



FINNISH EDUCATION
EVALUATION CENTRE

THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE USE AND LANGUAGING THINKING

Learning outcomes in mother tongue and literature at the end of basic education in 2014



SUMMARY

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Focusing on linguistic knowledge and writing

In April 2014, the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) assessed learning outcomes in mother tongue and literature at the end of basic education. The purpose of the assessment was to produce reliable information on how well the objectives of the 2004 national core curriculum for basic education have been met, and on success in promoting educational equality. For the first time, an electronic assessment was trialled in the national assessment of learning outcomes, with good results.

The assessment of learning outcomes consisted of linguistic knowledge and writing assignments. The concept of linguistic knowledge refers to language-related content in the national core curriculum. The previous national assessments carried out at the end of the basic education have provided information on general competence in the subject. In doing so, they have demonstrated that this time the assessment should focus on the areas of mother tongue and literature. These areas were also considered to lend themselves well to an electronic assessment trial.

Linguistic knowledge assignments were connected to language use scenarios, and writing assignments to interaction scenarios. Linguistic knowledge was also further linked to writing: the grounds for writing a job application were, for example, already laid down in the linguistic knowledge assignments. In addition, data for pupils, teachers and headmasters was collected by means of questionnaires.

This summary presents learning outcomes for the printed and electronic assessments separately. Other results are based on the printed assessment, and the outcomes of the electronic assessment are only mentioned if they differ from those of the printed one.

Pupils and their teachers who participated in the assessment

Data was gathered from 149 comprehensive schools, broadly representing various areas and municipal groups. Data was collected from a total sample of 5,144 pupils, 3,345 of whom participated in the printed assessment and 1,799 in the electronic one. Pupils subject to a decision on the need for special or enhanced support, or a corresponding previous decision on admittance for special needs education, also participated in the assessment. In schools accessing the printed assessment, said pupils accounted for some 7% of all sample pupils, some 4% of girls and 11% of boys. In schools accessing the electronic assessment, they accounted for approximately 4% of girls and approximately 10% of boys, approximately 6% of all pupils.

210 teachers responded to the teacher survey from schools participating the printed assessment and 102 from schools participating in the electronic one. Most of the teachers (84.3%) were educated to the level of Bachelor or Master of Art. Approximately 10% of the teachers had a background in class teaching (Bachelor or Master of Education) and some 5% had attained the Bachelor of Humanities. Approximately 12% of the teachers who participated in the printed assessment were not formally qualified as mother tongue and literature teachers. Of the teachers participating in the electronic assessment, 93% were Bachelors or Masters of Arts. The number of teachers without a formal teaching qualification accounted for approximately 8%, including 4 special needs teachers.

Background to teaching and studying linguistic knowledge and writing

Teachers and pupils were asked how often linguistic knowledge content was taught in the upper grades as part of mother tongue and literature studies. Such content refers to that mentioned in the national core curriculum (National core curriculum for basic education 2004) and is included in the assessment or usually covered at the end of the upper grades. The options were 1 = *Not at all*, 2 = *Rarely*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Often*, 5 = *Very often*. Teachers and pupils reported that the most common topics included the basic concepts of grammar, developing the comprehension of clauses and sentences in written language, and correct spelling (Figure 2).

Teachers were also asked about the methods they use in teaching the content of linguistic knowledge covered by this assessment, on the scale of 1 = *Not at all*, 2 = *Rarely*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Often*, 5 = *Very often*. Teachers reported using textbooks and workbooks, discussions, writing and research, for example with the help of texts and observation of language use, as their primary methods of teaching linguistic knowledge. Some teachers said they used electronic environments, while others applied problem-solving methods, collaborative learning or perhaps even crafts and drawing (Figure 1).

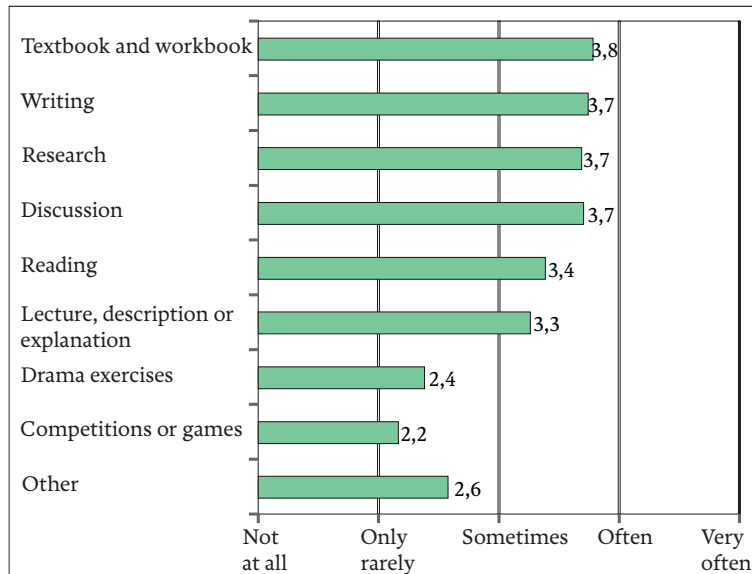


FIGURE 1. Teaching methods used in teaching linguistic knowledge content

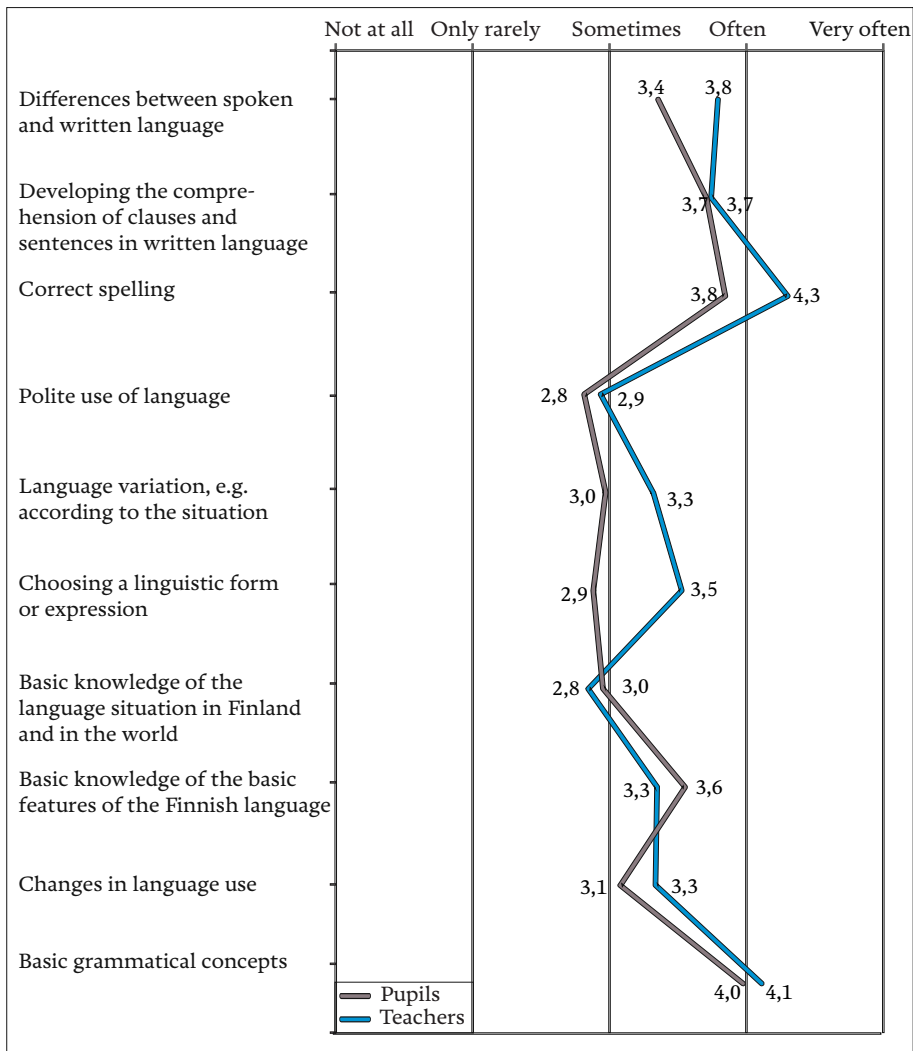


FIGURE 2. Teachers' and pupils opinions on studying linguistic knowledge content in the upper grades of basic education

Teaching and studying writing

Both teachers and pupils reported that the most common method of studying writing in lower secondary school was based on independent writing by the pupils, followed by a numerical mark from the teacher. The teachers reported giving written feedback on the completed texts. Teachers felt that the planning and drafting of texts and producing different types of text was also common. Even though writing has primarily been considered a personal competence, which the teacher assesses on the basis of the work produced, in practice interactive and pupil-centred methods favouring the writing process have been used, on average, sometimes.

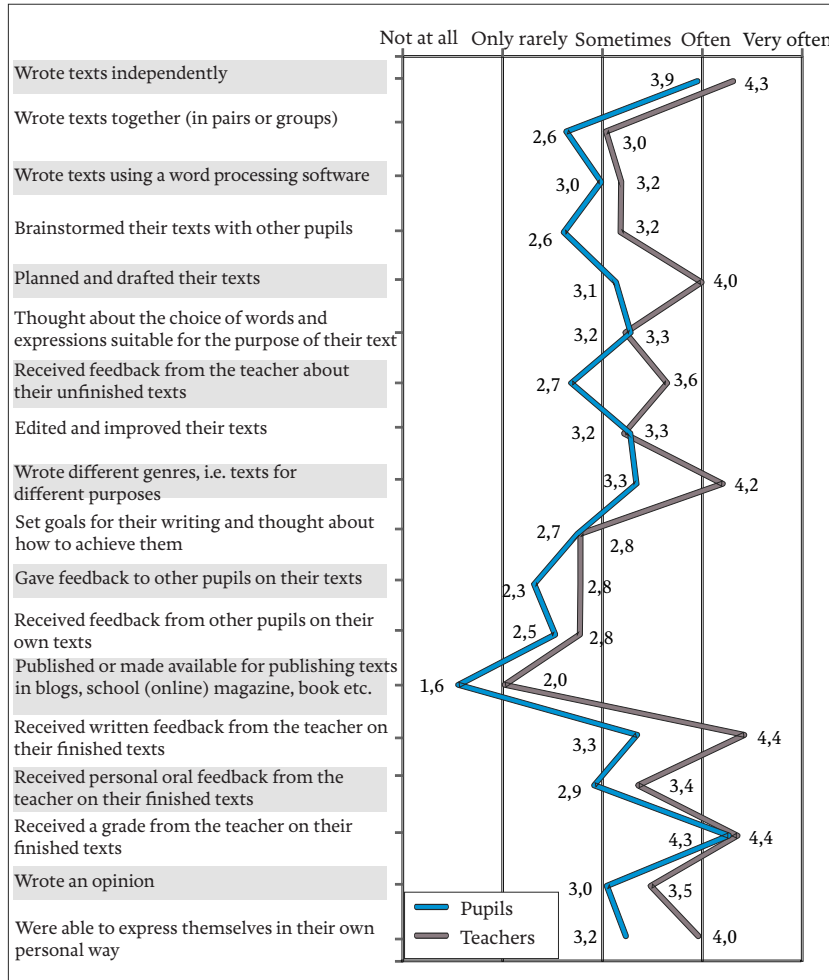


FIGURE 3. Teachers' and pupils' opinions on the content and working methods of writing studies

Extracurricular reading and writing

The pupil survey mapped pupils' extracurricular reading and writing activities. 40% of girls and 70% of boys reported reading nothing else in addition to schoolbooks in any one month during their leisure time. In contrast, 3% of boys and 11% of girls said they read three books or at least four books every month. The popularity of reading as a traditional hobby seems to have waned in comparison to the levels observed in the assessments at the end of basic education in 2005 and 2010.

Pupils were also asked how often they write personal texts, mainly related to social media, and longer, literary or factual texts. The options were Not at all – Only rarely – Sometimes – Often – Very often. Of the surveyed genres, both girls and boys said they most often wrote short private messages, especially text and instant messages using their mobiles, but also chat messages. While pupils commonly wrote social media updates, this was largely part of the girls' daily lives. Only a few pupils, predominantly girls, engaged in writing blog updates and comments. (Figure 4.)

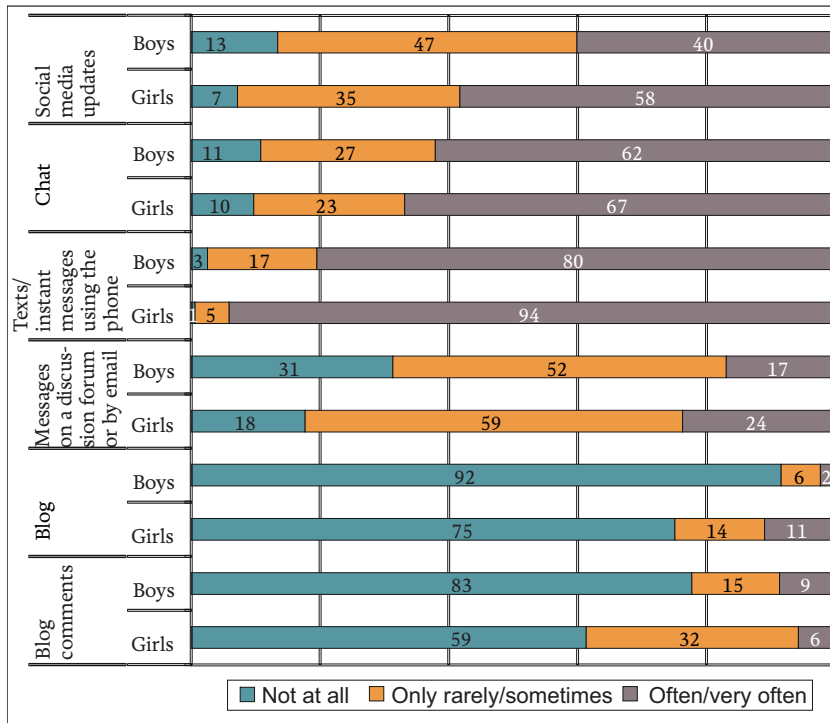


FIGURE 4. Writing by girls and boys in leisure time: personal texts or texts emphasising the personal view written for new media (the printed assessment)

Girls were observed to write longer literary texts, factual texts and diary entries more often than boys, though even girls were fairly infrequent writers. Only few pupils, primarily girls, said they wrote literary texts – books (short stories or novels), poems or song lyrics – often or very often. However, some 32% of girls and 15% of boys said they wrote poems or song lyrics rarely or sometimes. Writing a diary regularly was part of the daily life of some girls (often or very often 14.0%), and some boys contributed to an online magazine (often or very often 7.2%). Pupils also reported writing other texts: boys especially wrote texts related to gaming, comments and YouTube texts, while girls wrote stories and letters. Pupils who participated in the electronic assessment were slightly more engaged in writing in their leisure time compared to the pupil sample participating to the printed assessment.

Use of ICT in teaching mother tongue and literature



Use of ICT in teaching is primarily governed by the availability of equipment. There were major differences in the quality and availability of ICT equipment between the sample schools. Most teachers in the sample schools did not have even a single computer available for the permanent use of their pupils. More than half of the teachers could acquire 16–25 desktop computers for their pupils as required, and some 15% of the teachers could access more than 26 desktop computers. Laptops and tablets were less available at the schools. Some teachers noted that even when their school had computers, it did not mean they would be always available, since the equipment had to be shared with others. More than half of girls (53.0%) and less than half of boys (44.2%) thought that enough ICT was used during mother tongue and literature lessons. Of the pupils participating in the electronic assessment, slightly under 50% considered the use of ICT to be sufficient.

Teachers were asked how much they use computers in mother tongue and literature lessons and for which purposes, on the scale of 1 = *Not at all*, 2 = *Very little*, 3 = *To some extent*, 4 = *Quite a lot*, 5 = *A great deal*. ICT was mainly used for gathering information and editing and finalising texts (Figure 5).

Other uses mentioned by teachers included preparing presentations and talks (e.g. PowerPoint, radio play), undertaking exercises and mainly language assignments in learning environments (such as Alfa programmes, Opinportti, the teacher’s own teaching blog) and carrying out projects, portfolios and literary assignments. The results show that ICT is not widely used in the everyday teaching of mother tongue and literature. Teachers who participated in the electronic assessment used computers slightly more frequently in their teaching.

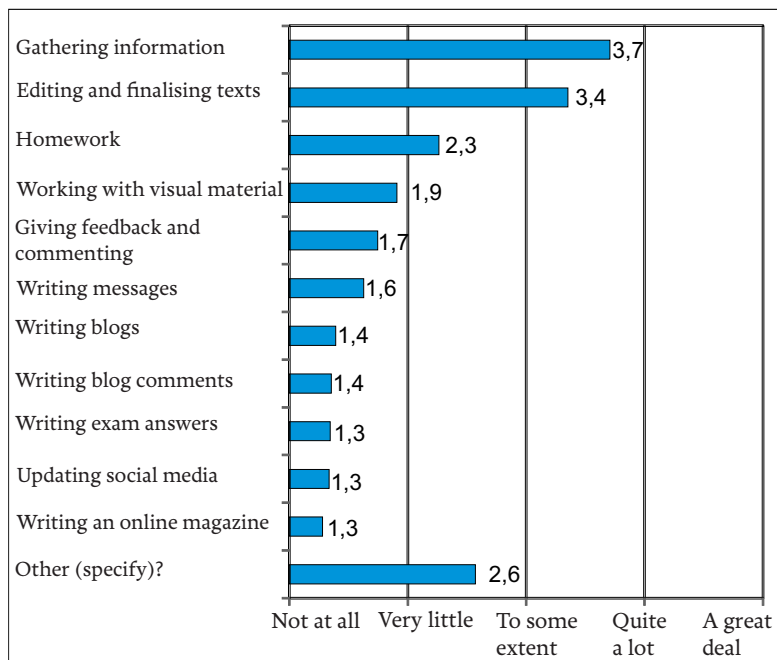


FIGURE 5. Use of ICT in teaching mother tongue and literature according to the teachers

Principal findings of the printed assessment

Linguistic knowledge

Girls' average score was 63% and boys' 50% in linguistic knowledge.

For linguistic knowledge assignments, the average percentage of correctly completed questions was 56% of the maximum score. Girls displayed average competence (62.6%) and boys' moderate competence (49.6%). About one in three girls and some 13% of boys achieved clearly good proficiency, referring to a minimum score of 70%, while about one in three boys and one in ten girls achieved weak results, or under 40%. There was a large difference between the competences displayed by girls and boys, and boys displayed a slightly greater variation in their competencies than girls (Figure 6). These findings are in line with previous assessments of learning outcomes for the subject in the ninth grade.

Almost four in ten pupils found the assignments to be challenging, since 38% of the pupils completed less than half of the assignments correctly. In contrast, pupils found it difficult to achieve the maximum points: only about one in seventy pupils (1.5%) scored at least 90%.

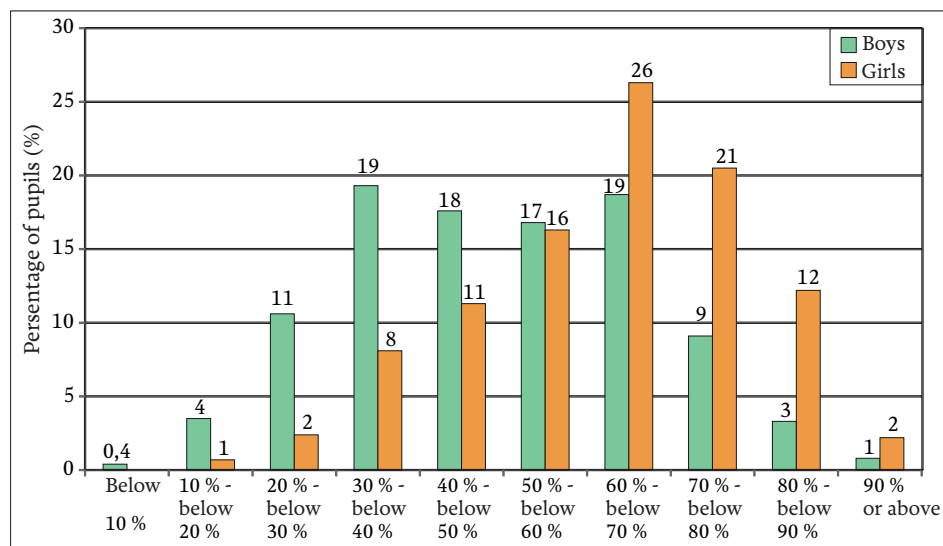


FIGURE 6. Distribution of scores in linguistic knowledge by gender

The linguistic knowledge assignments measured how well pupils:

1. understand that the situation and the purpose influence the choice of linguistic expression;
2. recognise different expressions and are able to interpret their meanings within their contexts;
3. have a good command of standard language norms.

Some assignments demanded an understanding of genres and appropriate language use in an interactive scenario (1). The genres included an advertisement, school rules and a comic. Pupils had to choose, justify or explain; their task was either to choose an expression for a certain scenario or purpose, or explain why a certain expression was chosen for a particular language use scenario or genre.

Nearly all pupils were able to choose the politest expression suitable for the language use scenario, but only one in three could justify their choice by explaining which language features influenced their decision. The more the pupils needed to verbalise their observations and justify their views in the open answers, the more difficult the assignments were for them and the larger the gap that was observed in the levels of competence between the genders. These types of assignments require pupils to have analytical and assessment skills.

Pupils were also asked to identify different expressions and interpret their meanings within their contexts (2). While these assignments used subject concepts (such as *non-finite clause*, *verb in the passive voice*, *clause*, *synonym*, *repetition*, *metaphor*, *language feature*), they did not test the pupils' knowledge of such concepts. Instead, they were used to refer to the phenomena described in the text excerpts.

The multiple-choice questions on non-finite clauses, synonyms and opposite expressions yielded the best results. Both girls' and boys' competences were slightly polarised in assignments in which they were asked to recognise different expressions (e.g. verbs in certain voices) and interpret their meanings within their contexts, for example, explaining the metaphor used in an advertisement.

The greatest difference between the genders was observed in the assignments measuring the command of standard language norms, where boys' competencies also showed slight signs of polarisation (3). These assignments assessed pupils' command of features such as compounds, capitalisation, possessive suffixes and congruence. Included in this section was a job application, comprising a few sentences and written by a young person. Pupils were asked to change the application so that it complied with standard language norms.

Pupils scored over 80% in multiple-choice questions in which they chose simple compound nouns in context and corrected them in short open answers. For example, pupils were able to choose *erilaisia* from the alternatives of *eri laisia*, *erilaisia* and *erin laisia* and change a *-inen*-adjective from an open compound to a closed one. However, pupils found it easier to recognise errors and select the correct alternative in multiple-choice questions only focusing on a single error type than when applying their knowledge to correcting errors within a text.

Learning outcomes in linguistic knowledge demonstrate that many pupils find it difficult to observe language and language use, apply their thinking and assessment skills, make conclusions and verbalise their conclusions. These skills, however, are part of the objectives laid down for mother tongue and literature in the National core curriculum for basic education 2004. They are also included in the objectives of the Finnish language and literature, which forms part of the mother tongue and literature syllabus in the new national core curriculum for basic education 2014.



Writing

The average percentage of correctly completed questions was 59% of the maximum writing score. Girls displayed average competence (almost good) (68.2%) and boys moderate competence (50.5%). The competence gap between girls and boys was large, and boys' competence levels varied slightly more than those of girls. About one in two girls and one in five boys clearly achieved at least a high proficiency, although more than one in four boys and 6% of girls achieved only weak results.

It would seem that the girls who achieved the highest proficiency were not able to perform to the best of their ability in the assessment. Similarly, the assessment probably failed to demonstrate how weak the boys who achieved the lowest scores actually were (Figure 7).

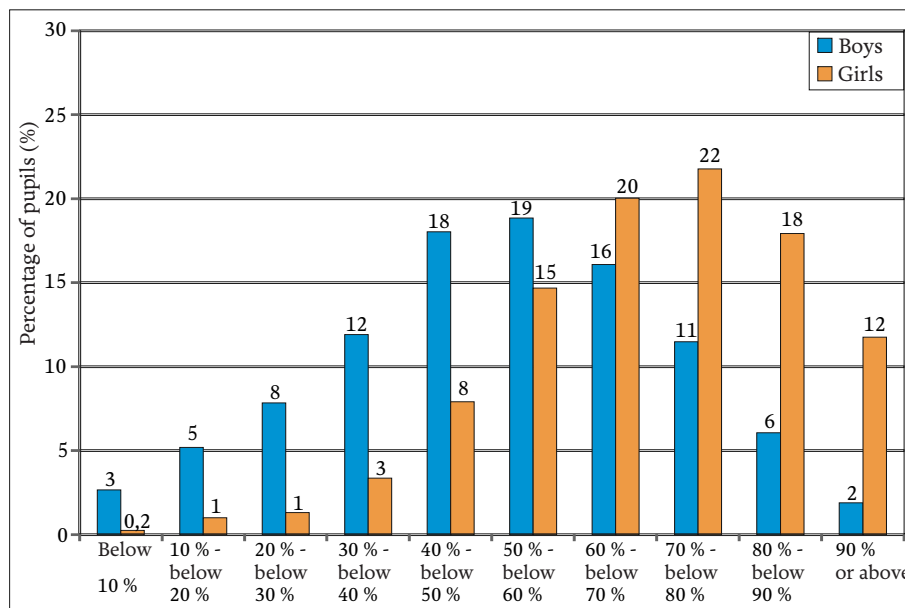


FIGURE 7. Distribution of scores in writing by gender

Writing skills were assessed on the basis of three texts: writing an application for a summer job, a rejoinder to Tuomas Kaseva's column *Entä jos koulussa ei olisi kokeita?* (*What if there weren't any exams at school?*) (Helsingin Sanomat, 6 August 2013) and a news item or a description based on a photograph (this writing assignment was also included in the 2001 assessment). The assessment criteria for the application and the rejoinder covered the typical features of these genres. Language was also assessed, with two language criteria applied to the rejoinder. In addition, the structure of the rejoinder was assessed, as it was intended as a longer text.

Girls' average score was 68% and boys' 51% in writing.

The greatest differences between girls and boys were observed in the writing assignment in which they attained the highest scores, namely the summer job application. About one in five applications written by boys were poor, indicating that the competence they demonstrated would not have been sufficient for an actual job application process (the corresponding figure for girls was 3.7%). Meanwhile, almost one in two girls and fewer than one in five boys achieved high marks, or a score of 80% or higher, in this assignment. Writing an application and addressing the recipient politely are part of the criteria for good performance (National core curriculum for basic education 2004). For both criteria, girls clearly achieved good competence and boys displayed moderate competence on average.

In the National core curriculum for basic education 2004, the subject section for grades 6–9 highlights the ability to present grounds and positions and to comment on other people’s views. The core content also includes the ability to use the source text and refer to it in a simple manner. In the assessment, this area was represented by the rejoinder to the column. Pupils were able to express their opinions well (even very well in the case of girls) when they were asked to write a rejoinder, but they had more difficulties in justifying their opinion. Using and referring to the source text yielded poor marks for boys and adequate marks for girls on average, as did expressing opinions that differed from their own. However, two-way argumentation is an advanced skill.

Writing a description or a news item on the basis of a photograph was included in the 2001 assessment of learning outcomes, enabling comparisons with the earlier results. In the 2014 assessment, this assignment yielded similar results to the one in 2001: while girls’ overall score remained similar to the previous one, boys’ overall score and the score for the news item was some 4 percentage points lower than before.

Girls clearly had a good command of standard language norms in written assignments, while boys had a moderate command of these. For writing according to the conventions of the genre, girls displayed average (almost good) competence and boys’ moderate competence in all three assignments.



Principal findings of the electronic assessment

Results of the electronic assessment are compared below to those of the printed assessment. However, this comparison remains indicative, since even though the assignments shared the same principles, they differed in their method of execution. Since most pupils carried out the work with pen and paper, the assignments were largely drawn up with the printed assessment in mind. Certain assignment types did therefore not lend themselves as well to the electronic assessment, or their usability differed from that of the printed one.

For example, pupils were not able to see the longer text on a single screen, which may have influenced their overall view of the text. However, some sections of the linguistic knowledge assignments formed a concrete continuum, and nearly all sections were on a continuum within their context (e.g. the summer job). Pupils may have found it more difficult to perceive these continuums in the electronic assessment, even though they were reminded of them in each assignment section.

The electronic assignments required the ability to use a keyboard, a different kind of precision from the pen-and-paper method, and familiarity with computer use in general. For example, if pupils were not used to writing texts on computer or were used to printing out texts and checking their lines of thought, structure and linguistic forms on a paper copy, an electronic environment may have presented new challenges to writing.

All in all, while there are major gaps in competences between boys and girls in the electronic assessment, in certain areas (e.g. in the command of standard language norms) they were slightly narrower than in the printed assessment. When compared to the linguistic knowledge and writing scores for the printed assessment, fewer girls achieved the highest, and in writing also the average, scores in the electronic assessment. Correspondingly, lower scores were more common. Almost as many boys achieved the highest scores, but there were fewer average scores and more poor scores than in the printed assessment. (Figures 8 and 9.)

Linguistic knowledge

In the electronic assignments, the average percentage of correctly completed questions was 51% of the maximum linguistic knowledge score. The score was about 5 percentage points lower than that of the printed assessment. Girls' scores were 6 and those of boys 5 percentage points lower than the corresponding figures for the printed assessment. In all focus areas of linguistic knowledge, girls scored 4–8 and boys 4–6 percentage points lower than in the printed assessment. The greatest differences were observed in the assignments measuring standard language norms, where girls displayed moderate (clearly good in the printed assessment) and boys' adequate competence (moderate in the paper assessment).

Girls' average score was 56% and boys' 44% in linguistic knowledge.

Boys achieved in 4 assignments and girls in 5 assignments an average score that was 10 percentage points lower than the corresponding figure in the printed assessment. The method of clicking a linguistic form in the text to underline words was found particularly difficult if the requested form comprised one or two words (e.g. a verb in the passive voice). In the case of two-word answers, pupils often clicked only one word or several words. Compared to the paper assessment, the scores were 14 and 20 percentage points lower for girls and 15 and 18 percentage points lower for boys

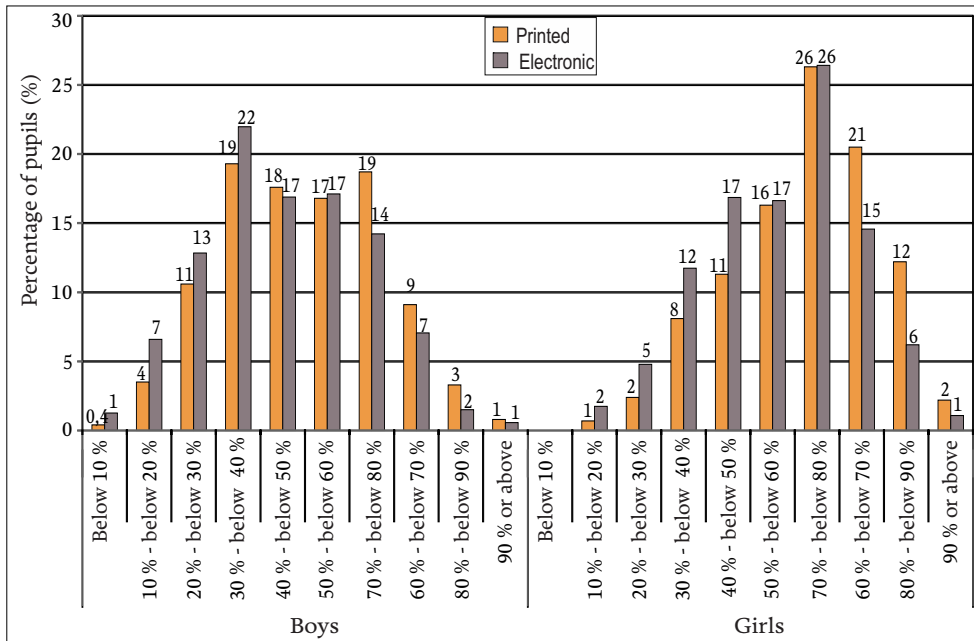
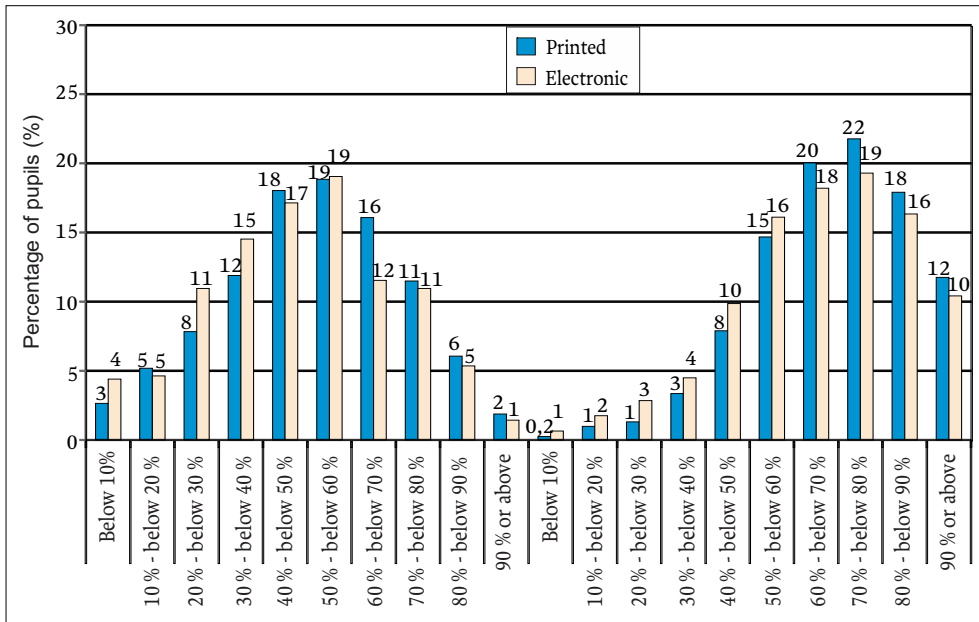


FIGURE 8. Distribution of scores in linguistic knowledge by gender in the electronic and printed assessments

In contrast, the scores of some assignment sections were 5–8 percentage point higher than those of the printed assessment. Boys had 2 and girls 1 of such sections. The boys' sections were multiple-choice questions, while the girls' section was a short open answer related to standard language norms, in which they were asked to correct and rewrite an authentic, short application.

Writing

In the electronic assignment, the pupil sample achieved an average of 57% of the maximum writing score. The results were some 3 percentage points lower overall than the corresponding figures in the printed assessment. In writing assignments, girls' command of standard language norms was 6 percentage points lower and boys' command 2 percentage points lower than in the printed assessment.



Girls' average score was 65% and boys' 48% in writing.

FIGURE 9. Distribution of scores in writing by gender in the electronic and printed assessments

However, girls and boys achieved the same level of competence in writing the application and the rejoinder in the printed and electronic assessment: the difference was about 1 percentage point. In case of the rejoinder, boys even displayed a slightly better competence in the electronic assignment (with a difference of 0.2 percentage points).

The description and, in particular, the news item lowered the score for the electronic assessment: the average difference to the printed version was up to 16 percentage points lower for boys and 12 percentage points lower for girls in the description assignment. In the news item, boys scored 6 percentage points and girls 7 percentage points lower than the corresponding figures in the printed assignment. This result may have been influenced by the assessment criteria for the anchor assignment, which was intended for the pen-and-paper method and was less successful in the electronic environment. If the anchor assignment were disregarded in the overall writing achievement, leaving the application and the rejoinder as the only assignments to be considered, the printed and electronic writing assessments would yield practically the same results.

Other results

Pupils entitled to support

Most of the sample pupils entitled to support achieved poor results in terms of both linguistic knowledge and writing. However, this had little effect on the overall result. If the sample had only included pupils who mainly studied in mainstream education groups, the average scores for linguistic knowledge and writing would have been one percentage point higher. If pupils receiving special or enhanced support in mother tongue and literature had been excluded from the sample, the results would have been some two percentage points higher.

Teachers without formal qualification

Approximately 12% of the teachers who participated in the printed assessment were not formally qualified as mother tongue and literature teachers. The pupils of these teachers had somewhat lower writing and linguistic knowledge scores than the average scores of all sample pupils (5–6 percentage points' difference). Special needs teachers are not included in this comparison.

AVI areas and municipality types

Competence was fairly evenly distributed across Finland. Regional differences were minor. Variation between schools was also small, although writing scores varied slightly more than linguistic knowledge scores. Some 9% of the differences in writing in the printed assessment (10% in the electronic assessment) were explained by differences between schools, while the corresponding figure for linguistic knowledge was 6% (5% in the electronic assessment). Pupils living in urban areas displayed the poorest competence in the electronic assessment.

The differences between printed and electronic assessments among both girls and boys were greatest in Eastern Finland among all AVI areas (the Regional State Administrative Agencies). The AVI area scored particularly well in the printed assessment of writing, but had the poorest performance in the electronic assessment: the writing scores for boys in Eastern Finland were some 10 and for girls some 8 percentage points lower than for those who participated in the printed assessment. The score for linguistic knowledge was some 7 percentage points lower. The differences between all municipality types in writing were statistically significant.

Applying for upper secondary education

Some 55% of pupils reported general upper secondary school as their first choice in the joint application system, while 43% of pupils placed vocational education and training (VET) as their first choice. In terms of learning outcomes, there was a major difference between pupils applying to upper secondary school and VET. Among those applying to VET, the overall performance in linguistic knowledge and writing was adequate, the scores remaining between 40% and below 50%. Girls and boys aiming to pursue upper secondary schooling clearly had better learning outcomes than those planning to attend vocational education and training.

Pupils' opinions on studying the subject

On average, pupils had a neutral opinion of the subject (the average score of approximately 3 on the scale of 1–5). Girls found the subject more useful than boys and also enjoyed studying it more (Figure 10). Learning outcomes were clearly connected to confidence in one's competence and to whether the pupil considered the subject useful.

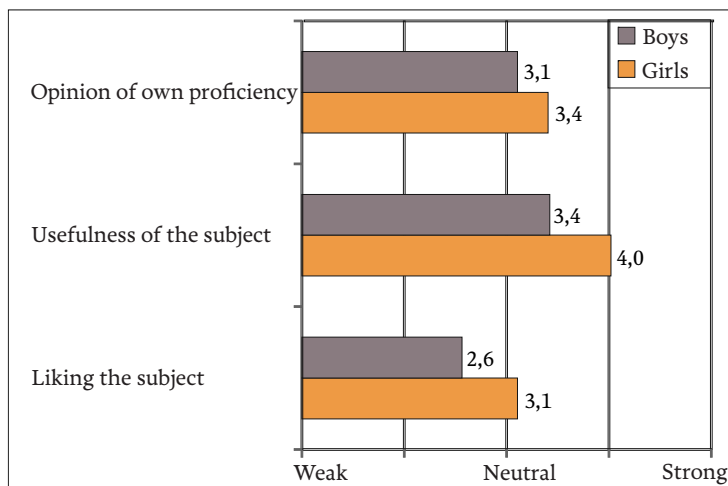


FIGURE 10. Girls' and boys' opinions of, and attitudes towards, the subject of mother tongue and literature

Pupils were also asked about their attitudes towards studying linguistic knowledge and writing. Only one third of the girls and below one fifth of the boys considered studying linguistic knowledge to be interesting or nearly interesting. However, 60% of the girls and 39% of the boys expressed motivation to advance as a language user. On average, pupils had a neutral opinion of studying writing, although girls liked writing clearly more than boys.

Performance in writing in particular was connected to pupils' interest in studying linguistic knowledge and desire to develop themselves as language users. A moderately strong link was observed between finding the writing studies useful and the learning outcomes. Study of linguistic knowledge and writing were therefore closely intertwined.

It was notable that, in comparison to pupils applying to upper secondary school, those applying to vocational education and training had less confidence in their mother tongue and literature competences and did not consider the subject as useful. Additionally, boys who trusted their competence as much as girls had less success in both linguistic knowledge and writing assignments.

Marks

The average most recent marks in mother tongue and literature was 7.7 (8.2 for girls and 7.3 for boys). In the printed assessment, learning outcomes in linguistic knowledge and writing were slightly more connected to the most recent mark given, meaning that a mark could express different elements and be based on different competences depending on gender. This difference between girls and boys was not observed in the electronic assessment.

Pupils' extracurricular activities, parents' level of education and interest in the child's education

Regular homework, a reading habit, the parents' education (matriculation examination) and an interest in the child's education were also connected to learning outcomes. While girls read other than school books and wrote in their leisure time more than boys, a link between writing in one's leisure and learning outcomes was not observed.

Some links between teaching practices and learning outcomes

Teachers were asked about their methods of teaching linguistic knowledge content. The following teaching practices demonstrated a weak positive link to learning outcomes in linguistic knowledge and writing: conducting research into language in the printed assessment, and drama exercises, competitions and games in the electronic assessment.

The pupil and teacher survey asked about the methods pupils were using to study writing. With regard to teachers, a moderate link was observed in the printed assessment between independent writing followed by a numerical mark from the teacher, which is the most commonly used teaching method in writing, and learning outcomes. A weak link was also found between learning outcomes and writing instruction in which teachers thought pupils had a chance to express themselves in their own personal way.

In the electronic assessment, a moderate link was observed in teachers' opinions between learning outcomes and the following teaching practices: interactive writing, process writing, and giving and receiving feedback.

Concerning the links between pupils' views and learning outcomes, a moderate connection was found in the electronic assessment between learning outcomes and these writing practices: independent writing followed by a numerical mark, and genre study. A weak link was also found connecting learning outcomes and situations in which pupils thought they had a chance to express themselves in their own personal way.



Development suggestions

1. The learning process and materials for the subject should be developed so that more pupils would regard the study of linguistic knowledge, writing and the overall subject as useful, meaningful and relevant.
2. As part of instruction in linguistic knowledge, pupils' confidence in their observational skills, thinking skills and ability to draw conclusions and justify their opinions should be supported. On the one hand, concepts and understanding of structures are important, even though they should not be studied out of the context of actual language use. On the other, when texts and interaction are discussed and talked about, knowledge of these areas must be accompanied by knowledge of language. Knowledge of language facilitates linguistic skills.
3. Based on the wide gaps found in writing skills, it will be important to consider how schools may be able to provide each pupil with suitably challenging opportunities for learning, while continuing to support his or her skills development. Laying the groundwork for genre modelling and writing, by using methods such as discussion, drama and visits, will lower the threshold for writing. Authentic writing scenarios, differentiating assignments, projects, multimedia environments and genres that are needed in everyday life (e.g. in studies and leisure activities) demonstrate that writing skills, knowledge of texts and command of standard language norms are useful. Skilled writers should not be forgotten either.
4. Writing should focus not only on individual writing, but rather also on interactive writing situations and cooperative writing, skills which are also required in real life. In this way, writing will emphasise metacognitive and social skills, and not only well-formed texts. Interaction and interactive environments (e.g. learning platforms and discussion forums) provide opportunities for genuine dialogue. They enable pupils to express their opinions bravely without being abrupt, justify their views, practise disagreeing constructively, give considered and helpful feedback, and process and publish texts. Argumentation is a civic skill.
5. Pupils must be guaranteed uniform opportunities to use ICT equipment across Finland, in different types of municipalities and in all schools. Hardware and its use should be reformed and standardised, providing the basis for equality. Teacher education must offer prospective teachers the capabilities for using ICT in teaching and for assessing texts produced online (multimodal texts). Teachers should be offered continuing education in this field. ICT skills are part of modern civics.
6. Pupils are entitled to realistic feedback, a realistic notion of their personal competence and skills, and a final grading on an equal basis, regardless of their gender, teacher or school. As important are the efforts to create a concrete picture of where each pupil's individual goal-setting will lead: what kind of skills in mother tongue and

literature will be sufficient for modern life, what benefits and added value these competences will bring to the pupil's life, and what kind of potential for the future the pupil could have.

7. Ideally, teachers should also explain assessment of learning outcomes to parents. In parents' evenings, teachers should highlight the connection between learning outcomes and the interest shown at home towards the child's education.
8. Teachers should meet the formal requirements laid down for the recruitment of new teachers related to mother tongue and literature, in order to ensure learning.
9. The assessment system should be developed, as indicated by the headmaster and teacher survey. An electronic assessment system would introduce new opportunities also in this respect, in addition to challenges.



This summary is based on the publication:

Elina Harjunen and Juhani Rautopuro

Kielenkäytön ajattelua ja ajattelun kielentämistä

Äidinkielen ja kirjallisuuden oppimistulokset
perusopetuksen päättövaiheessa 2014:
keskiössä kielentuntemus ja kirjoittaminen

Helsinki Office

Finnish Education Evaluation Centre

P.O. Box 28 (Mannerheiminaukio 1 A)

FI-00101 HELSINKI

Email: kirjaamo@karvi.fi

Telephone: +358 29 533 5500

karvi.fi