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Title of dissertation: *Family representations in contemporary Finnish and Polish picturebook series*

Abstract:

The family is undergoing profound changes in many societies around the world, which is reflected in contemporary children's literature. Images of families presented in picturebooks can be an important factor in shaping a child's future attitudes towards family. Picturebooks convey meanings by two modes: the verbal and the visual, which makes the impact more significant. Comparative study on how the family is presented in picturebooks addressed to young children can provide insight into what is acceptable and desirable from the point of view of family life in a given society. Thus, the aim of the dissertation was to reconstruct and compare representations of family in contemporary Finnish and Polish picturebook series about a child protagonist. This goal requires, among others, the following research questions: What are the similarities and differences in visual and verbal representations of family between Polish and Finnish picturebooks? Who are the represented family members? How are the family members depicted?

To answer the outlined research questions, a sociocritical approach was applied, more precisely – Multimodal Discourse Analysis with corpus-based methods. Quantitative methods were used as a supporting tool for further qualitative analysis of iconotexts.

Based on the outlined analysis, the representation of the family in the analysed research material was reconstructed. Four basic models of constructing the image of the Family were distinguished: 1. an overview model with the focus on family diversity (many equivalent families in the book); 2. an informative model; 3. a model focalising the family; 4. the model of the family in the background. The findings show that the family in Finnish picturebooks is a nuclear family consisting of parents (the most often mother and father, sometimes two mothers) with children (often more than three, not necessarily common children of the represented parents). The family in Polish picturebooks is multigenerational and extended family – grandparents and aunts with uncles play an important role in supporting the family of the main character. Finnish picturebook series show more variety in terms of ethnic background of presented families.