

# Primary school pupils' literary landscapes: What do Finnish- and Swedish-speaking pupils read at school?

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## Abstract

This article explores the literary landscapes of Swedish- and Finnish-speaking primary school pupils, using a large questionnaire for teachers as data collected in the *Lukuklaani* project. The focus is on the books viewed by teachers as the most popular and motivating among pupils.

Books written originally in pupils' mother tongue are most popular in the lower grades, whereas the popularity of foreign books increases in the upper grades. In Finnish-speaking schools, books written originally in Finland in Finnish are prominent, but the variety of the countries of origin is relatively wide. In Swedish-speaking schools, books written in Sweden are notably prominent, whereas different countries are scantily represented, and books originally written in Finnish are absent.

In the light of the study, a gap between Swedish- and Finnish-speaking primary school pupils' literary landscapes becomes visible, and the goals presented in the national curriculum are only partly fulfilled. These results should be taken seriously when developing literature education in primary schools.

**Keywords:** literature education, teacher survey, Finnish national curriculum, children's literature, reading engagement

## 1. Introduction

In the national curriculum for the comprehensive school in Finland (*Grunderna för läroplanen för den grundläggande utbildningen*, referred to as LP2014),<sup>1</sup> there are descriptions for 12 different syllabi for mother tongues taught in Finnish schools (LP2014, p. 102). Among these opportunities, the national languages, Finnish and Swedish, form the most common syllabi of mother tongue in the schools. In 2018, there were 2,276 comprehensive schools in Finland (SVT, 2018), and 203 of them provided teaching in Swedish (Svenskskola, 2018). The description of the subject mother

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<sup>1</sup>For the English version of National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014, see [https://www.oph.fi/english/curricula\\_and\\_qualifications/basic\\_education](https://www.oph.fi/english/curricula_and_qualifications/basic_education).

tongue and literature in the national curriculum is, for the most part, the same in all 12 syllabi for mother tongues. For example, in reference to literature education, the national curriculum states that “the aim of literature instruction is to engage students in reading for pleasure [*väcka läslust*], to offer them reading experiences that they can share with others, to deepen their cultural knowledge, to support their ethical development and to enrich their language and imagination” (LP2014, p. 104, all translations of excerpts are by the authors’). In addition, one of the aims of literature education is to “bind the students to their own culture and broaden their knowledge of other cultures” (p. 104).

In addition to the vast similarities in the descriptions in literature education in different mother tongues, there are also some interesting differences. Even though the descriptions in the first grades (1-2) are almost the same, in grades 3-6 there are differences with respect to how the knowledge about students’ own culture and particularly the other cultures should be realized. On the level of goals, the Swedish- and Finnish curricula are equal and aim to encourage the students to “broaden their literary landscape and read widely literature for children and youth” (LP2014, p. 163, 168). When it comes to contents of reaching these goals, the Finnish-speaking schools are advised to read “national and international children’s and youth literature from current literature to classics” (LP2014, p. 169), whereas the Swedish-speaking schools are expected to read “Finnish [*finländsk*], Swedish, Nordic and other international children's and youth literature in different genres” (LP2014, p. 165). The emphasis on the Nordic context in the Swedish language and literature syllabus becomes even more distinct in the upper grades, while the Nordic context is not mentioned at all in the syllabus of Finnish language and literature. This has also been the case in the earlier national curriculum in 2004 (Andersson, 2013).

This article explores how these differences are manifested, if they are, in the everyday life of Finnish schools, and particularly in Finnish- and Swedish-speaking primary schools. As our data, we use responses from a large survey addressed to primary school teachers in the comprehensive schools in Finland in 2017. By analyzing responses from 884 teachers, we aim to shed light on the literary landscapes<sup>2</sup> of Finnish- and Swedish-speaking pupils in Finland. Our focus is on the selection of books teachers report as inspiring and motivating for pupils (see also, Ruuttunen, 2018). The aim is to examine both the similarities and differences in the literary landscapes teachers see interesting and offer to their pupils, and discuss possible explanations for the book selections.

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<sup>2</sup> We are aware that the concept of literary landscapes is used in a different meaning in literary criticism. There, literary landscapes refer to the functions of geographic and symbolic surroundings in poetic texts. (See, for example, Weston, 2015.)

Since literature education has not been explored in this detail and on this large scale in Finland before, we hope to offer new, detailed information about literature education in Finland.

## **2. Background**

Among the countries involved in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study research (PIRLS, 2017), Finland was shown to have fourth graders who are excellent readers. They achieve particularly good results in reading factual texts (Leino, Nissinen, Puhakka & Rautopuro, 2017, p. 18-19). Fourth-grade pupils in Finnish-speaking schools achieved slightly better results than those in Swedish-speaking schools (Leino et al., 2017, p. 24). Reading fiction seems to have an important effect on the success in the subject mother tongue and literature: it has been shown that those who read fiction get better results in both PIRLS, and in PISA tests and national reading tests for the ninth graders (see Sulkunen & Nissinen, 2014; Harjunen & Rautopuro, 2015; Leino et al., 2017).

However, according to the PIRLS report, fourth graders in Finland are not particularly interested in reading: only 28 % of them report that they like reading very much, and almost the same percentage (23 %) report that they do not like reading at all. This is quite distinctive, since, for example, in Portugal even 72 % of pupils report that they like reading very much (PIRLS, 2017). In addition, Finnish fourth graders are not particularly engaged with literature education in the schools; only 39 % of Finnish pupils were highly engaged in literature education, while the average in PIRLS countries is 60 % (Leino et al., 2017, p. 29). This raises a question whether this fact is related to the reports from Finnish teachers that reveal that some tasks, such as interpreting the texts, analyzing the narration and style and the perspective of the writer and the aim of the text, as well as talking about the text in reference to readers' own experiences, were not common practices in Finnish literature education for fourth graders (Leino et al., 2017, p. 48).

Even though we know from PIRLS research some general tendencies in fourth graders' reading and literacy skills at school, we do not know a lot about the literary landscapes of primary school pupils (however, see Rulja, 2017; Tuominen, 2018), and even less in reference to different language groups. Currently, there is more knowledge about the literary landscapes of Finnish- and Swedish-speaking upper-secondary school students (see Kauppinen, Lehti-Eklund, Makkonen-Craig & Juvonen, 2011). In general, Finnish- and Swedish-speaking upper-secondary school students' reading and writing habits in their leisure time seem to be quite similar (Kauppinen, 2011; Petas, 2011). Kauppinen (2011, p. 318) reports that 94 % of Finnish-speaking girls and 74 % of boys read fiction in their leisure time, while among the Swedish-speaking upper-secondary school students, 95

% of the girls and 89 % of the boys said that they read fiction at least a couple of times a year (Petas, 2011, p. 387). Thus, it seems that Swedish-speaking upper-secondary school students read more fiction in their leisure time.

In their survey, Kauppinen et al. (2011) also asked which literature genres students read. Apparently, Finnish-speaking students' genre selection was broader than that of Swedish-speaking students (Petas, 2011, p. 388). Swedish-speaking students more often read detective stories compared to Finnish-speaking students, but in all other genres that the researchers had named, such as thrillers, fantasy, comics, lyrics, and drama, Finnish-speaking students reported to read more often (Petas, 2011, p. 388). However, the study by Kauppinen et al. (2011) did not mention in detail the titles or authors of books that students read at school or in their leisure time.

In this article we are interested in primary school pupils' reading at school and intend to describe and explore the selection of the books that are offered to them in Finnish- and Swedish-speaking schools. More specifically, we review primary school teachers' understandings of the popular and motivating fiction books for pupils in grades 1–6.

### **3. Data, methods and analytic steps**

In the on-going research project *Lukuklaani* (*Läsklanen*, 'Reading Clan') we have had an opportunity to take a closer look at literature education in primary schools in Finland (see <https://blogs.helsinki.fi/lukuklaani/>). *Lukuklaani* is funded by the Finnish Cultural Foundation and Kopiosto. In order to obtain information from schools, we sent an e-questionnaire (using Webropol) to primary teachers in November 2017. We asked, for example, about the practices, innovations, and problems in literature education in primary schools (see Grünthal et al., 2018). We received 884 responses, including 69 from Swedish-speaking schools. The majority of teachers that responded to the questionnaire were experienced professionals; 71 % of them reported that they had been teachers for more than 10 years.

Among the questions, there was an inquiry about books that the teachers had found particularly motivating for primary school pupils. We asked them to “[n]ame one book that, in your experience, inspires pupils. Name also the grade or grades in which the book is particularly popular.” We received 760 replies from Finnish-speaking teachers and 63 from Swedish-speaking teachers to this question. However, most of the teachers named several books in addition to several grades, which means that teachers mentioned altogether 1,136 books, book series or writers popular in grades 1—

6; 1,049 titles came from the Finnish-speaking teachers and 89 from the Swedish-speaking teachers (see Tables 1 and 2). Nevertheless, many teachers mentioned the same books or book series, so the actual number of different titles is smaller than that.

For the analysis of this data, we explored the variety of the named books and book series by using thematization and quantification (see, e.g. Eskola & Suoranta 2000, p. 165–180). After that we compared results of Finnish-speaking schools to the results of Swedish-speaking schools, and critically reflected on the comparison and the results in reference to earlier studies and the objectives described in the national curriculum (cf. Eskola & Suoranta 2000, p. 174–180). The analysis thus required us to take four analytical steps.

First, we categorized the books teachers had mentioned in reference to the grade. We made two lists: one for the Finnish-speaking schools and one for the Swedish-speaking schools. Many teachers mentioned many grades and many books for these grades. For example, if the teacher mentioned that the Harry Potter series was suitable for grades 3–6, “Harry Potter” was placed in the lists of all these grades. For presenting the data in the tables, we made some decisions in order to help the comparison. For example, we counted the responses that mention a book series and an individual book from this series into the same category. For example, the response “Ella books” and the response mentioning an individual book, such as *Ella ja kaverit* [Ella and friends], was counted as representing the same item. In addition, if the teacher had mentioned only the name of the writer, for example “Timo Parvela’s books” we counted that as an individual item since Timo Parvela is a writer of many popular book series, and we could not know whether the teacher refers to one of them or all.

Second, we explored the lists of the books read in primary schools in reference to the native countries of the authors. According to the national curriculum, one of the literature teachers’ obligations is to provide students a wide range of literature that will deepen and widen their knowledge about their own and other cultures (LP2014, p. 160). This aim is, of course, connected to many other subjects in school, because reading fiction also supports the core contents of geography, religion, ethics, history, and foreign languages, among others. In this respect and in connection to the principles of national curricula, the linguistic and cultural diversity of authors read in schools is important. Therefore, it is relevant to have a comparative look at the native countries of authors that are read in Finnish- and Swedish-speaking schools. We selected the countries in the tables in reference to the number of books/series/writers that were mentioned (the countries that were mentioned most frequently have separate columns, see Tables 1 and 2). However, we also referred to the descriptions provided by the national curriculum. Since in the Swedish language and

literature section there is an emphasis on the Nordic context, we decided to take Sweden and other Nordic countries into account. We also wanted to see whether books written in Finland in Finnish and Swedish were acknowledged in both language groups. Therefore, we separated books written in Finland into two columns. In addition, there were some responses that included books with several writers (such as fairy tale anthologies) and some that remained unclear. These answers were categorized under the column Various/Unclear. The results of this analytic step are provided in the Tables 1 and 2.

Third, when comparing the literature education in Finnish- and Swedish-speaking schools, we chose the most frequently mentioned books and placed them in Tables 3 and 4. Next, we checked whether the books in the Finnish-speaking teachers' list were also available in the Swedish language and vice versa. This was done by using a database maintained by the Finnish Literature Exchange organization (FiLi, see <http://dbgw.finlit.fi/kaannokset/index.php>). We have presented also the results of this analytic step in Tables 3 and 4.

Fourth, the results of the analytic steps one, two and three are analyzed and discussed. In the analysis, we describe the data provided in tables, identify the similarities and differences in the book selections between Finnish- and Swedish-speaking schools as well as between different grades in the primary school context.

#### 4. Analysis: the literary landscapes in primary schools in Finland

Now we will go into a more detailed analysis of the lists and tables that provide information on teachers' beliefs and experiences about the inspiring books for primary school pupils. We begin by considering the table that provides information about the books teachers see as motivating in Finnish-speaking schools.

Table 1. Books that teachers see as motivating for pupils in different grades in Finnish-speaking primary schools.

Books from:	Finland (Finnish)	Finland (Swedish)	Sweden	Other Nordic countries	Britain	USA	Russia	Other countries	various / unclear	Total
First grade	137	2	15	2	10	3	6	1	9	185
Second grade	145	2	28	1	17	2	9	2	3	209

Third grade	123	3	25	5	31	12	4	5	4	212
Fourth grade	105	2	32	4	41	13	2	7	2	208
Fifth grade	57	1	11	2	30	18	1	2	4	126
Sixth grade	38	2	8	0	35	17	1	4	4	109
Total	605	12	119	14*	164	65	23	21**	26	1049
Percent age of total	57.7	1.1	11.3	1.3	15.6	6.2	2.2	2.0	2.5	100

\*Eight books from Norway, four from Denmark, and two from Iceland.

\*\*Nine books from Ireland, five from Holland, four from Germany, one from Japan and one from France.

What is salient in Table 1 is the vast majority of Finnish books. Even 59 % of all books are written by Finnish writers. However, what is also distinctive is that only in 12 answers out of all 617 the Finnish books were by Swedish-speaking writers, and 11 of them were by Tove Jansson. Thus, according to this data, Finnish-speaking primary school teachers did not often mention Finnish-Swedish writers' books in their lists of inspiring books. Our data does not provide reasons for this or other teacher choices since we did not ask why teachers wanted the mention these books.

Second, even if there is no specific reference to Nordic literature in the Finnish language and literature section in the national curriculum, Finnish-speaking teachers mention literature particularly from Sweden very often; other Nordic countries are also included in their lists. Thirteen percent of the books are written in Nordic countries, and the majority of them in Sweden. The number of books from Sweden can be explained with the Finnish teachers' enthusiasm for Astrid Lindgren's books, but also more current writers such as Martin Widmark (e.g., *Lasse-Majas detektivbyrå* [Lasse-Maja's detective agency]) and Anders Jacobsson and Sören Olsson (e.g., *Berts dagbok* [Bert's diary]) are seen as inspiring. However, the books from Sweden are most often mentioned in reference to the lower grades of primary school.

Third, even if other Nordic countries, at least Sweden, are well represented in the teachers' responses, Finland's other neighboring countries are not. Russian literature is represented by one book, a classic by Eduard Uspenski, namely, *Uncle Fedya, his dog and his cat*. This book was mentioned in 23 responses, and it rose among the most often mentioned books in the first and second grade. Estonian literature, however, is absent from all the answers.

Fourth, books from Britain form the second largest group; 18 % of all books mentioned in teachers' responses were written by British writers. This can be explained partly by the huge popularity of J.

K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. It is placed at the top of teachers' lists in both fifth and sixth grade, and it is mentioned in lists of all grades. Roald Dahl is also extremely well known among primary teachers. Many of his books are mentioned (e.g., *The BFG*, *The Witches*, and *Matilda*; see Table 3). There are also book series written particularly by two American writers, namely Jeff Kinney (*Diaries of a Wimpy Kid*) and Dav Pilkey (*Captain Underpants*). These series were seen as inspiring particularly for (boy) pupils in grades 3–6. All in all, books by British and American writers seem to be mentioned more often in reference to the upper grades of primary school.

Fifth, the literature from other European countries, not to mention countries from other continents, is nearly absent. This does not, after all, mean that literature from these countries is not read at schools. However, it does indicate that the teachers have not experienced books from these other countries as inspiring for primary school pupils.

Now we will review the lists provided by teachers in the Swedish-speaking schools (Table 2). What has to be taken into account is that much less information was received from the Swedish-speaking school teachers compared to that from Finnish-speaking school teachers. However, we want to suggest that the responses (mentioning 89 titles) can give us at least a glimpse of what the literary landscape in Swedish-speaking primary schools is like.

Table 2. Books that teachers see as motivating for pupils in different grades in Swedish-speaking primary schools.

Books from:	Finland (Finnish)	Finland (Swedish)	Sweden	Other Nordic countries	Britain	USA	Russia	Other countries	various / unclear	Total
First grade		4	10					1		15
Second grade		4	15							19
Third grade		4	7	3	3					17
Fourth grade		2	9		4	2			1	18
Fifth grade		1	5		2	2				10
Sixth grade		1	6		2	1				10
Total		16	52	3*	11	5		1**	1	89
Percentage of total	0	18.0	58.4	3.4	12.4	5.6	0	1.1	1.1	100

\*Two books from Norway, one from Denmark.

\*\*One book from Germany.

First, what catches one's attention immediately is the vast number of books from Sweden; 58 % of all the books that teachers see as inspiring for primary school pupils were written in Sweden. In every single grade there are more books from Sweden than from Finland or other countries. It is a bit surprising that other Nordic countries are present to a very small extent.

Second, the total lack of books written by Finnish-speaking authors is, at least for us, surprising. Even if this does not mean that pupils in Swedish-speaking schools never read books written by Finnish-speaking writers, the table tells us that teachers did not mention them as responses for our question. Many of the pupils and students in Swedish-speaking schools are actually bilingual or multilingual (Harju-Luukkainen & Hellgren, 2013; Petas 2011), and in their leisure time, they may use Finnish much more than Swedish. This affects their skills in the Swedish language and probably also their reading habits. This fact might have some consequences for the teachers' responses. We will get back to the non-existence of Finnish-speaking writers when we discuss Tables 3 and 4.

Third, the second largest group in the table are the books written in Finland by Swedish-speaking writers (18 %). This means that even if the pupils do not read a lot of books written by Finnish-speaking writers, they get to know the books that are written within their own language culture, Swedish-Finland. Writers such as Sebastian Lybeck (e.g., *Latte Igelkott* [Latte Hedgehog]), Åsa Lind (e.g., *Sandvargen* [Sand wolf] and Carina Wolff-Brandt (e.g., *En hunds memoarer* [Dog's memoirs]) are often mentioned.

Fourth, similar to Table 1, Table 2 also reveals that the number of British and American books receive more attention in the upper grades of primary school, while books from Sweden are more often mentioned in reference to the lower grades. Also in Swedish-speaking schools, J. K. Rowling and Jeff Kinney are among the popular English-speaking writers.

Fifth, even if in Finnish-speaking schools the variety of writers that came from other countries than Nordic or Britain or the United States was quite limited, this is true also in the Swedish-speaking schools, and to an even greater extent. Swedish-speaking teachers mentioned only one book from other countries, namely a book written by a German author, Kirsten Boie.

We have already mentioned some books and authors that were frequently mentioned in teachers' responses. The next two Tables 3 and 4 provide more information about the variety of readings in schools. Since in this article we are not able to mention all the books, series and authors that were

mentioned in the answers, we decided, instead, to provide tables that contain information about the most frequently mentioned titles. From the Finnish-speaking teachers' reports we included in the table those titles that had gained at least six remarks. Since the data from Swedish-speaking schools was much smaller we excluded from Table 4 only those titles that were mentioned just once. In Tables 3 and 4 there is also information on the languages, namely, whether the mentioned book is also available in the other national language in Finland.<sup>3</sup> The series has received a mark even if there was only one book translated in the whole series. This is the case with *Ella*; from most of the series there are more than two books available in the other national language.

First, we take a look at the most frequently mentioned books in Finnish-speaking teachers' responses.

Table 3. Books most frequently mentioned by Finnish-speaking teachers

	Books and writers ( $\geq 6$ )	Also available in Swedish
First grade	<i>Konsta</i> , Tuula Kallioniemi (38) <i>Ella</i> , Timo Parvela (16) <i>Risto Rappääjä</i> , Sinikka & Tiina Nopola (15) Books by Mauri Kunnas (11) <i>Tatu ja Patu</i> , Aino Havukainen & Sami Toivonen (10) <i>Heinähattu ja Vilttitossu</i> , Sinikka & Tiina Nopola (9) <i>Fedja-setä, kissa ja koira</i> , Eduard Uspenski (6)	x x x x x x
Second grade	<i>Ella</i> , Timo Parvela (35) <i>Risto Rappääjä</i> , Sinikka & Tiina Nopola (25) <i>Konsta</i> , Tuula Kallioniemi (20) <i>Fedja-setä, kissa ja koira</i> , Eduard Uspenski (9) <i>Tatu ja Patu</i> , Aino Havukainen & Sami Toivonen (9) Books by Mauri Kunnas (8) <i>Maukka ja Väykkä</i> , Timo Parvela (6) <i>Heinähattu ja Vilttitossu</i> , Sinikka & Tiina Nopola (6)	x x x x x x
Third grade	<i>Risto Rappääjä</i> , Sinikka & Tiina Nopola (38) <i>Ella</i> , Timo Parvela (16) <i>Kuka pelkää noitia?</i> [The Witches], Roald Dahl (8) <i>Tatu ja Patu</i> , Aino Havukainen & Sami Toivonen (8) <i>Harry Potter</i> , J.K. Rowling (7) <i>Kapteeni Kalsari</i> [Captain Underpants], Dav Pilkey (7) <i>Iso Kiltti Jätti</i> [The BFG], Roald Dahl (7) <i>Matilda</i> , Roald Dahl (6)	x x x x x x x
Fourth grade	<i>Risto Rappääjä</i> , Sinikka & Tiina Nopola (32) <i>Ella</i> , Timo Parvela (14) <i>Harry Potter</i> , J. K. Rowling (12)	x x x

<sup>3</sup> Our facts about translated literature are from November 2018, and we are aware that some of the information given here may well be outdated soon.

	<i>Kepler62</i> , Timo Parvela & Bjørn Sortland (9) <i>Iso Kiltti Jätti</i> [ <i>The BFG</i> ], Roald Dahl (9) <i>Veljeni Leijonamieli</i> [ <i>Bröderna Lejonhjärta</i> ], Astrid Lindgren (8) Books by Mauri Kunnas (8) <i>Ronja Ryövärintytär</i> [ <i>Ronja Rövardotter</i> ], Astrid Lindgren (7) <i>Lasse-Majas detektivbyrå</i> , Martin Widmark (6) <i>Supermarsu</i> , Paula Noronen (6)	 x x x x x x
Fifth grade	<i>Harry Potter</i> , J. K. Rowling (14) <i>Neropatin päiväkirja</i> [ <i>Diary of a Wimpy Kid</i> ], Jeff Kinney (10) <i>Risto Rappääjä</i> , Sinikka & Tiina Nopola (8) <i>Kepler62</i> , Timo Parvela & Bjørn Sortland (7) <i>Kuka pelkää noitia</i> [ <i>The Witches</i> ], Roald Dahl (6)	 x x x x x
Sixth grade	<i>Harry Potter</i> , J.K. Rowling (10) <i>Neropatin päiväkirja</i> [ <i>Diary of a Wimpy Kid</i> ], Jeff Kinney (10) <i>Paahde</i> [ <i>The Holes</i> ], Louis Sachar (6)	 x x x

The Finnish-speaking writers' books cover a half of the most frequently mentioned books; they form a majority in grades 1–3, and then are followed by books from Britain or the United States, particularly Harry Potter in grades 4–6. It is obvious that many of the books primary teachers have seen as inspiring for their pupils, are the same in many grades. For example, Sinikka and Tiina Nopola's *Risto Rappääjä* [*Risto the Rapper*] is placed twice at the top, once as the second, and twice as the third in the list of motivating books or book series. In addition, Nopola sisters' series *Heinähattu and Vilttitossu* [*The Hayflower and the Quiltshoe*], is popular in the first and second grades.

In addition to Sinikka and Tiina Nopola, there are particularly two other Finnish-speaking writers who teachers mention very often, namely Timo Parvela and Tuula Kallioniemi. Timo Parvela's *Ella* series as well as his *Maukka ja Väykkä* books are popular in the first and second grades. In addition, together with a Norwegian writer Bjørn Sortland, Parvela has created a science fiction series *Kepler62* which has been placed among the most motivating ones in the upper levels of primary school. Tuula Kallioniemi's stories about *Konsta*, are reported as popular among the first and second graders. Finally, Mauri Kunnas as well as Aino Havukainen and Sami Toivonen should also be mentioned with their popular picture books. These favorite books and book series mentioned above have some features in common. Most of them are humorous, their main characters — boys, girls and animals — are inventive and active, and different types of family models are presented.

The majority of Swedish books in these lists in all grades were written by Astrid Lindgren; Eduard Uspenski's *Uncle Fedya* is popular among the lower grades; Roald Dahl is represented by several books, and J. K. Rowling and Jeff Kinney, as well as Louis Sachar with his book *Paahde* [The Holes] are the most often mentioned English-speaking writers.

Surprisingly, among the most popular series there are several that have not been translated into Swedish, even though there are translations to other languages available. For example, Kallioniemi's *Konsta* and *Reuhurinne*, Paula Noronen's *Supermarsu*, and Timo Parvela's and Bjørn Sortland's *Kepler62* are not available in Swedish, although *Kepler62* is available in Norwegian.

Now we turn to Table 4 about the books Swedish-speaking teachers see as most inspiring for primary school pupils. The book or series has been included in the table if it was mentioned at least twice.

Table 4. Books most frequently mentioned by Swedish-speaking teachers

	Books and writers ( $\geq 2$ )	Also available in Finnish
First grade	<i>Latte Igelkott</i> , Sebastian Lybeck (4) <i>Lasse-Majas detektivbyrå</i> , Martin Widmark (2) <i>Sandvargen</i> , Åsa Lind (2)	x
Second grade	<i>Sandvargen</i> , Åsa Lind (4) <i>Lasse-Majas detektivbyrå</i> , Martin Widmark (3) <i>Latte Igelkott</i> , Sebastian Lybeck (3)	x
Third grade	<i>Lasse-Majas detektivbyrå</i> , Martin Widmark (3) <i>Doktor Proktors Pruttpulver</i> , Jo Nesbø (2) Kristina Ohlsson's books ( <i>Zombiefeber</i> ) (2)	x x x
Fourth grade	<i>Dagbok för alla mina vänner</i> [Diary of a Wimpy Kid], Jeff Kinney (2) <i>Lasse-Majas detektivbyrå</i> , Martin Widmark (2) Kristina Ohlsson's books ( <i>Glasbarnen</i> ) (2)	x x x
Fifth grade	<i>Fröken Europa</i> , Kerstin Gavander (3) <i>Dagbok för alla mina vänner</i> [Diary of a Wimpy Kid], Jeff Kinney (2) Harry Potter, J. K. Rowling (2)	x x
Sixth grade	<i>Pojken som levde med strutsar</i> , Monika Zak (3)	

Most of these books are totally different than the books mentioned by the Finnish-speaking teachers. There are a couple of the same titles or writers, such as Jeff Kinney with his wimpy kid, J. K. Rowling with *Harry Potter*, and Martin Widmark with *Lasse-Maja*. Some of the books or writers are mentioned in the lists of Finnish-speaking teachers (e.g., Kristina Ohlsson and Jo Nesbø), but they received only a few remarks. The most inspiring books in the lists in Swedish-speaking schools, such as *Latte Igelkott*, *Sandvargen*, *Fröken Europa* [Miss Europe] and *Pojken som levde med strutsar* [The Boy Who Lived with Ostriches] are not even available in Finnish.

## **5. Different literary landscapes: What do we learn about this?**

In this article we have explored the literary landscapes of primary school pupils in Finnish- and Swedish-speaking schools. Our attention was on the books that teachers in these schools see as motivating and inspiring for pupils in certain grades. We found out that the literary landscapes, at least in the light of teachers' responses, are very different. In the Swedish-speaking schools, most of the books that were seen as motivating, were written in Sweden or in Swedish-Finland. There were extremely few books from other countries, although books from Great Britain and the United States were represented along with one book from Germany. No books written by Finnish-speaking authors were mentioned. In the Finnish-speaking schools, the majority of books that were seen as motivating were written by Finnish-speaking writers; only a few were written by Finnish-Swedish writers. The second largest group of books came from Great Britain; Sweden was also very well represented, and the United States was the fourth largest group. There was also literature from Russia, Norway, Denmark, Holland, and Germany. Even though there were not many countries represented in the lists from Finnish-speaking schools, the variety of countries was much greater than in the Swedish-speaking schools, also in terms of the Nordic countries.

However, we must keep in mind that the number of responses that we received from Finnish-speaking teachers (1,049) is much greater than that from Swedish-speaking teachers (89). Thus, the conclusions we can draw from the information about the Swedish-speaking schools are only tentative and presented here as an invitation to discuss as they are compared to results from the Finnish-speaking schools. With respect to Finnish-speaking schools, the results are more valid, and can be seen to describe the current situation in literature education.

According to our data, it seems that in Swedish-speaking schools the emphasis on the Nordic context in literature education is acknowledged, but perhaps in a biased way. If more than half of all the books that teachers see as motivating for pupils, are written in Sweden, the emphasis on the Nordic context is not quite fulfilled, or at least the amount of Nordic, non-Swedish literature is under-represented. In addition, even if the teachers recommend literature written by Swedish-speaking writers in Finland, the total lack of Finnish-speaking writers means that the idea of deepening students' knowledge of their own culture is not fulfilled assuming that Finnish-speaking literature is also regarded as part of Finnish culture by the Swedish-speaking Finns.

However, it is important to take the dominant cultural role of the Finnish language in Finland into account. Many pupils in Swedish-speaking schools (especially in urban areas) come from bilingual

or some from even totally Finnish-speaking families, and they may read Finnish literature in their leisure time. It is possible that teachers in Swedish-speaking schools emphasize the role of non-Finnish-originated literature deliberately because Finnish in all its forms is present in the lives of their pupils anyway. If true, this is an understandable choice, but the issue calls for more research. Another explanation is worth further exploration. It might be that the majority of respondents from Swedish speaking have responded based on what they read and recommend in the Swedish as mother tongue classes. In addition to this, Swedish speaking pupils attend Finnish as a second language classes or Finnish as a second language with mother tongue orientation. These lessons are often taught by different teachers, and it is likely that pupils read – or at least should read – books by Finnish writers in these lessons. For example, the syllabus of mother tongue orientation to Finnish as a second language aims at encouraging the pupils to read literature in Finnish and to find suitable literature from libraries (LP2014, 227-231).

On the other side, Finnish-speaking teachers' emphasis on books by Finnish-speaking writers can be seen as fulfilling the demand presented in the national curriculum of deepening students' knowledge on their own culture only partially. The almost complete lack of Swedish-Finnish literature is a severe omission and can narrow the Finnish-speaking pupils' view of Finnish culture and history in all its variety. However, Nordic literatures were generally well represented, because teachers mentioned books from all Nordic countries, especially Sweden.

What can we learn about these partly-tentative results and conclusions? First, we can see that most of the books that have been seen as inspiring are often discussed and presented in the Finnish media. For example, there are films that are grounded in book series, such as *Harry Potter*, *Risto Rättäjä*, and *Lasse-Maja*. It is probably easier for teachers to recommend a book that is considered as interesting among pupils also in other contexts than that of literature at school. Nevertheless, schools should not limit their book selections to these generally popular characters and plots, but also seek wider perspectives. However, these trends can be used for the benefit of children's reading and encouraging those readers that otherwise are not easy to motivate to read.

Second, we suggest that deepening students' knowledge in their own culture should be taken seriously, in both language groups. In Swedish-speaking schools, the teachers might want to encourage students to read at least those books, written by Finnish-speaking writers, that the experienced Finnish-speaking teachers have found as motivating for students. In Finnish-speaking schools, teachers should make an effort on finding also other motivating Finnish-Swedish writers than Tove Jansson. Furthermore, both Finnish- and Swedish-speaking teachers should demand from publishers that all those books that teachers find inspiring and that are not yet translated into both

national languages be translated. Translations from Finnish into Swedish are, of course, also intended for the larger Nordic reading community. Together with translations from Nordic languages into Finnish they create and support cultural understanding and wider literary landscapes not only in Finland, but also in the entire Nordic area. Since all teachers share the worry about children's diminishing interest in reading and literature, we need more research on literature education and information from schools where the teachers, as experts in their profession, can find information about literature, reading and inspiring books directly from their students. Maybe then researchers and teachers can help young readers to get into the exciting world of books.

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