-layered phenomenon to study. Since early queer theorists in the

1960s wanted to specifically strive away from certain identity-labels regarding sex and gender, it can be difficult to understand how queer theorists view gender and identity.

Gender and gender identity can be invisible for others, but assuming someone else's identity based on appearance or other visible attributes is oftentimes inappropriate. Even an educated guess is still in the end a guess. Therefore, in my study it is truly vital to acknowledge that as a researcher I cannot truly study the identities in the books, but rather the representations of identities. For instance, I cannot assume anyone's gender in the textbooks, but I can analyze what kinds of appearances, stories, and language the creators of the books have chosen to represent in the textbooks.

Acknowledging the equality of all humans is crucial for Queer Theory, but in the end, is it proactive for the purpose of Queer Theory to view everyone in a universally neutral way? As it has been proven, some minorities, such as queer people, have been mistreated and misrepresented in our cultures for decades (e.g., *Monro, 2019*), social criticism must have a place in our view of the world. The universal way of looking at people and the world can lead to the continuation of those historical patterns of oppression, even if the intention of universalism is the opposite (*Kirsch, 2000: 4*).

The goal of universalism is often linked to the goal of one community. Queer Theory however deconstructs the notion of one community (*Kirsch, 2000*), as there will always be a dominant culture, which dictates the way of things. For example, the sexual majority in our western society is heavily straight and monogamous. Heterosexuality in most people creates a norm of being heterosexual for people outside the majority. This heteronormativity and “compulsory heterosexuality” (*Butler, 1990*) can lead to the discrimination of other cultures outside the heterosexual sphere (*Kirsch, 2000*). Queer Theory and queerness are in the heart of being outside the dominant culture. Therefore, in theory, queerness can never be the dominant culture itself. It is about rebellion, resistance, and demand for a change. It can be easier and arguably more profitable to target language textbooks towards the dominant culture, to the one common community. However, the NCCBE demands equality and gender diversity in many of their publications and guidelines (*NCCBE, 2014*). Educators and teachers should be using materials that reflect the values presented in the curriculum, but sometimes textbook creators market their materials only to the dominant culture.

Queer Theory is about social change. This social change comes from the relativity of gender and identity, but above all else, it comes from questioning authority. Queer theorists (and queer people) live in a world that is not their own. It belongs to the dominant culture, the majority. Resistance and reform are important for social change. Thus, Queer Theory plays a major role for my research about gender diversity in language textbooks. The total redefinition of language textbooks as pieces of queer literature would be impossible and even detrimental for the purpose of inclusivity

(Kirsch, 2000: 8), but as the NCCBE demands for gender diversity in education, the dominant culture cannot be the only one represented in textbooks.

Queer theory is a theoretical field of critical discourse analysis that suits the purpose of the study at hand. Historically the presentation of gender has not been diverse in textbooks (e.g., Michel, 1986 and Macleod & Norrby, 2002). and there has always been a power relationship between those identities in front covers of textbooks and those identities that are completely silenced. The framework provided by the field of Queer Theory and queer linguistics play a vital role in my study. Queer Linguistics can be considered a descendant of Queer Theory. Queer Linguistics explores how language can contain and maintain social inequalities by methodically analyzing discursive and linguistic constructions in social contexts (Leap, 2015: 661). Leap (2015) argues that analysis of identity, gender, and language demands discourse centered perspective, which is why Queer Linguistics has a lot in common with CDA.

Queer theory highlights the struggles and discrimination that queer people face daily (Kirsch, 2000: 18). Gaining acknowledgement from the “majority” or for example from national institutions is still a struggle in the 2020s. Queer theory advocates for the underdog. This resistance and rebellion are very often political and considered activism. To carry out research that has Queer theoretical perspectives demands an understanding of the socio-political context and analysis of the surrounding cultures (Kirsch, 2000). This critical social discussion that is present in Queer Theory all have the same goal; to create an inclusive, accepting, and diverse world. This process not only demands the identification of injustice and inequalities, but also connecting those problems with real life actions and solutions. For gender diversity to realize in teaching materials, the problems must be first identified and analyzed. Representing gender in a diverse and comprehensive manner in educational materials such as language textbooks will always have an underlying force of a queer movement and has the goal of social change (Kirsch, 2000).

### **3.3 Gender diversity in education and the curriculum**

The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCCBE) is the most crucial source of educational standards and guidelines in basic education in Finland. The curriculum states what kind of things should and should not be included in teaching and learning and acts as a standard of norms and values, which should be represented actively in education.

The current NCCBE states that education should provide knowledge and resources on gender diversity as well as stray away from gendered traditions and roles (NCCBE, 2014: 18). Pupils should be made aware of different genders and presented

with diverse gender models. Education should further promote gender equality and prevent any marginalization of people (NCCBE 2014: 16-18). Students should additionally acknowledge the effect of their own views on gender, their own gender identity, and possible stereotypes they encounter, and distance themselves from these discourses.

The traditional binary views on gender and gender identity still affect and limit the possibilities of complete gender equality. Butler (1990) brings out that the binary way of looking at gender is essentially about power: us and them. Feminist gender ideologies are oftentimes still contested internationally. Sannikka (2020) and Virranieni (2021) report on how gender minorities are discriminated against even in the Finnish parliament and how gender minorities face the harsh reality of harassment, violence, and marginalization in their everyday lives in Finland. Teachers, educators, and parents have a huge impact on how children perceive gender and gender equality, which is where teaching materials also play an important role in presenting different perspectives on gender and identity. Education should be equal to all genders, and this should not be affected by any political ideologies, opinions, or religions (NCCBE, 2014: 16).

The traditional gender roles are acknowledged in the current curriculum. What those traditional roles truly mean is left unsaid by official documents, but typically one could link those terms to the cultural and societal roles that women and men have had in history. Such roles are examined and researched by for instance Parsons & Bales (1956) and Sydie (1987). Parsons & Bales (1956) communicate the history of the complementary roles of men and women and claim that the differing roles have to do with the binary genders being considered as opposite, in other words, the gender dichotomy. Sydie (1987) highlights how the societal role of women has been to serve men and to be secondary subjects to men, and that those comparisons between the genders have been based on biological, social, and intellectual capabilities of women. Parsons & Bales (1956) state that gender roles of men and women have been constructed in relation to family and the division of labor in raising a family, which is a statement that follows along the arguments made by Sydie (1987) and other researchers of gender (e.g., Butler, 1990 and Bucholtz, 2014).

One of the main concerns I have as a researcher of gender diversity has to do with the exclusion of gender minorities. The Finnish National Agency for Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health both use terms such as gender diversity, gender awareness and gender equality in their publications and the national curriculum. However, there is no clear acknowledgment of more than two genders, even though that is what gender diversity *de facto* stands for. The use of the plural form of the word *gender* makes it impossible to exactly know for sure whether the national standard for gender diversity in basic education covers only two or more genders.

Gender diversity and the gender spectrum should be something pupils acknowledge in education, furthermore, learn more about in school. However, the national curriculum in Finland has never included actual talk about genders outside the binary. Finnish schools follow the national curriculum as the latest and most important document regarding the regulations, standards and goals of education and teaching. If there is no mention of non-binary, genderqueer or other gender minorities, the acknowledgement of them in teaching materials might unfortunately correlate with that.

The National Core Curriculum from 1985 that applies to the older textbooks in my study also includes a section for gender equality. It is very similar to the statements made in the current curriculum, but there is a very distinct difference in the way gender is viewed in the curriculum. Gender is only mentioned in a separate text specifically about gender equality. Gender is thus something not fully realized in the curriculum, but rather something included as a separate phenomenon that should be acknowledged on the side. The discussion of gender and gender diversity is much more apparent and explicit in the current NCCBE.

The Finnish National Agency for Education carried out a report in 2009 (Tainio & Teräs) on how gender appears and is constructed in educational materials. That report has since then been directed towards publishers of educational materials to use as a guideline on how to portray and construct gender in textbooks. The report explains the notion of gender equality and diversity in a practical manner for textbook creators and is a product of feminism and gender studies. For my research, the importance of this report is tremendous, as it represents how feminism and awareness of gender issues have been brought to the attention of Finnish educators. The report and the guides created based on it act as a useful guideline on how the curriculum can be put into practice and constructed via choice of content, text, and pictures in materials (Tainio & Teräs, 2009). There were no such reports or guidelines for textbook publishers in the 1980s, which is also worth considering when analyzing the results of my study.

There is an underlying problem between the guidelines provided by the Finnish National Agency and school textbooks; there are no defining laws, regulations or demands for textbooks to follow the NCCBE. At the end of the day, the decision to use or not to use certain textbooks lies in the hands of teachers, educators and/or schools. From my own experience I can tell that in some cases the textbooks are chosen by the teacher themselves and in others it might be a group of teachers or even the principal. It is difficult to say how much teachers value the quality of the books regarding for example gender diversity and the representation of different kinds of people, but I would argue that teachers tend to primarily choose their material based on other qualities. The amount and quality of exercises, the user-friendliness of the

materials or the possibilities of differentiation will in most cases be prioritized over cultural and identity-related factors of the textbooks. Teachers also often choose their materials outside the textbooks, which then increases the responsibility of the teachers to choose materials that correlate with the NCCBE. Teachers and educators have a responsibility of maintaining the notion of gender diversity in education, whether the textbooks display the values of the NCCBE or not. It is of course easier for teachers to acknowledge gender diversity in class if it is mentioned and presented in the books, but at the end of the day, it is not in any way officially monitored. Some textbooks might mention in the preface that they follow certain curriculums or that they have included multifaceted perspectives on different identities, but it is ultimately the obligation of the teacher to select which materials to use.

### **3.4 Gender representation and diversity in textbooks**

A study done in 2006 (Kauppinen et al.) revealed that 98% of 9th grade FL teachers in Finland consider textbooks to be the most important resource material in teaching. Textbooks reflect the current pedagogical and linguistic values and traditions and act as representations of the language and its culture for those using the books. Textbooks can also act as a “hidden curriculum” and guide the learning as much as the national curriculum itself. In their study, Kallio & Rehn (2003) exposed how the values presented in the curriculum did not in fact correspond with those that were represented in school textbooks. Textbooks can therefore act as the indicator of the hidden values outside the curriculum that are rooted in our society so strongly that the curriculum alone cannot change them.

Gender bias in textbooks is something that has been studied and proven to be visible even in textbooks today. The male gender is often overrepresented in textbooks and men and women are often stereotypically depicted as representatives of their gender (Blumberg, 2007). These remarks have been made by various studies (e.g., Michel, 1986 and Macleod & Norrby, 2002). The male and the masculine are still seen as something ideal and above other forms of gender representation (Baker, 2008). Even with numerous reforms, changes in curriculums and societal shift towards gender-awareness, teaching materials still rarely meet the mark in equality.

So, how can gender diversity in fact be represented in language textbooks? The most straight-forward way to consider all genders in textbooks is through language itself. As Matsuno & Budge (2017: 1) inform, many non-binary individuals use gender neutral pronouns, for example they/them/their in singular, or neopronouns such as zie/hir/hirs, xe/xem/xyr and ey/em/eir. Including pronoun choices outside the

binary is a very self-explanatory way to present gender variance in texts. Gendered titles such as king and queen or lady and sir are part of sexist language, that has been problematized by liberal feminists from the 1990s (Mills, 2003). I would argue that gender diversity is also represented by the rejection of old gendered models of speaking and acting.

Gender diversity in textbooks is constructed through discourses and representations. These representations can be very indirect, for example representations of gender models via characters and people in addition to semiotic construction of meaning through language. Direct talk about sexism, gender equality and gender diversity are often left out of language textbooks, thus the way gender comes up in the books overall tells the reader about the gender ideologies of the authors and the surrounding cultures. Gender representations in textbooks have been widely studied from different research stances. The previous studies that have been conducted in the field of textbook analysis and gender studies play a crucial role for my study and should be acknowledged.

### **3.5 Previous studies**

The amount of research that has been done around gender representations in textbooks is significant. For example, Laakkonen (2007), Sirén (2018) and Purhonen (2021) have all conducted similar studies in their theses. All three of the studies had to do with gender representations, but none of them had the point of view of gender diversity in them. Sunderland et al. (2001) and Macleod & Norrby (2002) have presented some very important research on the sexual stereotyping and poor representation of genders in both foreign and Swedish language textbooks. The notion of minority genders is however lacking in these two studies. I have noticed this niche in textbook research, which is one of the reasons why I chose this specific theme in my thesis. Firstly, I present the work that has been done in Finland about gender representations in textbooks and end with having a closer look at the work of Sleeter & Grant (2010) on social justice and textbooks.

The studies of Laakkonen (2007), Sirén (2018) and Purhonen (2021) all studied the representations of gender in Finnish EFL textbooks. The goal of their studies was to examine how gender equality and gender representations are introduced in school textbooks. Laakkonen (2017) reports that her study had very similar results to her predecessors, as men and women were represented to have certain models and gendered identities and the male gender was overrepresented. In her thesis she additionally reflects on the responsibility of textbook creators and teachers in implementing the curriculum. The study of Sirén (2017) on representations of men and women in English

language textbooks showed results that highlighted the social roles and gendered activities of characters in the textbooks. Purhonen (2021), similarly to Laakkonen and Sirén, detected the visibility of traditional gender roles and gendered language in her study. The amount of indirect and direct references to gender varied in her results in different school subjects. Basic & Raheb (2020) examined gender representations and equality in Swedish language textbooks in Sweden. Their research proved that there were stereotypical representations of men and women and, again, the viewing of maleness as the norm in the textbooks was apparent. These findings did not correspond with the values of the Swedish curriculum.

Textbook analysis has been a point of interest for researchers of equality and social justice in America. Sleeter & Grant (2010) have studied how the curriculum and the textbooks can reinforce inequities between social groups. In their study, Sleeter & Grant (2010) established how diversity of race, class, gender, and disability is represented in over 40 American textbooks of varied subjects. They also wanted to analyze whether there has been some development in how different identities were represented in them by comparing older and newer textbooks from the time span of 15 or so years. The ways of depicting diversity in texts were examined through picture-analysis, anthology analysis, "people to study" analysis, language analysis, story-line analysis, and miscellaneous (Sleeter & Grant, 2010: 189). My methodology in my analysis is very similar to that of Sleeter & Grant in their study.

Sleeter & Grant (2010) gained many insightful results in their study. Most of the textbooks in their study had an overrepresentation of the male gender, while female characters and the female point of view in texts were considered as an afterthought, something secondary to the male experience. However, male characters were depicted primarily through stereotypically masculine activities (such as physical labor and business instead of caregiving or teaching), whereas female characters did have more representation of non-traditional female activities linked to them. Most people in the books did convey some stereotypical gender roles. One of the ways in which diversity was portrayed was by using non-sexist language. However, in some books, there were a lot of instances where for example the male gender was seen as the norm in language (for example gendered job titles and the general use of the masculine pronoun he). It was also concluded that out of the representation of famous people and celebrities, male celebrities were acknowledged far more than female celebrities, an observation that Laakkonen (2017) made in her study as well.

EFL textbooks have gained a lot of attention by researchers of gender representations already since the 1970s with the rise of the women's movement. Sunderland et al (2001) have collected some of the key features that have been studied extensively during the past decades on gender representations in textbooks. These features include overrepresentation of men, the higher valued positions of men in the books,



continuous performance of stereotypical gendered activities by men and women and the expressive and emotional view of women. Stereotypical roles of women and especially men have been also the result of studies of Swedish language textbooks (e.g., Demir, 2021). Linguistically researchers have been focused on who is given voice in textbooks and in which ways, the verbs and adjectives linked to specific gender, discursive roles of men and women. (Sunderland et al., 2001: 252).

The study done by Sleeter & Grant (2010) offers a toolkit on how to analyze and represent gender diversity in textbooks. Their study offers many valuable arguments for the context of my study, even though the research included only American curricula and textbooks. Nevertheless, Sleeter & Grant (2010) have not included any mention, talk or even hint towards the existence of other genders than male and female. Gender diversity should consider the existence of gender minorities, but Sleeter & Grant have not decided to do so in their research in defining and interpreting the term. The work of Sleeter & Grant gives me worthy standpoints on the gender representations of men and women in American textbooks, but my study additionally highlights the depiction of the non-binary in the Finnish context.

## **4 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

Research on textbooks can be done in different ways depending on the goal of the study. In this chapter I firstly present my research questions and goals of my study. Secondly, I present my data and discuss some research ethics regarding my data and the analysis of textbooks. Finally, I demonstrate the methodology of my analysis and some reasoning behind my chosen methods.

My study is a textbook analysis with some qualities of critical discourse analysis since I am analyzing societal changes and development in language textbooks. These changes in teaching materials stem from changes in cultural norms and beliefs, which is why my study has features of discourse analysis. The study is mostly qualitative, but some analysis of the data is done in a quantitative manner. Feminism, gender studies and Queer Theory play a meaningful role in identifying which texts and pictures are worth analyzing in the data.

### **4.1 Research questions and goals**

The aim of my study is to establish how gender diversity is and has been represented in Finnish middle school English and Swedish language textbooks. It is my goal to find out first how gender diversity is represented in the textbooks and then to compare the two subjects as well as decades. I use the national curriculum from each decade to act as a guideline on what kind of standards are demanded by the Finnish National

agency for Health and Education about gender representation and discourses around gender in education.

There is a wide range of different research questions one might choose on this topic, but I limited mine to these questions:

- How is gender diversity portrayed in Finnish middle school Swedish and English language textbooks?
- How have the representations of gender diversity changed over time in Swedish and English language textbooks?

I examine four different distinctive ways of representing gender diversity in the textbooks: texts, characters, language, and cultural references. I do not analyze every text and picture in the books, but rather choosing texts and pictures that are relevant to my topic and thesis. Gender representations construct the depiction of gender diversity, which is why I in some instances examine the individual gender representations in the books. With that in mind I must also study what is being left unsaid; why is gender diversity not represented in some instances, how the dichotomy of genders is still present in the books, and how gender diversity could have been brought up more in different parts of the book.

## **4.2 Data and research ethics**

In my study I have chosen to look at only physical textbooks. As there were no digital textbooks in the 1980s, I wanted to focus my research on printed books. The textbooks I chose are all aimed towards 9<sup>th</sup> grade middle school students. Possible additional exercise books, e-materials, and other teaching materials have been left out of my analysis. In addition, I have left out separate grammar sections in the textbooks from my study.

I chose middle school textbooks since the students at that age period of early teenage years are in the stage of development, where language learners start to shape their own identities as language users and critically think about cultures and ideologies around. Although, one could argue that language learners are shaping their identities from even earlier on. Another reason why I chose to research 9<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks was because I had noticed that lower-grade textbooks oftentimes have a strong emphasis on grammar, basic vocabulary and everyday conversations, and the presence of topics such as gender are thus quite limited. The choice of books was not the easiest task for me as a researcher, because the topic at hand can be difficult to find in language textbooks. After thorough research I chose four textbooks that I conducted my

research on. From the Swedish language textbooks, I chose to study *Nya Vindar 9* (1986) and *Hallonbåt 3-4* (2017), whereas from the English language textbooks I chose *Ok English 9* (1987) and *Scene 3* (2019). Older textbooks *Ok English 9* and *Nya Vindar 9* do not include almost any exercises in them, but newer textbooks do. *Hallonbåt 3-4* acts as both a textbook and an exercise book.

As I mentioned earlier, I am very interested and passionate about all gender-related issues as well as teaching materials overall. I consciously keep my research and especially the analysis of my data as objective as I possibly can. One cannot analyze every picture and text in a textbook from the standpoint of a killjoy, who criticizes every text and image. Language textbooks are a limited teaching material, and they need to incorporate a plethora of texts. Moreover, the aim of my study is not to criticize or put blame on textbook publishers or any individual people. The presence (or lack of) of gender diversity in textbooks is a product of a society and is always related to a time and a place. The aim of my study is to examine what are the ways that are and can be used to express the diversity of genders.

When it comes to research ethics, I have received permission from the publishers of the books on researching their books and attaching pictures from the physical copies of the books into my thesis. Attaching pictures makes my thesis easier to understand as I do not have to explain certain visual features or pictures by writing them out. It is worth noticing that as I was doing my research permit enquiries, the publishers of the textbook series *Scene* advised me to take into closer inspection *Scene 3* for its suitable themes in the texts. I have analyzed all the four textbooks very objectively and from the same point of view, but this recommendation made by the publishers of *Scene* certainly caused some questions in my research process.

### **4.3 Methods of analysis - CDA and MCA**

Teaching materials act primarily as a source of information and as a tool in teaching and learning (Uusikylä & Atjonen, 2001). My analysis does not focus on the actual learning goals of a subject, but on the identity-building aspect of learning and education. Teaching materials always represent certain ideologies and views, even though one could argue that they in theory should not. Language textbooks are a great medium to teach values and present people and the whole world in a way that correlates with the curriculum.

The present study is informed by features of critical discourse analysis (CDA), as I analyze how representations are made and how those representations maintain, reject, or resist ideologies. Van Dijk (2015, cited in Hamilton et al.) articulates that CDA is always somewhat political and involves social power-roles and the examination of

inequalities. Queer Theory and CDA have a lot in common, therefore it is a natural continuum for my study to use the methodology of CDA.

Teaching materials can be seen as its own form of discourse, as it has a clear purpose for the users/readers of it (e.g., Fairclough, 1997) In my study, I focus on the bigger picture behind the choices of the representations. The investigation of the gender diversity representations requires some overview on the form of the texts in the books. By searching for gender-related topics and language from the textbooks, I focus on the social intent of the materials in my results. Teaching materials are also somewhat regulated by the NCCBE, which is also very important to note when doing critical discourse analysis on them.

Analyzing textbooks as a form of discourse gives my research the opportunity to further my understanding of social power and power relations in the NCCBE and in language textbooks. When an institute or a group of people can limit or even erase the existence of certain identities and gender minorities, it has to do with power (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2009). Whether the exclusion of for instance intersex people is intentional or not, the institute responsible of the text or practices at hand is presenting and taking advance of its power.

Qualitative analysis of textbooks is bound to cause certain kinds of ethical problems regarding the reliability of the results. Since there are no clear guidelines on what the actual ways in which gender diversity can be portrayed, displayed, and represented in textbooks, it is my responsibility as a researcher to firstly understand how the phenomenon can be represented in textbooks overall before taking a closer look at my specific chosen textbooks. Gender diversity is not mentioned in the subject-specific sections of the NCCBE, but it is incorporated into the general sections regarding basic education. Gender diversity is expected to be carried out in education overall and not just in language textbooks or other teaching materials. This can create difficulties for both teachers and textbook creators; what is the actual ratio of responsibility between the materials and the teacher? Is it more important that the materials represent the values of the NCCBE, or does that fall into the hands of the teacher?

In my analysis I use the work of Sacks et al. (1978) on Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) as a part of my methodology. What is significant in MCA is the definition of membership and how memberships in our world are created in relation to our society and culture and in relation to other members. Memberships are constructed via activities and routine accomplishments that people do. Memberships are often related to social features. For instance, the question of social order is based on our own culturally shared knowledge on what kind of social cues and activities categorize people into certain categories. Housley & Fitzgerald (2015) claim in their article that even though MCA is not necessarily seen as a completely worked out methodology, it still works in favor of empirical studies of our culture. MCA as a part of

Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis reproduces insights on social behaviors, and, in my study, gendered behaviors. MCA is used in my study to further analyze and understand how gender is performed by certain activities and how people are categorized into certain gender identities through those actions. In practice, how MCA becomes a resource for my research, is when the activities that the characters do in pictures or in texts in the textbooks seem gendered even though the gender of them is not explicitly mentioned. For instance, if a parent cooking up steaks and playing catch with their son is assumed to be male, they are categorized to the male gender.

The analysis process firstly begins with the choice of representations I aim to examine. My research questions aid in my task to understand and deconstruct the meanings, texts, and language in the books. To construct my analysis, I consider gender diversity through characters, texts and exercises, language, and finally cultural references. From characters I examine main characters that reappear in the books and celebrities that are introduced in the books by how they become gendered and what kinds of roles they have in the textbooks. In the category of texts and exercises I look at the texts and exercises that are specifically made for the textbook and that represent gender or diversity of it. In this section I also consider category-bound activities of some gendered characters. Gendered language is analyzed by looking at the ways how language portrays gender, for instance via pronouns and gendered job titles. Finally, I explore what kinds of gender ideologies and representations cultural texts and references present in the textbooks.

Textbooks can provide different kinds of depictions for gender and gender diversity and the depictions can be based on the values and views of not only the creators of the books but also the surrounding culture, society, and context that the creators live in. The language textbook as a genre is also limited in representing all values of gender diversity. In my study I mainly analyze texts and gendered language, but indirect gender representations also come through imagery. The themes in the texts are more often about travelling, school, music and about some conversational situations, such as asking for directions or making a telephone call. Thus, gender diversity is present in characters, texts, and language in an indirect way.

## 5 ANALYSIS

In this chapter I present the findings on representations of gender diversity in the four textbooks. I firstly consider the ways in which gender diversity present in the textbooks directly and indirectly via characters, texts and exercises, language, and cultural references, and then move on to comparing the books with each other. The main goal of my analysis is to understand how gender diversity is represented in these language textbooks overall, but also to compare the gender representations between English and Swedish textbooks.

I begin my analysis by looking at the characters of different genders in the books and then moving on to stories and texts that have to do with gender. In some contexts, I take imagery into account when analyzing the characters in the books, as it often offers interesting insights about gender in the books. I end my analysis by examining all the cultural references in the textbooks that also represent genders and gender ideologies.

### 5.1 Gender diversity in characters

Both English textbooks in my research mention that the characters in the texts are real people. The Swedish books have not included such a statement. These statements are important because the characters can represent genders, especially if they are real people with their own gender identities. Some of the books had clear main characters and side characters that reappeared through the book, and some did not.

Characters in the books often represent a certain gender, and by having main characters that reappear in the texts and have a bigger role in the books, the authors can consciously or unconsciously promote certain kinds of gender identities over others. Both Swedish textbooks have multiple main characters, but in very different ways. On the other hand, the English books present a significant number of celebrities that

also represent gender. I have attached pictures and excerpts from the books to make them chosen examples easier to comprehend and incorporated four diagrams on gender representations through characters, in which I have conducted some quantitative analysis.

It is essential to mention that when I am analyzing the gender of characters in the textbooks, I can never be sure of the gender identity of anyone. I have based my gender categorization of the characters on the names of the characters, their personal pronouns and how they are referred to and talked about. I have decided not to assume the gender of a character through only appearance, yet in some cases the imagery of the books do represent gender and gender ideologies very directly, which I certainly take into consideration.

### 5.1.1 Characters in the older books

#### OK ENGLISH 9 (1987)

All the texts in Ok English 9 have different real-life people in them, which is why there is a very large representation of people in the book. Ok English 9 does not have any reappearing characters, which means that the book would be able to represent a wide range of different genders and gender diversity. However, within the whole book, there are no references to any characters who represent gender minorities.

The gender of the characters that do come up in individual texts come up usually by the narrator mentioning their gender or through reference by personal pronouns. For instance, there is a chapter titled "*Schoolgirls*" in Ok English 9 (Ok English 9, 46), where the text presents the average school day of two female characters. The gender of the characters in the text is presented already in the title of the text, even though one could argue that the gender of them has nothing to do with the contents of the text. Gender is a way to describe the characters already in the title. The gender of these schoolgirls in this text comes up also with the use of feminine personal pronouns (she/her) and through the names of the characters (Larissa and Jody). These tools of how to represent gender are seen through-out the whole textbook with also male characters.

There are a significant number of real-life celebrities, authors, poets, and other well-known people presented in the book. There is a significantly large representation of male celebrities compared to celebrities of other genders in Ok English 9. Out of the 35 celebrities in the book, 31 were male, four were female and there were no celebrities of other genders (see Figure 1). I provide discussion of the significance of representation of celebrities in the textbooks in section 5.4.



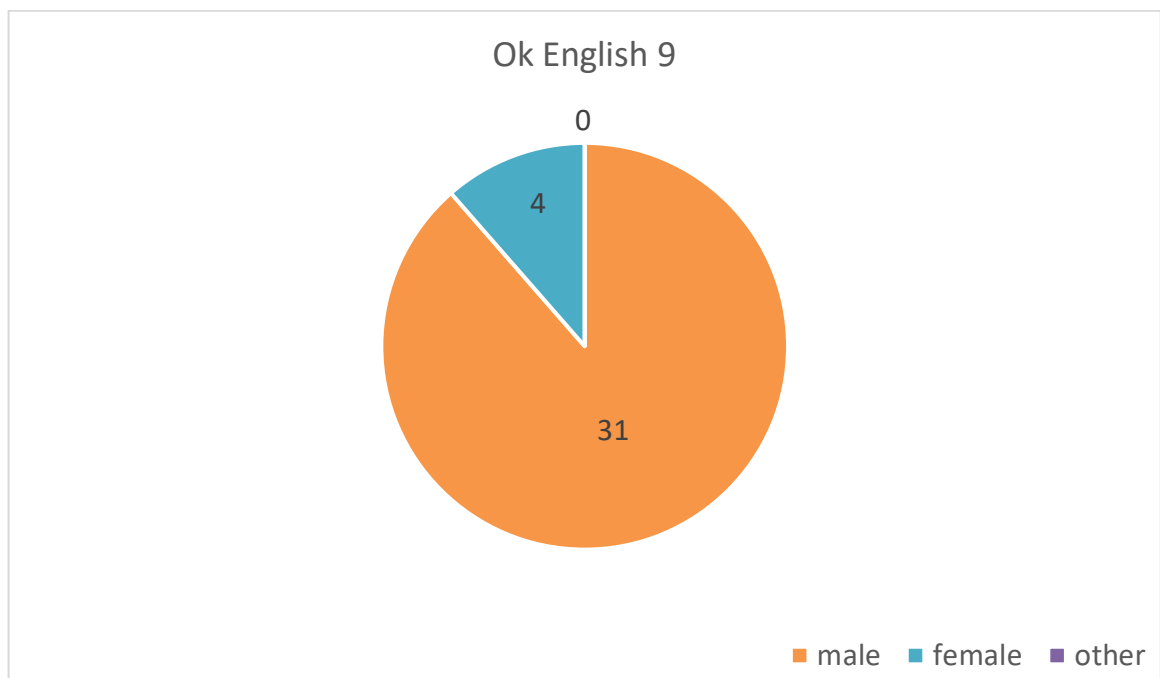


FIGURE 1 The distribution of celebrities in Ok English 9 by gender.

### **NYA VINDAR (1986)**

Nya vindar 9 introduces new characters in almost every chapter, thus the number of people represented is large. There are eight main characters that reappear in the texts, but there is no clear one main character. The reappearing characters in Nya vindar 9 (for example Vivi-Ann and Keith) represent only the two binary genders, four of them male and four of them female (see Figure 2).

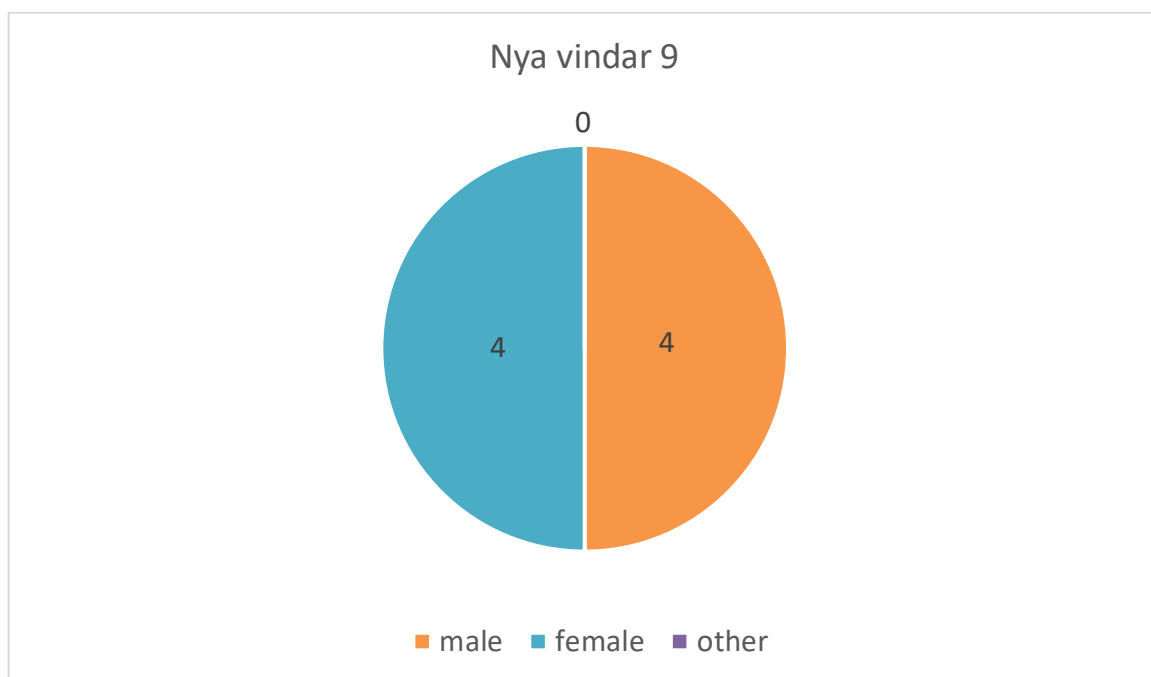


FIGURE 2 The distribution of main characters in Nya vindar 9 by gender.

The gender of the reappearing characters is presented through gendered personal pronouns (*hon/han*) and through actual mention of their gender by themselves, by other characters or by the narrator in text (see for example Excerpts 1 and 2). The chapter that told the story of Jenny in Excerpts 1 and 2 was even titled “*Jenny Åberg - simmarflickan*”, which translates to “Jenny Åberg - swimgirl”. This example of how Jenny is talked about and how her gender comes up in the text is very similar to how the gender of the other characters in Nya vindar 9 are presented.

*Jag är en tjej som är 15 år...*  
 (Translation: *I am a girl who is 15 years old...*)

EXCERPT 1 Jenny talks about herself. Nya vindar 9, 27.

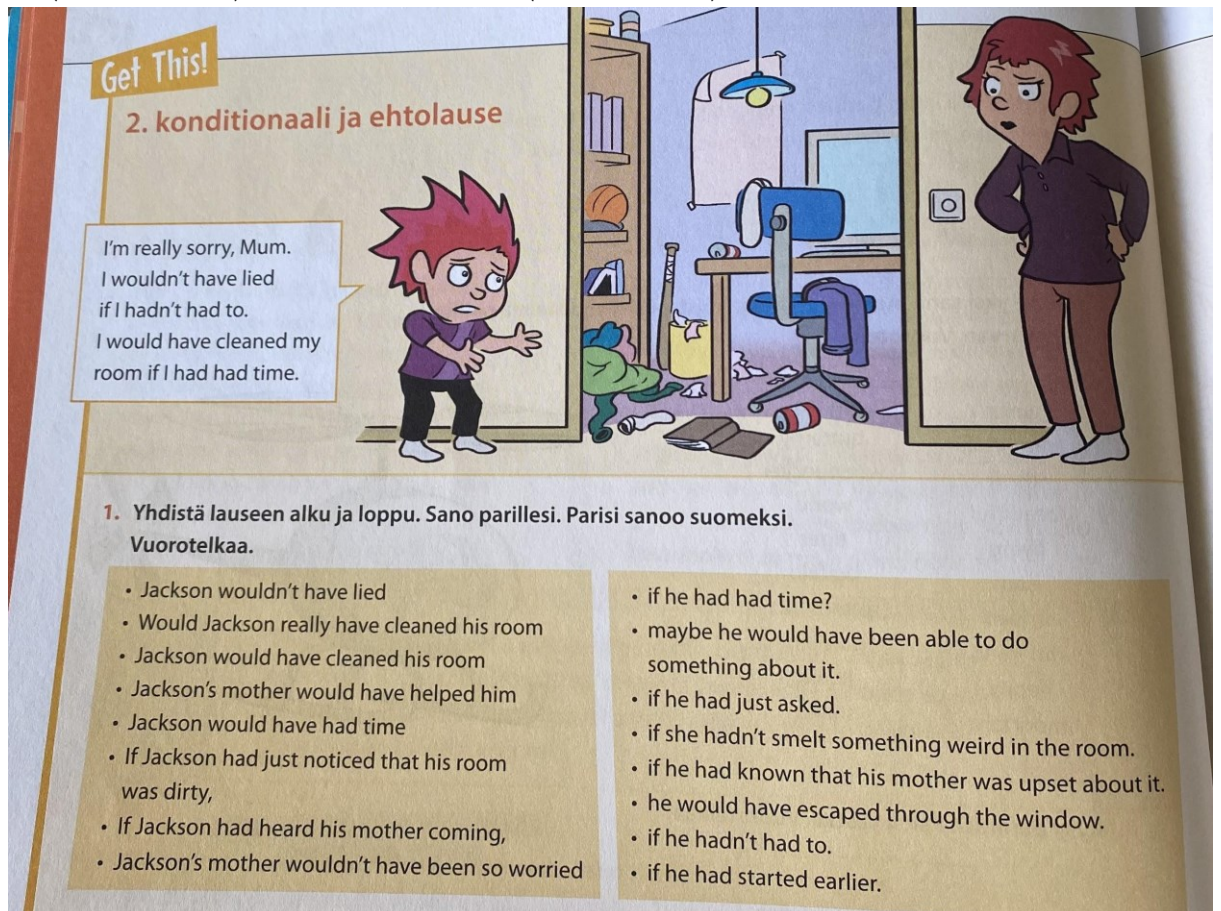
*Jennys bästa resultat kom i fjol. Då blev hon trettonde i SUM-SIM.*  
 (Translation: *Jenny's best placement happened last year. She then placed 13th in SUM-SIM.*)

EXCERPT 2 Jenny is referred to by feminine pronoun *hon*. Nya vindar 9, 24.

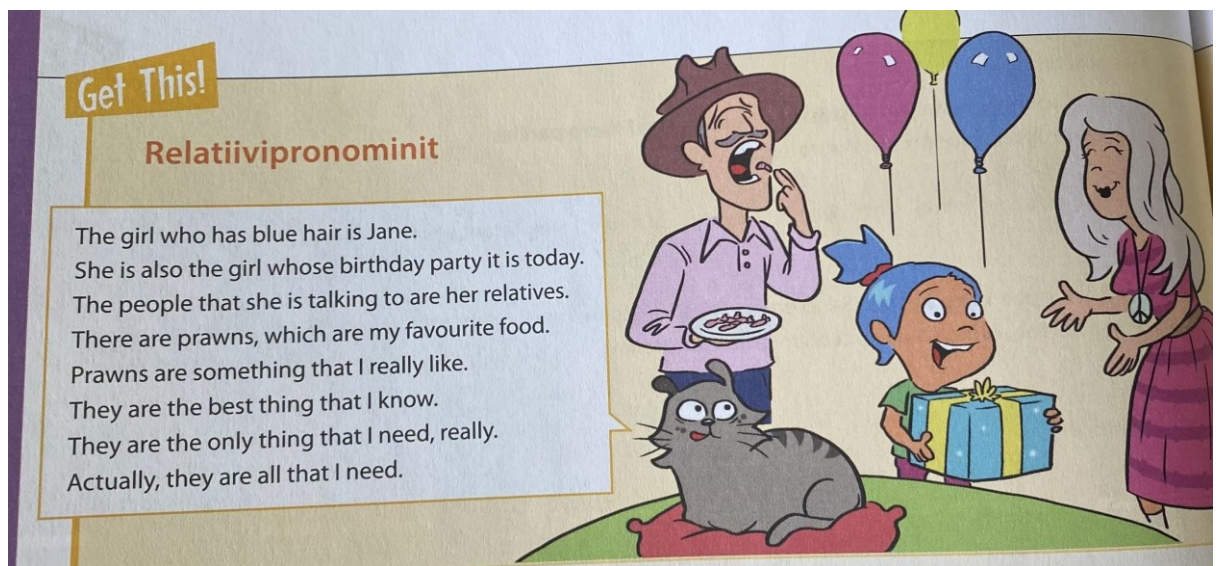
## 5.1.2 Characters in the newer books

### SCENE 3 (2019)

Scene 3 has no main characters, but the authors do introduce some drawn cartoon characters that appear in almost every short grammar section in the middle of the book. Jackson, even though having a somewhat gender-neutral name, is referred to as male (see Picture 1) and Jane as female (see Picture 2) in the book.



PICTURE 1 *Jackson* the cartoon character is on the left and he is referred to by masculine pronouns. Scene 3, 14.



PICTURE 2 The cartoon character *Jane* is referred to by feminine pronouns and as a girl. Scene 3, 66.

The authors have included a variety of drawn characters in the books in addition to Jackson and Jane. Drawn characters can easily be created as genderless or vice-versa representing the diversity of gender. Picture 3 shows one of the few examples in Scene 3 where there is a drawn character who is not referred to at all in any way, which makes the gender representation difficult to analyze. In addition, the appearance of the character does not provide any defining gendered features. For many the appearance of a person can be the most identifying factor when viewing gender. In this case, the lack of definition through imagery and text creates an impression of gender neutrality.



PICTURE 3 The “genderless” character. Scene 3, 76.

It is noteworthy to mention that naming the drawn characters with gendered human names and by referring to them by gendered titles and pronouns they become representative of only specific gender. No gender minorities were represented directly in the textbook in the characters, but as I mentioned, the drawn cartoon characters do provide some diverse representations of people overall and often can ignore the notion of gender altogether.

Scene 3, similarly to Ok English 9, had a strong emphasis on the representation of celebrities in the book. The representation of genders through the celebrities in the book was highly emphasizing male celebrities and there was only one female celebrity mentioned. Again, no gender minorities were represented in the celebrities in the textbook (see Figure 3).

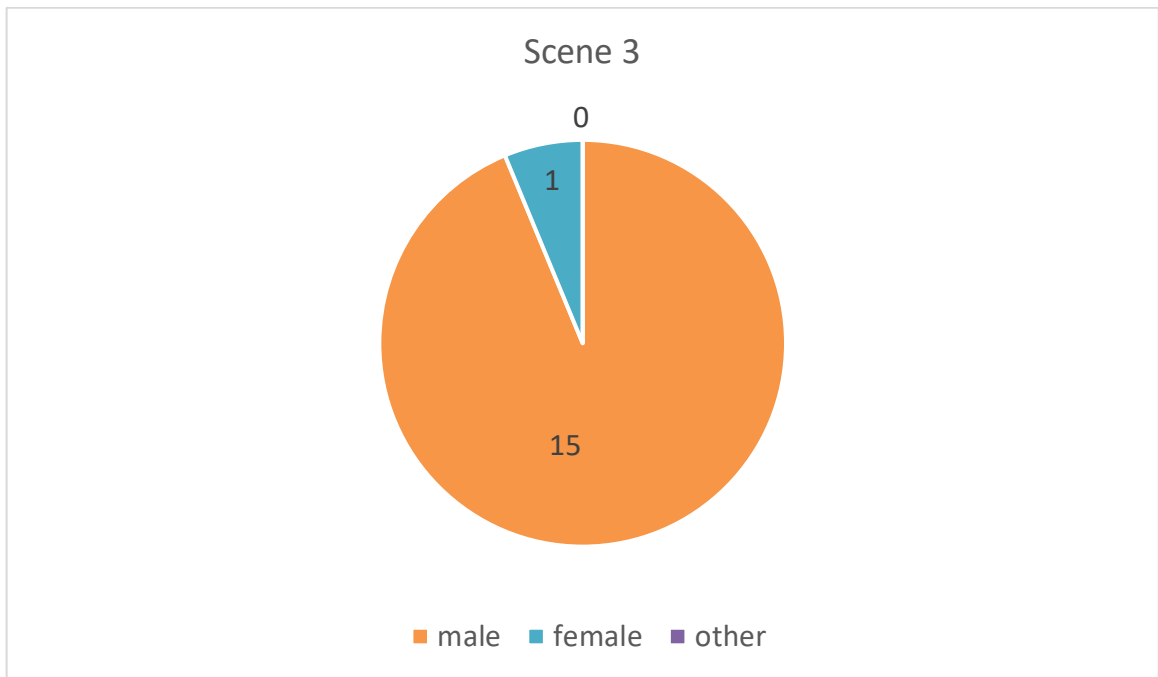


FIGURE 3. The distribution of celebrities in Scene 3 by gender.

#### **HALLONBÅT 3-4 (2017)**

Hallonbåt 3-4 has clear main characters in the book. There is a group of young people who appear in all the texts and two reappearing side characters; one of them a boy named Tomppa and the other a cartoon character Kapten Hallon. The group of reappearing main characters consists of mostly male characters, only two female characters and no characters representing other genders (see Figure 4). Both reappearing side characters in Hallonbåt 3-4 are male.

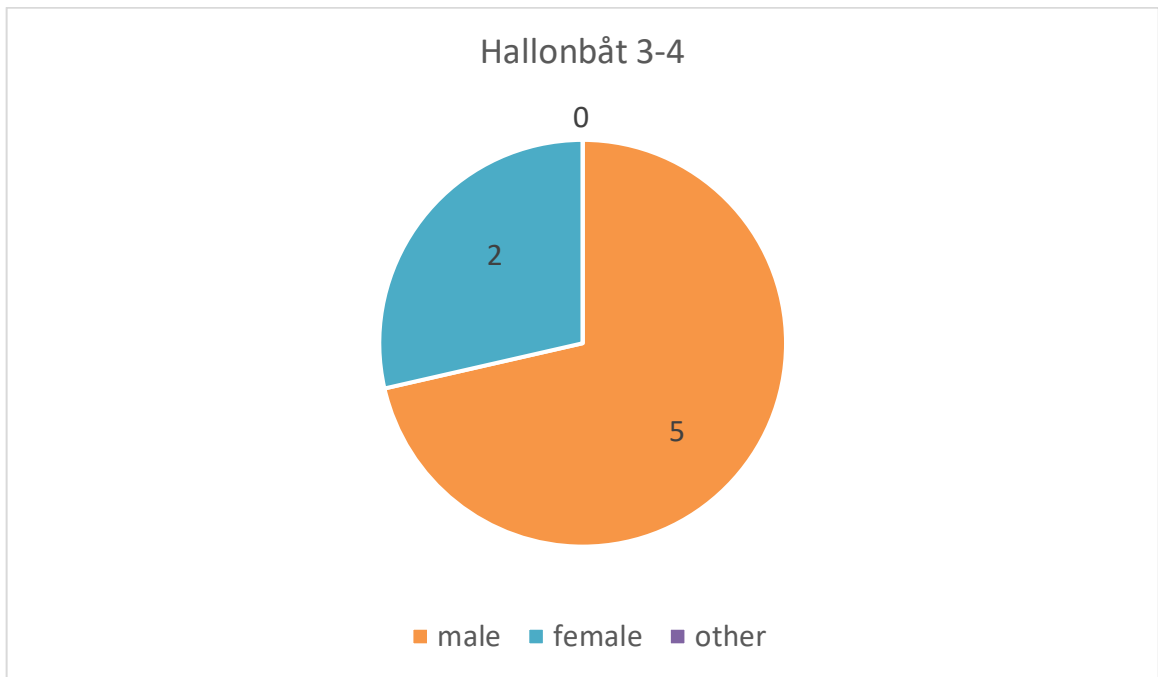


FIGURE 4. The distribution of main characters in Hallonbåt 3-4 by gender.

The two side characters Kapten Hallon and Tomppa in Hallonbåt 3-4 are both entertaining and funny male characters, but there are no similar characters of other genders at all in Hallonbåt 3-4. This is an important factor to consider because the side characters are not real people, but rather the authors have made the conscious decision to include only comedic male representation in this character group.

The writers of Hallonbåt 3-4 have, similarly to the authors of Scene 3, incorporated a variety of drawn characters instead of real people in the texts. Hallonbåt-series includes pictures of animal characters in the imagery of the book (see Picture 4). By themselves these animal characters could be considered genderless, but because the authors have named these characters with gendered names (Lisa, Björn, Peter...etc.), the characters seem gendered.



PICTURE 4 Drawn animal characters, who have gendered human names. Hallonbåt 3–4, 211.

## 5.2 Gender diversity in texts and exercises

In this section I focus on the gender ideologies that the texts and exercises in the textbooks present to the reader. In addition, I emphasize the significance of gender-related exercises in the books. Through gender-related exercises readers do not only see gender but also think about how they view gender themselves. The stories and texts in the books can support, but also oppose, the values of gender diversity. Gender roles, gender ideologies and the dichotomy between men and women are all themes that relate to the values of gender diversity. These examples that I have chosen for my analysis represent very different stories and ideologies about gender and gender diversity.

### 5.2.1 Texts and exercises in the older books

OK ENGLISH 9 (1987)



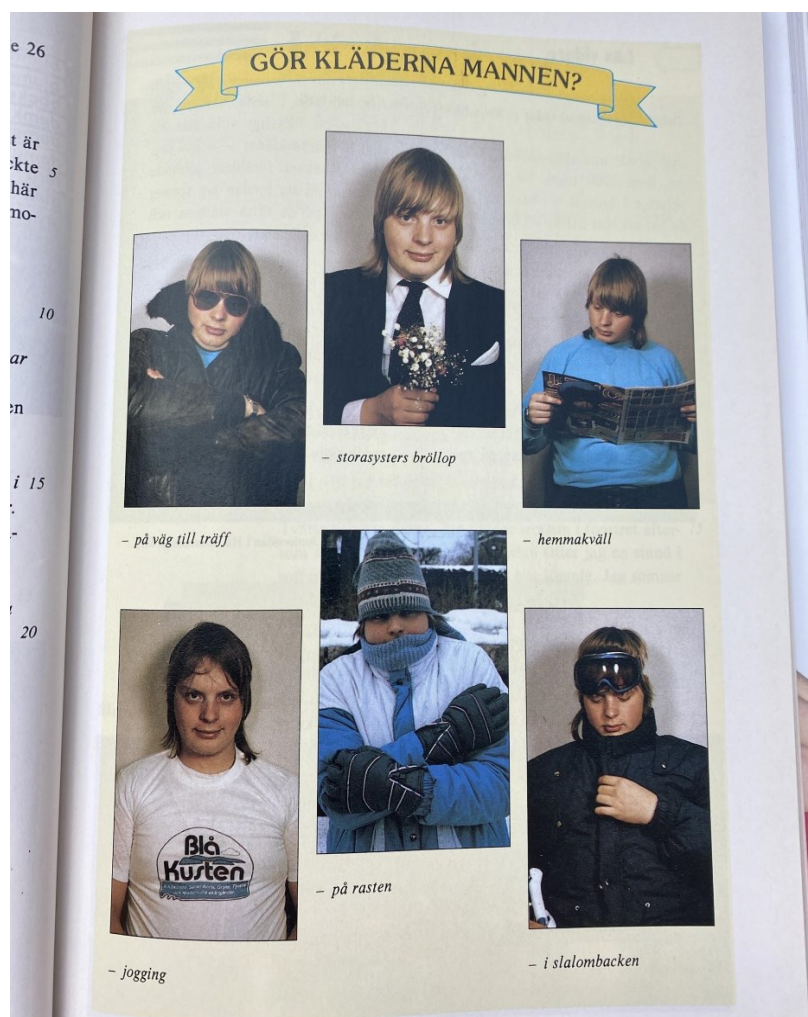
The categorization of people into binary genders is very visible in Ok English 9. As I previously mentioned, there is a chapter titled "*Schoolgirls*" (Ok English, 46) in which two girls tell about their school life. There has been a conscious choice made by the authors not to name the chapter for instance "School life" or even "A Day in school with Larissa and Jody", but "*Schoolgirls*". Even the titles of texts highlight how the most defining feature of a person is their gender. Binary categorization of men and women also comes up in a picture in Ok English 9, where female and male bathrooms are named "*COWGIRLS*" and "*COWBOYS*" (Ok English, 65). However, in this last example there is a question posed to the reader: "*...what do you think these signs mean?*". This question could provoke very interesting discussions about gender roles among the students.

In a text chapter that told the story of a football coach, the coach referred to high school football players as "*the boys*" (Ok English 9, 23). The coach later in the text mentions that "*People often think that football is a game for big boys...*" (Ok English 9, 23), and corrects the idea by arguing that even smaller people can play the sport. However, the coach did not correct anything about the assumption that the game is only for boys. In sports men and women are often separated for their physical skills, yet this example shows what kind of gender roles and ideologies are indirectly presented to readers.

There is a chapter on a boys' school (Ok English, 52-23) as additional reading in the book, because at that time gendered schools were much more common than nowadays, especially in the UK, where the story is situated in. In another text the narrator of the book uses the term "*typical American family*" to refer to a family that has gender-wise very traditional roles and titles (mother, father, and children). Traditional gender roles of a family also come up in a text where the responsibility of the mother of the family is to cook, and that of the father is to oversee fireworks. This example shows how traditionally masculine jobs belong to men, while women act as the caregivers. Ok English 9 presents old-fashioned models of gender in these instances.

### **NYA VINDAR 9 (1986)**

In Nya vindar 9 one there is a page with the headline "*GÖR KLÄDERNA MANNEN?*" (Translation: DO CLOTHES MAKE A MAN?), where there is a boy wearing different kinds of clothes for different occasions (see Picture 5). The text produces an idea of what a man looks like and even should look like. The headline also goes against the notion of gender diversity from a linguistic point of view, which I return to in section 5.3.



PICTURE 5 Pictures of a boy with the headline “GÖR KLÄDERNA MANNEN?”. Nya vindar 9, 61.

In one text in Nya vindar 9 it is said that it is surprising that a girl can jump higher than boys (see Excerpt 3). In the text there are interviews from a couple of students from one class and they are being asked questions about their classmates, sports, and other hobbies. The surrounding text on excerpt 3 does not have to do with biology or comparison between the male and female sex. Comparing the capabilities of individual people is very common, but in this excerpt the reader is assumed that boys are presumably always better at jumping high than girls, which is not always the case. This notion of athleticism linked to primarily men is a good example of how gender representations can also become visible through actions of people, and that some actions are not assumed of certain genders. During the time of publication of Nya vindar 9 this kind of category-bound way of thinking about certain hobbies or professions was very common.

*Hon springer fortare och hoppar högre än många killar.*

EXCERPT 3 Translation: "She runs faster and jumps higher than many boys." Nya vindar 9, 96.

In Nya vindar 9 there is a text in which two female students are talking about the profession of a sea captain (see Excerpt 4). In the excerpt two girls are talking about their dream jobs. One of the girls (Leena) explains that she wants to be a sea captain, which leads to the other girl (Vivi-Ann) asking Leena "And there are female sea captains?". We can see that women question their possibilities, and that certain jobs are male dominated. The existence of female sea captains is something that is odd and non-probable in the minds of these girls, which portrays and strengthens gender roles. However, by Leena confirming to her friend that there actually are female sea captains also in Finland, the whole discussion actually contests traditional gender views that people might have.

*Vivi-Ann: Vad skulle du tänka dig att bli?*

*Leena: Sjökapten, förstås.*

*Vivi-Ann: Och det finns kvinnliga sjökaptener?*

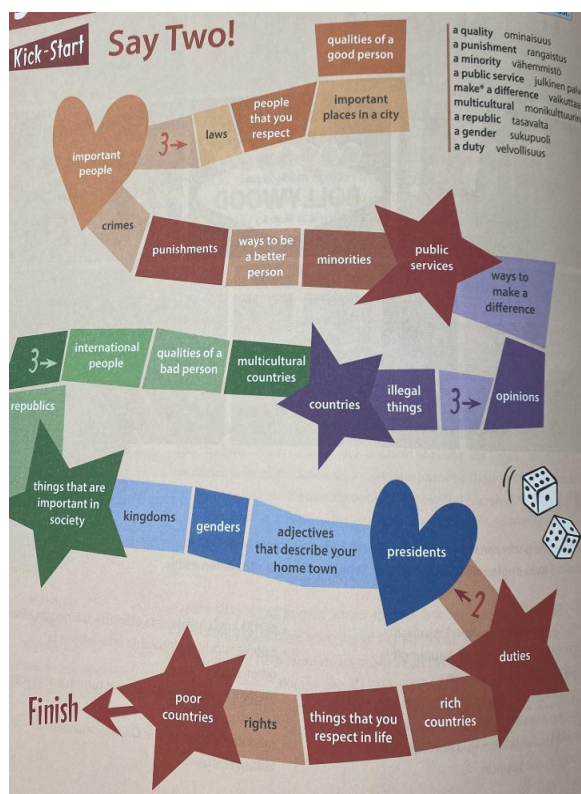
*Leena: Jo, det finns nog några i Finland också.*

EXCERPT 4 A discussion between two female characters about sea captains. Nya vindar 9, 136

## 5.2.2 Texts and exercises in the newer books

### SCENE 3 (2019)

There is an exercise in Scene 3 called "Say Two!". One of the tasks in this game-like exercise is to name two genders to advance (see Picture 6). This is one of the few explicit references to gender in all the data in my study. The same exercise also has a task where one must name at least two minorities, where the reader could answer with gender minorities such as transgender people, even though there is no further mention of de facto gender minorities.

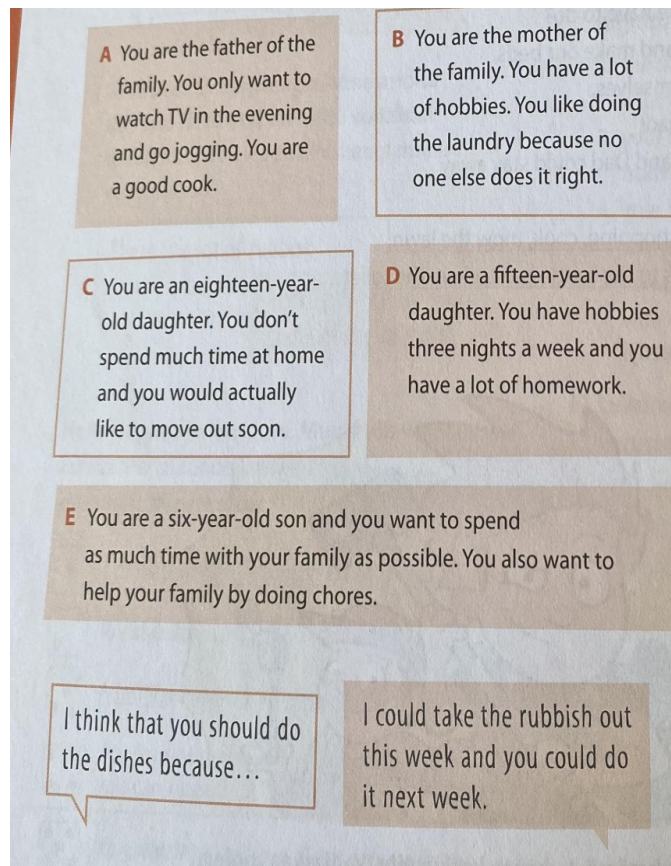


PICTURE 6 The task of “Say two: genders” in a blue box. Scene 3, 28.

Scene 3 emphasizes the conversational aspect of language in its exercises and texts and often includes very thought-provoking topics in the discussion exercises. One question to discuss for the students is “*Same-sex couples should be allowed to adopt children*” (Scene 3, 38). Another discussion topic in Scene 3 has to do with what the students think about things such as equality and rights (Scene 3, 65). Talk about gender and gender diversity arise in exercises more than in texts especially in Scene 3. These two instances I mentioned show that gender-related topics are used to create discussions within the students. However, these exercises are very current since the adoption-right of same-sex couples and equal rights of gender and sexual minorities have been very much under discussion even today in some countries. These topics have been and still are to this day very difficult and talking about them in education is a very good way to present awareness on social issues to students via textbooks.

In Scene 3 there is one audio recording of a text that talks about Harvey Milk high school. In the recording it is mentioned that high school can be a difficult time especially for LGBT youth. It is the only instance in all my data that a gender minority is mentioned in any way, as transgender people are pointed out in the recording. The recording brings out the problems that many transgender people face and what kind of inequalities they deal with. This text can produce many valuable discussions about gender diversity for its readers.

In Scene 3 there is an instance where students must decide whether they want to be a mother or a father in a discussion exercise (see Picture 7). In the exercise the students must role-play as a family and act as the family member they choose. They must also deal out daily chores between the family members together according to the descriptions of the family members provided in the text. For example, the mother in this exercise “likes doing laundry because no one else does it right”. The father is said to “only want to watch TV in the evening and go jogging” and he is said to be a good cook. In this exercise students are represented with certain chores that are category-bound to genders. It is very common to see a family in which the mother is the caregiver, and the father is the one who cooks or brings food to the table, and this exercise does not contest those traditional gender roles in a family setting.



PICTURE 7 A task where the reader must choose whether they want to be a father or a mother in a discussion exercise. Scene 3, 20.

As previously mentioned, non-binary genders are often left out from the texts and exercises in the book. Hallonbåt 3-4 has an exercise where students must count how many boys and girls there are in their classroom and then write it down (Hallonbåt 3-4, 24). Genders outside the binary are not presented as an option to choose from. This binary categorization of people can make students feel left out and discriminated against.

There is another instance in Hallonbåt 3-4 where the existence of female hip hop-artists is questioned in the same manner as female sea captains in Nya vindar 9, however the assumption is presented in a more subtle way (see Excerpt 5). Male hip hop-artists are presented first in the text, which is preceded by “*There are also many female artists...*”. It is assumed that certain professions, such as hip hop-artist, are predominantly male, and women in those professions are an afterthought, secondary to men.

*Timbuktu och Ken Ring är tre kända hiphop-artister. Det finns också många kvinnliga artister, till exempel Feven, Linda Pira och Siloiana Imam.*

EXCERPT 5      Female hip hop-artists are presented secondary to male hip hop-artists. Hallonbåt 3-4, 191.

### 5.3 Gender diversity in language

Gendered language is still a very important part of both Swedish and English. Terms such as mother, father, sister, and brother come up in multiple instances in every book. However, using two gendered terms is still disregarding other genders that are not female nor male. Gendered language can thus pose various problems when it comes to gender diversity. Other gendered words that can be found in the books include personal pronouns, job titles, names of family members and some individual gendered terms. Now I move on to examining what kind of a role gendered language plays in the depiction of gender diversity in the textbooks.

#### 5.3.1 Gendered language in the older books

##### OK ENGLISH 9 (1987)

There are no mentions of the gender-neutral pronoun singular *they* in either of the English textbooks. It is of course worth mentioning that the gender-neutral singular use of *they/them* was not considered grammatically correct in the 1980s, and the significance of it as a gender-neutral personal pronoun has come up only in the 2001s.

Moreover, the non-binary pronoun was added to the dictionary by Merriam-Webster only in 2019.

In one text in Ok English 9 the future president of The United States is referred to by *he/him* or *she/her* pronouns, and other pronoun choices are not introduced. Nevertheless, at that time in the 1980s, including anything more than the masculine pronoun was considered proactive in the field of gender awareness and feminism. One can find many instances in Ok English 9 where the masculine pronoun *he* is used to refer to all people (and all genders) (see for example Excerpt 6). The word *man* is used in multiple contexts in OK English 9 when referring to humans overall (for example Ok English 9, 172). During the time of publication this book presented the current way of using gendered language quite accurately, which is very different from what gendered language use is today.

*When you meet someone you know and you want to show that you like him,  
what do you do? - - Do you shake his hand? Do you hug him? Do you kiss him? Do you pre-  
tend to punch him?*

EXCERPT 6      *He* is used to refer to people overall. Ok English 9, 67.

There are multiple mentions of gendered job titles in Ok English 9. The production team behind a band tour and the different jobs that it contains is explained in one text in the book, where the job title “*roadie*” (Ok English 9, 79) is referred to specifically as a male job in the text. In the same text chapter, a tour manager is referred to by the masculine pronoun *he*. It is very common to see *he/him* or other masculine words used as a general way to refer to anyone or everyone, but normalizing the male gender over other genders in language creates the image of the male gender being the standard overall in life, even outside language.

### **NYA VINDAR 9 (1986)**

The feminine and masculine personal pronouns are an important part of Nya vindar 9. For example, in the few exercises in the book the reader is given the opportunity to choose from *hon* and *han* in creating their own sentences. The gender-neutral personal pronoun *hen* does not come up in Nya Vindar 9, because the term was not considered correct and rarely used in the 1980s.

Nya vindar 9 presents a song called “*Spelmannen*” (Nya vindar 9, 139), which translates to “*folk musician*”, but the term itself is outdated and gendered, since it contains the word “*man*”. Other gendered terms that I found in the book included for example *Herr* and *Damen* (translation: Gentleman and Lady) and the traditional

family-terminology, such as *bror*, *syster*, *mor* and *far* (*brother*, *sister*, *mother* and *father*). These gendered terms and titles are used to both describe and define people.

In *Nya Vindar 9* there is a chapter on fashion and clothing, where the actual text includes interviews of different people on their styles, but the chapter ends with a set of pictures of a male-presenting character with the headline “GÖR KLÄDERNA MANNEN?” (Translation: *DO CLOTHES MAKE A MAN?*) (see Picture 6). Even though the text could be very inclusive and even genderless, language and images surrounding it can make it very gender specific. The use of the word *man* in this example could be interpreted to refer to people in general, not just men.

*Nya vindar 9* presents one instance where gender diversity could have been thought of in the creation process. The text tells a story about loved ones and the narrator refers to “*moder, bror och vän*” (translation: *mother, brother and friend*). The term “*vän*” in this instance is a way to refer to anyone, regardless of their gender, thus it acts in the way of gender diversity

### 5.3.2 Gendered language in the newer books

#### SCENE 3 (2019)

The masculine and feminine personal pronouns are very visible in Scene 3. For example, the main characters are referred to by *he/him* or *she/her* pronouns. As I previously mentioned, the nonbinary pronoun *they/them* is not visible at all in the English books.

In Scene 3 the Finnish term “*lentoemäntä*” (Scene 3, 62) is used. The word translates to “female flight attendant” and it is, similarly to *spelmannen* in *Nya vindar 9*, gendered, as it is a gender exclusive term. The common gendered term *dude* is used in Scene 3 in the phrase “*Good luck dude!*” in a context where the phrase is used to refer to whoever and anyone, not specifically to a man. Other gendered words in Scene 3 I found were for example “*King and Queen*” (Scene 3, 112) and the traditional gendered family-terminology. Terms are used to represent the two binary genders and sometimes to categorize people based on gender.

There is one vocabulary list in Scene 3 that has translated the Finnish word *sukupuoli* as *gender/sex*. In another instance in the same book *sukupuoli* is translated as just *a gender* (Scene 3, 28). Out of all the four textbooks I examined, Scene 3 is the only one that has included an actual definition (in a translation) of the term *gender*. It is true, that *sukupuoli* in Finnish can mean both *gender* and *sex*, but there is no explanation of what those two translations in English mean and how they differ in Scene 3.

#### HALLONBÅT 3-4 (2017)

The masculine and feminine pronouns *han* and *hon* are used and represented regularly in *Hallonbåt 3-4*. In exercises students are given the option to choose from only these



two binary pronoun options. The gender-neutral pronoun *hen* is mentioned briefly in the grammar-section in the book, but it is left out from the actual texts and example sentences (see Picture 8). This, in theory, means that pupils are informed of gender-neutral language but using it might be difficult for them. Gender neutral *hen* was added to the official Swedish dictionaries only in 2015 and Hallonbåt 3-4 has been published in 2017, so the authors have had time to include the term in the book.

Täydennä puuttuvat muodot videon perusteella.

Suomenнос	Perusmuoto	Omistusmuoto	Suomenнос
minä	jag	min, mitt,	
sinä	du	, ditt, dina	
hän (pojasta)	han		
hän (tytöstä)	hon		
hän (neutr.)	hen	hens	hänen
me	vi	vår, , våra	
te	ni	er, ert,	
he	de		

PICTURE 8 Gender-neutral pronoun *hen* is presented to the reader. Hallonbåt 3-4, 70.

Gendered family-terminology comes up often in Hallonbåt 3-4, which goes for all the books. The only gendered title in the book I found was *Hallonmannen* (translation: Raspberry-man) the name of a superhero that comes up in one text in the book.

## 5.4 Cultural references in the textbooks

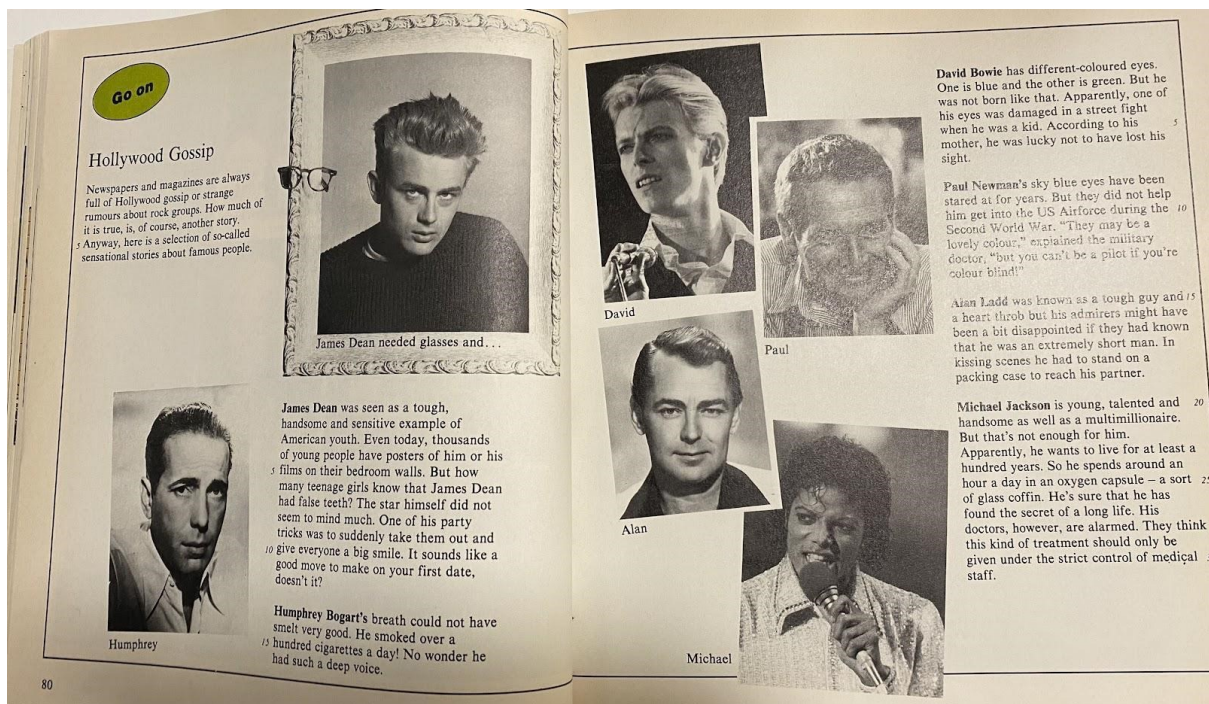
Language textbooks often include art in many forms for relatability and cultural value. Especially the older textbooks include a variety of poems, songs and lyrics and even biblical pieces of writing. The English textbooks in particular present a variety of celebrities, which has a very specific way of influencing the readers of the books and plays a huge role in gender diversity representations. These pieces of language and culture have a significant role in creating worldviews and ideologies.

In this chapter I analyze the role of intertextual and cultural references in the textbooks and how they affect the gender diversity representations in the books. It is important to critically think about what kind of values and views the artists behind these pieces of art bring to language textbooks with their art, and why the textbook creators have chosen these specific references in their books. Most of the references are from the English textbooks, which is also something I discuss in the summary for

this chapter. The creators of all the four textbooks have all included a variety of celebrities in their books, but in Ok English 9 there is a particularly large number of celebrities presented, which is why it is worth taking a closer look at Ok English firstly.

### 5.4.1 Cultural references in the English textbooks

In Ok English 9 there are many additional info sections on several famous poets, actors, and other well-known people. Out of these celebrities the majority is male, and there is only a couple of well-known women talked about in the book (see Figure 1). Queen Elizabeth, Madame Tussaud and the “*famously bad singer*” Florence Foster Jenkins are the only female celebrities presented in the book, whereas there are over 20 male celebrities presented. In addition, there are only two texts by female authors included in the book, which is very little, compared to the 15 male authors represented. In some instances, it is strikingly clear that there is only male representation present in the texts (see Picture 9). This high representation of men in cultural references is also visible in newer textbooks.



PICTURE 9 All-male\* celebrities in an info section about celebrities. OK English 9, 80-81. \*David Bowie is in the top left corner of the right page in Picture 9. It is important to note that even though he is portrayed as a part of this group of men and referred to by masculine pronouns in the text that his gender and sexual identity is not of the typical stereotypical male character.

In Scene 3 there is a chapter about sports, in which there are only famous male athletes presented and talked about (see Pictures 10 and 11). Sports is presented as category-bound to the male gender. Gender models come up also through language in cultural references. In Scene 3, a teacher is assumed to be female in the context of a joke by referring to the teacher with feminine pronouns (Scene 3, 126). Men are assumed to always relate to masculine and highly physical sports and women are, yet again, the caregivers and the teachers.



PICTURE 10 All-male athletes in a text. Scene 3, 39.



PICTURE 11 All-male athletes in a text. Scene 3, 40.

There is a text in Ok English 9 that talks about sexual prejudice and of the fight of suffragettes for women’s rights (Scene 3, 173). This excerpt brings up values of feminism and equal rights, which are both a crucial part of gender diversity. Feminism is also mentioned in an extract from “*The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole*” in Ok English 9 (see Excerpt 7). In the excerpt, the character Pandora wants to protect young girls from reading something that does not represent the feminist values. This intertextual reference to *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole*, and especially the values of Pandora, is a great example of how intertextualities can communicate modern gender values that the curriculum entails in an indirect way.

*Pandora burnt her collection of Jackie comics, she said that they ‘don’t bear feminist analysis’ and she wouldn’t like them to get into young girls’ hands*

EXCERPT 7 Feminism is mentioned in Ok English 9. Ok English 9, 71.

In Ok English 9 there is a song called “*Little Boxes!*”, where one of the verses states certain things about boys (see Excerpt 8). The song itself takes a stance on gender

roles, and it in a way satirizes the traditional way of thinking about the world. The title of the song presents the limited “boxes” that society has created for men and women. The song also talks about how the little boxes “*all look the same*” and how people “*all get put in boxes*”. The song conveys criticism towards society and even capitalism. This song could provoke very interesting discussions among students about gender diversity, and it certainly acts as a tool to represent certain kinds of values in our society.

*And the boys go into business,  
And marry and raise a family*

EXCERPT 8      An excerpt of the song “Little Boxes!”. Ok English 9, 44.

#### 5.4.2 Cultural references in the Swedish textbooks

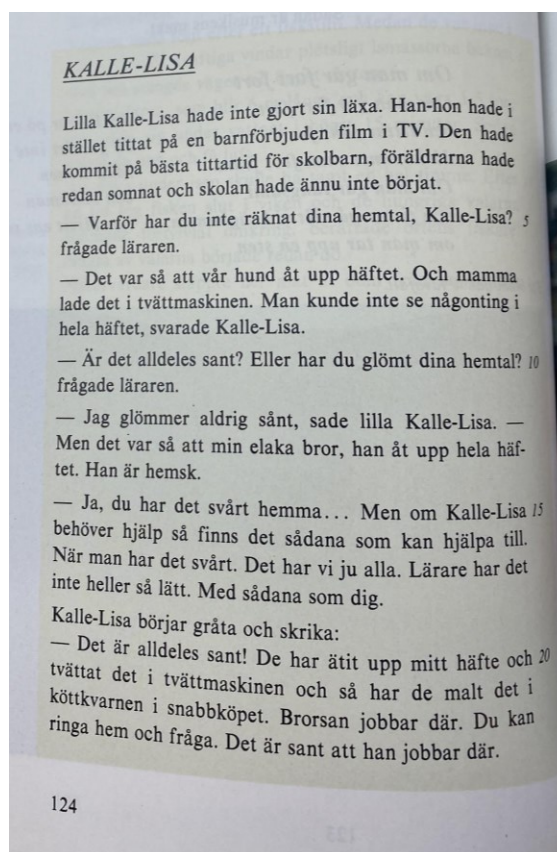
In *Nya vindar 9* there is an extensive collection of songs incorporated into the book and many of the lyrics include gender-related words and themes. The songs often include things such as love, relationships, and happiness, and the songs chosen for the book are all popular Swedish hits. There is a significant number of mentions of women in the songs in *Nya Vindar*. For instance, there is a song called “*Båklandets Vackra Maja*”, which tells the story of the beautiful Maja (a female name in Swedish) in *Nya vindar 9*. There are also some songs that mention men in the book, but they are not as common as mentions of women. Gender is something that the readers can relate to and maybe even be entertained by. In Excerpt 9 the song lyrics make the reader think about gender. The song which this excerpt is taken from talks about war and peace, friends, and enemies and overall, freedom. Gender is not directly referenced in the song, but in Excerpt 9 it is very apparent that gender as a social construct is being questioned. The songwriter describes how we as a nation have created these unnecessary walls between groups of people, which prevent people from being free and happy.

*skilt på bror och syster med en mur, jag ville vara folk*  
(translation: *separated into brothers and sisters with a wall, I wanted to be people*)

EXCERPT 9      Song lyrics in *Nya vindar 9* that question gender. *Nya vindar 9*, 31.

*Nya vindar 9* also includes one specific joke as a piece of additional reading that is very interesting for the purpose of the study at hand. The joke is called KALLE-LISA, and the one-page-long joke can be read with the main character being Kalle or Lisa, thus making the joke applicable for two genders. The feminine and masculine

personal pronouns *hon* and *han* are both included in the text. There is no variant for non-binary genders (see Picture 12). On the other hand, the joke could also be interpreted in a way that there is only one person, a mix between Kalle and Lisa, who could be a representative of a gender minority. There are no clear references or definitions to the gender identity of the main character, and the character is presented in a genderless way. Kalle-Lisa has forgotten to do their homework and blames it first on their mother and then on their brother. The lying and the things that Kalle-Lisa does are not category-bound to a gender and thus the reader can overlook the notion of gender in this text and view it as just something funny that a kid has done to get away from forgetting their homework.



PICTURE 12 A joke named KALLE-LISA. Nya vindar 9, 124.

## 5.5 Comparing the textbooks

The differences between gender diversity representations in the textbooks are in some areas very clear, but in others very much up to interpretation. In this section I have constructed a comprehensive summary of my main findings regarding characters, texts and exercises, language, and cultural references.

Characters in the books often represent a certain gender, and by having main characters that reappear in the texts and have a bigger role in the books, the authors can consciously or unconsciously promote certain kinds of gender identities over others. Both Swedish textbooks have multiple main characters, but in very different ways. The main characters in *Nya vindar 9* were actual real people, a group of young people, who presented only the binary genders. *Hallonbåt 3-4* on the other hand included two drawn cartoon main characters, who also presented the binary genders. There are also two reappearing side characters in *Hallonbåt 3-4*, and they both represent the male gender. Other characters in *Hallonbåt* were all drawn cartoon animals, that by themselves could be interpreted as genderless, but the authors did refer to those drawn animal characters often with gendered names or pronouns.

The gender ideologies represented through texts and exercises in the four books were very different, consequently the analysis of them was done in a qualitative way. All the books represented genders in one way or another in the texts. All the books showed some signs of gender roles and the dichotomy of the binary genders. One of the most direct ways of gender diversity representation was in Scene 3. Scene 3 presented discussion of gender through exercises and through stories about for example LGBT-youth, which none of the other books could accomplish.

Dichotomy between the binary genders is apparent on many occasions in the textbooks. Sometimes comparing the genders has to do with physical attributes and hobbies, but it can also present problematic views and increase unequal views about genders. Categorizing people to only two genders is seen for example via language choices, titles, and exercises. Oftentimes the role of a woman and a man is dictated by our society and culture but in the case of teaching materials these roles and models are remade and kept alive actively through for example exercises where a student must decide whether they want to role play as a father or as mother. The traditional gendered roles in a family-setting were also visible in all four textbooks, and the heteronormativity of a family was represented heavily.

Language-wise the resources that the authors use to portray gender and the diversity of gender were in the end very similar. Gendered personal pronouns (masculine and feminine) were always present and used in the texts, while the only mention of gender-neutral pronouns was in *Hallonbåt 3-4*. Gender-neutral pronouns in both Swedish and English are relatively new features in the languages, which should

be considered in the analysis of them. Other gendered terms such as job titles, family-terminology and names were seen in all the books. None of the books showed any direct non-binary or gender-neutral options to choose when using gendered job titles and such. Hallonbåt 3-4 had significantly less gendered titles and language than the other books. Gendered language was in some cases used to portray the masculine language (and thus also the male gender overall) as the norm, and women and other genders as secondary. These generalizations of maleness are portrayed in all the books except for Hallonbåt 3-4.

The English textbooks both emphasized the cultural references in the books by depicting celebrities and other well-known people in them. The representation of male celebrities was tremendous compared to other genders. Gender minorities were not represented in the celebrities or other characters in the English textbooks at all.

The cultural and intertextual references that the books presented offered many interesting ideologies about gender and gender ideologies, even more so than the actual text chapters that were specially created for the books. The English textbooks both had a massive number of celebrities, poems, songs and other pieces of art and culture that portrayed often traditional and one-sided views on gender. On the other hand, there were also instances where the English books brought up topical cultural phenomena regarding rights, equality and gender, something that the Swedish textbooks did not do. The Swedish textbooks had fewer references to culture and some of them also presented very problematic ideologies that go against the notion of gender diversity, just like those presented in the English books.



## 6 CONCLUSION

This chapter is divided into two sections. Firstly, I present the main findings of the study and discuss their relevance in the field in which it is situated in. As the findings were very differing in all the books, I have chosen some of the most interesting observations and similarities I found in the books. Secondly, I discuss the possibilities and limitations of the study, along with suggestions to the broader social implications and the practical applicability of it.

### 6.1 On the findings

The goal of this study is to discover how gender diversity is represented in English and Swedish language textbooks. To examine the representations of gender diversity, I have conducted a textbook analysis in the form of a critical discourse analysis and used the framework of feminist theories, Queer Theory, and membership categorization analysis. To study gender diversity I analyzed texts, characters, language, and cultural references in the textbooks. In addition, I took imagery into account in certain contexts.

Gender diversity is not talked about or mentioned directly in my data. This might be since some textbook creators may not fully understand or agree with the values of gender diversity, therefore constructing it in their work can be difficult and very much up to interpretation. Textbooks are also a limited set of texts and presenting gender diversity ideologies in them is difficult. As there were no clear indications of gender diversity in the books, my research underlines the indirect references to gender, gender ideologies, gender awareness and gender diversity of the books. Indirect references present the societal values and gender ideologies. The gender ideologies are indirectly portrayed and constructed through texts, characters, and language about gender.

The gender diversity representations that I found in the four textbooks were all very different and comparing them with each other is very difficult. Analyzing the characters and the language was rather manageable, as the resources used in those categories were quite straightforward and similar. However, the individual representations of gender and gender ideologies through texts, exercises and cultural references were so different in the books that comparing them directly would not provide useful results. Consequently, the some of the examples are analyzed case-by-case rather than by comparison.

Gender is talked about in the books, directly and indirectly. These discussions on gender can often be interpreted to include gender ideologies. Out of the four textbooks, Scene 3 is only one that in any way mention gender minorities, as there is mention of the struggles of LGBTQ-youth in one of its texts. The cultural references in the books often included very interesting takes on gender issues. Some of those views were rather traditional and old-fashioned, whereas other viewpoints were questioning the social construct of gender.

The actual text chapters in the four books provided very few discourses around gender. Gender diversity was presented in the texts mainly through language and characters. The cultural references, songs and poems had much more emphasis on societal issues and sometimes gender-related themes. Textbook creators have not created gender-related texts themselves in their books, but rather chose already existing cultural pieces of literature to present gender ideologies.

There are a lot of characters and plenty of female and male representation through characters, but there are no characters that directly represent any gender minorities in any of the four books. Overall, there is some separation between male and female characters to be seen in all the textbooks. However, that separation is much more apparent in *Nya Vindar 9* and *Ok English 9*, the older textbooks. The newer textbooks did not have any character representation of gender minorities in them either, but in some instances the gender of some characters was left unsaid or left to the reader to decide. Gender was not as important of a defining factor for characters in the newer books, compared to the older books. Many characters in the older books were identified through their gender and very early on the texts categorized as either female or male. Both newer language textbooks in my research showed some development in this topic since gender of the characters were left out in some texts, but eventually some characters still become gendered though gendered language.

Language is the most visible way that gender is directly represented in the textbooks. Gendered language such as gendered personal pronouns and job titles were all visible in all the textbooks. Gendered language was rarely inclusive, as gendered terms are often limited to the binary genders. Gender neutral job titles, pronouns and terminology were not presented to students as an option, alike male and female

variants in exercises. The main exception of gender neutrality in language was in Hal-lonbåt 3-4 where the gender-neutral personal pronoun *hen* was mentioned aside to binary personal *pronouns hon* and *han*.

The English textbooks had a measurable emphasis on cultural references in the books in the form of poems, song lyrics and short biographies of celebrities. Songs and intertextual choices represent various views on gender and represent a rather limited view on gender diversity. Art is always personal, and it is not the responsibility of the artist to cater their content to a specific audience, but the creators of textbooks must bear in mind the intentions, morals, and worldviews that different pieces of art can bring to textbooks and the classroom. *Nya vindar 9* also had several cultural references of songs in it, many of which involved gender stereotypes. Male celebrities and well-known and valued members of our society have a significant representation in the English textbooks. This overrepresentation of men (Blumberg 2007), and specifically male celebrities (Sleeter & Grant 2010) has been the result of earlier textbook research as well.

Creating exercises and texts that consider the diversity of gender can be very difficult for textbook creators that are not familiar with gender inclusivity. However, in practice, it might not always demand such large changes in the contents of the books. For example, by rephrasing instructions and leaving out unnecessary gendering of characters make it more accessible and inclusive for pupils of all genders. Small details and even word choices have a huge impact in the ideologies that are represented to pupils in the language classroom. Teachers do also play a big role in how they go through the contents of the textbooks, because a text by itself can never do the gender diversity work in the classroom.

None of the books offer a one-sided view on what kind of jobs or hobbies for example women have, but there are some grey areas in the books when it comes to diversity of gender roles. As previous studies have shown, men often carry some properties of being athletic, doing sports and doing physical labor in textbooks. This also goes to some extent for my data. All in all, the main problem in presenting gender diversity had to do with the omission of gender minorities.

## **6.2 On the research and future implication**

My study could have been conducted with countless different ways. For a thesis the amount of data that I decided to research was adequate. However, it is noteworthy to mention that the results I gained cannot be generalized, and that they only account for these specific textbooks. The methods of the analysis could have been different. My quantitative analysis included only the number of characters and celebrities in the

books, but it would have been possible to also account for the activities and how they are bound to certain genders. Yet, I do have confidence in my mainly qualitative methods, as my research questions certainly demand more qualitative research

During the research process my research interests developed quite a bit, and I started to think more about the role of textbook creators more. These thought processes of mine almost led to me including some interviews of textbook publishers on their views on gender diversity in their textbooks. This would have added a very interesting point of view to my study. Nevertheless, for the lack of resources and time, this option was not available to me in my research. Interviewing textbook creators and publishers on their experiences with gender diversity and about their creation process of textbooks is somewhat left undiscovered in the field of textbook analysis. In addition, it would be beneficial to gain more insights into how students and teachers view language textbooks and gender issues in them. I believe that the attitudes and experiences of textbook users are valuable when researching such sensitive and individually experienced issues.

The significance of this study for educators, teachers and textbook creators is considerable. The results offer interesting viewpoints into how gender is represented in textbooks and how those representations follow more the ideologies of the hidden curriculum, rather than the actual curriculum. My research also implies that the phenomenon *gender diversity* can be sometimes misunderstood, and therefore be underrepresented or even non-existent in language textbooks.

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