

Gender Representation in the Finnish EFL Textbook Series
The News Headlines and Smart Moves

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SAARIKIVI KAISA: Gender Representation in the Finnish EFL Textbook Series *The News Headlines* and *Smart Moves*

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Tämä pro gradu –tutkielma käsittelee sukupuolen representaatiota yläkoulun englannin opetukseen tarkoitetuissa materiaaleissa, tarkemmin sanottuna *Smart Moves* – ja *The News Headlines* –oppikirjasarjoissa. Tutkielma perustuu ajatukseen siitä, että oppilaat oppivat koulussa muutakin kuin varsinaisia oppiaines sisältöjä. He oppivat yhteiskunnassa vallalla olevat käyttäytymisen säännöt ja normit, toisin sanoen sisäistävät hegemonisen maailmankuvan. Oppikirjojen sisältämät sukupuolten kuvaukset ovat osa tätä hegemonian sisäistämistä.

Englannin opettamisessa käytetään valtaa, kun opetettavaksi valitaan tietyt kielen variantit ja tietyt kulttuuriset aspektit. Näin saatetaan joko tukea vallalla olevaa kulttuurista hegemoniaa tai poiketa siitä. Tämän lisäksi tyttöjä ja poikia kohdellaan niin koulussa kuin muuallakin yhteiskunnassa eri tavoin ja heihin kohdistetaan erilaisia oletuksia ja odotuksia. Teoreettinen viitekehys koostuu siis hegemonian ja sukupuolierojen teoriasta sekä englannin opettamisen poliittisuudesta.

Tutkielmassa selvitetään, millaisia sukupuoleen liittyviä diskursseja oppikirjasarjoista löytyy, ovatko ne hegemonian mukaisia ja onko oppikirjasarjojen välillä eroa tässä suhteessa. Tutkin sukupuolten representointia oppikirjoissa kriittisen diskurssianalyysin avulla tuoden tekstistä esiin siellä piileviä voimasuhteita. Tarkastelun kohteena ovat oppikirjojen päätekstien nais- ja mieshahmoihin liittyvät erilaiset diskurssit sekä heidän käyttämänsä kieli.

Analyysin perusteella voidaan todeta, että sukupuolien rajat ovat oppikirjasarjoissa selkeät ja sukupuolittunut käyttäytyminen useimmiten hegemonisten sukupuoliroolien mukaista. Naiset ovat miehiin nähden alisteisessa asemassa, joskin tilanne on hieman parantunut verrattaessa vanhempaa *The News Headlines* –sarjaa uudempaan *Smart Moves* –sarjaan. Uudemmassa kirjasarjassa myös naisia nähdään muun muassa vaikutusvaltaisissa ammateissa.

Avainsanat: kielenopetus, oppikirjat, sukupuoli, hegemonia, kriittinen diskurssianalyysi

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1. Introduction

When language is used and taught in schools, something more than the mere transfer of information or learning a language takes place. One aspect which is always inherently present in language use is gender. It is also an inescapable part of the educational system. What makes the situation even more complex is the fact that gender differences are differences in social power, as well. Despite this close link between gender, education and social power, school curricula are often seen as neutral and objective when they actually are the results of political decisions. The comprehensive school is a crucial part of the social structure of Western societies, since it is an institution which virtually all members of the society go through. This is why it is important to critically examine the contents of teaching in the Finnish comprehensive school from the point of view of gender equality.

Officially, Finland is a society where gender equality has been to a large extent achieved. Women and men have the same rights and responsibilities. Promoting equality is also one of the main goals of education in Finland. It is stated in the national curriculum that education is supposed to increase equality between different areas as well as individuals, and give pupils of both genders the same opportunities (POPS, 14). Nonetheless, the reality of education does not always correspond to the values it is officially based on. Even though the practices and materials used in teaching in the comprehensive school may at first glance seem to be in line with the goal of treating boys and girls in the same way, they need to be closely examined to find out if this is really the case. It can be argued that the official ideal of gender equality may not be promoted throughout the educational system the way it should be.

Pupils in the comprehensive school do not merely learn about the specific subjects they are taught, like mathematics or history or English. They also simultaneously learn about the rules and norms of the society in which they live. This kind of silent knowledge, “common sense”, of the different possible and acceptable ways of being in the world for men and women that pupils are overtly and covertly taught in the comprehensive school can be understood with the help of the concept of *hegemony*. In short, hegemony means a pervasive, dominant way of seeing the world that is taken for granted, seen as self-evident and natural even though it is in fact just one possible worldview, that of the dominant social group(s) (Koivisto and Uusitupa 1989, 68). At the moment that dominant social group would seem to be white middle-aged middle-class males. Even though the hegemonic worldview is so dominant and often seems like the only sensible one, other ways of seeing the world also exist. These views that deviate from the hegemonic one can be said to resist its dominance as they represent a different interpretation of the world. As has been stated, the current hegemonic worldview in our society is that of gender equality. Nonetheless, it encompasses notions about what kind of behaviour is suitable for men and women. In other words, the hegemonic view of gender includes stereotypical assumptions.

The hegemonic worldview permeates the whole educational system, language teaching being no exception. Because of the intensely globalised nature of today’s world, language education has an increasingly important role in the comprehensive school. As the lingua franca of today, English is the number one key to surviving and succeeding in this globalised world. Learning English opens the doors to the world for the learner. But what kind of a world is seen through those doors? What kinds of people inhabit it? What are pupils in the Finnish comprehensive school – i.e. all members of society – taught about the gendered world as they are taught English?

One way of investigating the gender-related hegemonic aspects of English teaching in the Finnish comprehensive school is to critically examine the materials used in the teaching, in other words, to analyse the contents of English textbooks. Textbooks are one of the cornerstones of language teaching in Finland (Luukka et al. 2008, 64). In fact, the textbooks influence English teaching in Finland to such great extent that they have been said to be the hidden curriculum (ibid.), meaning that they have as much or more influence on what happens in the classroom as the official national curriculum. Thus, it is important to analyse thoroughly the contents of the textbooks.

The aim of this study is to critically examine from the gender perspective a recent EFL textbook series that has been published for teaching grades 7-9 in the Finnish comprehensive school, *Smart Moves*, and to compare it with a textbook series that was published ten years earlier for the same purpose, *The News Headlines*. The focus is on finding out how gender is represented in the texts and what kinds of discourses are related to the gendered characters. Discourse in this context means the linguistic elements that are used to describe or refer to the characters representing different genders. It is assumed that the discourses can either mediate hegemonic attitudes and values or deviate from the hegemony and convey different values and ideas. The discourses will be studied through critical discourse analysis.

The specific research questions are:

1. How is gender represented in *The News Headlines* and *Smart Moves*?
2. Is there a difference in gender representation between the textbook series?
3. What kinds of discourses are related to gender?
4. Can the discourses be identified as hegemonic or deviant?

The structure of the thesis is as follows. First, the theoretical framework is outlined in section 2. In section 3 the methodology of the thesis is explained. The materials are presented in section 4, and the analysis in section 5. The findings of the analysis are discussed in section 6, and section 7 concludes the thesis with suggestions for further research.

2. Theoretical framework

Language is a powerful medium that is used in establishing a society and sustaining the status quo but it can also be used to question the dominant culture and ideology. As Fairclough (1992, 65) notes, language, or to put it more precisely, “discursive practice”, can be used both creatively and conventionally and “it contributes to reproducing society (social identities, social relationships, systems of knowledge and belief) as it is, yet it also contributes to transforming society”. Thus, using language is inescapably political and so is language teaching. This is also true in the case of English, the lingua franca of today used in almost all contexts of human interaction by over a billion people (van Gelderen 2006, 252).

In this thesis, language is not seen as an objective static entity to be dissected and studied, but the focus is especially on language use in social contexts, i.e. discourse. In the critical theory of discourse everyday language use is seen as an arena where ideologies clash and the differing interests of different social classes are placed in opposition (Fairclough 1989, 33). Thus, discourse is indeed “a place where relations of power are actually exercised and enacted” (Fairclough 1989, 43) and it is therefore in a key position in the framework of this thesis. Enacting power struggles in and through language results in that some discourses achieve a more powerful status than others, they become hegemonic.

In this view of society, a system constituting of different discourses competing for the hegemonic position, the competing discourses are also found within the educational system and therefore also in the practices and materials used in teaching English. In the Gramscian tradition, the educational system is seen as a part of the civic society where hegemony is produced and practiced (Koivisto and Uusitupa 1989, 71). Schools are thus places where social power is maintained and the unequal

power relations in the society are reproduced. The educational system plays a major part in constructing and sustaining social stratification and hierarchies between social groups in a given society (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977).

The hierarchy between social groups means that the groups, defined according to age, class, ethnicity, gender, etc., in a society are in an unequal relation to each other. One of the most basic definitions that divide human beings into groups from the minute they are born is their gender. In our society, there are two distinct gender groups that are treated differently, expected to behave differently and have an unequal amount of social power. Thus, research on social power relations and research on gender relations are irrevocably linked with each other and as Mills (1996, 5) points out, “work on gender is obviously and necessarily informed by an awareness of the power differences involved in gender differences”. The unequal distinction between the genders is partly created and to a large extent emphasized in the discourses within educational system.

2.1 Power relations in English teaching

The unequal power relations in the educational system can be analysed with the concept of hegemony. It was most famously defined by Antonio Gramsci who pointed out that the power of the hegemonic class is practiced through both coercion and consent, i.e. through coercion by the “government machinery” and consent produced in the civic society, including schools (Koivisto and Uusitupa 1989, 67). According to Gramsci, a hegemonic class is the class that is able to make its own interests seem like “the common good”, i.e. like the interests of the other, subordinate, classes as well (Koivisto and Uusitupa 1989, 70). Hegemony does not only refer to people’s beliefs

and ideas but it includes “the whole lived social process as practically organized by *specific and dominant meanings and values*” (Williams 1989, 56: my italics). These specific, dominant meanings and values are expressed through the dominant, hegemonic discourses everywhere in the society, including the English textbooks under scrutiny in this thesis.

The important aspect to understand about hegemony is that through it people comply with their own oppression (Mills 1997, 30). In other words, through hegemony people agree to be dominated. This agreement is achieved when people start identifying with the hegemonic identities offered to them. In Williams’ (1989, 60) words, “the true condition of hegemony is effective *self-identification* with the hegemonic forms.” In this sense, it is of great interest to study the English textbooks to see what kind of hegemonic discourses can be found in them, i.e. to examine what the pupils are supposed to identify with.

Hegemony can be seen in almost any area of a society. The focus of this thesis is on the hegemonic aspects of gender roles and gender relations and how they manifest themselves in language teaching. More precisely, the aim is to study how gender is represented in the materials used in teaching English and if the representation corresponds to the hegemonic view of gender or deviates from it.

Regarding the hegemonic aspects of gender in language, it has to be noted that in the English language, there is a problem which is not a problem in the case of Finnish, for example. In English, there are different pronouns for people of different gender. Thus, when people are mentioned, they always have a definite gender. Further, the male pronoun is most often used as the generic pronoun, although recently there has been pressure to change this practice. This male emphasis in English is related to the idea that “the structure of the language is conditioned by the

structure of society and vice versa” (Wodak 1997, 10) meaning that the hegemonic position of males in the society is reflected in the language used in the society.

In addition to the specifically gender-related ones, there are also other aspects of language teaching where hegemonic struggles take place. At the moment English is the dominant, legitimate language of international communication and business. It is therefore also taught extensively in the Finnish comprehensive school. According to Alexander (1999, 26), this dominant position of English worldwide relies on “the unanalyzed assumption of the self-evident ‘rightness’ of British or nowadays Anglo-Saxon ‘civilization’, democracy and free enterprise etc”. It is debatable if English as a global language is still connected merely to the Anglo-Saxon culture and values, but it is nonetheless important to consider what kinds of cultural and social aspects are taught when teaching English. In this context, one should also take into account the fact, noted by Phillipson (2000, 90), that the “expansion of English in recent decades has occurred simultaneously with a widening gap between haves and have-nots, and with a consolidation of wealth and power globally in fewer hands”. This does not mean that the spread of the use of English is the cause of “global enrichment and impoverishment” (ibid.), but that the status of English as a global language cannot be thoroughly analysed without also connecting it to larger social processes.

Thus, it must be noted that teaching English is not a neutral task but a part of ideological and political struggles. Johnston (2002, 43) argues that partly because the term *political* has been understood in an overly narrow way in the field of language teaching, the political aspect of teaching English went unnoticed for a long time. Only in the 1990s it was finally accepted that teaching English “is and always has been a profoundly and unavoidably political undertaking” (ibid., 41).

But in what way is teaching English political, exactly? Bourdieu (1991, 5) notes that standard, legitimate language – i.e. the language that is taught in schools – is always the language of the dominant social class and has become dominant “through a complex historical process, sometimes involving extensive conflict”. By legitimate language Bourdieu (1991, 53) means that certain linguistic practices – “the practices of those who are dominant” – are seen as the only legitimate ones and all other linguistic practices are measured against these.

Even though Bourdieu’s theory of legitimate language may be easier to relate to the context of teaching the official language of a country, it also illuminates the political aspects of teaching foreign languages, such as English in Finland. Deciding what kind of English and which cultural aspects are taught in the English lessons is not as straightforward as one might think. In fact, in the Finnish comprehensive school, the pupils are taught Standard English, i.e. the legitimate English language, meaning British English or American English, even though there are numerous other variants used all around the world. The cultural meanings and values that are taught are also only a selection from a wide range of possibilities. Selecting the represented variants of English and cultural contents in English textbooks is an act of social power, of inclusion and exclusion.

Nonetheless, English teachers do not always consciously decide on the cultural and gender-related values that they teach, since these values are often mediated through discourses in the textbooks they use in their teaching. Discourse is a concept that is difficult to define comprehensively as it has been used in various academic fields to mean many different things (Schiffrin et al. 2001, 1). And more often than not, it is used very vaguely. One of the most important theorists of discourse is Michel Foucault. He defines discourses as “groups of utterances which

seem to be regulated in some way and which seem to have a coherence and a force to them in common” (Mills 1997, 7). Foucault treats discourse “sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements” (1972, 80). Fairclough (1989, 22) defines discourse as socially determined language use and that, in a wide sense, is what it means here as well. More precisely, discourse is used in this study to denote the linguistic constructions used to describe and refer to characters of different gender in the English textbooks. In other words, discourse is seen as a coherent way of writing and talking about subjects.

Fairclough (1989, 25) notes that discourse is never created and practiced in a vacuum but that it is closely connected with social organisation on three different levels. The first level is the social situation, meaning “the immediate social environment in which the discourse occurs” (ibid.). The second is the level of “the social institution which constitutes a wider matrix for the discourse” (ibid.). And the third and final level is that “of the society as a whole” (ibid.). Thus, the discourses found in the English textbooks need to be analysed as being part of the situation they are used in (at school in the lessons and at home), the social institution they are a part of (the educational system) and the whole of the society (Finland, Europe).

As has been noted, among the various discourses circulating in a society at any given time some discourses become more powerful than others, they become hegemonic. Just how a discourse achieves a more powerful status than the others is an issue too complex to be dealt with in the scope of this thesis. The most powerful discourses are the ones that are the most difficult to notice, since they have become so commonsensical and naturalized (Jokinen, Juhila and Suoninen 1993, 76-77). Part of

the power of these hegemonic discourses lies in that it seems like there are no alternatives to them (Jokinen, Juhila and Suoninen 1993, 81). Thus, dominant, *naturalized* (see Fairclough 1989, 33), discourses can be restrictive of other ways of expressing oneself or even thinking. And as such, discourses are a crucial part of ideological struggles. In this sense, discourse is closely related to the concept of hegemony which is something that makes “the pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as a specific economic, political, and cultural system seem to most of us the pressures and limits of simple experience and common sense” (Williams 1989, 57).

To sum up, hegemony can be seen in many aspects of English teaching, for example in the themes and variants of English that are taught as well as in the representation of gender in the materials used in the teaching. These hegemonic struggles are enacted through discourses. As Apple (2004, 5-6) states, schools act “as agents of cultural and ideological hegemony” and help create “people ... who see no other serious possibility to the economic and cultural assemblage now extant”. The role of formal education in maintaining gender hegemony shall be elaborated on in the following section.

2.2 Gender inequality in the educational system

As we have seen, the educational system is a place where the hegemonic discourses and values of the society are passed on to the next generation thus maintaining the status quo. At school, children learn their place in the society and are socialized and cultivated into proper citizens and consumers. (Apple 2000, xiii.) Through the practices and contents of schooling, the pupils learn how to play their part as people

of certain gender, class, ethnicity and age, for example. Gender especially is quite a rigid category, and the boundaries of that category are reproduced in schools. The power relations within the gender system are also entwined with class structure.

As Apple (2004, 2) points out, schools “create and recreate forms of consciousness” and this allows the hegemonic social group to keep its dominant position without using coercive power. This means that hegemony is to a large extent produced and maintained through the educational system. But besides generally maintaining and inculcating the dominant ideas and values of a society through hegemonic discourses, the educational system can even be seen to specifically reproduce social classes, as suggested by Bourdieu and Passeron in *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (1977). They claim that “the school helps to make and to impose the legitimate exclusions and inclusions which form the basis of the social order” (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, x). In addition to social classes, schools can be seen to reproduce the gender system.

In his works, Bourdieu theorised largely on this idea of reproduction in education and came to the conclusion that “children from disadvantaged groups, with a habitus incompatible with that presupposed in school, are not competing with equal starting points with children of the socioeconomic elite; hence the reproduction of social stratification” (Lin 2000, 272). Morrow and Torres (1995, 254) also point out that some of the most crucial problems in modern capitalist societies are related to “equality of educational opportunity, equity, quality, and relevance of education”. These ideas of equal starting points and the relevance of education are related to the gender aspect of schooling in that male and female students are often seen to have differing and unequal starting points in educational settings.

For example, the current educational practices have been seen to favour girls. There has been much concern over how badly the boys are doing in school because the teaching methods and ways of acting that are expected and appreciated in school are deemed more compatible with the girls. (Gordon and Lahelma 1992, 314.) In Britain as well as other European countries, boys' underachievement especially in acquiring language skills is seen as problem (Noble 2000, 11). Interestingly, though, Finland seems to be the one country in Europe where this is not a problem. Noble (ibid.) deems that this is due to the fact that in Finnish schools "literacy is a critical goal in the early years during which classes are comparatively small" and the fact that young children watch many imported television programmes that are not dubbed, but have subtitles.

But the inequality between genders does not stop here because the fact is that even though girls do better at school, women still earn less and have a harder time getting into the top occupations in our society (Cameron 2003, 457). As Francis (2000, 128) points out, "generally in school and the wider society, men monopolize the positions of power, and male values are taken as the benchmark of normality." In other words, despite the better educational achievements of women, it is still the male gender that occupies the hegemonic position in the society.

It has to be noted that Bourdieu's theory of reproduction has been criticised because of its view of people as passive subjects that have no agency. This critique has resulted in "the emergence of theories of resistance that could account for the possibilities of change" (Morrow and Torres 1995, 216). Certainly, the idea of human agency must also be taken into account when considering the results of formal education, but I would nonetheless argue that the educational system is still a very important factor in maintaining social hierarchies.

It is crucial to realise that the knowledge, skills and values taught in the comprehensive school play an important role in keeping the society stable. These values and skills stated in the official curriculum are always chosen by someone and are merely “a particular selection from the whole available range, and with intrinsic attitudes both to learning and social relations, which are in practice virtually inextricable” (Williams 1989, 60). In fact, it is clearly stated in the official Finnish curriculum that one of the purposes of formal education is to teach the pupils the values and workings of the society so as to ensure that the society continues to exist. Nevertheless, education is also supposed to encourage the pupils to be critical and develop new ways of thinking. (POPS, 14) Whether or not criticality is in fact encouraged in the educational reality is another matter.

Fairclough (1989, 244) emphasizes the role of formal education in struggles over power in society as he notes that “what happens in schools can be decisive in determining whether existing orders of discourse, as well as more generally existing relations of power, are to be reproduced or transformed”. Thus, according to Morrow and Torres (1995, 254), in order for a critical research on education to be possible, “the presence of cultural arbitraries in the hidden and explicit curriculum” as well as “the relationships between educational sites and social relationships and its implications for domination and exploitation” need to be acknowledged.

As has been established, schools play an important part in the socialization of young people. As part of socialization, young people learn to perform correctly according to their gender. These gender roles are not something people are born with, but something they learn as they grow older and become members of a society. A child learns to play the part of a male or a female from very early on just by observing and imitating the behaviour of people around them. So, the school is hardly the only

place where children learn gendered behaviour, but it is one of the most influential institutions in cultivating it. Thus, in school students learn, among other things, what kind of behaviour and which activities are considered appropriate for girls and boys, i.e. gender roles.

These gender roles are actually quite deeply ingrained in the educational reality. As Palmu (2001, 181-182) points out, gender is seen within the educational system as a clear-cut, binary difference between the female and male students, as the students are often divided into groups according to their gender. Also, the expectations are different for girls and boys, and the assumptions of what girls and boys can and want to do are often quite stereotypical. The gender norms are thus taught in schools mainly covertly, as part of the hidden curriculum, since the overt goal of education is to promote equality. Sure enough, gender equality has increased somewhat in the last decades, but there are still clear norms that regulate the behaviour of males and females. And underlying these stereotypical assumptions made about girls and boys within the educational system there can still be found the view of the male as the dominant one and as the norm against which the female is measured (Francis 2000, 128). This is intriguing especially in the light of the official curriculum which promotes gender equality (POPS, 14). The other main document guiding language teaching in Finland, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, does not specifically comment on gender equality. Nonetheless, the CEFR aims to “promote mutual understanding and tolerance, respect for identities and cultural diversity through more effective international communication” (CEFR, 3). Thus, this official document is also based on the ideals of tolerance and equality, even if cultural and linguistic equality are emphasized more than gender issues.

According to Wodak (1997, 4), gender categories are social constructs that help to solidify the hegemonic cultural and social values making the idea of men as the dominant category and women as the subordinate one seem like common sense. Gender stereotypes are thus deeply connected with the concept of hegemony. As Talbot (2003, 471) points out, “stereotypes tend to be directed at subordinate groups (e.g. ethnic minorities, women) and they play an important part in hegemonic struggle.” This hegemonic aspect of gender stereotyping means that certain gender-related assumptions have become so widely accepted that it may be hard to even realize that those assumptions are merely connected to stereotypes and that there are alternatives.

Finally, it needs to be acknowledged that there lies a danger of oversimplifying in the investigation of gender stereotyping and gender roles. When women are studied as a subordinated social group, they are often treated as a homogenous crowd with certain fixed attributes, when in fact, it would be more productive to see them as “a grouping of people intersected and acted upon by other variables and elements, such as class, race, age, sexual orientations, education and so on” (Mills 1996, 4).

2.3 Gender representation through language

The educational system reproduces the unequal power structures between social classes and genders. Language plays an important role in this reproduction, as the power relations are realized through discourses permeating all institutions as well as everyday language use. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the gender-related

discourses within schools, and these discourses can be found for example in the textbooks used in language teaching.

The relatedness of language and gender has in fact been a major area of interest for researchers since the 1970s. The early studies (e.g. Lakoff 1975, Zimmerman and West 1975) on the relation of gender and language focused on the differences between “women’s language” and “men’s language”. These studies showed that women’s subordinate social status was reflected in their use of language in that they tended to use language in a more unassertive way and have a supportive role in conversations with men. (Kendall and Tannen 2001, 549-550) This view of women and men using language differently has since then been criticized and it has been suggested that if women use language in a hesitant or mitigating way, it might often be rather due to their status (social class or occupation) and not their gender (O’Barr and Atkins 1980, quoted in Kendall and Tannen 2001, 549).

Since the first studies in the 1970s the field of research on language and gender has grown exponentially. Numerous studies have been conducted to further investigate the differences between male and female language use. In these studies, often conversation analyses, the focus has been on interruption and politeness, for example (see Aires 1996 and Tannen 1994). The concept of discourse has also become an influential analytical tool in studying the relations between gender and language. Therefore, one popular area of research has been the representation of gender in the discourses found everywhere in the society, for example in the media and in literature (see Fiske 1996 and Soltysik 2010). This thesis follows this tradition, investigating gender representation in the discourses found within the educational system, more precisely, in the teaching materials.

The gendered characters that appear in the textbooks and the discourses related to them reflect the society's attitudes towards and ideas about gender. For example, in linguistic analyses conducted in the 1980s regarding English textbook characters' use of language, female characters were found to "speak less, speak first less often, and perform a narrower range of discourse roles" (Sunderland et al. 2002, 224). It can be assumed that this is no longer the case as "publishers' and writers' awareness of gender bias, along with that of teachers and students, the consumers, is changing" (ibid.). Indeed, according to some, the constructions of femininity have changed to include areas and aspects previously deemed only appropriate for males, for example "the possibility of academic success and the wish for a career" (Francis 2000, 128), whereas constructions of masculinity have remained the same. Similarly, according to Lakoff (2004, 44), women have adopted many of the ways men use language but not vice versa.

Finally, it has to be noted that in schools, gender is not represented only through language, but in the ways of behaving and being. And in this actual physical reality of life in schools, gender may not always be as definite and clear-cut as in the official documents. Gender may not always be performed in a stereotypical way, but it can also be acted and interpreted in more diverse ways (Palmu 2001, 181-182). Nonetheless, investigating the actual reality of gender representation in educational situations is out of the scope of this research. Thus, the focus here is only on the textual representation of gender in the English textbooks.

2.4 Textbook composition

As has been established, teaching materials used in schools are a part of the ongoing power struggles in the society and they include discourses concerning gender roles. The textbooks are not produced in a vacuum, but are “the results of political, economic, and cultural activities, battles, and compromises” (Apple 2000, 44). Textbook composition and publication have the same economic and political restraints as any other branch of industry in the society. Textbooks can be seen as “messages to and about the future” in that they are a part of “the organized knowledge system of a society” (Apple 2000, 46). When selecting which themes are to be included in the textbooks and which, in turn, are to be left out, and how the themes are to be presented and discussed, one is taking part in creating the official knowledge of the society.

Thus, when investigating the gender discourses found in *Smart Moves* and *The News Headlines* it is of great importance to consider who it is that actually decides on the content of the textbooks. To what extent does the curriculum define it and to what extent do the writers? Is there still some other instance that has power in the matter? Johnsen (1993, 246) claims that the actual authors of the textbooks have ever lower status and editors participate more in textbook composition in the increasingly “product-oriented publishing world”. Also, according to Johnsen (*ibid.*, 267), various forces have an effect on the process of textbook writing at different stages. He suggests that “curricula will most likely exert more influence than the publisher in the early stages of the process, although this situation will gradually shift” (*ibid.*).

Tainio and Teräs (2010, 18) explain that composing a textbook is often done as a project among many other projects or jobs and with a very tight schedule. According to them the way the publisher organises the project and how much effort

they put into it has an influence on the product, the textbook (*ibid.*). So, the process of composing a textbook is not something fixed and static but can be very different depending on both the publisher's commitment as well as the writers', and on the schedule and resources at hand.

In addition to the writers and publishers, there are still other instances that influence textbook composition, namely the National Board of Education and the EU. These institutions have issued official documents that need to be taken into account when composing textbooks for teaching English in the Finnish comprehensive school. These documents are the national curriculum (POPS) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Since they are supposed to be reflected in the contents of the textbooks, it is important to find out what kinds of values these documents promote, especially in regards to gender issues.

The national curriculum represents the current philosophical, pedagogic and administrative views on education but also the overall values of the society at that particular moment (Luukka et al. 2008, 53). As has been noted, these overall values should not be taken for granted and seen as neutral but rather analysed as the hegemonic ones. According to Luukka et al. (2008, 54), the current national curriculum, which was introduced in 2004, is based on a few key concepts such as communality and social effectiveness. In addition, the curriculum emphasizes the importance of promoting equality between the genders and states that boys and girls ought to be taught that they have the same rights and responsibilities in the society as well as in their working and family life. The school should also prepare boys and girls for acting out these equal rights in the future. (POPS, 14) In the curriculum it is also claimed that there are differences between girls and boys in their development and

background and that these should be taken into account in the planning of teaching and in choosing the teaching methods (POPS, 19).

Thus, the national curriculum has to be taken into account when composing a new textbook series even if the curricula do not always explicitly comment on their relation to textbooks. As Johnsen (1993, 22) notes, many countries actually have curricula that “literally never mention the word textbook”. But, as it is, every time a new national curriculum is introduced, a new series of English textbooks is published, as well (Luukka et al. 2008, 64). Indeed, the current national curriculum was introduced in 2004 and *Smart Moves 1* was published in 2005. Similarly, the curriculum before the current one was introduced in 1994, which was followed by the publication of *The News Headlines* in 1995.

The other official document that guides the teaching and composition of English textbooks in Finland is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. It is a document published by the Council of Europe with the intention of helping European countries to set specific standards to be achieved in different levels of language education, and to assess the students’ results in a way that can be comparable around the world. The CEFR is not a regulation that has to be strictly followed but more like a directive document that can be used as a basis for curriculum design. Nonetheless, it is advisable that “discussion on curricula should be in line with the overall objective of promoting plurilingualism and linguistic diversity” (CEFR, 169). And indeed, this is coherent with the idea of multiculturalism promoted in the Finnish national curriculum.

The CEFR has been included in the official curriculum so that the criteria for the assessment of the students’ language skills are presented in the Finnish curriculum with the common reference levels introduced in the CEFR. Apple (2000, 235) claims

that in today's society where education is seen as a commodity dominated by business values, the results of education have to be "reducible to standardized 'performance indicators'". This is exactly what the CEFR is for – a document to help European countries assess the performance of language learners in an easily comparable way.

The CEFR aims to comprehensively describe what students ought to learn to do "in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively" (CEFR, 1). In its emphasis on the aspect of communication in language learning the document reflects the current linguistic ideal of a "skilled interpersonal communicator who excels in such verbal activities as cooperative problem-solving, rapport-building, emotional self-reflexivity and self-disclosure, 'active' listening, and the expression of empathy" (Cameron 2003, 458). This new ideal of an empathic, reflexive communicator includes many aspects often deemed characteristic of women's language use, and this may be one explanation as to why the boys are allegedly having a harder time excelling in language studies.

One last crucial aspect to grasp about the composition and publication of textbooks is that they are one of the most important products for the publishing houses as they are guaranteed to be bought year after year. This may affect the contents of the textbooks in such a way that there cannot be anything very controversial in them since the publishing houses want as many schools as possible to buy their textbook series. Johnston (2003, 43) notes that one of the reasons why the language classroom was seen as merely psycholinguistic and not political was "the reluctance of publishers of ELT textbooks and course books to include any materials that might be deemed offensive by certain populations of learners".

3. Methodology

In this section I introduce the methodology of this study, which is textbook analysis through critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis was chosen as the method of analysis because it is based on the idea of unequal distribution of power in society and focuses on bringing to surface the way struggles for social power are enacted through discourse.

3.1 Textbook analysis

Especially in the past, before the Internet and the flood of information, the textbook was one of the most important sources of knowledge. Interestingly, even today, when there are various other resources and methods of teaching available for teachers to use, the traditional textbook has not lost its importance. There is certainly talk of teaching materials becoming electronic but in reality, pupils in the comprehensive school still carry books in their backpacks like they have done for decades.

Because textbooks are an important part of teaching in the comprehensive school in that they “form shared cultural experiences” (de Castell, Luke and Luke 1989, vii), they have been quite a popular subject for research. The importance of research on textbooks is all the more crucial because, as Littlejohn (1998, 190) argues, “the use of materials, like the Trojan Horse, may imply more than is immediately apparent”. As the textbooks are such an integral part of teaching, their contents become easily seen as the neutral, official truth about the world. Littlejohn (ibid.) also claims that teaching materials increasingly “effectively structure classroom time” and therefore need to be closely and critically analysed.

In the long tradition of textbook research, one of the oldest and most popular approaches to textbook analysis has been to investigate “the degree of representation individual groups have received in textbooks” (Johnsen 1993, 109). More recently, researchers have focused more on “the way in which such groups have been treated (linguistically and contextually)” (ibid.). Lähdesmäki (2007, 301) points out that research on English textbooks has previously “tended to focus on their pedagogic solutions and their merits or drawbacks, or their cultural content, its appropriateness or – as is often seen to be the case – its inappropriateness”. Other areas of interest for textbook research have been, for example the principles of inclusivity and appropriacy (Gray, 2002), the relevance of the cultural content for the students (Gray, 2002; Turkan, 2007), intercultural issues (del Carmen Méndez García, 2005) and the nature of the tasks (Nitta and Gardner, 2005).

Textbook analysis has been a popular area of investigation also within Finnish educational research and one of its main branches has been the analysis of gender representation. On the basis of this body of research it can be stated that a masculine emphasis can be found in the textbooks that have been used in the Finnish comprehensive school in the past (Metso 1992, 272-273). The most recent study on the representation of gender in teaching materials in Finland is an analysis by Tainio and Teräs (2010). They have analysed in the materials used in the Finnish comprehensive school in teaching Finnish language and literature, mathematics and student guidance. Their research method consists of first finding out the gender of the writers of the materials, then analysing the illustration of the materials, the gendered words used in the texts and finally, those parts of the texts which deal with gender or gender equality. They have also investigated the way ethnic and sexual minorities are taken into account in the materials. (Tainio and Teräs 2010, 5)

In their research, Tainio and Teräs (ibid., 6) found out that in the illustration of the materials, the majority of the characters are masculine. Also, the majority of the gendered words refer to male characters. When gender or gender equality is explicitly discussed in the texts, the essentialist view of gender is not deconstructed. Sexual and ethnic minorities are almost completely absent, thus constructed as “the Other”. Interestingly, Gray (2002, 160) also claims that certain social categories – the disabled, the old and the poor – are absent in the global English course books. Textbooks are also claimed to include “touristic, normalizing discourses of surveillance of marginalized groups” (McCarthy and Dimitriadis, 50).

3.2 Critical discourse analysis

The way the characters in the textbooks are described, the activities they perform and the positions they are placed in as well the way they talk are all part of the discourses that comprise the representation of gender. In order to pin down these discourses one needs to conduct a detailed analysis of the texts. This can be achieved through form of critical discourse analysis (CDA).

In CDA using language is seen as an act that constructs social reality rather than just describes it. CDA is a suitable method of research for a study where the point is to investigate the relation between language and power, as the method is based on the idea that language is the site where “discriminatory practices are enacted”, “unequal relations of power are constituted and reproduced” and “social asymmetries may be challenged and transformed” (Blackledge 2005, 5). So, in CDA, it is not possible to separate the linguistic elements, i.e. discourses, of the research

materials from their social context. Instead, these discourses are seen to reflect the social power structures as well as the hegemonic and resistant values in the society.

As with any other research method, there are various different orientations also within CDA. As Blackledge (2005, 3) points out, “CDA is fundamentally political in its orientation, interdisciplinary in its scholarship, and diverse in its focus”. The form of CDA used in this study is based on Fairclough’s definition of the method in *Language and power* (1989). Fairclough’s approach consists of paying close attention to vocabulary, grammar and textual structures in order to reveal – possibly hidden – power relations in a text (ibid., 110-111) and then proceeding to interpret and explain the findings in the larger social context. At the core of Fairclough’s method is the idea that “the common-sense assumptions of discourse incorporate ideologies which accord with particular power relations” (ibid., 141). This view is in accordance with the theory of hegemony and is thus a suitable method for my research.

More precisely, the method of this research consists of a close reading of the materials in order to pinpoint gender-related discourses in them. This close reading includes analysing the amount of characters of different gender, the occupations they have, the actions they perform and other topics that arise from the texts. The vocabulary related to the characters is also analysed to find out how the characters are described, but also if there is a difference between the way male and female characters use language. These aspects of the gendered characters are considered from the point of view of gender stereotypes to see if the books promote stereotypical gender behaviour or not. The two textbook series are also compared and contrasted in their representation of gendered characters.

4. Materials

In this section, I introduce the analysed materials, the Finnish EFL textbook series *The News Headlines* from the 1990s and *Smart Moves* from the 2000s. Both series have been designed for use in the upper level of the Finnish comprehensive school.

4.1 *The News Headlines*

The News Headlines Courses 1-4 for grades seven and eight was published by WSOY in 1995. *The News Headlines Courses 5-8* for grades eight and nine was published in 1996. Both textbooks consist of four courses which are all divided into three units. The books are designed to bring to mind a newspaper with its different sections for different themes. Thus, all the units have a different theme, for example travelling, mystery, heroes, music, teenage trends and so on.

The News Headlines is more than just a textbook, as each unit includes many activities in addition to the core texts meant for reading comprehension and learning grammar and vocabulary. In each unit, there are pages devoted to the following functions: Start Out, Listen, Find Out, Talk, Study, Think, Read, Sing, Play and Work Out. The pages marked with Study are the core texts including the most important grammar issues and central vocabulary meant to be learned in that unit. These texts are the ones that all the pupils are supposed to read and study carefully. Being the most important parts of the unit, these texts are also the ones that I include in my analysis, leaving out the rest of the activities in each unit.

It must be noted that, at first glance, *The News Headlines* seems quite disorganized with all its different units with different functions and a lot of

information in the margins. A large part of the illustration has is cartoon-like, but there are also many pictures. It would be interesting to also study the pictures to see how they contribute to gender representation, but unfortunately it cannot be achieved in this thesis.

4.2 *Smart Moves*

The textbook series *Smart Moves* was published by Otava in 2005-2008. There are three books in the series, *Smart Moves 1* for the seventh grade, *Smart Moves 2* for the eighth grade and *Smart Moves 3* for the ninth grade. The writers of the textbooks are mostly teachers with the addition of one freelance-writer in *Smart Moves 1*.

Just like *The News Headlines*, *Smart Moves* also includes more than just the core texts. There are sections called Bits 'n' Pieces which include information about the different English-speaking countries that are dealt with in the texts. There are also sections called Smart Talk which include dialogues and are supposed to train the pupils' oral skills. In addition, there are pages with the heading Reader. They are extra texts that the pupils can study for further reading comprehension practice. At the end of each textbook, there are the Help Pages with useful information, for example the alphabet, names of countries and nationalities, and information about grammar. The core texts are accompanied by photos, but the other sections are mainly illustrated with cartoon characters. Again, I will mainly only analyse the core texts, since they are the ones that all the pupils are supposed to study.

5. Analysis

The aim of the analysis is to find out what kind of people populate the world according to *Smart Moves* and *The News Headlines* and which ways of behaving and expressing oneself are presented as being conventional, or perhaps even the only possible ones, for the characters of different genders. I intend to find out if there are merely hegemonic gender discourses in the textbooks or if deviant discourses can also be found.

I will now go through the critical discourse analysis conducted of the three *Smart Moves* textbooks and the two *The News Headlines* textbooks. As was stated earlier, I have only analysed the core texts. The core texts that do not have any human characters in them and are thus irrelevant have been left out of the analysis because they. The analysis starts with a section on the gender-related discourses that emerge from the texts (5.1). This is followed by a section on the vocabulary used to describe the gendered characters (5.2). The analysis concludes with a section on the language the gendered characters themselves use (5.3).

5.1 Gendered characters

First of all, it has to be noted that all the characters in both *Smart Moves* and *The News Headlines* are clearly either male or female, and when romantic love is brought up, it is heterosexual, without exception. Thus, in a way, the fourth research question about hegemonic gender discourses is already answered: there are no discourses that could be identified as resistant to the hegemony of heterosexuality or the hegemonic, dichotomous view of gender. But this is hardly a surprise and cannot be seen as a

significant result. Therefore, the goal of the following analysis is to delve deeper into the nuances of the discourses related to these clearly male and female characters.

To start off the research into the textbooks' gender representations, I analysed the gender of the characters quantitatively by counting the amount of male and female characters. In this analysis I included all references to gendered characters, even if they are just briefly mentioned with a word or two. The results are illustrated in Figure 1:

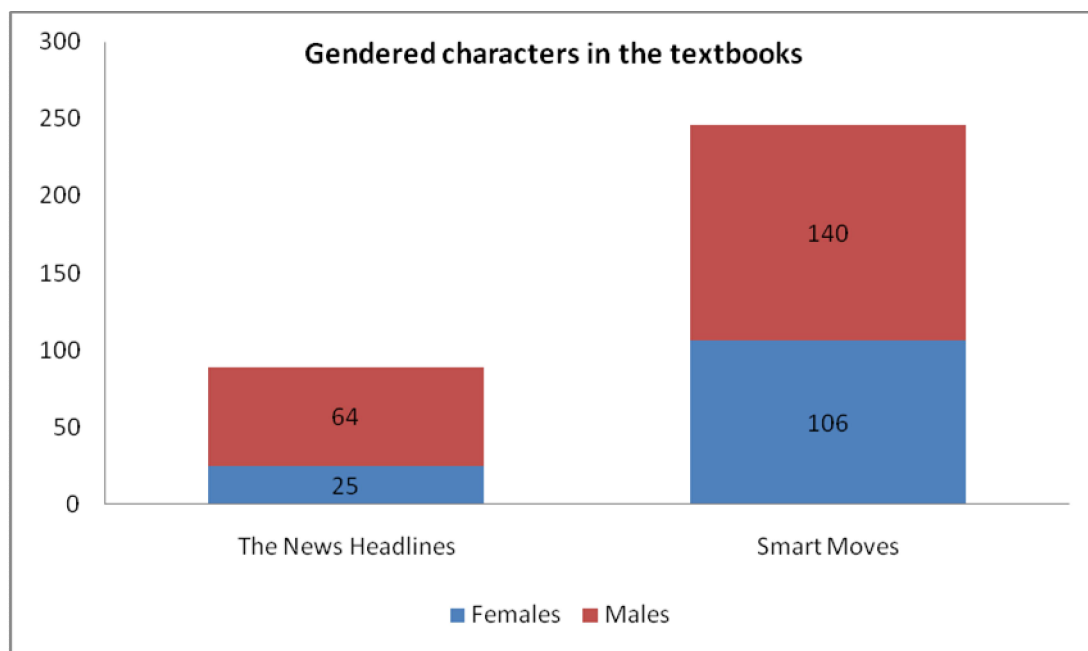


Figure 1. Gendered characters in *The News Headlines* and *Smart Moves*

In *The News Headlines* there are 89 characters all in all; 64 of them are male and only 25 female. In *Smart Moves*, on the other hand, there are 246 characters all in all, and out of these 140 are male and 106 are female. There are two important things to note here. First of all, there are clearly more characters all in all in the *Smart Moves* textbooks than in *The News Headlines*. On the basis of this it can be assumed that the gender-related discourses are also more abundant and varied in *Smart Moves*. There are much more male characters (72 per cent) than female characters (28 per cent) in *The News Headlines*, whereas in *Smart Moves* the amount of male characters (57 per

cent) and female characters (43 per cent) is quite balanced. Thus, already at this very elementary stage of analysis a difference in gender representation between the two textbook series emerges with the clear quantitative dominance of male characters in *The News Headlines*. This is the starting point of the more detailed analysis.

In the following analysis I will refer to the texts with abbreviations. *The News Headlines* is referred to as NH and the text in question is indicated with a number (for example NH 11). *Smart Moves* is referred to as SM and the numbers that follow indicate the book (*Smart Moves 1*, *Smart Moves 2* or *Smart Moves 3*) and the text in question (for example SM 2.12).

5.1.1 Occupations and hobbies

In this section I investigate the activities and roles the characters are seen in, namely their occupations and hobbies. In previous studies on gender representation in language textbooks it has been discovered that female characters are often seen only in the domestic sphere whereas male characters have a wider scope of occupations and these occupations are more powerful ones than those of the female characters. (Litosseliti 2006, 87.) I shall now analyse what kinds of occupations the female and male characters have in *Smart Moves* and *The News Headlines* and if there is still a difference between genders in this aspect.

In *The News Headlines*, the female characters, which are quite few, have the occupations of a windsurfer, a reporter, working in the hairdresser's and as a used record seller. In addition, female characters are also seen in quite traditional and non-professional domestic roles of a grandmother, a sister, a wife, a daughter and a bride. Thus, it is clear that female characters are not confined merely to the domestic sphere,

even though they are more frequently seen in the stereotypical domestic roles than having other occupations. Also, the female characters do not describe their occupations at all, they are just briefly mentioned, like in this example where a male character talks about a female character he used to know: “She left school and is working in the hairdresser’s at the moment” (NH 16).

The male characters, on the other hand, are seen in *The News Headlines* in sports-related occupations (ice hockey player, icefisherman, matador), policing occupations (patrolman, policeman), leading occupations (president of the US, head cashier at a bank), creative occupations (reporter, architect), as well as other miscellaneous occupations such as a motorist, an astronomer, a conductor, a newspaper delivery guy and a used record seller. Out of these, being a matador is an especially masculine occupation. The matador talks about it thus:

I was very young, 6-7 years old, when I saw my first bullfight. I decided I just had to become a matador, a bullfighter. The arena looked so fascinating. My father took me to the bullring in Malaga once a week and he was my first instructor. (NH 11)

Clearly, the male characters have more powerful occupations than the female characters, for example as patrolman, president and policeman. Nonetheless, male characters are also seen in the domestic roles of a brother, a father and a husband, although not as often as female characters are seen in the role of mothers or wives. There are also a few male celebrities in the texts, for example, Teemu Selänne, Marlon Brando, James Dean and Elvis Presley, whereas female celebrities are completely absent. It becomes clear from this that the male characters in this textbook series do indeed have more various occupations and roles than the female characters, and are seen in more powerful occupations.

In *Smart Moves*, on the other hand, both female and male characters are most commonly seen in the domestic roles of mothers and fathers, but they also have

various other occupations. The occupations of female characters fall into the categories of nursing (working at the hospital, working in the drug store, doctor), education (youth mentor, elementary school teacher, teacher), art or entertainment (Avril Lavigne, J.K. Rowling, Madonna, Val McDermid) and “McJobs” (employee at Burger King, waitress and factory worker, harvesting grapes). Also, one female character runs her own restaurant and one is a park ranger. Nonetheless, women are also seen in such stereotypically female occupations as housewife and flight attendant.

All in all, the occupations of female characters are clearly more varied in *Smart Moves* than in *The News Headlines*. But even though the range of occupations for female characters is wider in the more recent textbook series, the categories of these occupations, especially nursing and education, are actually quite stereotypically female. It is noteworthy that a female character is seen in the socially powerful occupation of a doctor. She describes her job thus:

My job is very highly respected in society, which makes me feel all the more responsible for my decisions and actions. It’s a long road to become a medical doctor or a physician, as we’re also called. First of all, **getting into medical school was really tough**¹, and after the basic studies that took me seven years I worked for three years as a GP in hospitals and the National Health Service. Many GPs want to specialize in one of about fifty fields in medicine. That’s what I did, and **now I’m a paediatrician**. It took me another six years of studying. Some friends of mine from medical school have become surgeons in different fields. My husband is also a doctor but he is a psychiatrist. (SM 3.16)

Non-stereotypically for females, the doctor emphasises the importance of her job and the difficulty of becoming a doctor. But it is interesting that she is a paediatrician, which is in accordance with the hegemonic view of females taking care of children. This role of females as the carers of children is emphasized further when a child describes the female flight attendant thus: “She is the helpful lady on the plane, a bit

¹ I have emphasised the parts I want to draw attention to by using **bold**.

like Mummy” (SM 3.16). It is also intriguing that only female characters are seen in poorly paid jobs, like this woman, for instance:

I came to California six years ago from Mexico. I had no future in Mexico, no education, no work. --- Since then I have harvested grapes in this vineyard. The pay is not good, and almost all my money goes on food and rent. (SM 3.22)

What is more, in a text where a female park ranger is interviewed (SM 2.23), the ranger mentions two of her colleagues who are both male. Also, when the female doctor describes her occupation (SM 3.16), she says that her husband is also a doctor, a psychiatrist. So, for some reason, when female characters are seen in these non-stereotypical occupations, male characters with the same occupation are mentioned as well.

The occupations of the male characters in *Smart Moves* can be divided into the categories of business or leadership (businessman, banker, owner of a furniture company, record company boss, founder of a charity organisation, an Indian leader, principal, prime minister), arts or entertainment (Johnny Depp, William Shakespeare, Bono, the Edge, Eminem), policing (police constable, dog handler at FBI) and manual labour (engineer, welder, electrician). The dog handler describes his job like this:

I’m William Kelson and I work as a dog handler at the FBI Headquarters here in Washington DC. My partner’s name is Pam, and she is a black Labrador Retriever. **Our job is highly specialized:** we look for bombs together. (SM 1.5)

This excerpt depicts quite a stereotypical male occupation. Working at the FBI headquarters and having a “highly specialized” job is in accordance with the hegemonic view of males doing the more dangerous and demanding tasks in the society.

In addition to the aforementioned jobs, the male characters also have the occupations of pilot, talk show host, tour guide, working for a software company,

astronaut, soccer coach and psychiatrist. Thus, in *Smart Moves*, male characters can still be seen to have a slightly wider range of occupations than female characters. Also, male characters are seen in such socially powerful occupations as prime minister, banker or owner of a company.

In the text with the female doctor in it (SM 3.16), there is also a male electrician and a female flight attendant. In this text there are quotes from children about the different occupations, for example, “He goes to people’s homes and changes the light bulbs” (electrician), “She flies, of course. Otherwise she wouldn’t be able to stay up in the sky” (flight attendant) and “They help people to stay alive” (doctor). As can be seen, in the part about the male electrician the children talk about *he* and the female flight attendant is referred to as *she*. But interestingly, the pronoun used in the children’s quotes about the female doctor is *they*, and thus, her gender is made less visible.

Next, I will further investigate the activities the characters are engaged in by examining their hobbies, again with an interest in the possible differences between male and female characters. In *The News Headlines* the characters never really talk about hobbies explicitly, but in one text, there is an attempt to emphasize how computers can be a hobby for girls rather than boys. In the text, two characters describe their lives, one being a girl from Singapore and the other a boy from Quebec. The girl’s interest in computers is brought up when she talks about her future: “I don’t know yet what I’d like to do after I finish school. Maybe something with computers” (NH 17). In comparison, the boy states the following:

I haven’t got a computer. You wanna know why? Because, one, I don’t need one. Two, I don’t have much spare time. And three, I use computers all day at school, so I get fed up with them. (NH 17)

Unlike in *The News Headlines*, in *Smart Moves* the characters have a lot of hobbies and they talk about them quite often. The female characters' hobbies include a number of different sports (tennis, diving, aerobics, rugby, netball, basketball, hockey, diving and jogging), music-related activities (singing in a band, playing the piano, making music), LARPing, circus, computer games, cooking and reading. In a few texts, shopping is mentioned not as a hobby as such, but as an activity that only female characters engage in. The girl who does LARPing describes how she got into her hobby and what it is like:

I started my hobby when I turned 19. **I got interested in LARPing through my brother** and his friends. The LARPing world is quite close to the games that I used to play as a child – except that role playing is, of course, more challenging. (SM 3.10)

LARPing may not be the most stereotypical hobby for a girl and thus can be seen as deviating from gender hegemony. Also, what is interesting in the girl's explanation is that she did not get into her hobby by herself but through a male character, her brother. This is similar to what was pointed out earlier about a male character being mentioned when a female character is seen in a non-stereotypical occupation.

The male characters' hobbies also include many different kinds of sports (golf, rugby, football, basketball, hockey, cricket, swimming, tennis, rowing, jogging and parkour), music-related activities (listening to music, going to concerts, playing a number of different instruments) chess, computers, model cars, home theatre, salt-water fish tanks, mobile phones, old comic books, computer games, movies and karaoke.

It can be seen that the range of hobbies is wider for the male characters than for the female characters. Both male and female characters do quite a lot of sports, but male characters' interest in sports is mentioned more often than the female characters'. In one text a boy actually states that girls "aren't very interested in sports"

(SM 1.12). It is seen as natural that men like sports, as can be seen when a girl talks about Thanksgiving and says: “There is also a big football game on TV, and **of course, the men in my family love to watch it**” (SM 2.24). All in all, not much deviation from hegemonic gender discourses can be found in the characters’ hobbies.

Lastly, a few observations on the illustration of the books need to be stated, as well. First of all, it is striking that in *Smart Moves*, there are numerous pictures of people doing all kinds of sports, and the people in them are most often male. Male characters are seen doing lacrosse, ice hockey, weight lifting, fishing, surfing, cricket, beach volley, bungee jumping, American football, skateboarding, parkour, baseball, soccer and rugby. By contrast, female characters are only seen diving, swimming, doing ballet, doing taekwondo and bungee jumping. In the only picture related to football with a female character in it she is not playing the game but is the referee. Thus, it becomes even clearer that sports are depicted quite strongly as a male activity in *Smart Moves*.

One interesting detail in the pictures accompanying the texts in *Smart Moves* is that there are three pictures of female characters reading a book, but no such pictures of male characters. Instead, there are two pictures where a male character sleeps with his head on a pile of books. This would suggest that reading or studying is seen rather as a feminine than a masculine activity. Lastly, though, it has to be noted that there is one picture in *Smart Moves* that defies hegemonic gender roles. It is a picture of a young woman drilling, a stereotypically male activity. But despite this one deviation, the pictures in *Smart Moves* can be said to mainly reinforce gender stereotypes.

To sum up, it can be stated that the occupations in both textbooks are somewhat divided according to a stereotypical gender division with only males doing

“hard”, manual labour and police work and females working in the fields of education and nursing. But it seems that the range of occupations for female characters has widened, whereas the scope of male characters occupations has stayed more or less the same. This can be seen in the fact that in the more recent textbook series there are female doctors and park rangers, but no male nurses or flight attendants, for example. When it comes to hobbies, they are all but absent in *The News Headlines*, whereas in *Smart Moves*, they are abundant. Notably, doing sports is represented more strongly as a male activity, even though female characters also engage in sports.

5.1.2 Roles in the family

In the previous section it was discovered that in both textbook series the male and female characters are often seen in the domestic roles of mothers and fathers. This part of the analysis focuses therefore on the gender discourses related to family, which is one of the core institutions of our society and an area where gender roles play an important part. Even though the concept of the nuclear family is not as common nor as old as we might think, it has certainly become one of the building blocks of our society, being an integral part of the dominant ideology and “prescribing well-defined and exclusive gender roles” (DeFrancisco and Palczewski 2007, 156). Therefore, it is of great interest to study how gender is represented in the area of family life in the textbooks.

In *Smart Moves*, family relations are often in the forefront, for example in a story about a British middle class nuclear family and their summer vacation in France (SM 1.9, SM 1.10 and SM 1.11). In these texts the parents are shown in quite traditional gender roles. The roles are clear right from the start as the text begins with

the parents performing tasks that are stereotypical for their genders: “Mr Clarkson is reading the evening paper, Mrs Clarkson has just cleared the dinner table” (SM 1.9).

As the story develops, the parents continue to perform gender-stereotypical actions:

Before they go to the passport control, **Dad remembers that he hasn't changed any money yet.** He disappears and comes back with hundreds of euros. (SM1.10)

Mum: Oh, by the way, is anybody hungry yet?

Dad: I could eat something. Maybe we could go to the restaurant car.

Tonya: Isn't there a food trolley? I'd like to sit here and get a snack from the trolley. Please, Mum!

Mum: OK, fine by me. I think I saw the menu in the seat pocket. Ah, here it is. Let's have a look. (SM 1.10)

Matt: The scenery is flashing past! This train must be going super fast!

Dad: I think it is going as fast as it can. I read in the brochure that in France the top speed is 300 kilometres per hour – three times as fast as cars on British roads. Our trains in Britain do only about 125-150 kilometres per hour.

Tonya: When do we arrive in Paris, Dad? We've been on the train for ages!

Dad: Soon, Tonya, one and a half hours to go. No, that can't be right! Oh, now I know: we've forgotten to put our watches forward by one hour. So, good news, Tonya, it's only half an hour to Paris! (SM 1.10)

In accordance with gender stereotypes, the father deals with anything involving mathematics (money, speed of the train, watches), whereas the mother takes care of the domestic, bodily needs of the family. Mothers are seen in this stereotypically female role of the carer and homemaker in quite a few other texts as well, but there are also deviations from this. Usually grocery shopping has been seen as a female task but in one text (SM 2.12) there is a father who comes home with shopping bags. Also, in another text (SM 1.1) the mother comes home from a night shift at the hospital, and the father says he will pack the children's lunches and help them study, so the mother can rest. This implies that it would usually be the mother's responsibility to care for the children in this way but in depicting the father doing these female tasks the text deviates from the hegemonic gender roles.

In the first text about the Clarkson family, Mr Clarkson is clearly placed in the role of the head of the family:

Mr Clarkson (to Mrs Clarkson): I think we have made the decision, so, go ahead and book the holiday. But because I will drive in France, I could book the car. (SM 1.9)

Even though the family plans their holiday together, it is the father who decides when they have reached a decision and gives his wife the permission to book the holiday. He is also the one who drives the car when they travel. Clearly, then, he has more authority than the mother.

The boy of the Clarkson family, Matt, is represented as a stereotypically reckless young male who likes danger and excitement. At one point, when the family is planning their trip to France, he expresses his adventurous nature by saying: “It’ll be brilliant to go by boat. I hope it’ll be stormy!” (SM 1.9) There is also the following sequence that takes place as the family boards the Eurostar train:

Dad: It’s good to have this table between our seats.

Matt: It’s perfect for this Disney kit that I got at the station. Let’s see what there is.

Tonya: Where did you get that? **You didn’t steal it, did you?**

Matt: No way! I got it from Goofy. You see, I went past the Disney Express Counter, and Goofy gave it to me. You know, the train goes to Disney World in Paris.

Mum: That’s lovely, Matt! **It will keep you busy for a while.** (SM 1.10)

The fact that his sister assumes that Matt might have stolen the kit and that the mother is pleased that there is something to keep him busy implies that it would not be out of the ordinary for him to steal something and that he can be a nuisance. This kind of behaviour is something typically more acceptable for boys than for girls, who are instead praised for being “well behaved” in other texts in *Smart Moves*. Also, Matt is interested in war, as males stereotypically are. And in contrast, the girl, Tonya, is stereotypically interested in shopping, as becomes clear in the following sequence:

Matt: I saw this brochure with D-Day sights. Can we go to the beach to see where it all happened in 1944? That would be really cool!

Mrs Clarkson: Of course we can, Matt! There will be so many things to see in Normandy! I've got another good idea. I think it would be super to stay in Paris for a couple of days – on our way back. What do you say to that?

Tonya: At least something civilised after the countryside! Yes, what a fantastic idea to go to Paris and do a little shopping! (SM 1.9)

In addition to the story about the Clarksons, siblings and their relationship are at the forefront in quite a few other texts in *Smart Moves*. In four texts the main character is a boy who has a sister and in two texts a girl is mentioned to have a brother. Families with two or more brothers are described in two texts. Thus, strangely, the siblings in the texts are always brother and sister or two or more brothers, but families with two or more sisters are completely absent.

One text about a brother and a sister begins thus: “Charley and his sister Sophie have invited their friends Danny and Pete over for a movie night” (SM 1.17). Sophie is not the main character but “his [Charley’s] sister” and is thus placed in the role of the underdog in the story, as can be seen even more clearly in the following parts of the dialogue:

Pete: **Charley**, have **you** rented some films for tonight?

Charley: No, I haven't because we have a big collection of films. Let's see what there is.

Sophie: I hope **you choose** a film that we can all watch – **including me**.

Danny: I'm not going to watch *Titanic* if that's what you mean.

Sophie: Even I'm bored with that film.

Sophie: Let's have a look. There is *Spiderman*, *Shrek*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*...

Danny: I've seen them all, Sophie. What else is there? (SM 1.17)

In this text, gender differences are also emphasized by drawing a line between the films that boys like and the films that girls like, or the things that they like in the same film. Sophie likes *Titanic*, which is a love story, and in the movie they decide to watch, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, she is only interested in the handsome male actor Johnny Depp, whereas the boys like the movie because of the battle scenes. When

they talk about their opinions on the movie, Sophie is ignored and again, it seems that she does not have as much power in choosing the movie they watch:

Sophie: I think that Johnny Depp looks fantastic in that movie!

Charley: Never mind about Johnny Depp – what about those battle scenes? I think I'm going to watch them again. They were excellent!

Danny: Yeah, I agree – especially the last one. That was brilliant!

Pete: Well, if you ask me, the movie was a bit boring. And the battle scenes were much better in *The Return of the King*.

Sophie: **Thank God we didn't have to watch that one.** I hate all those horrible-looking orcs. (SM 1.17)

All in all, being a family and doing things together as a family plays an important part in the texts in *Smart Moves*. There are gender-related differences in the behaviour of and attitudes towards the family members. Mothers are still in many cases seen in the role of the carer, but, in contrast fathers are no longer solely seen as breadwinners of the family but can take on the role of the carer as well. Behaving recklessly would seem to be more easily acceptable for the boys in the family, and boys describe their sisters more often than girls describe their brothers. Thus, the male voice is in a more powerful position in the family.

In *The News Headlines*, family is not nearly as prominent as in *Smart Moves*. There are no such stories about families or dialogues between family members as there are in *Smart Moves*, but family relations are mentioned in a few instances. In a text about friendship, a boy talks about his brother being his best friend:

My big brother is definitely my best friend. Being handicapped makes life a little difficult at times, but Jeff has always been there to help me. He treats me fairly, meaning he would never talk down to me or treat me as if I were stupid or something. **We even fight sometimes, like brothers should.** (NH 10)

This sort of brotherly fighting is a stereotypically masculine way of behaviour. It is hard to imagine the same sentence being said about a pair of sisters.

In one text in *The News Headlines* an American boy says: "On Friday evenings my parents, sisters and me usually go into town to see a movie." (NH 3)

Noticeably, there are two sisters in this family, which is never the case in any of the families in *Smart Moves*. Intriguingly, the only time a mother is mentioned in *The News Headlines* is when a boy talks about why he has been raised by his grandmother: “I would say my best friend is my grandma. That’s because my mom and dad haven’t looked after me very well. I don’t want to talk about it too much” (NH 10). Fathers, on the other hand, are seen in a few other instances, as well. For example, they instruct their sons in the art of being a matador: “My father took me to the bullring in Malaga once a week and he was my first instructor.” (NH 11). Fathers (and sons) are also the ones who do manual labour:

My folks took over the farm from my grandparents. And it looks like I’m gonna take over the farm from my parents as soon as I’m old enough. Pa is kinda old. He’ll be sixty-six next year, so the work’s getting too heavy for him. (NH 17)

In one text a father is seen in a non-stereotypical role, as a girl describes his father thus: “My father is a wonderful cook. He has taught me how to make excellent use of all the delicious natural ingredients we have here” (NH 17).

One discourse related to family relations that can be found in both textbooks is the problematic relationship between teenagers and their parents. In *The News Headlines*, a text with the headline “Parent Trouble” (NH 21) begins thus:

Parents and their children have the most arguments and problems when the children are teenagers. There are courses for parents who want to deal with their teenage children better. We spoke to David, father of three teenagers.

Characteristic of *The News Headlines*, it is the father who is interviewed and not the mother. In *Smart Moves*, on the other hand, there is a text (SM 2.12) where a situation of conflict between a parent and their teenaged child is described by both the mother or the father and the son or the daughter. The reader is then asked to decide who is right and who is wrong. For example:

Mother: I want my daughter to know that her friends are always welcome in our home. I want to have time for my kids, and I think it's important to get to know my daughter's friends, too. Last week she brought her friend home. I sat them both down with tea and biscuits so we could have a nice chat about school, boyfriends and what's important in their world.

Daughter: God, it's so annoying – my mother is so nosy. Just the other day, I had my friend Jessica round, and we were talking about this new cute boy in our class. Then, all of a sudden, she walks in with tea and biscuits and starts asking all sorts of silly questions. I was so embarrassed I could have died.
(SM 2.12)

In addition to the discourse of the difficulties between mother and daughter, there are also some female stereotypes to be found in this extract. The girls are talking about a boy they know and the mother wants to talk with them about things important to them, which the daughter deems as being nosy. This kind of talk about personal issues and “gossiping” or “being nosy” is often thought of as stereotypically female behaviour.

All in all, the family is a major aspect in many texts in *Smart Moves* but not so much in the forefront in *The News Headlines*. Gender roles within the family seem to be mostly in accordance with stereotypical gender behaviour. Boys are allowed to be more reckless than girls and mothers take care of the family more than fathers. And interestingly, there are a few texts about a pair of brothers but none about a pair of sisters.

5.1.3 Girls and boys as friends and in love

Besides family relations, other recurrent themes through which the gendered characters are connected to each other in the textbooks are friendship and love. Throughout the texts, the male and female characters go on dates, have heterosexual crushes on each other and hang out together as friends.

When it comes to romantic love between the characters, one essential discourse in *Smart Moves* is that of “a real date”, which means a boy and a girl going to dinner at a restaurant or to the movies. One text about such a date begins like this:

Mike is a little nervous. Jade has promised to go on a date with him.
They have decided to go to a restaurant. **So, it is a real date.** (SM 2.6)

The setting, a date in a restaurant, is thus quite conformist, but the fact that it is the boy who is nervous can be seen as resistant to hegemonic gender discourses. Also, later on in the text, the girl promises to call the boy after the date, not the other way around. This could also be interpreted as non-stereotypical gender behaviour. In another text, a girl complains to her mother that her boyfriend never takes her out on “a real date”:

I always complained to my mum about my boyfriend. **He never took me out on real dates** – we always ended up sitting in his house or mine. One evening, my mum was making dinner, when my boyfriend called. He said that he wanted to take me out for a dinner and to see a film that evening. (SM 2.16)

In this extract, the “real date” is clearly described as being a dinner and a movie, whereas “sitting in his house or mine” does not qualify. Also, there are at least two strikingly stereotypical gender aspects in this text. First of all, it is seen as the boyfriend’s duty to take the girl out for a date, not the other way around. Secondly, the mother is making dinner, which is a stereotypically female chore.

In *The News Headlines*, heterosexual romantic love is discussed for example in a text titled “All you need is love” (NH 16). In this text, two boys and two girls describe their romantic experiences. Noticeably, there is an equal amount of male and female narrators, but the boys’ stories are told first. In both the boys’ stories about love, the girl they are in love with is described as cold and not returning the boys’ feelings. One of the boys talks about his first love as an eight-year-old, and describes how the girl ignored his attempts to show his infatuation and how “in the end, I asked

one of my friends to tell her I liked her. After that she asked the teacher if she could move to another desk” (NH 16). The other boy’s first love is a girl he sees through the window when travelling on a train. So, it seems to be possible to fall in love with a girl based only on her appearances. Again in this boy’s story the girl is quite cold, as can be seen when the narrator pulls “emergency handle” on the train and goes to talk to the girl, she tells him to “get lost” (NH 16).

In contrast, the girls who talk about their romantic experiences in the text are described as having a more mature attitude than the boys. First, one girl talks about how she has been out with a couple of boys but did not like them and that she has got “more important things to do right now, like getting through college and finding [herself] a good job” (NH 16). This could be interpreted as a resistant discourse to the hegemonic one about female irrationality and emotionality. Nevertheless, the same girl says “Maybe I’ll meet the right person one day”, indicating a belief in the romantic idea of the one ideal partner. This idea of meeting the One and marrying for love is questioned in the next part of the text as an Indian girl describes how her parents arranged her marriage and it has been a success: “My husband and I have been together for seven happy years. I’m thankful for my parents’ choice. I have heard that in Europe young women choose their own husbands. Is that why there are so many divorces?” (NH 16).

In addition to love, friendship is also an important theme in both textbook series. In *Smart Moves*, there are a few instances where the friendship between a boy and a girl is described. In one text, it is stated that it is unusual for a boy and a girl to be friends, but that it is possible, when a character called Brandon describes his best friend, Sarah: “Some people think it is funny that my best friend is a girl but I see nothing strange about it” (SM 1.3). The fact that they really are just friends is

emphasized even further, as Brandon states that “Now Sarah has a boyfriend, and I’m really happy for her” (SM 1.3). There is also another text where a boy talks about his female friend with whom he usually walks to school. He mentions that he has to wait for the friend in the morning, as she usually gets up too late, and goes on to state that “Luckily, she doesn’t have to choose her clothes because we wear a school uniform” (SM 1.12). This discourse of the importance of appearances for females is discussed further in the next section. In yet another text the male narrator tells that he has two female roommates: “I have two roommates, two girls as a matter of fact, who are great company” (SM 3.14). What is noteworthy in all these cases is that it is always the male character describing his relationship with a female character. There is one instance, where a female character mentions having a male friend but she tells nothing more of him besides the fact that he has died in a drive-by shooting (SM 2.22).

In *The News Headlines* there are no references to girls and boys being friends, but other non-traditional types of friendship are described. In a text titled “Friendship is...” (NH 10) two boys and two girls talk about their best friends. The first boy says that his grandmother is his best friend:

Some people have a lot of friends. I don’t. It’s not because I’m unfriendly or anything like that. It’s just that I don’t make friends easily. I would say my best friend is my grandma. That’s because my mom and dad haven’t looked after me very well. I don’t want to talk about it too much. (NH 10)

The other boy says his best friend is his brother. One of the girls says she does not have a best friend besides her dog. The other girl describes the difficulties she and her best friend, a girl, have had because she is white and her friend is black and they live in South Africa. The emphasis in the text would seem to be on embracing difference. Also, a discourse of not having a lot of friends and not being very sociable can be found in this text. This is something unique to *The News Headlines*. In *Smart Moves*,

the norm is to have a lot of friends or siblings who you hang out with; “I’ve got lots of very good friends who I have great fun with” (SM 3.14).

All in all, the discourses related to romantic relationships seem to be more prominent and more in accordance with the hegemonic gender discourses in *Smart Moves* than in *The News Headlines*. On the other hand, examples of friendship between a boy and a girl, which can be seen as deviant from the hegemonic gender roles, can only be found in *Smart Moves*. Interestingly, in the texts about these friendships, it is always the boys who describe their female friends, and at one time also their appearances, which is an aspect of gender representation that is analysed more thoroughly in the next section.

5.1.4 The importance of girls’ appearance

In our society, women’s appearances are scrutinised as well as exploited to a much larger extent than men’s. As people are constantly bombarded with images of ideal female bodies in the media and advertisements, it is hard for a woman not to feel the pressure of having to be beautiful, thin and youthful. It is no surprise then that the looks of female characters are often brought to attention in the English textbooks as well.

In *Smart Moves*, an emphasis on female characters’ appearance is apparent already in the very first text of the first book, as a female character states that “I’m in my last year of high school now and I have to look good” (SM 1.1). It is not just females themselves who comment on their looks, but male characters do it as well. For example, in one text, a Welsh boy states the following about his female friend:

I don't understand why Geraldine is always so late in the morning! I get up, wash, dress and have breakfast, and it only takes me twenty-five minutes from start to finish. She does the same but it takes twice as long. **I suppose she spends more time with her hair and make-up.** Luckily, she doesn't have to choose her clothes because we wear a school uniform. (SM 1.15)

There is also a text about a girl desperately looking for a bikini to wear on a holiday in Spain because, as she says, "I can't wear my old bikini. I must get a new one, or the holiday will be a disaster" (SM 1.14). Also, in a text about the successful singer Avril Lavigne, under the subheading "Secret of success", we are told that "people loved Avril's skater dress style and loud, clear voice" (SM 1.16) in that order, which would imply that her style has been a more important factor in her success than her singing. In one text a mother wonders what has happened to her daughter because she wears "dirty jeans and an old hoodie with holes in it" when she plays a sonata on the piano in front of her school, even though the mother "told her to dress properly" (SM 2.12). She even goes on to state that "I was so ashamed. She played well enough but she looked terrible" (SM 2.12). Again, looks seem to be more important than musical talent for a girl.

There is also one text where teenagers ask for advice from a youth mentor whom they call "Lizzy Looks" (SM 2.14). The nickname already reveals what it is that the teenagers mostly need help with – their looks. Three of the four teenagers asking for help are girls and only one is a boy. The girls' problems are awful-looking hair and a pale face. The boy has trouble sleeping and is worried about the way he looks because of it, but this concern about his appearance is mainly due to his girlfriend: "My girlfriend said that if I want to hang out with her, I can't look like a scarecrow" (SM 2.14). Male characters' appearances are also commented on in a few other instances. For example, in one text a girl talks about how he has a crush on her friend's big brother who is "hot" (SM 2.16). And in a text where a brother and sister

watch the movie *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the sister thinks Johnny Depp “looks fantastic” in the film (SM 1.17). Thus, it is not only girls whose appearance is talked about, but the emphasis is clearly on them.

In *The News Headlines*, no such clear emphasis on the appearances of either female or male characters is to be found. There are only a few instances where a woman’s beauty is mentioned. For example, when the plot of an action movie is summarized, the following is stated: “Not only does the hero win this fight but he also wins the love of a **beautiful woman** who has watched his bravery throughout the film” (NH 19). Also, in a text about love, a boy falls in love with a girl because she is beautiful: “When I saw my first love I was travelling on a train. We were going through a station and **I saw this beautiful girl**” (NH 16). But, to be fair, male characters are also described as being “handsome” and “good-looking” (NH 19). The focus on appearance seems to be something that concerns people much more nowadays than it did before, if the textbooks are anything to judge by. And there is also a difference between genders in that looking good is more important for girls than for boys.

To sum up, there is a much greater emphasis on the female characters’ appearance than the male characters’. Both female characters themselves as well as male characters comment on their looks and clothes. In some instances, it seems that for a girl, looking good is more important than being talented.

5.1.5 Girls, boys and education

As was mentioned earlier, there is an ongoing debate about the appropriateness of the educational system for students of different gender. Some say the current teaching

methods are more suited for girls whereas others claim that teachers treat boys differently than girls, giving them special attention and privileges. Be that how it may, in the textbooks there are certainly different discourses related to girls and boys in terms of education.

First of all, it is mainly only girls who are praised for educational success and knowledge, as in these examples:

Molly: Yes, there was a big famine in Ireland in those days, right? I remember it from my course on immigration last year.

Grandma: Yes, there was. **You've done your homework, Molly. Well done!** (SM 2.18)

Mrs Clarkson: Now you will have a chance to practice your French. **You have studied it for three years and your grades have been good.** My French is a little rusty, so, Tonya, we will need your help.

Tonya: Oh Mum, please, I'm not that good! (SM 1.9)

In both of the texts mentioned above, it is someone else (noticeably, their mother or their grandmother) praising them, not the girls themselves talking about their education. But, there are also texts where girls comment on their studies. For example, a girl from San Diego states the following: "I think I'd like to become a doctor. To make my dream come true I must study very hard" (SM 2.22). In another text, a Finnish girl explains how her time-consuming hobby does not interfere with her schoolwork: "It takes a lot of my time, but I manage to do my homework and meet my other friends as well" (SM 3.10). So, girls are praised for doing well at school and they also appreciate education themselves.

To add to the emphasis on education being more important for female than male characters, there are three texts in *Smart Moves* in which a girl is doing a project for school. In one text (SM 1.13), an American girl writes to a British boy because of her school project where she has to find out about a city in Britain. In another text, an American girl with Irish roots is talking with her grandmother: "Grandma, I need a

little help. We have a school project on family roots, and I'm supposed to tell my class where our family comes from" (SM 2.18). In yet another text (SM 2.8), both a boy and a girl are said to be doing a school project, but it is the girl's project that is the core text, and the boy's project is an extra bit that can only be listened to, not read in the textbook.

Boys are never praised for their success in educational endeavours in neither textbook series. Instead, there are a few comments on education from two male characters that have succeeded in sports and made it into a career. In the first text in *The News Headlines* (NH 1) Teemu Selänne talks about the importance of English for his career:

My name is Teemu Selänne. I'm a professional ice hockey player in the NHL in Canada. As you can imagine, I need English every day, not just at work but also in my private life. **I may not have been the best student at school but at least I tried.** And I can tell you, it really helped me later on in my career. (NH 1)

He also encourages the reader in their English studies: "So, my advice is simply to **do your homework (OK – I didn't always do it)** and slowly try to build up your vocabulary" (NH 1). In *Smart Moves*, a Finnish football player studying in the US comments on his educational success in Finland: "I did pretty well at school, and my grade average was around 8. **I know I could have worked harder but I was quite pleased with my results**" (SM 3.14). Thus, both of these male athletes admit that they did not always do their best in school, but it has not stopped them from becoming successful. But, in fact, the Finnish footballer studying in the US does also emphasise the importance of studying dutifully:

You have to attend all the classes, especially if you're an athlete. You see, the teachers report back to the coach immediately if you miss your class without a valid reason. To be able to play in the team, you have to have a certain average in exams, too. **So, playing sports is no excuse to do badly in your studies.** (SM 3.14)

But even in this statement the male character does not emphasise a desire to do well at school, he merely states the fact that in his American school one is supposed to attend school even if one does well in sports. There is also another text where a male character explains how he does not neglect his studies because of the sport he is into:

Well, the time I spend on parkour depends on the weather and schoolwork. If I have a lot of homework, I do parkour at weekends. In general, it could be something like three hours a week. In the summer, it's totally different because I have more time for my hobby then. (SM 3.10)

The hegemonic male attitude towards education is also brought up in a text where a boy talks with his grandfather about school:

Grandad: How's school, laddie?

Donald: Oh, you know, the same old same-o. **I think school is the most boring place on earth.**

Grandad: Aye, it was the same when I was at school, I suppose. They say they are the best days of your life, but you don't think so at the time, do you? (SM 2.9)

Thus, boys do not always do their homework or work as hard as they could at school, and they think school is boring. The extract above is also quite interesting when compared to the text where a girl talks with her grandmother (SM 2.18). The female characters talk with each other because the girl has a school project, but the male characters talk about how boring school is.

Of course, the emphasis on all these texts is on the importance of going to school, in order to encourage the students reading them to do their homework properly and attend school regularly. But in the texts about Teemu Selänne and the footballer, there is also a hint of educational success not being so important if you have other skills, especially sports-related. And, interestingly, both of these people who have a career in sports are male.

As a summary, it can be said that in the textbooks the girls' educational endeavours are praised more than boys'. Female characters have a higher appreciation

for doing well at school than male characters. It is pointed out that male characters can succeed in life even if they do not do their very best at school, by being good at sports, for example.

5.2 Vocabulary of gender representation

Next we move from larger gender-related discourses into a more detailed analysis of the language of gender representation in the textbooks. In this section, the focus of the analysis is on the linguistic details of gender representation, namely on the vocabulary used to describe the characters. This analysis is crucial, as “ideological differences between texts in their representations of the world are coded in their vocabulary” (Fairclough 1989, 113). The intention is to find out how the behaviour and nature of female and male characters are represented in *The News Headlines* and *Smart Moves* and if there is a difference in this representation between the textbook series.

5.2.1 Verbs

As has been pointed out, there is a difference in the way males and females are expected to behave. Some actions, such as showing one’s feelings or doing household chores, are still deemed more suitable for females and some others, for example fighting or killing, are seen as more masculine. Therefore, I will now analyse the verbs related to the gendered characters in the textbooks in order to find out if they behave according to the social rules or if they are given the freedom to deviate from them.

The verbs related to the characters are divided into fourteen semantic types according to the categories devised by Dixon (2005, 102). These primary semantic verb types are the following: motion and rest, affect, giving, corporeal, competition, social contract, using, obeying, attention, thinking, deciding, speaking, liking and annoying. Out of these, the most prominent verb type among both male and female characters in the textbooks was found to be the thinking type, including verbs such as *think*, *know*, *remember* and *believe*. The second most popular verb type for characters of both genders is that of motion and rest, including various different verbs expressing movement or being still, such as *walk*, *sit*, *throw* and *bring*. The third most common verb type among characters of both genders is the speaking type encompassing verbs such as *say*, *tell*, *agree* and *shout*. Thus, it is clear that the most common activities for both male and female characters are thinking, moving and speaking. The amount of verbs of the thinking type related to male and female characters is roughly the same. In contrast, for both the motion and rest type and the speaking type, the amount of verbs related to male characters is larger than the amount of verbs related to female characters. Nevertheless, no clear conclusions can be drawn in this case, as the imbalance of the amount of verbs is most probably due to the fact that there are more male characters in the textbooks all in all. But the quantitative difference is not the only differentiating factor between the gendered characters. It is important to consider the gender-related aspects in the use of the verbs, as well.

When looking at the verbs of the most common category, the thinking type, it has to be noted that the verb *forget* is never related to female characters but five times to male characters. Thus, forgetfulness is represented as a stereotypically male characteristic, as in this example:

Mom: Ryan, do you have a test today?

Ryan: Yeah, I guess...

Mom: You guess! You either do or you don't!

Ryan: Well, yeah... err... I do, geography – **I forgot**... (SM 1.1)

Secondly, the verb *learn* is used six times in connection to female characters and only three times to male characters. Female characters also often talk about learning in the sense of learning about either one's own or other people's feelings. For example, in a text where people describe why they like doing survival sports, a female character states the following: "I think I've **learnt a lot about myself**. I've learnt that I can survive" (NH 6). And in another text a girl states the following about her hobby, LARPing:

The goal for every player is to act like the character and also **learn to understand the character and their feelings**. --- I can recommend my hobby to anyone who wants to **learn to understand other people**. (SM 3.10)

Learning and caring about one's own and other people's feelings are thus represented as female characteristics. Interestingly, and in contrast, female characters are never said to teach but male characters do it in three instances.

Among the second most common verb type, that of motion and rest, there is an intriguing imbalance between the genders in regards to the verb *live*. It is used eleven times in relation to male characters but only three times in relation to female characters. However, no elaborate conclusions should be drawn from this, as it may be only due to the fact that male characters are narrators more often than female characters and thus describe themselves and where they live more often. But there is gender imbalance with a few other verbs of this type, as well. For example, the verb *visit* is used in connection to male characters seven times, but never in relation to female characters. Also, the verb *travel* is related to male characters three times and only once to a female character. This may be seen to imply that male characters have slightly more freedom to move around and travel than female characters.

Next, among the verbs of the speaking type, the verb *complain* is only used in relation to female characters, and to be precise, mothers. In addition to this, the tendency to be bossy or irritable is constructed as a female characteristic in a few texts. For example, when a boy is babysitting his little brother and orders him to go to the shower and put his clothes in the laundry basket, the little brother tells him “You sound just like Mum, Phil” (SM 2.13). Also, when the big brother lets the little brother stay up later than he is supposed to, he says “You have to promise me not to tell Mum or she’ll have my head on a plate” (SM 2.13). In another text, even though the verb *complain* is not specifically used, a mother is again seen to complain when she puts her children in order: “Will you two stop fighting! I can’t stand you two right now” (SM 1.1). What is more, mothers do not only complain to their children, they also try to control their husbands’ behaviour, as becomes clear when a boy talks about how his father was “always changing hobbies – or he used to be until Mum **made him stick** with one hobby” (SM 1.8). This is interesting in the light of the fact that one persisting stereotype concerning women and their use of language is “the nagging wife or scold” and “a notable feature of stereotypes of women as language users is how negative they are” (Talbot 2003, 469).

In one text, though, there is exceptionally a father who is irritated and complains about his children:

Two teenage sons – it isn’t the easiest thing, let me tell you. I came home from work the other day feeling dead tired, with two heavy shopping bags in my hands, and what did I see? The two of them were lying around on the sofa watching DVDs. There were crisps all over the floor and sweet wrappers, too. I snapped and told them that if they want to live like that, they can go to live in a hotel.
(SM 2.12)

Interestingly, though, when a father shows his irritation, he does it more forcefully than the mothers do, as becomes clear from the way the sons describe the situation:

Dad is on edge these days! I mean really on edge. On Monday we were watching the end of this great movie when **he came in huffing and puffing** with two shopping bags. Before we could get up to help him, **he started shouting and throwing things**. He even threw a packet of frankfurters at the television screen – I mean, what’s that all about? (SM 2.12)

Thus, when a father is irritated, he shouts and throws things whereas mothers merely complain. This seems to be in accordance with hegemonic gender roles. Women and men are expected to behave differently when they are angry; “women are allowed to fuss and complain, but only a man can bellow in rage” (Lakoff 2004, 45).

In addition to the three most popular verb types, there are other types of verbs in the texts, as well. The affect type, including verbs such as *wash*, *break*, *knock* and *shoot*, is clearly more often related to males (20 instances) than females (eight instances). There are a few noteworthy gender aspects in the use of verbs of this type in the textbooks. One of the verbs of this type is the verb *kill*, an activity most often thought of as masculine rather than feminine. In *Smart Moves* the verb *kill* is not used at all, but in *The News Headlines* male characters kill in three instances. In contrast, the verb *cook*, often associated with femininity, is related to a female character twice. First, when a female crime writer is interviewed, she says that when preparing a new story, what she does is “cook and talk to myself” (SM 3.22). And second, this is what happens in a text about a boy and a girl on a date in a restaurant:

Once Mike sees Jade’s dessert, he wants to have a bite, too. Jade knows the recipe because she has made it at home many times. **Mike asks Jade to cook something for him.** (SM 2.6)

There is yet another instance where a female character is cooking, although the verb *cook* is not used, but instead, she is said to be “making dinner” (SM 2.16). On the other hand, cooking is also once related to a male character, but in a much more primitive, and thus perhaps also more masculine, sense than with the female characters. In a text where an Apache man finds two boys shooting birds, the

following happens: “He led the boys to a place where they could **make a fire and cook the birds**” (NH 25).

The giving verb type is also more common among male than female characters with fifteen references to male characters and seven references to female characters. There is an interesting division of the verbs *buy* and *sell* included in this category. *Sell* is never related to male characters, but twice to female characters. In comparison, only one female character is said to *buy* something, whereas male characters are seen to *buy* six times. The verb *pay* is also related to male characters four times but not once to a female character. This would seem to imply that handling money is a characteristically male activity.

Corporeal verbs are also more common among male characters with twenty-three references to males and fourteen to females. Interestingly, there is only one instance where a female character eats, and in comparison, eight instances where male characters eat. This reflects the hegemonic idea that women are not supposed to eat, or at least not eat a lot. The verbs related to showing one’s feelings are also listed under the corporeal type. And, as showing your feelings is often seen as a stereotypically female trait, it is intriguing that in the textbooks the verb *laugh* is not related to female characters at all and the verb *smile* only once, whereas male characters laugh in three instances and smile in one. What is more, a male character cries in one instance and a female character in two instances. Thus, it can be said that showing one’s feelings is not depicted as an especially female characteristic in the textbooks, and expressions of joy or sadness are not that common among characters of either gender. Interestingly, though, there is a slight difference between the textbook series here, as a male is the only crying character in *Smart Moves*, whereas in *The News Headlines* there are two crying female characters. Therefore, in *The News*

Headlines, the stereotypical behaviour is a little more common, as female characters are represented as slightly more inclined to showing their feelings.

Among the competition verb type, it is interesting that the verb *win* is related to female characters in three instances, and only once to a male character. Moreover, the instances of female characters winning are all in *Smart Moves*, and the sole male winner is in *The News Headlines*. This means that in *Smart Moves*, male characters never win, even though they are said to play many different sports, which is perhaps somewhat surprising, as competitiveness is often seen as a male characteristic.

Male characters seem to pay more attention to their surroundings, as many verbs of the attention type are more prominent among them than among female characters. For example, the verb *see* is related to male characters 29 times and only twelve times to female characters. Also, *notice* is only once mentioned in relation to female characters but six times in relation to a male character, and *watch* is related to female characters four times but nine times to a male character.

All in all, the amount of verbs related to male characters is slightly larger than the amount related to female characters. Through the use of verbs describing the gendered characters, some gender stereotypes are reinforced and some are rebutted. For example, caring and learning about other people's feelings and complaining to the children are represented as female characteristics, whereas forgetfulness and handling money are male characteristics. But, showing one's feelings is not only related to female characters, but characters of both genders quite equally, and competitiveness is represented as a female characteristic rather than a male one.

5.2.2 Adjectives

The analysis of the vocabulary related to the male and female characters continues now with the focus on the adjectives that are used to describe the characters. The intention is to find out if there is a difference between the representation of the nature of males and females in the textbooks. The adjectives are divided into the following semantic types following Dixon (2005, 84-85): dimension, physical property, speed, age, colour, value, difficulty, volition, qualification and human propensity (with the subcategories of fond, angry, happy, unsure, eager, clever, honest and busy).

Firstly, the most common type of adjective used to describe both male and female characters is that of value, including adjectives such as *helpful*, *friendly* and *suspicious*. The second most common type is the happy subtype of the human propensity type, including adjectives such as *excited*, *happy* and *enthusiastic*. These two types are by far the most prominent. The other types are used quite rarely, and some of them only in connection to male characters. These male-only adjective types are dimension and age. Notably, adjectives of difficulty, volition and qualification are not used to describe the characters at all.

In *The News Headlines*, only a few adjectives connected to female characters can be found, as the female characters are few and far between in the textbooks, as has been noted. To be precise, there are only twelve instances of female characters being described with an adjective in the whole textbook series. Again, the importance of appearance in regards to female characters is emphasized as even within the small amount of adjectives related to women in *The News Headlines*, the adjective *beautiful* is used twice. It is also an interesting coincidence that a female character is described as *unenthusiastic* in *The News Headlines*, whereas in *Smart Moves*, the word *enthusiastic* is used to describe a male character. Many of the adjectives of the value

type that are used to describe male characters in *The News Headlines*, for example *tough*, *powerful*, *glorious* and *great*, are associated with the hegemonic view of masculinity where men are seen as strong in mind and body. But male characters are also said to be *afraid* and *upset* which imply a resistance to hegemonic masculinity.

In *Smart Moves*, the range of adjectives related to the characters is more varied than in *The News Headlines* and also the amount of adjectives related to male and female characters is more balanced. The adjectives most commonly used to describe both male and female characters in *Smart Moves* fall under the categories of value, including adjectives such as *helpful*, *lovely* and *great*, and human propensity, especially the subcategory happy, including adjectives such as *excited*, *embarrassed* and *proud*.

In *Smart Moves*, a male character is described as being famous three times and once as being well-known, but neither of these adjectives is ever related to female characters. Dumbness is also a characteristic related only to males as they are described as being both *stupid* and *dumb*. Neither of these adjectives is ever related to female characters. Also, *smelly* and *brave* are never used in connection to female characters and could be interpreted as belonging to the group of words connected to hegemonic masculinity. In one text (SM 2.2), female characters think bungee jumping is exciting but a male character is afraid of it, and the fact that he did not bungee jump even though the rest of his family did is described as *brave*. In a strikingly misogynist joke, another male character is said to be brave because he does not yell when his wife falls out of an airplane:

A Scotsman was out working on the field when a small plane landed. “I’ll give you an airplane ride for £5,” said the pilot. “Sorry, I cannot afford it,” replied the Scot. “Tell you what,” said the pilot, “I’ll give you and your wife a free ride if you promise not to yell. If you yell, you’ll have to pay me £10.” So up they went and the pilot did all he could to scare the Scot. Nothing worked, and the pilot finally landed the plane. He turned around to the rear seat and said, “I have to tell you that **you are very brave!**” “Aye,” said the Scot “But I nearly yelled when my wife fell out!” (SM 1.18)

In *Smart Moves*, there are two instances where male characters use the comparative and superlative forms to describe themselves, and not in order to boast and claim that they are better than others, but to state that they are average:

I have blue eyes, brown hair and I’m about the same size as all my friends – **not taller, not shorter, not fatter, not thinner.** (SM 1.2)

I play football in a local football team. I think I’m quite good at it, though I’m **not the fastest or the strongest** in my team. (SM 1.7)

There would seem to be an emphasis on fitting in and not standing out in a crowd, but also a discourse of acceptance is to be found here. After all, the textbooks are supposed to promote equality and acceptance of oneself. This aspect of acceptance is also present in another text where a boy talks about the requirements of his hobby, parkour: “Everyone has their own strengths in parkour. I’m short, and that’s why I can do things that taller guys can’t” (SM 3.10).

As was pointed out, adjectives of both the dimension type, such as *small* and *thin*, and the age type, such as *young* and *old*, are only related to male characters. This may be due to the fact that it is not suitable to inquire a woman her age or discuss the physical dimensions of females. Also, even though adjectives of the physical property type, such as *tired* and *sick*, are used to describe both genders, noticeably only male characters are said to be thirsty and hungry. Bodily dimensions and corporeal feelings are thus represented as being rather related to masculinity than femininity.

5.3 Gendered voices

In the previous section the focus was on the language used to describe the characters, and now it is time to examine the way the characters themselves use language. As was stated earlier, the idea of there being a difference in the way men and women use language has been debated quite a lot since the start of research on language and gender. In the 1970s, Robin Lakoff, one of the pioneers of this area of research, investigated the two sides of the linguistic discrimination women experience, namely the way women “are taught to use language” and “the way general language use treats them” (Lakoff 2004, 39-40). She claims that both areas of linguistic discrimination tend to “relegate women to certain subservient functions: that of sex object, or servant” (ibid.).

Cameron (2003, 450) points out that the ideas about how exactly women’s and men’s ways of using language differ are culturally specific, but that “what is constant is the insistence that in any identifiable social group women and men are *different*” (Cameron 2003, 452). It is interesting to investigate if such a difference can be found in the English textbooks between the female and male voices, since the way the female and male characters use language is part of the textbooks’ gender representation. Thus, it also reflects the society’s views on female and male language use.

To begin with, it is useful to find out if there is a difference in the amount of male and female voices in the textbooks. In order to do this, the characters that are either narrators of the texts or have lines in a dialogue were counted. The result is that in *Smart Moves* there are 27 male voices and 30 female voices altogether, so the amount of gendered voices is quite balanced. However, out of the ten texts with only one gendered narrator, the narrator is male in seven instances, leaving only three texts

with a female narrator. Thus, it can be stated that a male narrative voice is a little more dominant in *Smart Moves*. In *The News Headlines* there are eleven male voices and eight female voices. Also, there are five texts with a sole male narrator but no texts with just a female narrator. The male voice is thus slightly more dominant in this textbook series as well.

It has often been claimed that women tend to be more polite and men to use more imperative forms (Litosseliti 2006, 28). Cameron (2003, 450) points out that in the culture of “Western anglophones”, men are supposed to be “more direct speakers than women”. Again, it may be that the status of the person affects their use of polite or imperative linguistic forms more than their gender. According to Aires (1996, 107), “women's greater politeness is related to their lack of many forms of power.” This means that as women tend to occupy less powerful roles in the society and thus are more often in a subordinate role, it is understandable that polite forms are more frequent in their language use. Tannen (1994, 31) emphasizes that linguistic strategies, such as indirectness or interruption, are ambiguous and can also be interpreted as a sign of solidarity instead of dominance. With this in mind, I will now explore if there is a gender-related difference in the degree of politeness and use of direct imperatives in the language use of the characters in the two textbook series.

In *Smart Moves*, female characters are more often seen in situations where politeness is mandatory than male characters, and thus they also use polite language more. For example, a female character says “**Excuse me**, could you help me, **please?**” (SM 1.11) when asking for directions. Another female character is shopping and asks the shop assistant “Where is the fitting room, **please?**” and says to her friend “**Would** you look after my bag, **please?**” (SM 1.14). Also, when a girl is writing to a boy

because of a school project, she asks: “I’d love to have a picture of you and your family. **Could** you send me one, **please**?” (SM 1.13).

Tag questions are also a polite and hesitant linguistic form that women have been said to use more often than men (Litosseliti 2006, 28). But in *Smart Moves*, at least, no significant difference can be found between the use of tag questions by male and female characters. In *Smart Moves*, a female character uses a tag question six times and a male character four times. In *The News Headlines*, there is only one tag question and that is uttered by a male character.

When analyzing the use of imperative forms, it has to be noted that indirectness does not necessarily imply subordination, but “can be used either by the powerful or the powerless” (Tannen 1994, 34). In one text a male character is seen to use imperative forms to give advice: “So, my advice is simply to **do your homework** (OK – I didn’t always do it) and slowly **try to build up your vocabulary**” (NH 1). In another text a male character uses the imperative form in the following situation:

“We’ve got to get out of here,” cried Debbie. “But how?” Paul was still looking at the stone. Suddenly his face lit up. “I know! It’s all here on this stone! **Follow me**, Debbie! Quick!” (NH 2)

It has to be noted how the characters in this extract are seen in quite traditional gender roles. Not only does the male character use the imperative form and tell the female character to follow him, but he is also the one who figures out what is going on in the situation they are in, whereas the female character despairs and does not know what to do. Another instance of male characters using an imperative is when two boys are shooting birds with a BB gun – a notably masculine activity, once again – and one of the boys says to his friend: “There’s another one. **Shoot it!**” (NH 25) Also, when an Apache man sees the boys shooting the birds and tells them: “I see you have been

hunting. **Pick up** your game and **come with me**” (NH 25). In yet another text in *Smart Moves* a male character uses quite a few imperatives:

Off with your clothes! No, **don't throw** them on the floor. **Put** them in the laundry basket. – **Wash** your hair twice. – **Remember** to floss. (SM 2.13)

The reason he uses this kind of language is that he is talking to his little brother, which would imply that the use of the imperative is probably more to do with status than gender. Interestingly, though, as he uses these imperatives, the little brother says he sounds like their mother. Thus, it can be assumed that the mother would normally use imperatives. And in one text a mother does actually use imperative forms when addressing her son: “Billy Evans, **go to your room** this instant! And **don't come back** till you are in a better mood” (SM 1.15).

There are also a few texts where female characters use imperative forms when giving advice. In one text, a female character uses imperatives because she is a youth mentor and thus it is her job to give advice to young people. She uses the following imperatives, for example, “**Think** carefully about what you eat” and “**Clear** your mind of the day's events” (SM 2.14). There is yet another text where a female character uses imperatives because she is asked for advice:

Read as much as you can. When you like a book, **try to figure out** what the author has done to make it work. When you don't like a book, **think** about what the author has failed to do or has done badly. (SM 3.22)

All in all, it can be stated that it is in fact female characters that use more imperative forms than males in the textbooks, but using them would indeed seem to be more linked with the status and occupation of the character, not their gender.

According to Lakoff (2004, 43), the way women and men use language also differs “in the use of particles that grammarians often describe as ‘meaningless’”. It has been claimed that women tend to use more “empty particles” or interjections such as “Oh!” and “Oh dear!”. In *Smart Moves*, both male and female characters use the

particle “Oh” but there is a slight difference in the way they use it. Male characters use it mainly to express surprise, as in these examples:

Sophie: Hey, watch out, Charley! You’ve spilled the coke on the coffee table now.

Charley: Whatever. **Oh** hello, Mum!
(SM 1.17)

Waiter: Good evening! How are you?

Mike: **Oh**, hi!
(SM 2.6)

Female characters use the particle rather to emphasize something, for example when they exclaim “**Oh**, this one is lovely” (SM 1.14) or state something emphatically, as in the following dialogue:

Jade: Mmm, this pasta is very good! How’s your wok?

Mike: Can’t talk, eating. It’s really delicious!

Jade: It was a very good idea to come to this place. I’ve never been here before.

Mike: Yeah, I like the place, too. Mum told me about this. She actually met my dad here.

Jade: **Oh**, she did? How old was she back then?

Mike: I think she was something like 17 or so.

Jade: **Oh, how romantic.**
(SM 2.6)

Lakoff (2004, 45) also claims that there are certain adjectives used to convey approbation or admiration that only women are allowed to use. These are *adorable*, *charming*, *sweet*, *lovely* and *divine*. In contrast, she claims that the adjectives *great*, *terrific*, *cool* and *neat* are neutral and can be used by members of both genders (ibid.). In the textbooks, *lovely* is used by a male character twice and three times by a female character. Thus, it cannot be said to be a strictly feminine word. The other four “feminine adjectives” are not used in the textbooks at all. A slight masculine emphasis can be detected in the use of *great*, as it is used by a female character seven times and twelve times by a male character. *Cool* is quite a neutral word in the textbooks, being used once by a female and twice by a male character. *Neat*, on the other hand, is used

only once by a female character and never by a male character. All in all, as there is no clear gender divide in the use of these adjectives of approbation or admiration they cannot be said to be a part of a difference in the way female and male characters use language in the textbooks.

Yet another lexical aspect that has been claimed to be characteristic of the way women use language is using precise names for colours, such as “beige, ecru, aquamarine, lavender” (Lakoff 2004, 43). Interestingly, almost the opposite is true of the language use of the characters in the textbooks. Neither males nor females actually use such precise words for colours, but male character use the more common words for colours more often than female characters. Also, male characters use such expressions as *bright red*, *amazingly blue* and *bright-colored*. All in all, there does not seem to be a significant difference in the way male and female characters use language in the textbooks.

6. Discussion

To answer the first research question about the way gender is represented in the textbooks, it can be said that, first of all, in *The News Headlines* and *Smart Moves* gender is mainly only represented through the discourses related to the characters and hardly at all through the way the characters themselves use language. Secondly, aspects of gender-stereotypical language use such as women's politeness and men's directness, which have been noted in earlier studies (see Litosseliti 2006, Cameron 2003), are not part of gender representation in these textbook series. In other words, there is no clear gender-related difference in the way the characters speak, but there are many gender-related differences in the way they are represented in the texts.

As for the question about what kinds of gender-related discourses there are, the answer is that there are many different kinds. For example girls are depicted as being obedient students and worrying about their looks. Boys, on the other hand, are represented as more reckless and forgetful than girls. Both boys and girls are quite active in the sense that they have many hobbies and many friends. Women are seen to be caring for the home and children, but also having careers of their own. Men are not very interested in education, but have socially powerful jobs nonetheless.

In regard to the research question about the hegemonic or deviant nature of the gender discourses, it can be said that both reinforcement and resistance to hegemonic gender discourses were found in the texts. For example, caring about other people's feelings is represented mainly as a female characteristic, which is in accordance with the hegemonic discourse. Also, stereotypically only females complain and cook, whereas forgetfulness and dealing with money are described mainly as male characteristics. Male characters move about and travel more than female characters, which is in line with what has been noted about language textbooks in earlier studies

– that females are more confined to the domestic space than men (Litosseliti 2006, 87). Adjectives related to bodily dimensions and age are only used in relation to male characters even though the appearance of females is otherwise discussed quite often. Also, the corporeal activities of female characters are not described as often as male characters'. This is in agreement with the hegemonic idea that it is inappropriate to comment on the age or bodily size of females.

But, as was stated, some deviant gender discourses were also found. For example, male characters are described as being afraid, upset and nervous, which is deviant from the hegemonic discourse of males as emotionally strong and stable. Also, females are represented as more competitive than males. Stereotypically it would be the other way around. Notably, even though there are deviant gender discourses in the textbooks, none of the discourses deviate from the hegemonic binary view of gender. In other words, all the characters are clearly female or male and heterosexual. Tainio and Teräs (2010, 6) noted the same, the absence of sexual minorities, in their research on gender representation in teaching materials.

To answer the research question about the differences between the textbook series in the representation of gender, the textbooks are clearly different. First of all, the amount of female characters is much smaller in comparison to the amount of male characters in *The News Headlines* than in *Smart Moves*. Also, one of the most prominent discourses related to female characters in *Smart Moves*, the emphasis on their appearance, cannot be found in *The News Headlines* at all. Another important gender-related discourse that was mainly only found in *Smart Moves* is the emphasis on gender relations within the family. Furthermore, discourses related to female characters as mothers are almost completely absent from *The News Headlines* but abundant in *Smart Moves*, where female characters are often seen in the role of

mothers performing quite stereotypical activities such as caring for the family, complaining and being nosy. Interestingly, though, the discourses related to romantic love and dating are more in accordance with gender stereotypes in *Smart Moves* than in *The News Headlines*, where there are for example a few young girls whose attitudes towards romantic love are depicted as quite mature.

The main hypotheses stated of the study (see pp. 13-15 above), that gender is an integral part of unequal power relations in the society and that males still hold the most powerful occupations in society, were proven correct in both textbook series. This is in line with earlier research where a male emphasis was found in textbooks used in the Finnish comprehensive school (Metso 1992, 272-273). Nonetheless, when comparing the older textbook series with the more recent one it becomes clear that gender equality has somewhat increased. This increase is seen in the fact that there are more female characters in *Smart Moves* and they are seen in a wider range of occupations than in *The News Headlines*, whereas the range of occupations for male characters is quite similar in both series. This may be seen to reflect the idea of gender equality emphasised in the national curriculum (POPS, 14). All in all it seems that the constructions of femininity have changed more than those of masculinity, as was postulated earlier in this study (see p. 18 above) and as has been noted in earlier research, as well (Francis 2000, 128). But even in *Smart Moves*, male characters still hold the more powerful occupations in the society. Also, female characters are often placed in a subordinate role in families and male characters describe female characters more often than the other way around, making the male voice more dominant. Educational gender inequality is also reflected in the textbooks, as girls are praised for their achievements in school more often than boys.

Critical discourse analysis proved to be a suitable method for the thesis, as it focuses on the linguistic details with the aim of revealing power structures. Through CDA it was possible to find discourses related to gender and unequal power relations between the gendered characters. Nonetheless, Fairclough's definition of CDA may not have been the most useful version of the method, as it emphasises such ideological differences that were not the main focus of this research, for example discourses related specifically to class distinctions. Also, it might have been good to have more materials to investigate. It is quite difficult to find discourses and draw reliable conclusions from such a small amount of texts.

All in all, the results of the thesis reveal that the official ideal of gender equality stated in the national curriculum (POPS, 14) is not fully achieved in the English textbooks. Even though some progress has been made, female characters are still shown in less powerful roles and both male and female characters are represented in quite stereotypical ways. In comparing the findings of this thesis with earlier research it has to be noted that the findings support the idea of there being a male emphasis in teaching materials (Metso 1992), but the emphasis is not as strong in the more recent textbook series. Also, female characters were found to be more confined to the domestic space than male characters, as has been discovered in previous studies on gender representation in language textbooks (Litosseliti 2006, 87). Lastly, in regard to differences in women and men's language use (Litosseliti 2006, Cameron 2003), in this study, no clear difference was found in the way the female and male characters use language.

7. Conclusion

Gender continues to be one of the fundamental distinctions in our society and thus also in the English textbooks investigated in this thesis. *The News Headlines* and *Smart Moves* both include many clearly gendered characters who are distinguished from each other in the way they look, what they are interested in and the way they act. In addition to difference between genders, there still seems to be a slight male dominance in the world of the textbooks. There is a clear imbalance between genders in the amount of characters in *The News Headlines*. In *Smart Moves* the imbalance is not so drastic but there is still a male majority. Male characters also have more powerful occupations and the male voice is more often the narrator than the female voice.

Just how much difference is acceptable? How much can one deviate from gender norms and still be accepted as a normal member of the society? If these textbooks are anything to judge by, the boundaries are quite strict. The characters in the books are for the most part conservative and conformist in that, for example, they are all clearly male or female and heterosexual. In other words, the gender representations of the textbooks were found to be stereotypical and narrow. These findings point out that gender equality is not actually promoted in the Finnish comprehensive school as thoroughly as it should be according to the official curriculum (POPS, 14).

This thesis was able to tackle the question of gender representation in the materials used in the upper level of the comprehensive school. However, it did not reach the level of teaching practice, i.e. the way the materials are used in schools. Thus, the research could be continued and developed further by using ethnographic methods and observing the classroom situations where the textbooks are used to find

out how the gendered characters are dealt with and interpreted by the teacher and the pupils. It would be interesting to study, for example, what happens if and when the dialogues with gendered characters are performed by the pupils, as is often done in language classes. Also, the pupils could be interviewed about their opinions on the textbooks and the characters in them, to find out if they identify with them or not and what kinds of materials and characters they would prefer.

In this thesis, the focus was on the materials used in the upper level of comprehensive school, when the students have already been studying the language for four to six years. However, Finnish students begin learning English already in the third grade of comprehensive school. It would be interesting to study the materials used in the lower levels of comprehensive school to find out what kinds of gender discourses are presented to the students when they start learning English.

All in all, this thesis shows that the analysed English textbook series include various gender discourses that are for the most part in line with hegemonic ideas of gender. The binary distinction between women and men is an integral part of the worldview of the textbooks.

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