Dealing with culture in schools: A small-step approach towards anti-racism in Finland

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Abstract

This chapter discusses anti-racism education by focusing on how culture is used in educational discourses in Finland. More and more studies highlight the pervasive use of culture as a substitute for race, urging scholars to explore how and why cultural claims are made relevant (Breidenbach & Nyíri, 2009; Piller, 2011). Culture is present in numerous subjects (e.g. religion, literature, history, languages) and anti-racism education should therefore be understood from a holistic perspective. This chapter focuses on the Finnish context which is relevant to examine for two main reasons. First, Finnish school system is globally represented as high-quality. Second, the new national curriculum, which reflects current ideas and values, will be applied in August 2016.

Drawing on critical approaches to culture, this chapter (1) looks at limitations of the way culture is conceptualized within educational discourses, (2) proposes new ways of using the concept (3) and provides practical examples while considering limitations and challenges such as hidden curriculum and teachers' personal values. This chapter will primarily deal with foreign language education since one of its main objectives, as stated by the new curriculum, is to "increase cultural diversity and language awareness"[1] (Opetushallitus, 2014, p. 219 & p. 349).

Building on intercultural communication and educational research, and using the experience of one of the authors as a teacher, this study bridges the gap between theoretical insights and practical implications. With the aim of providing applicable findings, we argue for a variety of small changes in existing practices rather than the addition of a large anti-racism programme.

INTRODUCTION

The global situation has changed very rapidly during the past few years due to several conflicts and economic recession which have affected migration and discourses about migrants. Populist anti-immigration discourses have become even more common and audible across Europe. Discourses building on ideas of *cultural incompatibility* and *clash of civilizations* (Hutington, 1996), have also become more prominent. In Finland, increased diversity is a fairly recent phenomenon and the country is considered as a somewhat homogenous society (Holm & Londen, 2010) and has typically been a country of emigration until the 1970s (Korkiasaari & Söderling, 2003). Teachers in Finland are therefore faced with challenges of taking diversity

[1] Originally in the text: "Kasvu kulttuuriseen moninaisuuteen ja kielitietoisuuteen" (translation by the authors)

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into account more than before. These reasons highlight the importance of developing anti-racism education from a cultural standpoint.

In this chapter we discuss anti-racism education in the Finnish context. Even though we do not use empirical data, we nevertheless rely on the new Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education to discuss the notion of intercultural communication competence and its implication for instance in language teaching. The Finnish context is relevant to examine for several reasons. First, Finnish education has a very positive reputation worldwide and it is generally considered as extremely high quality. The most prominent reason for this is the exceptionally high attainment in the previous Pisa studies (OECD, 2000; 2003; 2006; 2009). Second, Finnish education is considered very equal and democratic due to the comprehensive school system where all children regardless of their socioeconomic background attend the same school and follow the same curriculum (Sahlberg, 2011). Nearly all children in Finland (99,7%) complete the comprehensive school (Finnish National Board of Education). Schools do not select their pupils and normally the pupils enter their nearby schools. However, the ability of the Finnish school system to deal with the challenges arising from immigration has been questioned, for instance in relation to teacher training (Holm & Londen, 2010). The increase in immigration is a relatively new phenomenon as Finland has typically been a country of emigration (Pitkänen & Kouki, 2002). Despite being a bilingual country (i.e. Finnish and Swedish) with several significant minority groups (i.e. Sami, Roma, Jewish, Tatars), Finland is usually regarded as fairly homogenous (Holm & Londen, 2010; Pitkänen & Kouki, 2002). In 2015 foreign nationals (i.e. individuals living permanently in Finland, excluding asylum seekers and the ones who have acquired citizenship) made up only 4,6% of Finland's overall population (Ministry of Interior, 2012; Statistics Finland, 2016). The country's self-representation and increased immigration provide interesting grounds to examine and develop anti-racism practices in education. Lastly, Finland is currently adopting a new National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (hereafter FNCCBE) where cultural issues are dealt with more extensively than before.

The overall argument of this chapter is that small changes in conceptualizing and teaching culture can significantly contribute to anti-racism education. This chapter brings together theoretical insights as well as practical implications and challenges. We start the chapter by discussing the relation between culture and racism from a predominant critical intercultural communication viewpoint. We then briefly introduce aspects of the new FNCCBE which are relevant to anti-racism education (i.e. cultural competence & foreign language teaching) and discuss their practical implementation. This chapter proposes a small-step

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approach to anti-racism education by introducing 3 steps which are (1) *intercultural communication competence* (2) *language and culture* and (3) *nation and culture*. Finally, we list some practical challenges that can hinder anti-racism education.

From *race* to *culture*: Shifts in racist discourses

The evolution of discourses of racism moving from *race* to *culture* is grounded in the invalidation of biological arguments to explain differences by new theoretical approaches as well as a new international, political and economic order in the twentieth century. Inherently, racism is utilized to construct and maintain unequal relationships between individuals. Gillborn (2008, p. 3) points out that race is "far from being a fixed and natural system of genetic difference" and that racism therefore relies on socially constructed categories that keep being reinvented. Thus, the disappearance of biological categories has left room for new ways of justifying and maintaining inequalities (Wren, 2001); a gap that *culture* seems to be increasingly used to fill as it nowadays dominates various types of discourses. Some scholars (see e.g. Jameson, 1998) talk about the *cultural turn* to address the shift in discourses following which everything became cultural. Whether it is to describe individuals' behaviors, hobbies and values, to explain international relations, or to enhance business transactions, culture appears everywhere as a tool to define everything and everyone. The pervasive focus on culture to explain, predict and categorize individuals hints at culture being utilized as a marker of differences. Breidenbach and Nyíri (2009, p. 22) note that culture is mostly used to highlight what "distinguishes one group of people from another". The notion of difference appears to be a key element to the emergence of culture as a discursive resource, especially as one utilized to replace race. Taguieff (1989, p. 77) argued already 25 years ago that discourses switched from "inter-racial *inequality*" to "inter-cultural *difference*", the latter one sounding more positive and less dangerous. Similarly, Lentin (2004) discusses the way in which culture tends to be regarded as unproblematic and unrelated to politics. She argues:

> Thinking culturally about difference is the default for not talking about "race", thereby avoiding the charge of racism. But the need for such a substitute obscures precisely the fact that the hierarchy put in place by racism has been maintained. It no longer exists as blatant persecution. It is more ambivalent. (Lentin, 2004, p. 99)

The emphasis put on difference reveals another key aspect of culturalist discourses: their essentialist underpinnings. The propensity of culture to replace race lies in its conceptualization as something people *have* so that cultures are understood as "second natures" (Taguieff, 1989,

pp. 76-77). Such approach contributes to define culture as a homogenous and stable entity, which in turn allows to categorize and describe individuals based on those fixed attributes. In his account of color-blind racism in the United States, Bonilla-Silva (2006) presents *cultural racism* as one of the four main frames of post-racial discourses of racism. In line with other studies on cultural racism, Bonilla-Silva (2006) argues that it has become both more common and more effective than racially-based racism. In Europe as well, cultural racism has been identified as a powerful element of racist discourse articulated around two main elements; the idea that (1) "Europeans are not *racially*, but *culturally* superior", which is supported by (2) the "constructions of the nation as a bounded *cultural* entity" (Wren, 2001, p. 143). The role played by national culture highlights the importance of exploring discourses contributing to the construction of the nation as an *imagined community* in which members share common practices, values, identities and ultimately a same culture (Anderson, 1991).

Schools constitute a relevant venue for investigating nationally-oriented discourses since one of their missions is to transform pupils into citizens through the construction and legitimation of national culture and identity (Bourdieu, 1994). Previous studies have explored ways through which racism can operate in school settings. In her study of everyday racism in the Netherlands, Essed (1991) highlights the insidious separation of black and white pupils between schools, the underrepresentation of black teachers besides ethnic activities and institutionalized forms of racism that appear, for instance, in textbooks. Further research has drawn attention to the way inequalities and stereotypes can be sustained by educational systems that overlook – or misunderstand – the importance of everyday racism and the pitfalls of using culture instead (Dovermark, 2013, Kundnani, 2004). Numerous studies have pointed out limits inherent to the materials used by teachers. Gulliver (2011) casts light on the pervasive use of national symbols in English as a Second Language (ESL) textbooks in Canada. Such illustration of "banal nationalism" (Billig, 1995) highlights ways in which school books contribute to construct the nation and reinforce its legitimacy as the primary source of identification. Exploring different textbooks used in Finland, Hahl, Niemi, Johnson Longfor and Dervin (2015) offer insights into representations of *Finnishness*, "us" and "them", as well as the concept of the "West". This chapter contributes to this body of literature and sets out to bridge the gap between theoretical insights and practical implementations by discussing concrete ways in which to address culture in class without the spectre of racism. Critical intercultural communication research brings insights into this topic by questioning the very use of culture. This issue is discussed in the next subchapter.

Critical Intercultural Communication approach

The pervasive use of culture and the shift in racist discourses where *culture* is the main discursive tool to discriminate highlight the urgency to investigate "who makes culture relevant to whom in which context for which purposes" (Piller, 2011, p. 174). As opposed to essentialist approaches which underpin cultural racism, critical intercultural communication is informed by social-constructionism, post-structuralism and postmodernism. All three philosophical traditions shed light on culture as (1) something people *do* (and not something people *have*) and (2) a socially and discursively constructed concept (3) which is permeated by power (Dervin, 2011; Halualani, Mendoza, & Drzewiecka, 2009; Piller, 2012). Contrarily to essentialist views which conceptualize culture as an abstract fixed notion, constructionist views focus on local productions of culture. This level of inquiry sheds light on *liquid* practices and highlights ways in which individuals' experiences can be varied and volatile rather than static and predictable (Dervin, 2011). This approach therefore urges researchers to explore ways in which culture can be performed by individuals and mobilized as a discursive and interactional resource. Investigating productions of culture also draws attention to the interplay between local and global dynamics, present and past discourses and associated power structures. Such approach helps move pass the assumption that culture is an unproblematic and logical explanation of how individuals behave. On the contrary, critical scholars inspire to examine how and why culture is typically conceived of as the answer. That is, culture is regarded as raising questions rather than providing answers.

The emphasis put on culture being a construction enables critical intercultural communication scholars to "shift from reified and inescapable notions of cultural difference to a focus on discourses where 'culture' is actually made relevant and used as a communicative resource" (Piller, 2012, p. 14). Focusing on the construction of culture underlines tensions related to the representation of culture as normal and natural (Sommier, 2014). Particular attention has been paid to the recurrent and unproblematized association of culture and nation which sustains status-quo and associated privileges (Halualani, Mendoza, & Drzewiecka, 2009). Questions are raised such as "Who ultimately has the power/privilege/right to define and reproduce 'culture'?" or "Who benefits from the creation of 'culture'?" (Halualani, 1998, p. 267). This hints at the emphasis put on exploring *discourses* of culture and discourses in which culture is made relevant. A discursive approach starts from the premise that "culture is not a real thing but an abstract and purely analytical notion. It does not cause behavior, but summarizes an abstraction from it and is thus neither normative nor predictive." (Baumann, 1996, p.11). Building on such assumption enables to investigate the power structures, tensions

and struggles that permeate culture and that are reproduced through its usage. The *critical cosmopolitanism* approach developed by Holliday (2011) is a useful framework to understand the ideological underpinnings of culture. It highlights the normalization of some cultural representations and their positioning at the center of a global order, while other cultural realities are overlooked and marginalized. Critical cosmopolitanism ties intercultural communication together with other prominent theories about the construction of peripheries (Bhabha, 2004; Hall, 1998), critical approaches to the notions of race and culture (Delanty, Wodak, & Jones, 2008) and research in critical pedagogy and critical multicultural education (Holm & Londen, 2010; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). These different research traditions all endeavor to deconstruct taken-for-granted representations of culture and identity that sustain status-quo. Investigating power dynamics in schools and educational texts enables to address tensions circulating at large within society in order to tackle deep-rooted structural issues and trigger change. Informed by these different strands of critical research, this chapter focuses on the concept of culture and its use in order to develop anti-racism education in Finland.

The Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education[2]

Finland is currently going through a major school reform in the form of a new national core curriculum which will be implemented in August 2016. The curriculum sets objectives and content to each school subjects and defines the general concept of learning. In addition, the curriculum describes seven broad-based competencies that should be taken into account across subjects and throughout the whole 9-year comprehensive school. The broad-based competencies derive from the current societal situation and aim to answer the challenges of the future. One of the broad-based competencies is called *cultural competence, interaction and expression*. According to it, "pupils are brought up to a world that is culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse". Pupils are expected to "familiarize with and appreciate the cultural heritage of their own environment". They are also encouraged to "recognize cultural diversity and see it as a positive resource". The curriculum urges pupils to recognize "how cultures, religions and different views affect the society and its everyday live, how media shapes culture and to ponder upon what issues are not acceptable against human rights" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 21). Besides the broad-based competence of *cultural competence, interaction and expression*, some subjects discuss cultural issues more explicitly than others.

[2] The references to the FNCCBE (2004) are based on the official English translation by the Finnish National Board of Education. The translations of the FNCCBE (2014) are done by the authors as the official ones are not yet accessible.

For instance, religion, history and foreign languages tackle the issues of culture and tolerance in their core content and objectives.

In this chapter we discuss the notion of cultural competence as an overarching theme. We also focus on its implications in foreign language education and introduce practical ways in which culture could be addressed and discussed when teaching English as a foreign language. The curriculum objectives of the foreign languages are divided into three main categories which are (1) *growth into cultural diversity and language awareness*, (2) *language learning strategies* and (3) *language skills*. The first category contains issues such as "guiding pupils to perceive the linguistic and cultural richness of the near environment and the world and to motivate pupils to appreciate their own and others' language and culture backgrounds and to encounter people with no preconceptions." (Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 219)

Overall, the new curriculum therefore seems to present a less essentialist-embedded approach to culture than the previous curriculum (Finnish National Board of Education, 2004). A relevant illustration can be seen in the shift between emphasizing the "essence of the Finnish and European cultural identities" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2004, p. 37), to making pupils familiar with their close cultural environment and its diversity (Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 21). The new curriculum places more emphasis on the diversity of national culture as well as contextual experiences of it. This discourse helps move away from fixed and reified views of culture as a homogenous pre-existing entity and instead supports ideas about multifaceted and constantly changing practices. This shift suggests a transition from explicitly essentialist approach where culture is something people *have*, to constructionist discourses which understand culture as something people *do*. However, the new FNCCBE could be perceived as an example of neo-essentialist discourse in which "national culture remains the basic unit" and "diversity is the exception to the rule" (Holliday, 2011, p. 14). The curriculum also maintains the validity of comparing "our" and "their" cultures. More importantly, the new curriculum does not question the concept of culture and its salience, therefore using it as an unproblematic category. The absence of attention paid to the pervasive use of culture in official texts has been criticized for de facto institutionalizing a depoliticized approach to culture. Several critiques have argued that the institutionalization of culture as a normal and neutral category lays the foundation for cultural racism (Kundnani, 2004; Lentin, 2004).

We argue that despite limitations, the new FNCCBE provides a good outlook for anti-racism education by going beyond homogenous essentialist views of culture. Capitalizing on

this shift in official discourse is important in order to enhance anti-cultural racism practices and awareness. A critical intercultural communication approach – and the intercultural awareness that grows from it – is a relevant tool since it allows to tackle culture in its political form and usage by questioning reasons why culture is so prevalent and scrutinizing ways in which it is used in discourses circulating throughout society.

Similarly to the notion of overarching cultural competence in the new FNCCBE, discourses of culture and in which culture is made relevant occur across subjects. For this reason, this chapter emphasizes the need to consider anti-racism education from a holistic perspective by making adjustments in teaching situations where culture is brought up. This chapter thus argues that anti-racism at school is better conveyed through small steps and practices rather than the implementation of a large program that would be more tedious and intricate to apply, and would potentially uncouple racism from existing teaching practices and contents. Throughout this discussion part, we will introduce aspects that need to be taken into account. Specifically, issues of language use, figures of the native speaker and national references are tackled hereafter. Those issues relate to the broader topic of intercultural communication competence, both at teacher- and student-levels.

Step 1: Intercultural communication competence

In this chapter, the concept of intercultural communication competence is discussed from a critical approach which enables to depict a full picture by addressing the dynamics between individual features and societal forces (Dervin, 2010; Martin & Nakayama, 2015). Competence models emphasizing individual aspects typically revolve around the three main components of *affect*¸ *knowledge* and *behavior* (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). These models can be adapted to underline intercultural interactions as embedded in immediate and larger contextual forces. Within educational contexts, this means developing pupils' knowledge and attitude not towards culture but towards the way culture is utilized and made relevant. It also hints at raising pupils' willingness to go beyond ready-made, homogenizing and reducing representations embedded in widely circulated discourses. This approach to competence places emphasis on the construction and contingency of meanings by teaching pupils to *examine what is said* rather than teaching pupils *what is said*.

Growing awareness of the way culture is utilized is central to developing intercultural communication competence and anti-racism education. Another key aspect lies in the attention paid to and attitudes towards *differences* and *similarities*. Oftentimes in school subjects where culture is made relevant (especially history, religion, language) *differences* tend to be pointed

out first and foremost, which in turn teaches pupils to notice and pay attention to them. This reinforces *cultural differentialism* informed by essentialism which supposes that differences are inherently cultural and an appropriate way to understand others (Dervin, 2010). Focusing on similarities is a relevant strategy to diminish the salience given to differences in culturalist discourses. Placing emphasis on similarities enables to move pass the assumption that culture automatically creates gaps between individuals. It also gives pupils the opportunity to grow awareness of how similarities, as well as differences, are constructed and performed. Ultimately, this orients pupils to detect similarities and actively build bridges that are relevant to their interactions and personal situations, rather than being subjected to ready-made discourses. Casting the light on differences and similarities as artificial is also a cornerstone element to go beyond representations of difference as *natural* and *inevitable* and instead encourage pupils to focus on the construction, ascription and utilization of *cultural differences* (Titley, 2004).

In general, the way difference is conceptualized and connoted is very important to reflect on. Intercultural competence recommends focusing on similarities in interaction but it is equally important not to overlook and prejudice against differences. As argued by Xu (2013, p. 394):

> Difference is not the problem for communication; the problem is the attitude of the interlocutor toward difference and the other – negative or positive, complaining or appreciative.

From an anti-racism point of view, being able to positively deal with differences is very important in order not to reproduce what has happened with race-oriented discourses of racism. The scientific proofs that race is not a biological reality has been used to support anti-racism but it has also given room to the more insidious and politically-correct form of cultural racism. Dismissing culture and cultural differences because they are social constructs may not prevent cultural racism but may on the contrary contribute to the emergence of new racist patterns and strategies. Addressing differences and not making a taboo out of them is a very significant aspect of anti-racism education. As Abdallah-Pretceille and Porcher (2005) point out, for intercultural education to be beneficial it must take into account both similarities and differences and cannot overlook either one of them. It is also primordial to introduce pupils to the reasons behind differences by pointing out situational, economic, political, religious or historical factors behind practices and customs. Even with young learners, this is possible to achieve since it affects aspects of every day-life. One can for instance discuss agricultural and economic reasons behind the food people eat, climate issues behind particular clothing,

infrastructures and migration as well as historical and colonial reasons behind sport practices and hobbies (e.g. cricket in India, football in Brazil). Explaining reasons why practices differ within and between countries can provide a mirror image of one's own practices and reasons behind them. Exploring the way practices are constructed can help understand difference as a relational, and not absolute, construct. It can open pupils' eyes to how their own practices can seem *odd* for newcomers so that the implicit hierarchy of "our" culture being *normal* and *better* and "their" culture being *odd* and *less valuable* is dismissed.

Step 2: Language & Culture

Language use and language teaching are particularly relevant to examine in relation to anti-racism because of the hierarchies between groups of individuals that they implicitly assume. For instance, according to Kachru's (1985/2006) concept of "circles of world Englishes", the inner circle countries (i.e. United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New-Zealand) provide the norms for language use which speakers from other countries (i.e. outer and expanding circles) follow. This hierarchy can affect representations of individuals among "native" as well as between "native" and "non-native" speakers. Those different statuses have to do with the intersection between linguistic skills, stereotypes and the pervasive assumption that monolingualism and monoculturalism are the norm and diversity the exception.

The prevalence of homogenous language use can appear through the type of accents presented to pupils in language classes. For instance, English teaching audio materials tend to follow what is labelled as "standard" English (i.e. British and American) pronunciation, grammar and syntax. The use of uniform audio material sustains the supremacy of British and American English as "normal" ways of speaking English, while limiting pupils' understanding of the scope of varieties of English used and spoken worldwide. In order to prepare pupils for authentic *cosmopolitan realities* teachers should provide them with examples of various *Englishes* relevant to current glocalized times (Holliday, 2009; Pennycook, 2007). Teachers should more systematically introduce pupils to a wide variety of accents and organize communicative situations where those different varieties are used. Some teaching materials already acknowledge the different types of Englishes and for instance introduce pupils to different countries and the way English is spoken there. However, in the case of Finland, such practices tend to remain minor (Kopperoinen, 2011). This maintains a distorted representation of the state of the global English community, so that the English spoken in former British colonies (e.g. India, Nigeria, Jamaica, South Africa) is marginalized and English spoken in politically powerful states (e.g. U.K., U.S., Australia, Canada) is used as the norm.

In addition to different types of first-language English speakers, it is important for pupils to become familiar with different varieties of foreign-language Englishes. As the proportion of users of English as a Foreign Language is globally increasing, the typically imagined communicative situation involving a "native" and a "non-native" speaker is likely to become less common than that of two language learners talking together (Graddol, 2006). It would therefore be greatly beneficial to maximize interactions with visitors whose first language is not English. Otherwise, teachers can rely on recorded materials which are widely available for instance from the Internet.

Introducing pupils to a variety of accents can contribute to anti-racism on several aspects. First, exposing pupils to a large variety of Englishes help them become aware of and appreciate differences, so that *different* does not mean *deviant*. Second, it helps both teachers and pupils go past the model of the "native speaker". Literature on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has criticized the concept of the "native speaker" because of the unattainable goal it sets for learners of a foreign language (Cook, 1999; Kramsch, 1997). Other scholars have pointed out the ideological tensions embedded in the figure of the "native speaker" because of the dominant and unchallenged position it holds among all speakers (Holliday, 2006). Representations of "native speakers" have strong intercultural implications also because of the stereotypes they convey. Holliday (2009, p. 25) argues:

> There is growing evidence that the populist notion of 'native speaker' is connected with the 'white Anglo-Saxon' image of people who come from the English speaking West, and that 'non-native speaker' educators are excluded from 'native speaker' status because they do not fall neatly into this image.

When it comes to English, challenging the homogenous views of who native speakers are is crucial given the width and plurality of the global English speaking community. Using different models of English speech, vocabulary, syntax and grammar can encourage pupils to appropriate the language and grow into responsive language users who can adapt their language use based on the context and features of the interaction instead of growing to reproduce fixed instances of an ideal "native speaker".

Step 3: Nation & Culture

The emphasis placed on dominant national culture is visible in English language teaching as the main textbooks used in Finland mostly discuss the mainstream cultures of the U.K. and the U.S. Often the stories and images revolve around stereotypical families and practices as opposed to presenting different facets of national cultures. Examples of banal nationalism in

textbooks are intertwined with the role played by schools in the construction of citizens belonging to a national imagined community. The covert construction of the nation as a normal and natural basis for individuals' practices and identifications impedes anti-racism education. Banal nationalism maintains homogenous representations of the nation, thus sustaining dominant practices as the norm and reproducing existing hierarchical relations within the society (Billig, 1995). Banal nationalism therefore functions as a powerful tool to maintain unproblematized views of culture, cultural practices and cultural differences. Teachers should be aware of the ways banal nationalism can permeate representations proposed in textbooks in order to be able to question them and provide alternative materials that show more multifaceted aspects of national cultures.

One common activity in English teaching is giving pupils "native" English names. Typically, the names are very traditional and sustain dominant views of the national imagined community. For instance, names like Ibrahim and Muhammad for boys or Nur and Maryam for girls are scarcely used despite their growing popularity. Muhammad was for instance in the top 20 list of names given in England and Wales in 2014, and was the most popular name when taking into account the different spellings (i.e. Muhammad, Mohammed, Mohammad) (Office for National Statistics, 2015). Similarly to accents previously mentioned, the name activity reflects double-edged inequality. At the global level, using names emanating mostly from the U.K. and U.S. reproduces biased ideas of who global users of English are. At the U.K.- and U.S.-levels, those names maintain distorted views of the national community. In Finland, two of the most used EFL textbooks (i.e. "Wow!" & "Let's go!") which propose this activity also provide a list of very traditional names such as Jack, Charles, Adam, Caroline, Allison or Fiona. On this issue as well, ready-made materials maintain status-quo and push teachers to reproduce dominant existing views.

The prominence of the nation as the cultural system can be challenged by discussing differences and similarities not only between but also among countries. Finnish schools provide opportunities to focus on diversity within the country as there are almost no private schools and most children, including refugees, attend their nearest school. There are, however, separate preparatory classes for refugees in Finland which pupils usually attend for one academic year. It is important that these classes are not separated from the school community but rather brought together with other pupils by participating in common projects and activities. This is especially important given that preparatory classes have drastically increased in Finnish schools in 2015. In addition, schools can have visitors from local organizations and do cooperation with local reception centers.

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Another practical way of deconstructing the prominence of the nation as the main cultural system is to talk about the different and similar ways of celebrating the same holiday between families, for instance regarding food and clothing. Examining differences within countries can help pupils realize that diversity surrounds us and that "we" are plural. It is important to emphasize that different ways of doing are equally valuable and make them realize that all practices are social constructions negotiated within communities (whether it is at the family-, regional-, national- or online-level) and that there is nothing absolute or natural. Making pupils aware of the way practices are negotiated at different levels is an important step to recognize knowledge in general as constructed and situated. In classrooms with pupils from different nationalities one could have a calendar in which different-level celebrations (e.g. national holidays as well as individuals' birthdays) are shown together and can be used for discussions. That can provide opportunities to talk about differences as well as similarities, and discuss reasons behind them. A key element when presenting different celebrations is to engage all pupils and orient the discussion around the analysis of cultural practices being equally artificial and not fall back into the pattern of comparing "our normal habits" with "their odd customs".

Because of the unclear distinction between *race* and *ethnicity*, previous studies (Kundnani, 2004; Pyke & Dang, 2003) have shown pitfalls of focusing merely on "ethnic" customs which tend to reproduce stereotypical views of culture. Especially when drawing attention to differences, the emphasis put on ethnic practices tends to build on essentialist views of culture as a homogenous entity and on exotic representations of the "Other". Said's (1978) discussion of *Orientalism* casts light on the construction of Asian and Middle Eastern people in European discourses as inferior, retrograde and exotic. These discourses have been used to support colonialism and keep nourishing racist discourses (Ware, 2015). One way of overcoming the exotic appeal of differences is to, once again, present different practices and customs in classes where pupils are from the same country and where instances of regional or linguistic differences can be explored. This contributes to making pupils aware of existing differences within the same nation and of the importance of respecting one another's practices regardless of the level at which differences occur. Furthermore, this emphasizes the importance of considering interaction as occurring between *individuals* and not *cultures*.

Kundnani (2004, p. 107) points out potential counter effects of emphasizing "ethnic minority culture" as it can give pupils from dominant groups the impression of having no culture and being discriminated. Exploring differences within the same country can contribute to make taken-for-granted practices visible so that pupils from majority groups, whose cultural

practices tend to be invisible, become aware of their own situatedness. Ultimately, this can break down hierarchical assumptions about the *exotic cultural other* and the *normal a-cultural us*. The emphasis, or absence thereof, on some nations or practices relates back to prestige associated with certain identities, countries or cultures. This illustrates how permeated with power culture is and how referring to culture is never as innocent and unproblematic at it may seem.

By going beyond fixed homogenous representations of culture, anti-racism education ultimately presents identity from a liquid standpoint by drawing attention to the range of identifications available and ways in which they overlap. Discussions about identity capture the overall strategy of anti-racism education underpinned by critical intercultural communication. Identity, like the other key concepts of culture, difference and nation, is highlighted as a construction permeated with power. The emphasis is therefore placed on presenting them as contingent ideas and not established facts:

> Once we go from the façade of the "givenness," "naturalness," and "normality" of social and cultural identities to the historical processes that produced them, we begin to shift the ground of discussion from fixed reified notions of identity as a "thing," "given in nature" to processes of *production*, *naturalization*, and *normalization*. (Mendoza, Halualani, Drzewiecka, 2002, p. 316)

Going beyond the nation as the main unit and offering varied examples of linguistic practices are central aspects in developing pupils' awareness of identification as a performance that can go beyond existing categories and their immediate locality. Acknowledging and supporting the development of fluid identities is a key aspect to move past static categories based on assumptions of what "cultural diversity" entails. Holm and Londen (2010) point out the limitations of thinking only in terms of ethnicity, religion and language, as it dismisses other aspects such as gender, sexual preference, social class or disability and overlooks intersections between all these facets.

Presenting identities as constructions is especially important in education given its enculturation and socialization role and the overarching theme of identity across subjects. Language teaching is a prominent venue given the emphasis placed on linguistic communities and identities, but subjects such as history also have a role to play in presenting the construction of culture in the light of the conflicts and struggles that shaped (and keeps shaping) them. Ngũgĩ (1993, p. 28) powerfully reminds us that "Any study of cultures which ignores structures of domination and control and resistance within nations and between nations and races over the last four hundred years is in danger of giving a distorted picture".

Other issues to consider

There are several challenges that need to be taken account in anti-racism education. Firstly, teachers themselves might have a very stereotypical view of culture which can be conveyed in their teaching. Because culture is not often identified as an instance of racism, teachers who are not aware of it may reproduce such racist discourse by giving more prestige and visibility to some cultures. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to be aware of their own values and beliefs of race and culture. For instance, a study conducted about teacher students' perceptions of multiculturality by Jokisalo, Kukkonen and Simola (2009), sheds light on the discrepancy of people's values and practical actions. That is, the majority of the teacher students agreed with the statement that "it is important to talk about the different personality traits of different ethnic groups" (p. 207) even though this kind of discourse is considered highly racist. However, 92 percent of the teacher students agreed with the statement that "racist actions or discourse should always be interfered with" (p. 207). This conveys their willingness to take anti-racism seriously and highlights the need to develop future teachers' understanding of culture as a tool for racism.

Secondly, pupils may have constructed views of existing cultures which teachers have to overcome. That is, stereotypes are often appealing to pupils and intrigue them because they offer simple answer to complex questions. Pupils are also already accustomed to stereotypes, for instance through media exposure and family socialization. Therefore, teachers might have to push pupils out of their comfort zones and challenge their assumptions. For instance, referring to the example of foreign names provided earlier, pupils may be unwilling to choose non-stereotypical names and instead pick traditional and popular ones. To overcome this, teachers can for instance offer a list containing only non-stereotypical names.

There are also few practical challenges in implementing anti-racism education. First, school materials play an important role. Despite relevant improvements in the past years as regards gender roles and minority groups, important shortcomings remain. One issue is the prevalence of *culture* to address diversity, which, as this chapter shows, harms rather than serves anti-racism practices. The lack of relevant materials forces teachers to come up with their own resources. Taking upon such mission at the individual level requires a considerable amount of time. Compiling relevant anti-racism material that is ready to use and tailored to each discipline is a critical aspect to tackle in order to successfully implement anti-racism education. Second, even though Finland is becoming increasingly diverse, there are still very

homogenous areas and schools in terms of practices, social backgrounds and nationality, which makes it both crucial and challenging to address the issue of anti-racism education.

CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed anti-racism education from a cultural standpoint because of the increasing visibility of the ubiquitous concept of *culture* and its propensity to replace *race* in racist discourses. We looked at the new FNCCBE and how it talks about culture and linked it to education. We argued that anti-racism practices should be acknowledged across subjects through a series of small steps and presented three main aspects. First, we discussed intercultural communication competence and raised the importance of looking for similarities while positively addressing differences. Second, we talked about tensions embedded in language use and language teaching, related to homogenous examples of language use and the figure of the native speaker. Third, we raised issues related to the overlapping between nation and culture and emphasized the importance of going beyond the nation as the main and normalized unit to address practices and identities.

This chapter intended to bridge the gap between theory and practice by providing concrete examples in order to implement anti-racism education. However, some of these examples which are from the Finnish societal context might not be transferred to other contexts as such. In the future, it is important to keep developing concrete and approachable ways for teachers to deal with *culture* in class without reproducing racist discourses. In addition, it is necessary to produce better teaching materials and raise teacher students' awareness of intercultural competence and the pitfalls of culturalist discourses. Working teachers should also receive courses on anti-racism education so that it becomes an inherent part of every teacher's teaching philosophy.

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