

Publisher

Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC)

Title of publication

Lärresultat i finska i åk 6. Resultat av en utvärdering våren 2018

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In April 2018, The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (Karvi) evaluated the learning outcomes in the second official language (A-finska) among sixth-grade students who received basic education in Swedish. A total of 2,661 students from 165 schools participated in the study. 1,596 students studied Finnish as a second official language (**A-finska**), and 1,065 studied Finnish according to the bilingual syllabus *modersmålsinriktad finska* (**Mofi**).

Evaluations of both syllabuses included multiple choice and open assignments as well as production tasks in the areas *Ability to interpret texts* (listening and reading comprehension) and *Ability to produce texts* (oral and written production). The evaluation assessed how well the sixth-graders had achieved a good level of competence according to the core curriculum for basic education framework 2014.

The results were evaluated from three different perspectives: regions, municipal language distribution and gender. The schools participating in the evaluation were divided into three different groups: 1) **Southern Finland** included schools from the bilingual municipalities covered by the Regional State Administrative Agency for Southern Finland, 2) **Western Finland** group included schools of bilingual and Swedish-speaking municipalities in the areas of the Regional State Administrative Agency for Western and Inland Finland and the Regional State Administrative Agency for Southwestern Finland. 3) The third group included Swedish-speaking schools in Finnish-speaking municipalities that provide basic education in Swedish. For this group, we use the name '**other regional language schools**' (Språköskolor in Swedish). Municipalities were divided into four groups according to the number of residents speaking Swedish: 1) Finnish-speaking municipalities with less than 10 % Swedish-speaking residents, 2) Municipalities where 11–50 % of residents are Swedish-speaking (bilingual municipalities where the majority is Finnish), 3) Municipalities where 51–80 % of residents are Swedish-speaking (bilingual municipalities where the majority is Swedish) and 4) Swedish-speaking municipalities where over 80 % of residents are Swedish-speaking.

On average, students in Southern Finland achieved better results in all the evaluation areas than students in Western Finland. Regional differences were higher in the A-finska syllabus than in the Mofi syllabus. Students in the other regional language schools and students in Southern Finland achieved roughly the same results. The results between schools differ quite a lot. The differences between girls and boys are relatively small in both syllabuses.

A-finska

Interpretation tasks

Almost half of the students in the **listening comprehension tasks** achieved a good skills level of A2.1. The results in Southern Finland were on average better than in Western Finland. In the municipalities of Southern Finland where there is a majority of Finnish-speaking residents (over 50 %), almost 80 % of students achieved a good level of competence, whilst students from the corresponding Finnish-speaking municipalities in Western Finland received a poorer result.

The students achieved the poorest results in **reading comprehension**, compared to other areas. On average, one third of students achieved a good skills level of A2.1. About half of the students in Southern Finland achieved the target level whilst only about one-fifth of the students in Western Finland achieved the same level. In Finnish-speaking municipalities, the results were better than average, with about 60 % of students achieving the target level. In municipalities with a Swedish-speaking majority of 51–80 %, there were hardly any differences between Southern and Western Finland. In the Swedish-speaking municipalities of Western Finland, only 12 % of students achieved a good level of competence.

Production tasks

Students performed best in **oral production**, with an average of around 60 % of students achieving a good skill level of A1.3. Students from municipalities with a Swedish-speaking majority achieved a good result, with over half of the students achieving a good level of competence. 41 % of students achieved a good skills level of A1.3. in **written production**. The best results were achieved by students from predominately Finnish-speaking municipalities in Southern Finland, where about 60 % of students achieved a good skill level. In the Swedish-speaking municipalities of Western Finland (percentage of Swedish-speaking residents 51–80 %), the sixth-graders achieved a better result in writing than their peers in Southern Finland in corresponding municipalities.

In the A-finska syllabus, the differences between schools are quite significant, especially in listening and reading comprehension. Differences between schools accounted for 34 % of the total variation in results in listening comprehension and up to 39 % in reading comprehension. The numbers of Swedish-speaking residents in the region and in the school location explain some of the differences between schools. If the regional differences and the number of Swedish-speaking residents in the municipalities are taken into account, differences between schools account for 20 % of the variation in listening comprehension and 21 % in reading comprehension.

Mofi

Interpretation tasks

Nearly 60 % of students reached a good skill level of B1.1 in **listening comprehension**. The differences between the schools were small in listening comprehension. In Western Finland, the results were on average poorer than in Southern Finland. The differences between other regional language schools in Southern Finland were not statistically significant. The students did less well in **reading comprehension**, with on average, about one third of the students achieving the target level of good skills. Regional differences could be found only in those municipalities with a Finnish-speaking majority (11–50 % Swedish-speaking). 31 % of students in the Southern Finland municipality had a good level of competence and, respectively, in Western Finland, 22 % of students achieved the same level.

Production tasks

Students performed well in **oral production**. Three-quarters of students achieved a good skill level of B1.1 in oral tasks. Several students even achieved a higher level of skill. The best results were achieved by Swedish-speaking municipalities in Southern Finland (51–80 % Swedish-speaking), where on average 80 % of students reached a good skill level. The poorest results were found in Finnish-speaking municipalities (11–50 % Swedish-speaking), where less than 70 % of students achieved a good skill level.

In **written production**, about half of the students achieved a good skill level. One-third of the students achieved an even higher level in writing than the target level of B1.1. On average, students from Southern Finland and other regional language schools performed better than students in Western Finland in their written assignments.

In the **Mofi** syllabus, the differences between schools vary depending on the area (3–27 %). The differences were less than 10 % in interpretation tasks and over 20 % in production tasks.

Background information

During the evaluation, students, teachers and principals answered background questions. Approximately half of the sixth-graders who participated in the evaluation had begun studying Finnish in the first grade. Students who studied the Mofi syllabus came mainly from bilingual families. About 90 % of the teachers had a teacher qualification (class teacher, subject teacher, special needs teacher). The majority were class teachers (68 %). More than half of the teachers felt that they do not use the skill levels of the European reference framework in their teaching.

Among other questions, students were asked about their attitude to schooling and the use of Finnish language in their spare time. The sixth-grade students considered Finnish as a useful subject. More girls than boys considered Finnish to be a useful subject. They also liked the subject a little more than the boys liked it. Reading for leisure was more common with girls than with boys.

Those sixth-grade students who think Finnish is a useful subject performed better in the assessment than those who thought the subject was not so useful. Liking the subject had a positive connection to the students' performance in the A-finska syllabus. There was no similar link in the Mofi syllabus. The use of Finnish in their free time had a positive connection to students' skills in both syllabuses. The more the students spoke Finnish in their free time, the better they were able to complete the evaluation tasks.

Keywords: Basic education, evaluation, learning outcomes, Finnish as a second official language, native Finnish, skills to interpret texts, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, skills to produce texts, oral production, written production, regional differences