THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDEAL READER IN GERMAN AND FINNISH TEXTBOOKS FOR LITERACY EDUCATION

LIISA TAINIO* & IRIS WINKLER**

*University of Helsinki, Finland & **University of Jena. Germany*

Abstract: The article compares reading literacy education in Germany and Finland using the following curricula and textbooks intended to ten-year-old pupils as data: Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education and the German Bildungsstandards, as well as of three Finnish and three German textbooks. Our analytical method is critical discourse analysis, which is used for the purpose of the comparison. We identify three important differences in the curricula that also affect the textbooks. In our analysis of the textbooks we focus on identifying their ideal readers, and, as a reflection of the differences between the curricula, find that these ideal readers differ between the German and Finnish data. We illustrate the ideal readers' characteristics by analyzing extracts from the textbooks. The ideal reader in the Finnish textbooks is presented more as an independent actor who is interested in learning and whose prior knowledge is valuable whereas in the German textbooks the ideal reader is more dependent on guidance. According to our limited data, we consider this to be one of the key elements illustrating the differences in German and Finnish educational cultures.

Key words: textbooks, ideal reader, reading literacy, comparative analysis

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1.   INTRODUCTION

From a historical point of view the German educational culture has had a great influence on the development of educational culture in Finland, and also on the didactics of literacy education (Vitikka, Krokfors & Hurmerinta, 2012). Today, in international assessments of reading literacy Finland achieves better results than Germany, even though the latest PISA results show a slight convergence of average reading performance of 15-year-olds in both countries (improvement in Germany, decline in Finland; OECD, 2013). Concerning 10-year-olds, however, PIRLS 2011 reveals still a clear advance of Finnish pupils: 7,9 % of Finnish students were assessed as weak readers in contrast to Germany's 15,4 %. On the other hand, 18,4 % of the Finnish 10-year-olds and 9,5 % of the Germans were assessed as top readers (Tarelli et al., 2012: 13). Based on this data Finland can currently be estimated as more effective in improving pupils´ reading literacy than Germany.

In this article we look into the possible differences in reading literacy education in Germany and Finland that might be influencing these results. Although there are crucial differences in the general educational structure and systems between Germany and Finland which could affect the results (see e.g. Mullis et al., 2012), here we focus on other aspects of the two educational cultures. We suggest that in the analysis of the cultures of reading literacy education, at least three subject-specific aspects should be taken into consideration: curricula; learning materials, such as textbooks; and the enactment of teaching itself. We undertake a comparative analysis of curricula as well as teaching and learning materials that in many studies are identified as the most significant, namely textbooks (Blumberg, 2007; Heinonen, 2005; Luukka et al., 2008).

The assumption behind this approach is that textbooks are an important mirror of the educational culture in a certain domain and school system (e.g. Pingel, 2010; Mikk, 2000; Mayer, Sims & Tajika, 1994). First, textbooks realize curricula (Sulkunen, 2012: 218; Tarelli et al., 2012: 260). Second, in a less explicit but very important way, textbooks contain not only subject contents but also "explicit references to a great number of rules, norms and patterns of behaviour that the adults believe in and wish to inculcate into the younger generation" (Pingel, 2010: 7). The traditions of teaching certain curricula are manifested in textbooks (Pingel, 2010).

We see the prevailing image of the pupil as one of the key issues in our comparative analysis, in other words, the ways in which the pupil is seen as a learner and participant in pedagogical settings. Thus our main analytic aim is to identify the image of the pupil that is written into the curricula and the design of the books. We see this image as a manifestation of the ideal reader (Kress, 1985). The term 'ideal reader' refers to a certain reading position that is created by the author(s) through various linguistic and visual means in the text. In the process of reading, the 'flesh and blood reader' is led into the position of the ideal reader through the guidance of the author (Kress, 1985; Phelan, 2004). Although textbooks are partly written for the teacher, the direct target is the pupil. This is why the identification of the ideal

reader is a key issue in understanding how the perspective of the pupil is taken into account in the textbooks and how the educational authorities (authors of text-books and curricula) view the competences of pupils.

Thus we focus on the following research questions:

1) Are there differences in curricula concerning reading literacy between Germany and Finland?
2) If we find differences in curricula, are they reflected on the differences in the construction of ideal readers between Finnish and German textbooks?
3) How can the possible differences in curricula and textbooks contribute to explaining the different outcome of reading literacy education in both countries?

To make the comparison possible, we chose to compare curricula and textbooks for pupils aged 9-10 in comprehensive school. This means grade 3 in Finland and grade 4 in Germany. According to the curricula, at this stage the basic acquisition of reading as a technique is completed in both countries. In addition, German pupils are not yet divided into different school types, meaning that textbooks in the fourth grade are addressed to all kinds of pupils, as they are in Finland where all pupils share the same comprehensive school education, separating into different branches of secondary education only at age 15 or 16.

In what follows, we will analyze in detail the Finnish National Core Curricula for Basic Education (NCC, 2004) and the German Bildungsstandards (KMK, 2004) in order to identify the possible differences between them from the perspective of reading literacy. Then we turn to empirically analyzing the ideal reader embedded in the design and texts of the textbooks. As a data, we will use three most popular and widely used textbooks in Germany and Finland (a detailed criteria for the selection of the books are given in section 4). After the analysis, we discuss the consequences of it for the reading literacy education. However, first we introduce our methodological framework.

1.1 Methodological framework

We approach reading as a phenomenon that is thoroughly embedded in the socio-cognitive and situated processes of reading (Gee, 2013; Ruddell & Unrau, 2013). It is a cognitive process, but at the same time a socially and culturally situated activity that is tied to experience and action (Gee, 2013). We adopt as our starting point the view presented in discursive psychology (e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987) that the roots of cognitive processes originate and are developed in social situations where people interact with each other. Reading mediates values and beliefs of the surrounding environment, and is influenced by the overall and specific aims of reading both at the social and individual level (Gee, 2013). During the reading process, the reader has different experiences of various real and imagined material and social worlds, and these experiences are always tied to the perception of the reader's own internal states, feelings and body (Gee, 2013; Ruddell & Unrau, 2013).

Reading a textbook has its own characteristics (Ruddell & Unrau, 2013). Textbook reading is usually situated in classroom contexts where it is a platform for different beliefs and conceptions of knowledge, feelings, attitudes and dimensions of control, presented in the texts and by the teacher and pupils in this specific setting (Ruddell & Unrau, 2013). Textbooks are usually treated as institutional and authoritative sources of information and learning practices for students (Oteiza, 2003). However, the textbook genre is heterogeneous. Textbooks consist of various kinds of textual and visual material, and textbooks for mother tongue education offer the readers both factual and fictional texts, in addition to exercises, lists, abstracts and other small texts, and, more and more importantly, illustrations and other aspects of visual design. The actual textbook is a result of cooperation between many diverse actors, such as the authors and editors, including teachers or possibly other experts in the subject field or educational studies, and representatives of the publisher (Tainio, 2012; Müller, 2010). All texts communicate ideologies (e.g. Fairclough, 1989; Oteiza, 2003), and textbooks communicate ideologies concerning teaching and learning in particular, including representations of the identities of students and pupils as learners and actors in the surrounding communities of practice (Eckert & McConnel-Ginet, 1992).

The institution of education, as illustrated in textbooks, is always constructed around differences of several kinds, including those of power, authority and knowledge (Kress, 1985; Ruddell & Unrau, 2013). From the point of view of the pupil, in order to be successful in schooling contexts these differences, as well as the modes of tackling them, should be accepted, and to some extent overcome. The teacher should guide pupils to adopt a particular kind of attitude towards teaching and learning, and thus a certain kind of a reading position (Kress, 1985). In educational cultures, there is a prevailing paradox of two competing aims: first, to create citizens who can adjust to and sustain themselves in the surrounding society, and second, to help students to develop as active, critical, and independent actors and individuals who are able to be innovative in society (e.g. Macionis & Plummer, 1998). In terms of writing learning materials, this leads to two possibly opposing approaches: the authors should treat the pupils both as individuals with their own valuable experiences, and at the same time as immature young people who should be guided by authorities into mature adulthood and appropriate participation in society. The writers of a textbook must resolve this paradox to be able to create a plausible reading position for the ideal reader, a position that can be treated as natural and unproblematic to the extent that the reader is ready to adopt it (Kress, 1985). In educational settings, there are pressures created by the institution itself for the readers to adopt this position, since it more likely leads to success in school in the eyes of the teacher (Kress, 1985).

The term 'ideal reader' comes from the theoretical approach of critical discourse analysis (CDA, e.g. Fairclough, 1989; Janks, 1997; Oteiza, 2003). CDA sees language as a social practice that mediates, contests, recreates and identifies differences, and it treats written texts as unities of various linguistic, semiotic and

visual features (Janks, 1997). In CDA, texts are always seen as attempts to have a reader accept the dominant reading position constructed in the text with the help of linguistic features and other aspects of text and visual design (Kress, 1985; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The construction of the ideal reader should be powerful enough to convince the reader; s/he should believe that the competing ideologies embedded in the text and in its contexts are resolved if the reader adopts the offered, dominant position (Mills, 1995). The concept of 'ideal reader' bears a resemblance to the concepts of 'authorial audience' by Phelan (2004) or 'implied reader' by Chatman (1988) that have been created for the purpose of analyzing reader positions when reading fiction. With these approaches, in the reading process, the 'flesh and blood readers' are assumed to achieve these positions. In the analysis of narrative texts, these positions are also regarded as platforms for embedded moral and ideological goals (Phelan, 2004). In an empirical study by Macken-Horarik (2003), the written responses of actual readers have been found to closely parallel the author's construction of the ideal reader.

In this article we intend to identify the ideal reader in the reading literacy textbooks for pupils in Finland and Germany with the help of critical discourse analysis. The ideal reader is constructed in the texts by repetitions, by representing the same or similar ideological features to an extent that the features become naturalized and are finally taken as the legitimate and natural state of affairs (Fairclough, 1989). This makes repetition an influential means of mediating ideological discourses that impose cultural meanings and structure readers' perceptions (Oteiza, 2003). In the analysis we take into consideration the driving force behind the textbooks, namely the official curricula, and illustrate the dominant reading position of the ideal reader by analyzing textbook extracts that exemplify the ways in which the ideal readers are recurrently constructed in the textbooks.

Our approach is a comparative one, and we use comparison as a method for explanation (Esser, 2012). As already mentioned, we made sure that the chosen objects of comparison – curricula, textbooks and textbook items – were equivalent. Concerning the textbook analysis, we apply the concept of ideal reader as a tertium comparationis. In practice, we read and analyzed carefully the six textbooks that we had chosen as our data, to find out the most significant elements that are both based on the curriculum analysis and form the basis for the identification of an ideal reader of each of the textbooks. Then we identified the most significant elements reflecting the formation of ideal readers that were common in all three books in Finnish (Author 1) and, vice versa, in all German textbooks (Winkler). After that we double checked the analysis conducted by the other researcher (Winkler through translations to English by Tainio; Tainio with her limited access to German with the supplementary help by Winkler), and compared the analyses of Finnish and German data. After this double checking and comparison we identified and chose the examples that were the most representative in respect to the differences we found out in the analysis. As a result, we compare the chosen objects as possi-

ble explanatory variables that can help to better understand the contexts of different outcomes in reading literacy education. Thus, the description of differences cannot end in itself, but must lead to interpretative inferences (Esser, 2012; King et al., [1994] 2012; Schriewer, 2003).

Our comparison is not made possible only by having data from two different countries but also by the backgrounds of the two researchers. Each of us comes from a certain national educational culture. So a 'foreign view' on the data of each country was implemented in the research process, and challenged teaching patterns that seemed to be familiar and self-evident from a national point of view. This means that our findings, at least to a certain extent, mirror a process of intersubjective and intercultural negotiation and comprehension (investigator triangulation, e.g. Flick, 2010: 444).

2. CURRICULUM ANALYSIS

In Germany each federal state has its own curricula. Nevertheless, efforts have been made to ensure a uniform quality of education in all federal states. One means of doing so was the 2004 implementation of national education standards (Bildungsstandards) for several subjects and class levels. The Bildungsstandards describe expected performance at an average proficiency level. The curricula of the federal states have to be geared to the national Bildungsstandards. Our analysis of German curricula is based on the Bildungsstandards for the subject of German in grade 4 (in Germany, end of primary school; pupils aged 9-10). Reading and text comprehension is one of four core areas in German lessons.[1] In our analysis we focus on this part of the Bildungsstandards.

In Finland every school creates its own local curriculum which, however, is always based on the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCC, 2004), the main document for steering, instructing and guiding education in comprehensive school. It can be regarded as an administrative document as well as an intellectual document defining culturally significant knowledge, and as a pedagogical document, providing pedagogical advice and support (Vitikka, Krokfors & Hurmerinta, 2012). The NCC describes the objectives and core content for teaching of six languages as mother tongues in Finnish basic education, but here we focus on Finnish, since 90% of the population in Finland speaks Finnish as their mother tongue (see also Tainio & Grünthal, 2012). The objectives, core content and description of good performance are divided in the NCC's section for mother tongue and literature for grades 1-2, 3-5 and 6-9. With regard to reading literacy education in this article, the aforesaid description pertains to the end of the fifth grade, and is the main source of data for the analysis (NCC, 2004: 47-50).

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[1] *The other core areas (German: Kompetenzbereiche) of mother tongue education in Germany are writing, speaking and listening, and reflection on language.*

In PIRLS 2011, experts from each country provide an analysis of the country's reading curriculum in the fourth grade. According to the summary of these analyses, the Finnish and German curricula show many similarities and resemble the curricula of most other countries in essential ways, for example, in that "students should be able to read with comprehension […] a variety of text types […] identifying main ideas (and secondary information), acquiring information, and being able to discuss opinions about what had been read" (Mullis et al., 2012: 12). In addition to the functional aspects, both the Finnish Curriculum and German Bildungsstandards agree that mother tongue education contributes essentially to pupils' enculturation, including the acquisition of membership in the literacy community (KMK, 2004: 6; NCC, 2004: 44). These similarities are not surprising, because reading literacy research and assessment is an international task with results that are also internationally received. So differences, if they exist, are hidden, for instance in the way certain aspects are stressed or neglected. In our analysis we found three essential aspects that differ between German and Finnish curricula.

The first difference concerns the range of the texts pupils should learn to read. Both the Finnish curriculum and German Bildungsstandards recognize that in the age of multimedia, texts appear not only in paper form, but also through other media, for instance TV or the internet. Pupils aged 10 in both countries are expected to have acquired a basic knowledge of different media. In spite of this general consensus, however, the Finnish National Curriculum mirrors a broader conception of the encompassed texts, since it refers, at least implicitly, to the relevance of multimodal texts:

> The subject's foundation is a broad conception of text: texts are spoken and written, imaginative and factual, verbal, figurative, vocal, and graphic – or combinations of these text types. (NCC, 2004: 44; underline LT/IW)

Also the stated objectives and core content refer to the relevance of multimodal texts. The objectives require that the pupils "learn to work with text environments in which words, illustrations, and sounds interact" (NCC, 2004: 47). According to the core content, this aim can be reached for example by

> anticipating the content and structure of texts on the basis of illustrations, headings, and prior knowledge and reading experiences (NCC, 2004: 48; underline LT/IW).

Thus, Finnish pupils not only become familiar with multimodal texts, but are expected to use and combine actively and purposefully the different modes of information. In the German Bildungsstandards nothing similar is mentioned. We emphasize this difference because it will be relevant for the analysis as well as for the conception of textbooks, which can be seen as multimodal texts as well (Bezemer & Kress, 2008).

Second, the Finnish National Core Curriculum and German Bildungsstandards treat differently the question on how reading strategies are embedded in the process of fostering reading literacy. As mentioned, the curricula agree on the general essentials of acquiring reading literacy, as well as on the relevance of reading strat-

egies. According to educational researchers, reading strategies should always be chosen in relation to the purpose of reading; i.e., the selection of the strategy is dependent on the aim of the learning or performance (cf. Artelt et al., 2010: 78). For the learning process this means that the acquisition of reading strategies cannot be separated from the aims of reading. Against this background it seems to be important that only the Finnish Core Curriculum stresses the relevance of reading purposes. One of its objectives postulates that the pupils will "learn to choose appropriate reading for different purposes" (NCC, 2004: 47). Knowledge of the interdependence of reading aims and reading strategies may lie behind the German Bildungsstandards, but this important relationship in terms of learning contexts is not brought out clearly and explicitly.

Third, the Finnish and German reading curricula both refer to the role of (prior) knowledge in the reading process, but there are significant differences in how this knowledge is taken into account in the description of objectives. It is recognized in the literature that reading is a process of construction characterized by the progressive connection of text information with prior knowledge (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983; Alvermann et al., 2013). The quality of prior knowledge significantly influences the quality of text comprehension (e. g. Ruddell & Unrau, 2013). The Finnish Core Curriculum strongly emphasizes taking into account the pupils' (prior) knowledge. In the German Bildungsstandards, pupils are also expected to acquire knowledge, for instance, about texts, authors, and genres. In the Finnish Core Curriculum, however, the pupils are not only expected to acquire knowledge, but also to use it for deeper understanding. For example, the core content contains the idea of both understanding and using key literary concepts (NCC, 2004: 49). Both curricula request that pupils activate their prior knowledge when dealing with texts; however in the Finnish Core Curriculum the crucial step of knowledge elaboration – drawing conclusions, and knowledge-based reflection on texts – is explained and thus stressed whereas in the Bildungsstandards it remains only implicit, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Dealing with prior knowledge according to German and Finnish curricula

German Bildungsstandards (KMK 2004)	Finnish National Core Curriculum (NCC 2004)
The pupils develop and express their own ideas and opinions about a text (p. 12; translation IW).	"The pupils […] will become accustomed both to considering and expressing ideas awakened by texts, and to connecting them with their own lives and environment" (p. 47). The pupils "distinguish opinion in age-appropriate texts and consider the texts' dependability and meaning for themselves" (p. 49).

This observation is interesting with respect to the PIRLS 2011 results. According to them (Bos et al., 2012: 115-117), German pupils perform significantly worse in knowledge-based text comprehension (reflection on texts) than in text-based comprehension (finding information and understanding the ideas of the text). In contrast, Finnish pupils perform much better in knowledge-based comprehension than the Germans.

To sum up, the Finnish National Core Curriculum and German Bildungsstandards share the general concepts and objectives of improving pupils' reading literacy and fostering their enculturation. The differences emerge in the explicitness of the description of certain objectives. The Finnish Curriculum pays more attention to certain aspects that – according to reading research – can be seen as important for the improvement of reading literacy, such as emphasizing the purpose of reading, the significance of reading different genres, including multimodal texts, and the acknowledgement of pupils' prior knowledge. Now we turn to the analysis of textbooks to determine if the differences in the curricula are reflected in the textbooks.

3.   TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS

Our textbook data consists of three Finnish and three German mother tongue education textbooks for 10-year-old pupils. The textbooks are in line with the Finnish National Curriculum as well as German Bildungsstandards and the curricula of the federal states they are used in. Textbooks in Germany even have to be formally accepted by the educational administrations of the federal states (e. g. Tarelli et al., 2012: 260). In Finland there is no external review of textbooks (Sulkunen, 2012: 218).

In Finland "textbooks in the mother tongue are the primary materials for teaching reading" (Sulkunen, 2012: 218)). We chose Kirjakuja ('The Alley of Books', 2009), Kulkuri ('The wanderer', 2009) and Vipunen (2006), all from the textbook series currently and widely used in grades 3 to 6 in Finland[2]. Each of them integrates items of reading, language education and literature. The structure of the textbooks is often objective oriented, that is, there is a common theme that is learned through a systematic and gradually deepening introduction presented in larger sections. For example, in the section entitled "In the path of knowledge" ('Tiedon tiellä', in Kulkuri (2009: 46-63), see the Finnish examples 2 and 3) the task is to learn more about seeking information and reading factual texts. The textbook chapters in all three textbooks are closely interrelated, as they are embedded in a

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[2] *In the most recent studies, Kirjakuja and Kulkuri have been found to be the most widely used textbooks series both in PIRLS questionnaire and a more recent Textmix questionnaire; Vipunen was ranked third in the Textmix questionnaire, and fifth in the PIRLS questionnaire (Sulkunen, personal communication 2.2.2014, based on PIRLS results with 139 teachers; results from the questionnaire in Textmix-project with 196 teachers in November 2013, see [http://blogs.helsinki.fi/textmixblogi/] and Tainio, Karvonen & Routarinne, forthcoming).*

fictional framework story or present the same humorous fictional characters throughout the book. The framework story and the fictional characters can be found in all volumes of a textbook series; i.e. the pupils can thus gradually become familiar with the fictional world and characters and, as a consequence, with the textbooks. In Finland the groups of textbook authors not only consist of teaching experts but also of famous writers of children's fiction as well as artists. The design of the textbooks aims to create a textually and visually coherent entity.

In Germany there is quite a wide range of commercially distributed textbooks. Teachers choose textbooks for classroom work from a list of books approved in the respective federal state. We selected three textbooks that are widely accepted by the federal states, also in the federal state with the largest population (Nordrhein-Westfalia), and which come from well-respected textbook publishers[3]: Jo-Jo (2012), Piri (2010) and Tinto (2008). Each is topic-oriented, i.e. it integrates different content and learning objectives under the umbrella of a topic that is set by the title of the chapter, e. g. "Media," "Dragons," "In the Dark"). Piri and Tinto combine reading and language units in the same volume whereas Jo-Jo has a separate volume for the objectives of reading literacy and literary socialization.

We identified three points where the Finnish and German curricula were different from each other, providing a good starting point for our textbook analysis. First, to illustrate the range of texts and the consideration of pupils' prior knowledge in the construction of the ideal reader of the textbook, we have selected extracts that demonstrate how knowledge of new media is taken into account in the text and design of the books. This is critical from the point of view of constructing the ideal reader since it reveals beliefs concerning pupils' ability to acquire and use knowledge. Second, to illustrate the ways in which the reading strategies are taken into account, we have selected extracts about guidance for reading factual texts. This gives us information about the beliefs concerning the ideal reader as a learner of reading strategies. Third, although both curricula agree on the importance of contributing to pupils' enculturation, particularly to the acquisition of membership in the literacy community, this aim is presented differently in Finnish and German textbooks. To illustrate the different ways in which pupils are guided into acquiring membership in the literacy community, we have chosen extracts from the textbooks where the use of libraries is introduced to the reader. These extracts show us the character of the cultural life that the ideal reader is willing to join and the role s/he is to adopt in this sphere of life. All of these extracts represent the overall construction of the ideal reader that can be found in other sections of textbooks through recurrent repetitions.

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[3] *There is no information available about the de-facto use of the chosen textbooks in German classes.*

Example 1: Consideration of prior knowledge
One of the important questions in designing effective teaching is how to take into consideration the prior knowledge of students. According to Vygotsky (1978), to foster learning it is necessary to identify the level of the actual development of the learner in order to estimate the level of the potential development that the learner is able to reach with guidance. If the level of the actual development and the quality and amount of prior knowledge is inaccurate, that is, under- or overestimated, the learner can easily become frustrated. To illustrate the differences between the estimation of the German and Finnish learners constructed in the textbooks, we selected extracts that illustrate the use of the internet and computers in textbooks. In all of the textbooks examined it was taken as given that pupils deal with computers and search for information on the internet, and the next two examples illustrate most clearly the spirit of these extracts.

The Finnish extract comes from Kirjakuja (2009: 27). In the preceding section of the book there is information about the characteristics of factual texts. Additionally, pupils can find guidance for reading such texts and using them for seeking information. The specific context of this extract is an introduction to how to search for information and prepare a presentation for an audience. The pupil in the picture – a familiar character from the framework story – has chosen lynxes as his topic. At the left side, on a blue background is a text about how to act when you search for information on the internet ("In the internet you have to use information search programs. At the beginning you might need help from an adult.") The focus pupil sits in front of a computer in a library, concentrating on the task ("Lynx…Search…"); the adult behind him is a librarian (also familiar from the framework story) who is observing the pupil, thinking "It seems to be going fine."

The information is embedded in both the visual design and the texts; this we found to be very typical of the Finnish textbooks. All in all there are more visualizations, including comics, and non-linear texts written for instructional purposes in the Finnish books than German ones. That leads to an impression that the ideal reader in Finnish books is expected to be more visually oriented, a tendency that will also be demonstrated in the following examples. In picture 1 the ideal learner is a pupil capable of using a computer, finding information on the internet and reading multimodal texts; the role of the adult is to act as a guide if needed. The learning is not restricted to the context of the school and to the interaction between the teacher and the student. Moreover, the learner is an active, independent student who also works on his task outside of school; the learner has a considerable amount of prior knowledge, including competence in using computers and functioning in a library, as well as motivation to search for information on the specific topic that interests him, lynxes. This construction of the learner reflects the Finnish curriculum, where the argument of pupils' learning "on the basis of their existing structure of knowledge" (NCC, 2004: 16) is clearly presented, in contrast to the Bildungsstandards.
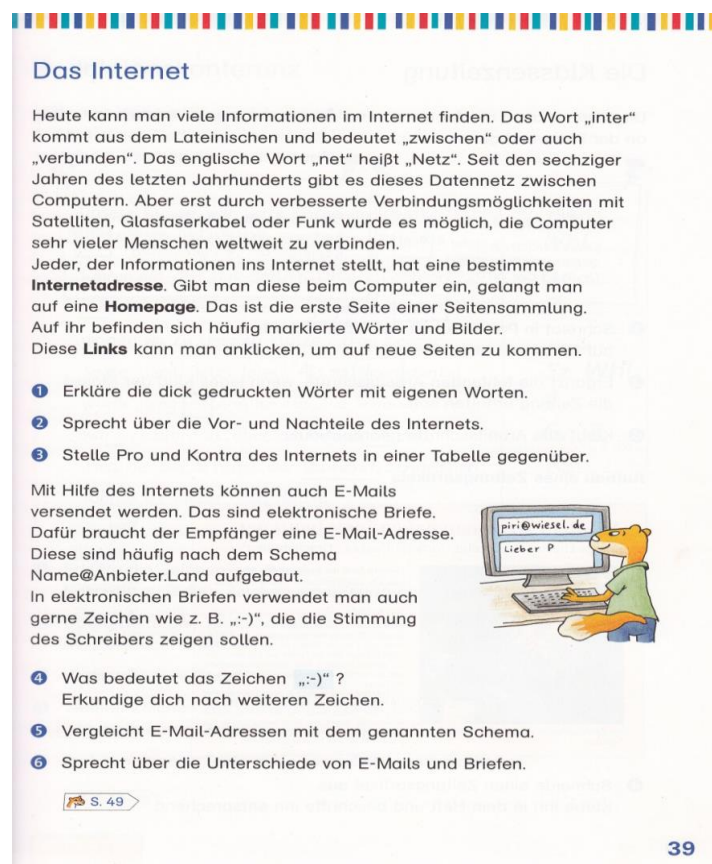
Picture 1. Consideration of prior knowlegde – Finnish (Kirjakuja 2009, 27).
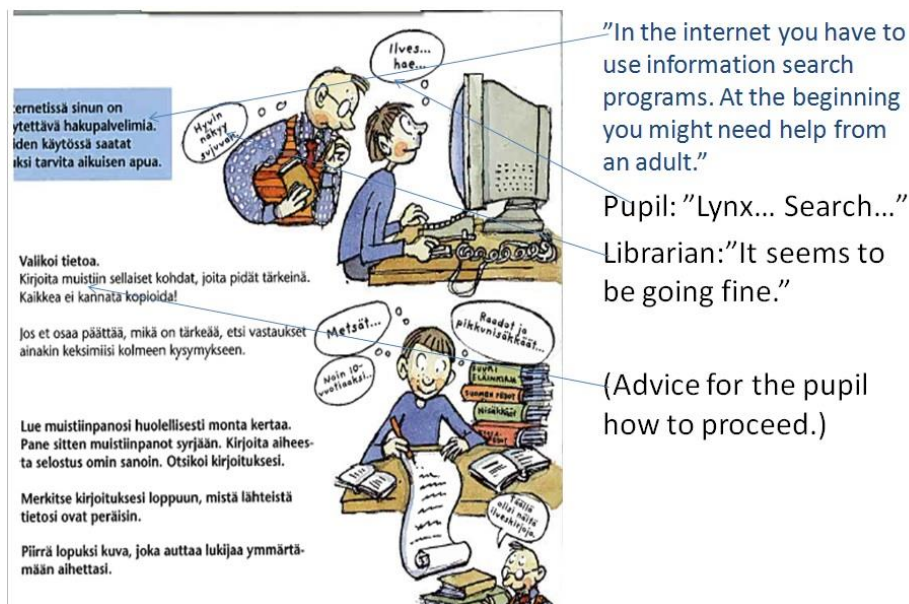
In the German example from Piri (2010: 39) (see Picture 2) we can see the image of a pupil, the ideal reader, that was very typical of the German textbooks. On the one hand, the German textbooks seem to underestimate what pupils know, and on the other, they expect them to possess more knowledge than most 10-year-olds. The example is embedded in an item about media. The selected page explains what the internet is and how one can use it. The first impression is that of a very text-laden item. Using the textbook is a demanding reading task. The illustrations do not help the pupils to better understand the text. The ideal reader is expected to be able to read a large amount of text without further support. In the actual tasks on the page the pupils are asked to explain the words "internet address," "homepage" and "link" (task no. 1). So the 10-year-olds are assumed to lack even the most basic knowledge about the internet. This kind of ideal reader can also be found in the next paragraph where the authors explain what an e-mail is and what an e-mail address looks like. On the other hand, the learners are asked to reflect upon the advantages and disadvantages of the internet (task no. 2 and no. 3) and to compare emails and letters (task no. 6). So they would need to have some prior knowledge about the internet and about different ways of communication to complete these tasks, and not only on a general, surface level. However, learners who must be told the basics about the internet cannot fulfil this request at the same time. Furthermore, learners who have enough media experience that they are able to reflect upon the advantages and disadvantages of the internet must feel underestimated

with respect to the information given on this page. This means that the textbook authors have hardly managed to create a plausible reading position for the ideal reader. Thus, textbooks that overestimate or underestimate pupils' prior knowledge provide too much or too little support, and at the same time do not offer a suitable connection between the individuals' experiences as a pre-condition of learning and the realization of learning objectives.[4]

Picture 2. Consideration of prior knowledge – Geman (Piri 2010, 39)

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[4] *The same problem can be seen in the two other books. E. g. Tinto (2008: 64) implies a book presentation that is very regulative on the one hand but lack essential support on the other hand. JoJo also shows a contradictory handling of prior knowledge, and combines pages with well-known basic information (2012: 122) and tasks requiring a demanding information search (2012: 177 bottom).*

Example 2: Fostering reading strategies

Recent literature on reading research has strongly emphasized the teaching and learning of reading strategies (e. g. Artelt et al., 2010). This is also reflected in curricula in several countries, as is shown in the PIRLS 2011 analysis (Mullis et al., 2012: 12-14). In it, the reading strategies (called as comprehension strategies) are divided into four main categories: focusing and retrieving explicitly stated information; making straightforward inferences; interpreting and integrating ideas and information; and examining and evaluating content, language, and textual elements (Mullis et al., 2012: 34). In the PISA study, reading literacy is defined as "understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society" (OECD, 2013: 176), which means that the ability to apply strategies is emphasized. Some German L1 education research have critically reflected on the PISA-influenced (mis-)understanding of reading literacy as a mainly strategy-driven competence, and on its expression in learning materials (Spinner, 2005). Our comparison shows very different applications for fostering reading strategies in German and Finnish textbooks.

Picture 3. Fostering reading strategies – Finnish (Kulkuri 2009, 57).

Picture 3 is included in Kulkuri, in the larger section where children (familiar from the framework story) are searching for information about bats because their friend has asked them an interesting question about these animals. Preceding this extract, the children have been asked the question, have gone to the library to searching information (see Picture 6), have borrowed factual books and have begun to read them in order to gain the knowledge they need. In other words, the activity of reading factual texts is embedded in a (fictional) context where seeking the information is well motivated.

Just preceding the picture 3 the authors present a visually well-designed introduction to factual books: information about pictures, texts, captions, key words (bold-faced), as well as indexes and their use when searching for information (Kulkuri, 2009: 54-56; see also Kirjakuja, 2009: 24-26). Every page features smaller tasks and exercises on the sub-topics. In this picture, the way of reading a factual text is presented as a more visual and abstract summary of earlier information. Again, the presentation is visually oriented; the figure showing the steps in the process of reading is accompanied by only a few short textual instructions. The illustrated reader of the text is motivated, and seems to enjoy the activity of reading.

In this example, seeking information and reading factual texts is done for a purpose. The ideal reader constructed here is interested in information and in the ways in which the information is presented and acquired in factual books. Furthermore, the reading is also fun. The ideal reader is an active learner who enjoys reading while developing metacognitive, procedural knowledge of the process of reading and information seeking. This clearly reflects the Finnish curriculum which emphasizes pupils' ability to anticipate the content and the structure of the text on the basis of headings, prior knowledge and reading experience (NCC, 2004: 48).

The German example for fostering readings strategies (picture 4) comes from Jo-Jo. Upon first view it seems very similar to the Finnish example (picture 3), as both offer a list of hints for strategy-driven reading ("hints to understand texts better"). Even the hints are much the same.

Below the surface, however, the example from Jo-Jo differs from the Finnish example. The item concerning reading strategies is not embedded in the topic-oriented chapters of the 'heart' of the textbook. We find it in the appendix, as a kind of systematic summary concerning the use of reading strategies. The list of hints (picture 4) is on the first page of the item and is related to a short factual text about dinosaurs on the next page. The following exercises go through the list of hints step by step and apply them to the dinosaur text about. Several expected 'correct' answers are given in the section.

The positioning of the item in the appendix is one reason why the required reading activities are free of a situational context (Gee, 2013). The textbook gives no reason why it should be worthwhile or necessary to read and understand the text about dinosaurs. This is a crucial difference compared to the Finnish example. Additionally, the given "hints to understand texts better" are not connected with certain

types of texts (factual texts). At the bottom of the page shown here (picture 4) pupils are told to use the given hints with the different types of texts (principle of "trial and error"). Only at the very end of the item (Jo-Jo, 2012: 193) are the pupils informed that which advice is useful or not depends on the text. Thus, the essential interrelation between text, reading aim and the usefulness of the reading strategies is neglected.

Picture 4. Fostering reading strategies – German (Jojo 2012, 185)

Das hilft dir, Texte besser zu lesen und zu verstehen

Alle Lese-Tipps auf einen Blick

• Vermute, worum es in dem Text geht.

• Was weißt du schon über das Thema? Was möchtest du wissen? Was erwartest du?

• Verschaffe dir einen Überblick über den Text. Lies zwei Sätze vom Anfang, aus der Mitte und vom Ende des Textes.

• Wenn du etwas nicht verstanden hast, lies den Abschnitt oder den ganzen Text noch einmal.

• Kläre die unbekannten Wörter.

• Teile den Text in Abschnitte ein. Überlege dir für jeden Abschnitt eine Überschrift.

• Finde die wichtigen Wörter in jedem Abschnitt.

• Stelle W-Fragen an den Text.

• Gestalte ein Schaubild zum Text.

• Erkläre jemandem, worum es in dem Text geht. Nutze dazu deine Überschriften zu den Abschnitten, deine wichtigen Wörter und dein Schaubild.

• Überprüfe: Welche deiner Vermutungen passen zum Text? Hat der Text deine Erwartungen erfüllt?

Versuche, diese Tipps bei **allen** Texten anzuwenden. Überprüfe dann: Welche Tipps konntest du anwenden? Welche Tipps haben dir besonders geholfen?

188   **Lesestrategien**   AH, S. 20–21

• Think about what the text is about.

• What do you already know about the topic? What do you want to know? What do you expect?

• Get an overview of the text. Read two sentences from the beginning, the middle and the end.

• If you don't understand something, re-read the paragraph in question or the whole text.

• Look up words you don't know.

• Divide the text into paragraphs. Make captions for each one.

• Find the key words in each paragraph.

• Ask "W" questions [Who? What? Where? When? Why? Etc.] about the text.

• Create a figure for the text.

• Explain to somebody what the text is about. Use the captions and key words you found and the figure you made.

• Check: Which of your proposals match the text? Did the text comply with your expectations?

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In the German example the illustrations in the chosen item offer only minimal help in understanding the texts. Mainly, the illustrations are for reasons of design or amusement as on the page shown in picture 4.

The ideal reader in this example is interested in understanding texts better and is willing to practice for this purpose. For these exercises s/he does not need a social context or a reading aim. S/he is willing to accept the guidance and objectives set by the textbook and, slightly contrarily, to reflect on the usefulness of the reading strategies. This ideal reader is very similar to the image of the pupil who Spinner (2005) criticizes as a German answer to PISA – the image of a pupil engaged in guided training instead of self-regulated problem solving. So from this view, the oversimplifications in the German example might rather be a consequence of slight misunderstanding of the PISA results than a reason for the unsatisfactory German

achievement. The Finnish example in this chapter illustrates that there are alternatives to this misunderstanding of fostering reading strategies.

Example 3: Acquiring membership in the literacy community

As mentioned above, one of the purposes of mother tongue education is to support pupils' enculturation. Since reading is a socio-cultural process situated in its social context (Gee, 2013), it is important to be able to enjoy literacy culture. This means that it must be possible for students to find a reading community and join it. Since the aims of mother tongue education are not restricted to classroom contexts, the education should help the pupil to become an active member of cultural life and the literacy community outside of school as well. To illustrate these attempts in the textbooks, we present two examples that show how pupils in Finland and Germany are introduced to the use of a library. This, and also the role of the library as a space for entering the cultural life of the community, are represented quite differently in the two countries.

The German example (picture 5) is a single page again from the appendix of Jo-Jo. The page offers information on how to use a library. Again we do not have an embedding of the reading-related activities in a situation that gives meaning to using a library.

The rather long text above the illustration sums up the "dos" and "don'ts" of library use. It is a list of behavior rules that creates the impression that you can make many mistakes when using a library, e.g.:

- "Be careful that you don't lose your user card to avoid misuse."
- "You must pay a fee when you return books and other items too late."
- "There are specific rules for each library's use – ask for an explanation of these."

The page seems to be illustrated very sparingly and the text dominates. The picture shows a single pupil at a computer desk in a library. The library is shown not as a place to meet friends, not a place of cultural life, but as a place to work alone. It seems quite interesting that the single learner here is a representative of minorities in a double sense. Very familiar from a German point of view but very strange to Finnish eyes, the signs on the bookshelves label the books in terms of the recommended reading age (e.g. up to 10 years; 10 years and up). So even this can seem an overregulation of library use.

Picture 5. Use of a library – German (Jojo 2012, 180)

Bücher lesen: Bibliotheksbesuch

Seite **164** — **Kinderbücher**

In Bibliotheken oder Büchereien kannst du
diese Medien ausleihen: Bücher und Zeitschriften,
Hörbücher und Musik-CDs, Filme auf DVD,
Computerspiele und Gesellschaftsspiele.

Für die Ausleihe brauchst du einen Ausweis.
Achte gut auf deinen Ausweis, damit niemand anderes
auf deinen Namen ausleihen kann.

Alle Medien haben eine bestimmte Ausleihfrist.
Bücher kannst du meistens 4 Wochen ausleihen,
andere Medien oft nur 2 Wochen.
Wer etwas Ausgeliehenes zu spät zurückgibt,
muss eine Gebühr bezahlen.

Jede Bibliothek und jede Bücherei
hat eine Benutzerordnung.
Lass dir die Benutzerordnung erklären.

In den meisten Bibliotheken und Büchereien
gibt es Computer: Hier kannst du in einem Katalog
überprüfen, ob die Bücherei ein bestimmtes Buch hat
und ob es ausgeliehen ist.
Jedes Buch hat eine eigene Signatur, die kennzeichnet,
wo es steht. Lass dir von der Bibliothekarin oder
dem Bibliothekar zeigen, wie die Suche funktioniert.

Lesen ab 10 Jahre

Lesen bis 10 Jahre

180   **Textwerkstatt**

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The ideal reader in this example is a pupil who needs guidance to use a library and who wants to be well informed about the rules of library use and not its possibilities. S/he has dared to visit a library despite it appearing to be a lonely place where many mistakes can be made.

In contrast to the image of a German library illustrated by Jo-Jo, a Finnish library is, according to the Kulkuri textbook, a lively place with many different kinds of people and activities. Here the children from the framework story go to the library to find out about bats. This contextually motivated activity is used by the authors of the book to introduce and describe a library. Again, most of the information is given visually. Beneath the picture are tasks that help to make clear relevant elements in the library in terms of how to use it.

In picture 6 the sphere of cultural life offered by the library is manifold. The library users are able to read, and obtain information from books, journals, the internet and the librarian; they can paint, listen to music, borrow books, and find out about other cultural activities (e.g. wall posters advertising local theatre events). But most importantly, the library is full of active people – children, and adults, including the elderly. Furthermore, in the library you can find fictional characters popular in children's literature and Finnish children's culture, such as Winnie the Pooh (created by E.A. Milne), Moomin characters (by Tove Jansson), Alfons Åberg (by Gunilla Bergström) and Puppy (by Eric Hill). These visual intertextual references invite pupils enter to the literacy community. To use this rich illustration for further learning purposes, tasks are offered to pupils under the picture. These are intellectually quite demanding; for example, the pupils are, asked to find the right bookshelf for information about Denmark, bats, airplanes and violins. On the bookshelves are signs referring to different fields such as geography, philosophy, science, society, technology, and arts. The pupils are expected to study the picture and understand these abstract categories to the extent that they can situate the specific objects in them.

The ideal reader and learner created here is, once again, an active young person who is interested in culture, especially literature. S/he also has prior knowledge about the categorization of information in specific subject domains. Further s/he is invited into the cultural life of the surrounding literacy community and is willing to join it. S/he is also able to acquire information visually and through texts, and the learning is created as an enjoyable activity (see also Vipunen, 2006: 22-23, Kirjakuja 2009:11-13, 52-53, 68-69).

Picture 6. Use of a library – Finnish (Kulkuri 2005, 50-51).

4.   DISCUSSION

Conducting a comparative analysis between two educational cultures is a demanding project with many possible pitfalls (e.g. Schriewer, 2003). Also the large scale international evaluations, such as PISA, have been criticized, for example, in their ability to compare and rank countries adequately (e.g., Goldstein, 2004; Kreiner &. Christensen, 2014). The starting point of this article was the assumption that national curricula and textbooks are a significant mirror of educational cultures. To prove this assumption it was necessary to ascertain concepts and methodology suitable for a comparative analysis of this kind of data. In our view, an appropriate approach is to reconstruct the ideal reader by conducting critical discourse analysis of national curricula and textbooks.

To identify the ideal reader and learner that we see as predominant in German and Finnish educational cultures, we first analyzed curricula and the possible differences between the Finnish core curriculum and German Bildungsstandards. We found only a few, but crucial, differences that we used as a starting point for our analysis of the textbook data. First of all, we noted a difference in the range of text types that pupils are expected to learn to read. Multimodal texts in particular were taken into account differently in the two curricula. This difference is reflected in all textbook examples. In the Finnish textbooks the illustrations are part of the instruction. Most Finnish textbook pages must be read as multimodal texts, i.e. as a pur-

poseful combination of words and pictures. In German textbooks the illustration is mainly for amusement. Second, we found differences in the emphasis on introducing reading strategies together with the explicated references to the purposes of reading. To illustrate these differences we analyzed extracts that introduce to pupils the reading strategies for factual texts as well as the examples of introducing the library where the purpose of reading for enjoyment was treated quite differently between the two cultures. Third, we identified a crucial difference in taking into account pupils' prior knowledge, and its emphasis. This was observable in all examples, particularly in the first and third examples. Referring to the analysis above, we claim that even if some differences were found in the curricula, the differences were much more salient in the textbooks. We have summarized the most obvious differences found in the Table 2.

Table 2. Differences between Finnish and German textbooks

Finnish	German
Objective oriented (e.g. finding and deepening information)	Topic oriented (e.g. "Summer", "Media")
Course of instruction, contextually motivated, problem-oriented, coherent composition of elements	"Islands" of learning; connections are not presented clearly; e. g. reading strategies in the appendix
Visual presentations as part of instruction, textbook as multimodal text	Pictures are of minimal help in understanding
Illustration as an equal source of information	
	Illustration as an element of design, for amusement
Reading pictures as a textbook task, drawing inferences from pictures	
Purpose of reading is clear, embedded in the context	General reading aims, no embedding in contexts

The main result of our study, however, is the identification of the prevailing ideal reader projected by the curricula and the textbooks. The ideal reader, and since the data consist of textbooks, the ideal learner, is, according to our analysis, quite different between Germany and Finland. In Finland, the ideal reader is a child who is interested in learning, who is able to gain information both visually from the illustration and by reading the texts, whose prior knowledge is valuable and important, and who is an active and independent member of the literacy culture. In contrast to this, in Germany the ideal reader and learner is a child who is willing to learn but needs and accepts a considerable amount of guidance, who has a limited amount of prior knowledge, and who, in the other hand, is able to read long texts without much help from the visual design.

All in all it seems there are minor differences in the way German and Finnish culture introduce and exploit the possibilities of multimodal texts, emphasize the importance of reading strategies, and invite pupils to be members of literacy culture. However, the most significant difference we identified was in the treatment of prior knowledge and thus in the importance of respecting pupils' own life experiences in the school culture. We found the authors of Finnish textbooks to ground the information and knowledge much more on pupils' prior knowledge and to create more reasonably the level of this knowledge in the texts and illustration than the authors of German textbooks.

Our comparison only focuses on reading literacy education in two countries, illustrated with a few examples of data. This means that the extent to which we can generalize these findings is limited. Thus we hesitate to claim causal interrelations between the outcome of reading literacy education and our findings concerning the particular characteristics of curricula and textbooks (Lieberson, 1991; Ragin, [1987] 2012). However, our results can be used to illustrate the slightly different socio-cultural contexts of reading instruction in Finnish and German mother tongue education in primary schools. Clearly, the analysis of textbooks and curricula says little about the characteristics and quality of actual teaching in the classroom. The chosen variables, however, can be seen as elements of national educational cultures and in this respect mirror beliefs about teaching reading literacy. The differences concerning the treatment of pupils' prior knowledge seem to be particularly crucial from this point of view. Based on the analysis of the differences of the ideal reader between German and Finnish textbooks, we can hypothesize that correlations exist between the ideal textbook reader and the flesh and blood pupils and their average success in acquiring reading literacy. Nevertheless, further research including more countries and taking more explanatory variables into account (e.g. Esser, 2012: 33) is necessary to prove this hypothesis.

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