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DIVERSE YET SIMILAR
English teachers' conceptions of multicultural teaching and pupils of
multicultural background

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Maahanmuuttajien määrä Suomessa on kasvanut viimeisten kahden vuosikymmenen aikana merkittävästi. Tämä on vaikuttanut myös suomalaisten koulujen väestörakenteeseen ja sitä kautta opettajien työhön. Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää, millaiset käsitykset yläkoulun englannin opettajilla on monikulttuurisesta opetuksesta ja maahanmuuttajaoppilaista ja miten he ovat selviytyneet opettajan arjesta monikielisessä luokkaympäristössä. Teoriataustan valossa tutkimuksessa haetaan vastauksia seuraaviin kysymyksiin: 1) Mitä englannin opettajat käsittävät termillä monikulttuurinen opetus? 2) Millaista englannin opettaminen heidän mielestään monikulttuurisessa luokkaympäristössä on? ja 3) Mitkä heidän käsityksensä maahanmuuttajataustaisista oppilaista ovat?

Tutkielman aineistoina on kahdeksan puolistrukturoitua teemahaastattelua. Haastateltavat ovat kaikenikäisiä yläkoulun englannin opettajia ja he opettavat kouluissa, joissa on suuri määrä maahanmuuttajataustaisia oppilaita. Haastattelut nauhoitettiin ja litteroitiin ja tämän jälkeen aineisto analysoitiin sisällönanalyysin periaatteita apuna käyttäen.

Tutkielman tulokset osoittavat, että opettajat ovat jo tottuneet maahanmuuttajataustaisiin oppilaisiin. Toisaalta opettajat kohtelevat monikielisiä oppilaitaan samalla tavalla kuin suomalaistaustaisiakin oppilaita eivätkä ota oppilaita millään erityistavalla huomioon. Heidän käsityksensä monikulttuurisen opetuksen peruseriaatteista ovat hatarat ja heidän mielestään paras ratkaisu on tarjota kaikille samanlaista opetusta, kielestä ja kulttuurista riippumatta. Opettajat ovat kokeneet maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden opettamisen haastavaksi ja oman tietopohjansa rajalliseksi jossain vaiheessa, mutta osa opettajista näki myös monikulttuurisen luokkaympäristön hyvät puolet ja piti erilaisten kulttuurien kohtaamista elämää rikastuttavana tekijänä. Englannin opetuksessa useimmat puhuvat suomea ja vaikka he tietävät sen, että mahdollisesti osa oppilaista ei ymmärrä suomenkielistä opetusta, he eivät usko englannin käytön tarjoavan tähän ratkaisua. Rakenteiden opettaminen ja maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden puutteelliset suomen kielen taidot koetaan suurimmiksi haasteiksi monikielisten oppilaiden kieltenopetuksessa.

Tutkielman tuloksista voidaan päätellä, että opettajat eivät tiedä, mitä monikulttuurinen opetus pitää sisällään, koska he eivät ole saaneet tarvittavaa koulutusta siihen, ja siksi he eivät osaa tukea maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden oppimista riittävästi. Monikulttuurinen opetus pitäisi ottaa selkeämmin osaksi Suomen opettajankoulutusta. Tämä tukisi sekä oppilaiden että opettajien henkistä hyvinvointia ja oppimista 2000-luvun muuttuvassa Suomessa.

Asiasanat: Multicultural teaching. middle school English teachers. immigrant pupils. teachers' conceptions. interview. qualitative research. content analysis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	5
2 IMMIGRANT PUPILS IN FINLAND	6
2.1 Immigration in Finland	7
2.2 Pupils of multicultural background in Finnish schools and classrooms	8
3 MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND TEACHING	10
3.1 Definitions and origins of multicultural education and teaching	10
3.2 Main principles of multicultural education	11
3.3 Culturally responsive teaching: the teacher's role	14
3.3.1 Equal expectations	14
3.3.2 Pupil-teacher relationship	16
3.3.3 Pupil at the centre of the learning process	18
3.4 Multiculturalism in teacher education	20
4 TEACHERS' MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE	23
4.1 Defining multicultural competence	23
4.2 Identity and the concept of otherness in multicultural teaching	25
4.2.1 Professional identity and the importance of reflection	25
4.2.2 Otherness and coming to terms with it	28
4.3 Towards multicultural competence	31
5 LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN MULTICULTURAL TEACHING	34
5.1 Bi- and multilingual education: teaching language minority pupils	34
5.2 Immigrant pupils and Finnish	37
5.3 Foreign language learning and pupils of multicultural background	40
6 PREVIOUS STUDIES	43
6.1 Different types of multicultural teachers	43
6.2 Teachers' values, attitudes and beliefs concerning immigrant pupils	47
7 DATA AND METHODOLOGY	52
7.1 Aim of the study	52
7.2 Methodology	53
7.2.1 Choice of research method	53
7.2.2 Participants of the study	56
7.2.3 Interview	57
7.3 Analysis	58
7.3.1 Content analysis	58
7.3.2 Transcribing and analyzing the data of the present study	59
8 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: ENGLISH TEACHERS AND MULTICULTURAL TEACHING	60
8.1 Teachers' background and their knowledge of their pupils	60
8.1.1 Work experience	61
8.1.2 Teachers' knowledge of their pupils and its effect on attitudes	63
8.2 Multicultural teaching according to English teachers	67
8.3 Teacher education and developing one's professional expertise	70

8.4 Teachers' multicultural competence	73
9 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: TEACHING ENGLISH TO PUPILS OF MULTICULTURAL BACKGROUND	76
9.1 Language skills in Finnish and English	76
9.2 Teaching English	80
9.2.1 The language used in the classroom and its implications	81
9.2.2 Techniques used by teachers to facilitate learning among immigrant pupils	84
9.2.3 Challenges in teaching English in a multicultural classroom	86
9.2.4 The positive aspects of teaching English to pupils of diverse backgrounds	89
9.3 Cultural values and attitudes in teaching English	91
10 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: ENGLISH TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF PUPILS OF MULTICULTURAL BACKGROUND	96
10.1 The advantages of teaching a multicultural class	96
10.2 Descriptions of pupils of multicultural background	98
11 CONCLUSION	103
BIBLIOGRAPHY	108
APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	112
APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLES OF THE TRANSCRIBED DATA	114

1 INTRODUCTION

Finnish society is undergoing a demographic change that begun in the beginning of 1990s and has only accelerated since the turn of the millennium. Diversity in society has increased and the number of immigrants has augmented rapidly during the past two decades. In addition, a new generation of young people of immigrant background are being born and raised in Finland, thus changing the previously homogeneous communities, particularly in southern Finland and in the capital region. According to the Finnish Immigration Service (2008), at the end of the year 2008, 143 197 people of foreign background were permanently living in Finland while the number in 1990 was still 26 300. The increase in the number of immigrants is naturally reflected in Finnish schools where teachers are dealing with the different aspects teaching more heterogeneous groups involves. The present study has risen out of questions such as whether teachers are equipped and prepared to the face the challenges multicultural teaching consists of and how these teachers, the majority of which are of Finnish background, have reacted to the changing situation. There is one certainty to all of this – immigrant pupils are becoming a rule more than an exception in Finnish schools and schools and teachers alike can no longer ignore the diversity in classrooms.

Immigration and multicultural education have been studied in foreign contexts (e.g. Gay 2002, Gollnick and Chinn 2009) more profoundly, particularly in the American context where diversity has been an issue schools have had to take into consideration from the start. Even if in many American schools pupils are often divided into different schools based on their socioeconomic background, which in turn correlates with ethnicity and race, these issues have nevertheless been on the table already for decades whereas Finnish schools are now, after two decades of increasing immigration, finally waking up to the reality where they must adapt to the situation. Teachers are of paramount importance when it comes to changing the system from the bottom up and as far as implementing multicultural education into everyday teaching is concerned, a profound transformation of the value system in schools is needed.

The purpose of the present study is to shed some light on the conceptions English teachers have of multicultural teaching and pupils of multicultural background and how they have taken the issue into account – that is if they have taken it into account in any way. Particular attention will be paid on what the teaching of English in a Finnish

classroom requires from the teacher when the pupils have several native tongues. Previous studies (Matinheikki-Kokko 1999, Miettinen 2001, Talib 2000; 2002; 2005; 2006) conducted in the Finnish context have focused mainly on elementary school teachers, at the expense of subject teachers in middle and high schools. Particularly language teachers have been neglected in research on multicultural teaching, which is strange in fact, considering the fact that teaching a foreign language through a language that is more than often another foreign language to immigrant pupils poses an obvious dilemma for language teachers across the country. Thus, there is a justified need for the present study.

This is a qualitative study and the data consist of semi-structured interviews provided by eight middle school (yläkoulu in the Finnish school system) English teachers in the capital region and in Jyväskylä, Central Finland. The data were transcribed and analyzed based on the principles of content analysis. Chapter 7 will provide a full account on the choice of methodology, the data collection process and the analysis of the transcribed data. Prior to that, the theoretical framework will firstly discuss the status of immigrant pupils in Finland, secondly progressing to outline the principles of multicultural education and teaching and then moving on to define what is meant by teachers' multicultural competence. The two final chapters of the theoretical section will explore in more detail the linguistic aspects of multicultural education in addition to introducing the results of previous studies conducted on teachers' conceptions of diversity in the classroom. Chapters 8, 9 and 10 will focus on reporting the results, providing at the same time analysis and interpretation of the results. Since this is a qualitative study and the results will rise from the transcribed data, a choice has been made to report the findings and discuss them in same sections, thus making the chapters differ in theme, not in form. The final chapter will conclude the study by evaluating the merits and the limitations of the study as well as the validity and reliability of the study. The conclusion will also provide suggestions for further research.

2 IMMIGRANT PUPILS IN FINLAND

Immigration has become an everyday phenomenon in Finnish society during the past fifteen years and as a result, there are more immigrant pupils in Finnish classrooms at the moment than ever before. This chapter will start off by discussing immigration in

Finland from a more general perspective and after that, immigrant pupils and their status in Finnish schools will be examined in more detail. This section will also provide definitions for the terminology used throughout the study, thus explaining which terms have been chosen and why. Multiculturalism is here to stay and that will put the Finnish education system to a test. It remains to be seen how these issues will be dealt with in the future.

2.1 Immigration in Finland

About 143 000 people of foreign background live in Finland at the moment (Laaksola 2009: 3) and a half of them live in the Helsinki area. There has been a strong increase in the number of immigrants during the past fifteen years and today three percent of the entire population of Finland is registered to be of foreign background. In reality this number is even higher since some immigrants have already been granted Finnish citizenship. Even though Finland is still one of the most homogeneous countries in Western Europe, the change in the demographics has been rapid, particularly in the capital region. This naturally affects schools and today eleven percent of all pupils in schools in Helsinki are of foreign background – this number having been six percent seven years ago (Laaksola 2009: 3). There are already existing signs of regionalization in that most immigrants living in Helsinki live in the eastern parts of the city. There are schools in eastern Helsinki where 20-30 percent of the pupils speak some other language than Finnish or Swedish as their mother tongue, and this percentage is still growing. It is thus an undeniable fact that multiculturalism is becoming, and has already become in some parts of the country, an everyday phenomenon. Changes in society are always reflected in schools and Finnish schools are now facing a challenge that needs to be addressed, not only in the administrative level but particularly by teachers who are responsible for the everyday work that takes place in the classroom.

Since the present study focuses on pupils who are of foreign background, the term that will be used throughout the study is *a pupil of multicultural background*. It therefore includes pupils who were born in Finland but whose mother tongue is not Finnish or Swedish. Most of these pupils are immigrants' children and their parents have come to the country as refugees, asylum seekers or migrants in order to stay in Finland permanently (Miettinen 2001: 12). Some of these pupils might not have been born in Finland in which case they could be described as immigrants but since the individual

history of each pupil with a foreign background varies, the umbrella term for all of them is *a pupil of multicultural background*. Whenever the term *immigrant pupil* is used, it is used to refer to pupils who were not born in Finland. One common factor for all of these children is the different language and cultural traditions of the home environment compared to mainstream Finnish culture. The main minority groups in Finland include Russians, Estonians, Swedes and Somalians. According to the Finnish Statistical Office (Tilastokeskus 2008), the largest foreign groups were those who speak Russian (48 740), Estonian (22 357), English (11 344) and Somali (10 647) as their mother tongue. It is therefore to be expected that these are the major minority groups also in Finnish schools. However, diversity is the word one could use to describe immigrants all around the world and this is also true of Finland. Even though Russians, Estonians and Somalians might be the largest minority groups, variation from school to school and from region to region is bound to occur. It is precisely this variation that makes multicultural teaching unique and demanding at the same time.

2.2 Pupils of multicultural background in Finnish schools and classrooms

As far as teaching pupils of multicultural background is concerned, the Finnish school system has focused on integration: after a year of preparatory studies the emphasis of which is particularly on learning Finnish, these pupils are integrated into regular classes (Miettinen 2001: 15). The focus has been on cultural equality – all pupils, regardless of their language or ethnic background, should have the same possibilities to survive independently in Finnish society after the years of obligatory schooling. Even though all cultures are considered to be equal and pupils of multicultural background are encouraged to take pride in their native language and culture, the idea of integration is to prepare these pupils to face the challenges of Finnish society and to be able to provide for themselves in this context after comprehensive education (Miettinen 2001: 15). Whether equal opportunities for further education or employment are the same for all pupils in reality is a debatable matter but even more importantly, it is crucial to acknowledge that integration does not mean that pupils of multicultural background automatically become Finnish during the process of preparatory studies. Particularly pupils who were born in a different country and come from various cultural backgrounds need specific guidance and bring their own culture to the classroom as well. This is something that teachers have to take into account and adapt to in their own teaching.

When an immigrant pupil enters a Finnish classroom, he or she has already had to experience more than most Finnish pupils, including moving to a new country and starting from the beginning both in terms of culture and language. Some of these pupils have also survived atrocities in their home country and carry the emotional scars with them for the rest of their lives (Talib 2002: 52). Teachers are faced with a new challenge and have to remember that cultural and language-related conflicts are almost inevitable but that does not necessarily have to be something negative. Despite all odds, immigrant pupils are resilient and the way they are taken as part of the class community has an enormous effect on their motivation (Talib 2002: 53). Talib (2000: 81) lists all the factors that facilitate the immigrant pupil's adaptation process to the new surroundings: firstly, if the move has been voluntary, the attitudes towards the new culture are naturally better and the pupil is more eager to take advantage of all the opportunities the new country has to offer. Secondly, if the pupil has a positive collective identity, i.e. the pupil feels that he or she is part of a group, both at school and at home, they are more likely to succeed at school. Thirdly, it is easier to be motivated if education in general is appreciated in the culture where the pupil comes from, and fourthly, if the pupil has adult role models. The family has an important role to play here: if the immigrant pupil sees that someone in the community is working and appreciates it, it serves as a model to the adolescent pupil who is not yet sure of how to react to the changed situation. According to Talib (2000: 81; 2002: 54-55), the most important facilitating factor is, however, a strong sense of a particular culture identity among the family. It thus seems that a conflict-free and equal combination of two cultures is the most successful way to motivate pupils of multicultural background and that way promote their learning and further success in society.

Despite the fact that integration might be the right way to help in the adjustment to Finnish society, teachers should also emphasize the importance of minority pupils' cultural heritage and encourage them to be proud of their roots (Talib 2002: 48). This message should also be conveyed to immigrant families, either via school or in society in general since it seems to be of paramount importance that immigrant families cherish their cultural traditions. According to Peltonen (1998: 14), the Finnish policy in multicultural education has not been able to come up with any long-term solutions; there seems to be a common misconception that immigrant pupils would after one year of preparatory studies be ready to attend Finnish classes in all subjects and be able to fully understand all teaching. Peltonen (1998: 14) states that this is an obvious result of the

way the immigrant issue has been dealt with at the political level: there is a clear lack of a long-range and systematic immigration policy in Finland and governmental institutions such as schools can no longer ignore the existence of people of different cultural backgrounds in the Finnish society. Schools are suitable for forming the foundation for a change that has to take place in this society if it is desired that immigrants feel welcomed and appreciated as part of a contemporary society and not as if they were second-class citizens. Multiculturalism and the principles of multicultural education should become the norm in Finnish schools, not something extra that will be taken into the school agenda if nothing more important comes in the way.

3 MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND TEACHING

This chapter focuses on multicultural education in all its forms: firstly the main terms used in the study, such as multicultural education and multicultural teaching will be defined and the principles of multicultural education will be outlined. Secondly, one specific theory of multicultural education will be discussed in further detail; namely culturally responsive teaching from the point of view of the teacher. The teacher has an important role to play in implementing multicultural principles in classrooms and culturally responsive teaching has a certain set of guidelines any teacher is able to follow, regardless of the subject he or she teaches. Issues such as the importance of equal expectations, creating an efficient and caring pupil-teacher relationship and putting the pupil in charge of his or her own learning will be discussed in relation to culturally responsive teaching. The fourth section in this chapter puts emphasis on future teachers, particularly at Finnish universities. Teacher education will be viewed from the point of view of how well it prepares future teachers for the realities of school life and what modifications could be done for it to better serve the needs of teachers who will need multicultural knowledge in their work.

3.1 Definitions and origins of multicultural education and teaching

Multicultural education has its roots in the civil rights movement which took place particularly in the United States during the 1960s and in the development of ethnic studies which developed at the same time (Gollnick and Chinn 2009: 5). However, the ideas of multicultural education have existed since the 1920s when the first articles

involving intercultural education and ethnic studies were published. At first, the emphasis was on racial and ethnic inequality and the purpose of these ethnic studies was to teach minority groups about diversity and the history of oppressed groups across the United States. Fairly soon professors at colleges and universities realized that the change would have to start within the dominant group, i.e. the white Anglo-Saxons and *multiethnic education* became part of college curricula for all students (Gollnick and Chinn 2009: 6). Amidst the turmoil of the civil rights movement, other groups that were victims of institutional discrimination, such as women, the elderly, persons with disabilities and religious and sexual minorities started to stipulate their rights and thus the term *multicultural education* was expanded to include education which focuses on all minority groups.

In addition to multicultural education, *intercultural education* is a popular term used to describe education which focuses on minorities. These terms are basically interchangeable with a slight difference in emphasis. *Intercultural education* seems to be more demanding in its definition: it stresses the interaction that takes place between people from different cultural groups and therefore mutual understanding and tolerance are to be expected in order for it to succeed (Määttä 2008: 9). According to Talib (2006: 141), one goal of intercultural education is to teach people about multiculturalism also in countries which are culturally fairly homogeneous. Thus, this would seem like a suitable term for the Finnish context despite the fact that Talib (2006: 141) claims that *intercultural education* is the term preferred in Europe whereas *multicultural education* is mainly used in Northern America. Since multicultural education seems to be the most commonly used term in all literature, both European and American, it will also be the term used in the present study. Talib (2006: 141) defines multicultural education as the goals a particular school tries to achieve in order to meet the demands of its pupils with various backgrounds and to take into account the cultural values and traditions these pupils originally have. This definition suits the Finnish context well and therefore sums up the idea of what is meant by multicultural education also in this study.

3.2 Main principles of multicultural education

Gay (1998: 13) outlines the three key principles related to multicultural education. Firstly, cultural background has an impact on values, attitudes and behaviour in all settings including school. Secondly, there are biases related to culture, ethnicity and/or

race which are also apparent in schools and which thus prevent certain pupils from achieving their utmost potential. Thirdly, since diversity exists both in society and in schools, efficient education also requires a diverse set of teaching methods and techniques if it wants to meet the needs of all students. These *principles* will be discussed in more detail in the following.

According to Gay (1998: 13), the significance of culture in all teaching and learning is the first step towards implementing multicultural values in education. Our thinking, emotions, behaviour and values are determined by our cultural background and teachers, in order to understand their pupils with various backgrounds, have to become acquainted with the cultures these pupils come from. Features such as social class, ethnic background, nationality, mother tongue and length of residence in the new country, in this case Finland, have an effect on the behaviour of pupils with a multicultural background. These features have to be taken into account if the school wants to convey multicultural values. Gay (1998: 13) also states that nothing is culture-free and even schools have their own cultural processes. Teachers and pupils bring their own backgrounds, attitudes and views of the world into the classroom and the more incompatible these cultures are, the more difficult it is for the pupils to learn. However, this does not mean that teachers should have the very same cultural background as the pupils – and it is in fact an impossibility in a multicultural classroom – instead they should be aware of these differences and try to find a common ground to build upon.

The second key principle outlined by Gay (1998: 14) is the existence of cultural, racial and ethnic biases which still prevent pupils from learning because these biases tend to be negative, stereotypical and stigmatized to a certain ethnic group. Even though Gay (1998: 14) speaks from the American point of view, stereotypical thinking is also a reality in Finland, not only towards immigrant groups but also towards certain ethnic minorities which have been a part of the Finnish society for centuries. Unfortunately these biases are often transmitted to schools and, according to Gay (1998: 14-15), are reflected there in several ways. Multicultural education is, for instance, often reduced to special ethnic events which are celebrated every now and then. This is not enough – schools have to take the main principles, preventing racial and ethnic discrimination and promoting equality, into their everyday lives and these principles have to penetrate the curriculum so that textbooks, syllabi and everyday teaching reflect these values. Putting ethnic minorities on a pedestal is actually the opposite of multicultural education, even though it has its positive sides, too. According to Talib (2002: 117), several studies have

shown that the academic achievement of ethnic minority pupils is often lower than those belonging to the dominant cultural group. This results from a number of factors, the most significant being the low expectations of teachers, the school culture which reflects the values and lines of action of the dominant culture and the materials which support the white, male-dominant world. According to Gay (1998: 15), textbooks account for 75 to 90 percent of all teaching and if they mirror a world where white males are always the most successful ones and the exercises have been planned to fit the mould of the dominant culture, cultural minorities are in a weaker position right from the start. Becoming aware of these biases is the key to creating a more equal and more reality-based learning environment.

The third and final principle introduced by Gay (1998: 16) is the idea of pedagogical diversity which should be set up to meet the diversity in the classroom. First of all, multicultural education should become a part of every school's curriculum and not as a separate part but as an underlying way of thinking which sets the tone for everything that is said in the curriculum. In addition to that, various teaching techniques and strategies should be developed, not just for pupils of multicultural background but for all learners because everyone has a different learning process. This requires commitment, enthusiasm and expertise from the teacher and may be demanding in the beginning but on the other hand it is rewarding and in its best results in better learning outcomes for all pupils, both pupils belonging to the dominant culture and those coming from a different cultural background.

Gay's (1998: 17) principles can be summarized into a set of guidelines for all schools and teachers. They are specific for American society but are just as applicable in the Finnish context. First of all, multicultural education suits for all pupils, grades, subject and schools, and cultural diversity is part of all societies in one way or another. Since culture affects learning, multicultural education is needed and in fact, it helps in achieving academic success among pupils with multicultural backgrounds. Teaching is at its best when it promotes cultural diversity and shows that diversity in fact is valued and infused in all teaching and also in the school curriculum. Gay (1998: 17) also states that when realized properly, multicultural education is able to empower both pupils and teachers, contributing to self-growth and personal liberation. According to Talib (2002: 116), the idea of multicultural education is to promote cultural pluralism and thus have minority pupils take pride in their cultural heritage while at the same time they are part of the dominant culture of the society they live in. These pupils develop a bi- or

multicultural identity where they have a sense of belonging to two cultures without these cultures being in conflict with each other. As part of multicultural education, teachers should try to encourage pupils to appreciate their multicultural heritage and help them to see the strengths a multicultural identity entails. Culturally responsive teaching, which will be discussed in the following part, puts emphasis precisely on this aspect. Cultural diversity is a strength and should be seen as such by pupils and teachers alike.

3.3 Culturally responsive teaching: the teacher's role

Culturally responsive teaching is a relevant and important part of multicultural education and one of its main researchers and pioneers has been Geneva Gay (Gollnick and Chinn 2009: 380). Culturally responsive teaching focuses on the idea of cultural diversity being something that minority pupils are allowed and even have to take pride in and pupils' experiences and cultures are reflected in teaching. Gay (2000: 34) accurately points out that "students are taught to be proud of their ethnic identities and cultural backgrounds instead of being apologetic or ashamed of them" and thus summarizes the essence of culturally responsive teaching. As far as teachers are concerned, they have a key role to play when it comes to empowering pupils and making them reach their potential. Teachers' attitudes and expectations just as well as their expertise in creating a positive learning environment and a caring atmosphere are of paramount importance in culturally responsive teaching. Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 380) state that culturally responsive teaching also questions the traditional ways of knowing and even the concept of knowledge as it has traditionally been perceived. The following subsections will take a closer look at the role of the teacher since the present study focuses on teachers and it is important to identify the obstacles to culturally responsive teaching. Unfortunately the majority of the obstacles derive from teachers and by changing their attitudes and by making them aware of cultural differences, culturally responsive teaching has a better chance to succeed.

3.3.1 Equal expectations

Both Gay (2002: 614) and Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 383) state that one of the main reasons why pupils from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds achieve low academically is the teacher's low and even negative expectations. When pupils of

multicultural background come to school, teachers might already have their own biases and stereotypes, not openly pronounced of course, but underlying ones which impact the way they treat their pupils. Gay (2002: 614) claims that there is a definite resistance towards diversity and the more pupils' cultures and values differ from the ones advocated by the school, the more likely it is that their school achievement will be influenced by the teacher's low expectations. This is called a self-fulfilling prophecy: the teacher does not expect much from the pupil and therefore the pupil loses all interest in even trying to prove the teacher wrong. The fulfilment of these prophecies takes place unconsciously (Gollnick and Chinn 2009: 383-384) and in the worst case scenario they have a negative influence on academic achievement throughout the pupil's school career. It is therefore important for educators to form strategies to help defeat these negative expectations in order to guarantee that all students have equal opportunities in becoming successful (Gollnick and Chinn 2009: 384).

Gay (2002: 615) acknowledges that some of these low expectations may derive from the lack of knowledge on part of the teachers. They might not know how to deal with pupils who do not fit the mould of the majority and thus become frightened and start feeling resentment towards their pupils and even their parents. The only solution to this is to teach teachers about different cultures and about intercultural communication and multicultural education in general. Lack of time and resources, however, often stands in the way, particularly since teachers already have to take a number of other aspects into account in their teaching. Gay (2002: 615) and Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 384) state that no matter how difficult the situation may be for the teacher, it is not a valid reason to put the pupil into a special education class and hope that the problem will solve itself there. Particularly in America, tracking, i.e. placing students in high- and low-ability classes, is common and more than often pupils of multicultural background are placed in the low-ability classes (Gollnick and Chinn 2009: 384). However, Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 384) also affirm that heterogeneous grouping is more advantageous when it comes to improving academic success, particularly among ethnic minority students and pupils from low-income families. Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 384) also confirm that forming heterogeneous groups does not hinder the success of academically talented pupils, particularly if the instruction is challenging enough for them. Tracking is the least useful for those who are placed in the low-ability groups and they tend to feel more negatively about their potential to succeed in school and later in life.

Gay (2000: 53) states that teacher expectations do matter and if the values of culturally responsive teaching are to be part of everyday teaching, a different strategy is to be developed. Equal teaching requires equal expectations for all and all students deserve to be treated as intelligent individuals. It is the teacher's duty to ensure that teaching is challenging enough for all learners – without making it too challenging for some. Becoming aware of one's own stereotypes and raising critical cultural consciousness are crucial particularly for teachers since they are in the position of harming the success of their pupils if their stereotypical thinking creates negative expectations. Even though Gay and Gollnick and Chinn have conducted their research in the US, this situation can be applied to Finnish schools as well. Finnish teachers are not free of stereotypes and biased thinking either and the lack of knowledge is most likely an even greater problem in the Finnish society where cultural homogeneity has been the norm and cultural diversity is only gradually becoming more common. Raising awareness is the key to equal expectations which in turn leads to equal teaching. According to Gay (2002: 619), becoming aware of one's own cultural roots in addition to those of the minority groups is an integral part of culturally responsive teaching since it diminishes stereotypes and challenges the teacher to reflect on cultural diversity in his or her personal and professional life.

3.3.2 Pupil-teacher relationship

A positive pupil-teacher relationship has an enormous effect on pupils' academic achievement, and Gay (2002: 620) confirms that minority pupils learn better in classroom climates which are caring, warm and encouraging. Caring is one of the key concepts in culturally responsive teaching, and according to Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 384), pupils who feel that teachers care about them want to try harder and do better. A caring teacher is patient, persistent and tries to facilitate the learning process for the learner. In addition, a teacher who genuinely cares about their pupils has high expectations and tries to create an environment where empowerment can occur, both for the teacher and for the pupils (Gay 2000: 47). At their best, these teachers manage to create an emotionally warm atmosphere in the classroom, they form positive interrelationships with their pupils and they extend their caring beyond the school by respecting these pupils' parents and cultural heritage. Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 384) state that caring teachers have become aware of their stereotypes and have been able to

rise above their biases and thus do not let these biases interfere with the way they treat their pupils. In a caring classroom atmosphere, labelling pupils is out of the question and there is no need for that either because the teacher treats every pupil as an individual. One of the most important features of a caring teacher is that he or she does not give up on their pupils (Gollnick and Chinn 2009: 385). Each pupil is expected to reach their potential and it is the teacher's duty to create a supportive climate where everyone indeed can achieve their best. In order for learning to occur, pupils also need to feel safe and feel like they can be themselves (Gay 2002: 621). By reducing stress factors to a bare minimum, teachers can create such an atmosphere. It can be challenging and it also demands a great deal from the teacher's own persona but creating a caring relationship is not only beneficial for pupils of multicultural background but for all learners and the teacher alike. By being committed to their pupils' learning, teachers have the best chances to succeed in their work.

Another important aspect in creating an effective and supportive pupil-teacher relationship is communication, both verbal and non-verbal. According to Talib (2002: 84), only ten percent of all communication is verbal and the rest consists of non-verbal cues, such as gestures, body language and facial expressions. Non-verbal communication has therefore an important role to play in teaching but unfortunately it is often neglected. Gay (2000: 77) points out that there is no communication without culture and on the other hand cultures are explained through communication. Thus, culture and communication are always interconnected and also define teaching and learning. Teachers have to be aware of the significance of non-verbal communication and pay attention to the fact that culture impacts communication. Once again, becoming aware of one's own cultural and non-verbal ways of communicating is a good start in creating a pupil-teacher relationship based on mutual understanding.

A common reason for learning not to occur in the classroom is thus the lack of efficient cross-cultural communication between pupils and the teacher (Gollnick and Chinn 2009: 396). Misunderstandings often take place because cultures are different in their language and discourse practices. It is possible that teachers and pupils have different social meanings for same actions and manage not to find a common ground in their communication. Teachers should be particularly alert if and when their pupils of multicultural background are not responding the way they are expected to respond. Blaming automatically the pupil is neither helpful nor appropriate because in most cases the reason for passive or inappropriate responding lies in miscommunication. Teachers

who want to develop their cross-cultural communication skills should actively participate in cultures which differ from their own and try to learn how to most effectively communicate with pupils from all sorts of cultures (Gollnick and Chinn 2009: 396). Teachers who are familiar with different cultural cues do not only know how to talk to their pupils but they can also teach their pupils how to communicate efficiently in unfamiliar and even uncomfortable situations.

Dialogue is closely associated with communication and dialogue in culturally responsive teaching is an essential part of creating a supportive and beneficial pupil-teacher relationship. According to Talib (2005: 32), the dialogue between a pupil and his teacher is not supposed to be predetermined but open and can consequently lead to several interpretations which are precisely what multicultural education is all about. The core idea of establishing a dialogic relationship between pupils and their teacher is to increase mutual understanding, empathy and respect towards others and towards oneself. An effective pupil-teacher relationship is naturally a two-way street but the teacher holds the key to its success: if the teacher is willing to put his or her biases aside and encounter the pupil as an individual who needs care, encouragement and respect, even cross-cultural misunderstandings should not stand in the way of true learning.

3.3.3 Pupil at the centre of the learning process

The idea behind culturally responsive teaching is to break the traditional role of the teacher and that of the pupil. The teacher's role is to be more of a supporter of the learning process than an infallible source of information. According to Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 386), culturally responsive teachers want to encourage pupils to take actively part in all that goes on in the classroom and in order for this to happen, teaching is based on pupils' own experiences and communities they are involved in. Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 386) list the characteristics of a teacher who is willing to engage his or her pupils and wants them to take responsibility for their own learning. These teachers are passionate about their work, connect the subject matter to the life outside school and to issues which pupils care about, make sure they understand, are interested in their pupils' progress, care about their pupils, provide role models and are genuinely proud of their pupils when they do well. By giving pupils a chance to choose, teachers manage to motivate them, which in turn is more likely to lead to active participation. One important aspect in engaging pupils is to use *cooperative learning* as a learning method (Gay 2000,

2002; Koppinen 1998; Gollnick and Chinn 2009). In cooperative learning pupils work in groups and learn from each other. The teacher becomes more of an assistant and makes sure that the tasks are completed. Thus, all learning takes place among the pupils and the traditional role of the teacher is altered. According to Gay (2000: 188), cooperative learning enables pupils to achieve their best, also in terms of grades, and improves their chances to participate more actively in the classroom. Moreover, cooperative learning empowers pupils because they get to teach each other, thus making it an excellent teaching method and perfectly suitable for culturally responsive learning.

Another way of making pupils take part in their own learning and stimulate their learning process is to start from the pupils' experiences and thus make their voices heard (Gollnick and Chinn 2009: 385). This is particularly important with pupils of multicultural background who rarely get heard in the wider societal context and often become invisible members in the dominant culture. Thus, multicultural teachers attempt to include pupils' voices, and the voices of their families and communities, into their teaching and encourage pupils to use their own experiences as the starting point for their learning. Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 385) list the main benefits of incorporating pupil voices: firstly it allows pupils to understand the subject matter from their own perspective, thus promoting learning; secondly it is easier for the teacher to get some perspective as to what the pupils already know of the subject matter and thirdly, pupil voices also offer essential information about their own cultures. It is important to assure the pupils of the legitimacy of their voices and make sure they know that their voices are just as correct and just as appreciated as those of the dominant culture.

The last crucial aspect in how teachers can make themselves redundant in the traditional sense in the classroom and turn pupils into active constructors of their own learning is to develop their critical thinking. According to Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 388), this is normally the automatic result of multicultural teaching because it in general questions the dominant culture and the traditional understanding of what knowledge is. Teachers are allowed to teach their pupils to question their textbooks and not hold them as flawless sources of the absolute truth. Knowledge is never set in stone and it changes as times change and people learn more about the surrounding world. As stated by Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 388), this is also the core idea of culturally responsive teaching: the world is not as black and white as it sometimes is presented and pupils should learn to explore and see the world from several perspectives – even if they contradict each other. The role of the teacher is important in the development of critical

thinking: if the teacher blindly believes in every word that is printed in the textbook, it is impossible to teach pupils to question them. One important feature of culturally responsive teaching is to teach pupils to think about the roles racism, stereotypes and discrimination have in society and to examine their own stereotypes, too. Reflecting the surrounding world starts with self-reflection and according to Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 388), critical thinkers are able to question their own biases and replace myths with accurate information. This demands a great deal from the teacher but by having reflected upon their own cultural heritage and stereotypes and by being enthusiastic and committed, teachers have a good chance of succeeding in culturally responsive teaching.

3.4 Multiculturalism in teacher education

As Räsänen (1998: 37) states, Finnish schools have become increasingly multicultural and there seems to be a valid reason to include multicultural education in teacher education. Programmes educating teachers in Finland have generally been fairly monocultural and ethnocentric and it seems that the transition towards a more multicultural teacher education has been slow and is still going on. Räsänen (1998: 37) points out that teachers are essential when it comes to teaching future generations about multiculturalism and about the changing society. If teachers have no foundation to base their knowledge upon and have not been in any contact with multicultural education by the time they graduate, the reality of the modern school may be shocking and unexpected. Yli-Renko et al. (1997: 23) have confirmed the lack of multicultural education in teacher education: a study conducted twelve years ago proved a total absence of multicultural education in teacher education and even though the situation has somewhat improved during the past decade, there is still room for development. As Lerkkanen (1999: 168) accurately emphasizes, the purpose of teacher education is to educate teachers who are able to work in changing conditions. Finnish society is no longer as homogeneous as it was thirty or even twenty years ago and teacher education programmes have to be updated in order for them to correspond with the real situation Finnish schools of the 21st century are in.

Gay (1986: 155) outlines the reasons why teacher education should be multiculturalized and why multicultural education should become mandatory for all future teachers. Firstly, it is unrealistic to expect teachers to be capable of efficiently teaching pupils of multicultural background without any prior preparation. As Gay

(1986: 155) puts it, “- - teachers cannot teach what they don’t know”. Secondly, there are committed teachers who want their teaching to follow multicultural values but a more systematic approach is needed in order for *all* teaching to meet the needs of the multicultural society. Almost twenty years ago Gay (1986: 156-159) already called for a legalized status for multicultural education in American teacher education, and the current situation in Finland is likely to resemble that of the United States in the 1980s: multicultural education both in theory and in practice has to be systematically implemented in teacher education across the country. Gay (1986: 159) also provides ethical reasons for making teacher education multicultural: teachers have the right to receive multicultural training because it is humane and fits the principles of good education and democracy and because it is professionally justified for them to receive multicultural training since they live in multicultural societies. It is important to find a correspondence between theory and practice: in this case theory has not been able to keep up with the development of multiculturalisation in schools.

Multicultural expertise lies mainly on teacher education and on the additional education qualified and practicing teachers should regularly receive. According to Talib (2002: 130; 2005: 39), short crash courses are hardly enough to make teachers multicultural since it is a complex issue and requires plenty of reflection, both on the teacher’s own identity and on the pupils’ rights and roles in the classroom. It has been concluded that different “theme weeks” in teacher education can even strengthen the already existing stereotypes and add to the prejudices teachers have for certain cultures (Talib 2002, 2005). Even though the process of becoming multiculturally qualified requires exposure to a multicultural school setting and work in this type of a setting for a longer period of time, learning in practice is not enough. According to Talib (2005: 40), teacher education should provide future teachers with cultural information, both on different cultures and their own, in this case Finnish culture. Cultural information alone is not enough either – teachers also need to learn about different learning difficulties and mental disorders in addition to societal information. Teacher education should be able to widen the perspectives of teachers who often come from fairly monocultural backgrounds and are not acquainted with multicultural matters. If the process of teacher multiculturalisation begins in teacher education, chances of teachers succeeding in implementing multicultural education in practice once they step into the real world improve drastically.

Räsänen (1998: 37-38) lists the requisites of multicultural teacher education. One of the most essential is that of a broader social and educational awareness which teacher trainees should develop during their teacher education. Räsänen (1998: 37) also states that future teachers often come from homogeneous and secure backgrounds and thus have little experience of different societal problems, such as racism, ethnocentrism or stereotypical thinking. Another crucial requirement is to make teachers become aware of how cultural backgrounds shape values, attitudes and traditions. Becoming aware of one's own cultural background is essential in this process of consciousness-raising. Good multicultural teacher education helps teacher trainees to realize that their own cultural background can distort the ways they see other cultures. Everyone is biased; becoming aware of these biases is the way to try to put these biases aside and enables teachers to promote anti-racist attitudes despite their own personal stereotypes. Efficient teacher education also promotes the development of intercultural or multicultural competence, something that will be dealt with in more detail in the following chapter. It is committed to fighting against racism, discrimination and all forms of prejudices and manages to arouse this need to battle racism in teacher trainees as well and teaches future teachers about the goals, methods and fundamental values of multicultural education in general. In addition, teacher trainees should be taught about how to turn all this theoretical knowledge into useful practical techniques in order for them to get the most out of their teaching and to be able to make it as effective as possible.

To conclude, teachers have an imperative role in implementing multicultural values into their everyday teaching and in making all pupils feel comfortable and equally accepted in the classroom (Räsänen 1998: 37). Even though culturally responsive teaching tries to break the traditional view of what the teacher's role in the classroom is, it does not mean that teachers no longer are important, quite on the contrary. In order for multicultural education to work, changes need to be made in schools and teachers are those who bring the change to the grass-root level. How teachers relate to their pupils of multicultural background, which teaching methods they use and which attitudes they convey all greatly influence the way pupils see themselves and each other. Since teachers have an essential role to play, it is also crucial to acknowledge the fact that teachers might lack appropriate information concerning their pupils in every aspect. It is not only the different cultures teachers might be ignorant about but also their own role in the classroom that has changed from monocultural into multicultural might require additional clarification. As Yli-Renko et al. (1997: 23) appropriately point out, future

teachers, both elementary school teachers and subject teachers, including English teachers, do not receive enough information during their university studies in order to be prepared to meet the diversity in the classroom. This results in frustration, incompetence and ignorance and can easily initiate problems in communication between teachers and pupils of foreign background. Teachers have to be educated about multicultural matters before they enter classrooms, both in terms of their future pupils and themselves. The subsequent chapter will thus focus on teachers themselves and on their professional and personal aptitude as multicultural educators. It will discuss the idea of what it is to become multiculturally competent as a teacher.

4 TEACHERS' MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE

The following chapter will address multicultural competence, i.e. how teachers construct and combine their professional expertise with their personality and identity as a monocultural or a multicultural person. The objective behind multicultural competence is that teachers would have a repertoire of attitudes, values, goals, skills and techniques embedded in their personality, which would help them to make their teaching as multicultural as possible. It is important to remember that teachers are not bias-free and objective creatures either and the challenges they face in multicultural classrooms requires plenty of work and reflection on the part of the teacher before multicultural teaching is even possible. A definition of multicultural competence will be provided in the first section of this chapter. In subsection 4.2 teachers' identity and self-reflection will be discussed, along with the notion of otherness. The final section aims at shedding some light on how teachers construct themselves as multicultural teachers and which phases this process consists of.

4.1 Defining multicultural competence

Multicultural competence is a term used in several studies (Matinheikki-Kokko 1999a, 1999b; Talib 2005, 2006) where multicultural teaching and teachers are under the microscope and the researcher wants to examine the attributes of a competent and skilful multicultural teacher. Matinheikki-Kokko (1999a: 43; 1999b: 40) uses the term *cultural competence* and defines it as a three-dimensional paradigm: firstly, a culturally competent teacher has knowledge of multicultural learning, teaching and interaction.

Secondly, teachers who possess cultural competence understand the impact cultural differences have on learning and try to see their own point of view as well as that of the pupils. Thirdly, culturally competent teachers have multicultural pedagogical skills so that their teaching is multicultural also in practice. According to Matinheikki-Kokko (1999a: 43), cultural competence is also related to a larger socio-political context. Thus, teachers should reflect on the attitudes the entire school system of a particular country, in this case Finland, represents and how teachers can in their own work contribute to the development of multicultural values both in school and in the broader social context. Other terms, such as *intercultural competence* have been used interchangeably with multicultural competence. Määttä (2008: 27) has used intercultural competence in her study and has defined it to be “-- ability to interact successfully with people from different cultural backgrounds and take different cultures and aspects connected to culture into consideration in different situations”. However, the term *multicultural competence* will be used in this study for two specific reasons: firstly, it fits with the other terminology used in this study, such as multicultural education and multicultural teaching as opposed to intercultural education and secondly, because it is the most common term used in literature on multicultural education.

Multicultural competence, according to Talib (2006: 147), is a process where the teacher becomes aware of his or her teaching and reflects on the educational decisions made. The best way to acquire multicultural competence is through experience, not only through experience of teaching but also through experience of different cultures. Talib (2006: 147) notes that multicultural competence is rather a way of experiencing and perceiving the world than a specific set of skills or attitudes. This worldview is easier to achieve if a person is already acquainted with the notion of otherness and has personal experiences, for example, of what it means to live in a foreign country for a longer period of time. Talib (2006: 148) also points out that some scholars have said that it is not necessary for teachers to know all the specifics of different cultures; more importantly, teachers should be critical when it comes to mystifying cultures and try to maintain their objectivity, as far as this is possible.

Talib (2005: 43) proposes a model which describes the way a teacher's multicultural competence is constructed. It is a circular model the core of which is the teacher, his or her being and the next circle consists of the teacher's identity. The next circles, or levels of consciousness as Talib (2006) puts it, entail the reflection of the past, ethnic identity, social awareness which includes the notions of self in contrast with

others, critical professional reflection, social action and global responsibility taking. These different levels of consciousness work differently with different teachers and most teachers never reach all the levels. The important thing is to start from the core because all teaching starts from the teacher's personality and work one's way up to the outer circles. In the following section some of the main notions of this circular model will be discussed. Firstly, the focus will be on the teacher's professional identity and its correlation with his or her personality and also on the concept of self-reflection. The second subsection centres on the notion of otherness and how teachers could develop their own understanding of what it means to be different in a fairly homogeneous group.

4.2 Identity and the concept of otherness in multicultural teaching

4.2.1 Professional identity and the importance of self-reflection

Identity is a person's conception of oneself and it is shaped throughout one's life. Constructing one's identity is thus a continuous process which happens in interaction between the individual and the communities he or she is in contact with (Talib 2000: 128). According to Albert (1998: 3), the connection between culture and identity is clear in that a certain culture may or may not be part of an individual's identity and the sense of belonging to a particular culture may help in answering the question of who one is. Talib (2000: 128) states that teachers bring the conception they have of themselves shaped by their life history, i.e. their identity, to every teaching situation. Thus, all the experiences the teacher has had starting from childhood and moving towards the time before becoming a teacher have had an impact on the teacher and on his or her professional identity as well. Becoming aware of the factors that have affected one's identity is of the essence in multicultural teaching, particularly because one's identity influences the way he or she behaves. Thus, if the teacher is aware of his or her own behavioural patterns which stem from the identity, it is easier to understand how and why pupils of multicultural background react the way they do. Teachers may not be familiar with everything that has happened in the pupil's past but the mere awareness of the impact past experiences have on one's identity is sure to provide some help. Talib (2000: 129) points out that teachers have to have an idea of what their identities consist of in order to be capable of observing them through the eyes of an outsider in cultural encounters.

The professional identities of teachers depend on several aspects and are not only defined by the teachers themselves but also by other people in the society, in the community and also by the media. The role of the teacher has been defined differently at different times (Talib 2002: 95) and national and cultural attitudes and beliefs have an effect on what is considered to belong to the profession of a teacher. According to Talib (2000: 95), teaching is a social process which requires a great deal from the teacher: quick decision-making, problem solving and the ability to create a caring and encouraging learning environment. All this is based on how the teacher relates to life in general and the basis for this is his or her own personality. There is no such thing as objective education, which means that the teacher's previous life experiences have shaped his or her views on education and teaching (Talib 2002: 96). The culture in which the teacher was born and raised has influenced the way he or she comes in contact with pupils and also the way he or she treats pupils of diverse backgrounds. Since teaching is a profession where emotional commitment and personality have an important role to play, it is important for teachers to genuinely respect all human beings despite their ethnic, religious or social background.

According to Koppinen (1999: 147-148), personality is an important tool in multicultural teaching since it is easier for the teacher to find ways to cope in unfamiliar situations if he or she is able to feel empathy towards pupils. Empathy, on the other hand, is possible only when the individual's personality is fully involved in the situation. Koppinen (1999: 148) states that even though it is imperative for teachers to teach with their personality, there is, however, a danger in it. Teachers who are one hundred percent committed to their profession are in danger to burn out at some point and therefore it is important, particularly for teachers who teach pupils of diverse backgrounds to know when it is acceptable for professionalism to overcome personality. Teachers who daily encounter pupils of multicultural background are bound to face situations where they have to put their full personal potential to use but Koppinen (1999: 148) emphasizes that a teacher who has enough expertise knows when to lean on to professionalism instead of personality. It is sometimes difficult to separate these two terms from each other but Koppinen (1999: 148) makes the distinction in the following way: when a teacher first meets a pupil of multicultural background, it is important to encounter that pupil as a person and thus convince the pupil of the fact that the teacher is genuinely interested in the pupil and his or her learning. Everything else that goes on in the classroom and at

school the teacher can use his professionalism for. This will ensure the well-being of the teacher and thus contribute to the well-being of pupils alike.

Self-reflection and particularly reflection on past experiences is closely linked to the identity of a teacher. According to Talib (2005: 45), the experiences teachers have had shape the way they perceive themselves, which in turn directs their teaching. As far as multicultural teaching is concerned, it is important to become aware of the image a teacher has of oneself and self-reflection is the perfect tool for the process of bringing one's identity into consciousness where it can be dealt with and eventually even changed if necessary. Talib (2006: 149) states that it is possible to change oneself in order to fit into new circumstances: the only prerequisite is that one truly wants to change oneself. Teachers who want to implement multicultural teaching as part of their everyday work have to be prepared and willing to reflect on their self and on the experiences that have shaped them into the person they currently are. This can be a surprisingly difficult and taboo-like matter for some people because it is not easy to enter the world of one's inner self, let alone question the values and attitudes one has held as absolute and real for quite some time. Nevertheless, according to Talib (2006: 149), critical reflection is where both personal and professional growth begins and a similar process of reflection is needed in order to tackle and accept the complex issue of one's own ethnic identity. Multicultural teachers have to be bold enough to return to the place where they have left in their inner self and sort out the factors that make them who they are and reflect on the consequences of these factors. They also have to be able to question the truths they have often taken for granted, not only within themselves but also within broader social contexts, such as the school, the community surrounding the school or the society in general. By being aware of the underlying reasons behind their choices, teachers are also able to understand their pupils better, which in turn can result in several interpretations about the world, all of which are equally justifiable and appropriate, only different (Talib 2005: 46). This is the core idea of multicultural teaching in general and teachers who have been able to reach this point in their self-reflection, will also be able to teach their pupils efficiently and promote ethnic, racial, religious and sexual equality.

4.2.2 Otherness and coming to terms with it

Before teachers can be referred to as being multiculturally competent, it is essential that they come to terms with what is called otherness (Talib 2006: 151). It is by no means an easy task – Talib (2006: 151) claims it is the most difficult aspect in the implementation of multicultural values. The term *otherness* or *the other* refers to something different, usually meaning a person who is different from us in terms of values, beliefs, attitudes, nationality, ethnicity, race, looks, religion, gender or age. Talib (2005: 48) says that multicultural competence requires a certain awareness of what is called the other on part of the teacher, and this can be a challenging task for everyone, including teachers struggling with multicultural issues. According to Talib (2006: 151), the problem with facing the other is in the person's need to find reasons for the behaviour of the other and making sense of what is strange and foreign is often done through one's own lenses. This can result in conflicts since the idea is not to interpret otherness through one particular worldview but to accept the fact that different worldviews can live side by side in agreement. This is what all teachers have to become aware of and approve of before they can call themselves multiculturally professional and competent.

Hoffman and Cools (1999: 207) note that in every culture foreigners and strangers are defined with specific words thus indicating that it is an innate, human need to make a distinction between what is meant by *us* and what is meant by *them*. Talib (2006: 151) says that collective identity is something human beings naturally build upon and want to belong to, and that is why others are often described in a negative manner. This is a consequence of two different factors: Firstly, otherness as a term was developed for nationalistic purposes and particularly in the 19th century during the rise of national states, there was a clear need to separate others from us. Secondly, otherness serves as a means for stronger nations to impose their political, ideological and economic power onto other weaker nations (Talib 2006: 151). Used in this way, animosity against foreigners usually resulted from fear and fear has an important role to play when it comes to unsuccessful encounters with different people also today. When an individual is faced with something that he is unfamiliar with, the newness of the situation is frightening and the natural way of reacting is to push the strangeness away in order to protect one's identity. Despite the fact that fear is a natural emotion to all human beings, overcoming that fear is of paramount importance when it comes to becoming multiculturally-oriented and accepting of diversity.

Hostility towards the other is not, however, merely a by-product of nationalism, it is also socially constructed and passed on by parents, the broader social community and sometimes schools alike. Talib (2006: 151-152) emphasizes the importance of education in fostering cooperation and communication with everyone, no matter what their cultural, linguistic, ethnic or religious background is. Schools should become havens of human rights where everyone is respected and appreciated for who they are, where all types of identities have a freedom to grow and where nationalistic ideas are resisted, not encouraged. In this context it is interesting and imperative to consider the values outlined by the Finnish National Core Curriculum (NCC, Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2004: 12). It is directly stated that Finnish elementary and middle schools, i.e. grades from one to nine, should base their teaching on Finnish culture, on its values and on the specific features Finland as a nation holds. If all countries outline the values represented by their schools similarly, the question of whether otherness can ever be totally accepted and thus multicultural education implemented around the world must be discussed. The Finnish education system puts emphasis on equal education opportunities for all but the values listed in the National Core Curriculum (NCC 2004: 12) suggest that while everyone has a right to receive education, the education received in Finland has a Finnish tag on it bearing the nationalistic values of this country. This view is in contrast with the principles of multicultural education outlined by Gay (1998: 13) and discussed in more depth in section 3.2.

Talib (2006: 152) stresses the importance of emotions in every encounter one has with diversity. Since dealing with otherness is emotionally-charged, it is extremely difficult to confront these situations with rationality and to try to change one's reactions to these encounters. In addition to fear, human beings have a tendency to remain faithful to their beliefs and when encountering something that is different to what one is used to, this reluctance to see matters from a different perspective tends to strengthen. As far as becoming multiculturally competent is concerned, teachers should above all become aware of their own relation to otherness and to all matters foreign (Talib 2005: 49). Coming to terms with otherness and diversity requires the ability to come to terms with oneself and with the idea one has of the other. This, in turn, entails reflection. As it has been stated on several occasions already, everything in multicultural education and teaching is interconnected and teachers who want to become multicultural in their teaching cannot escape from their own values, attitudes, and beliefs, or from their inner

self. A journey to oneself can be a demanding one and facing one's own stereotypes is never easy but in order for teachers to be able to teach about these issues to others, they have to know themselves thoroughly and be ready to respect and accept the other, both outside and inside themselves. This includes coming to terms with one's weaknesses, knowing them and accepting them as part of one's personality but also trying to overcome them in situations where they have a negative effect on one's actions and behaviour. According to Talib (2006: 152-153), this is the only way into deeper understanding, particularly when it comes to understanding otherness. Above all, teachers have to be fearless enough to encounter difference since it leads to tolerating multiple interpretations and the fact that more than often one accurate answer does not exist.

In addition to Talib (2005; 2006), Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 397) have also underlined how important it is for teachers to know their strengths and weaknesses if they want to develop their multicultural competence. Becoming familiar with otherness and other cultures is important but it all begins with becoming familiar with what one is afraid of when faced with diversity. Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 397) provide teachers with a set of practical instructions in order for them to become multiculturally more proficient. Firstly, teachers should get to know their own cultural identity and heritage before they can teach their pupils to become more tolerant towards diversity. Secondly, they should also learn about different cultures and try to seek situations where they are faced with otherness. If they become familiar with the other on a day-to-day basis, it is easier for teachers to understand it and thus teach their pupils to similarly comprehend it. The opposite of fear is often becoming acquainted with what one was afraid of to begin with and this very same technique can be used in teaching. Thirdly, Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 397) advise teachers to critically examine the way they interact with pupils of multicultural background. Sometimes teachers accidentally ignore multicultural values and instead reinforce the status quo in schools, i.e. teach pupils to segregate people from each other based on the colour of their skin, their religion or their ethnic background. By questioning their own teaching and their own attitudes towards otherness, teachers have a better chance at not only making their teaching multicultural but also at making themselves more competent multiculturally which will not only help them in their work but will also empower them as individuals thus making them more tolerant and acceptable of others.

4.3 Towards multicultural competence

Both Pollari (1999: 152) and Talib (2000: 135) have studied the phases of the culture shock a teacher receiving pupils of multicultural background in their classroom undergoes. Pollari (1999: 152-157) has listed there to be four phases whereas Talib (2000: 135) has arrived at only three phases. No matter what the accurate number of phases is, it is clear that both immigrant pupils and teachers experience a similar culture shock – immigrant pupils undergo this shock when they first arrive in the new country whereas teachers of multicultural pupils experience this shock when they first start teaching a multicultural class (Talib 2000: 135). New teachers first entering a culturally diverse school are thus expected to experience a shock of their own in one form or another. If a teacher who starts to teach a multicultural classroom has had previous experience with multicultural issues and is aware of his or her own cultural identity, the shock will naturally be milder but nonetheless, the teacher will undergo a shock either consciously or subconsciously. According to Pollari (1999: 153), learning about new cultures is not enough for a teacher to become multiculturally competent; instead it all begins with the ability to examine one's own culture through the eyes of a foreigner. This process is challenging and even teachers who are delighted and eager to work with pupils of multicultural background will experience feelings of resentment and hostility. The most important message conveyed by Pollari (1999) and Talib (2000) is for teachers to accept a full range of emotions as a normal part of the culture shock and not blame themselves when negative feelings arise. The four phases presented by Pollari (1999: 152-157) will be presented in the following paragraphs.

In both Pollari's (1999: 154) and Talib's (2000: 135) studies the first phase is called *honeymoon* and during this stage the teacher is anxious to find out more about the cultures of his or her pupils. Everything is new, everything is exciting and teachers are often willing to do more than is actually expected of them. For instance, they use their spare time to learn more about the families, traditions, values, belief systems, cooking and religion of their pupils and are even prepared to help the parents to adjust to the new culture. Excessive work is of course unnecessary and those teachers who are the most enthusiastic to be seen as multicultural, often run the risk of feeling even more resentful in the following stages of the culture shock. The honeymoon phase is, however, a very positive period because everything is new and exotic, also for the teacher (Talib 2000: 135). Nevertheless, it is merely the first stage and by no means is a teacher

multiculturally competent after this stage. Developing one's multicultural competence is an infinite process and teachers who have been working with pupils of multicultural background for thirty years are still not ready – there is always something new to learn and becoming aware of the permanent nature of the process is an important part in becoming multiculturally competent.

In Pollari's (1999: 156) model, the second phase is called *the shock phase* and this might not be so easy for the teacher to detect. This is the stage where the feelings of resentment and hostility start to build up but are not yet shown in the teacher's day-to-day conduct. When the teacher at first had plenty of empathy towards the immigrant pupils, in this stage the altered situation starts to take its toll. Teachers get tired of having to work harder in order for all pupils to learn and problems with the language start to irritate them. In the shock stage teachers might feel guilty for even experiencing these feelings but eventually this results in the third phase which is called *the reaction phase* (Pollari 1999: 156). Talib (2000: 135) has not separated these two phases from each other: she presents them as the same *rejection phase* in which the teacher experiences negative feelings towards immigrant pupils and teaching diverse pupils in general and vents his or her anger either on colleagues or on family and friends, assuming they have the time or the energy to listen. Pollari (1999: 154) claims that teachers get depressed by their own anxiety and negative feelings and their aggression results in complaining. Consequently, indefinite aggression and resentment give rise to racist emotions and as a result, to extreme guilt. Teachers often feel that immigrant pupils are ungrateful for everything the teacher has done for them and they have neither the energy nor the enthusiasm to help these pupils or their families anymore. Pollari's (1999: 154-155) message is simple: teachers should not give up on themselves or on their pupils at this stage, their feelings are acceptable and only feelings, not their actual opinions. Once this stage passes, the hostile emotions will make way for a more serene atmosphere and positive attitudes.

The fourth and final stage in the culture shock teachers of immigrant pupils undergo is, according to Pollari (1999: 157), *the tranquil phase*, also called *the stabilization phase*. Talib (2000: 135) aptly calls this *the regression phase* and in a way it is precisely that: the teacher has passed the most acute crisis and is ready to face facts in a more objective and neutral way and to return to the beginning. During this final stage teachers realize that there are both positive and negative aspects to teaching pupils of multicultural background and that there is no need to take sides. Teaching is teaching

no matter what type of backgrounds the pupils come from: there will be good days and there will just as well be bad days. At this point, teachers are already more familiar with the specific features of multicultural teaching and they can therefore take a step back and take a look at their own teaching – and their pupils – in a more neutral manner. They also come to terms with their own limits and hopefully comprehend that they do not have to do everything for the immigrant pupils and their families. No one is irreplaceable and one part of being a multiculturally competent teacher is for teachers to understand that their teaching serves pupils better if they remember to take care of themselves and do not feel responsible for the whole adaptation process of both the immigrant pupil and his or her entire family. Pollari (1999: 155) concludes that teachers learn to take a more administrative stand to everything that takes place in the classroom and this can be seen as something positive. Maintaining a certain distance is not a disadvantage for a multiculturally competent teacher, on the contrary.

To sum up, having multicultural competence is an integral part of multicultural teaching and even more so since it is directly related to the teacher as a person and thus to his or her identity. When teachers' conceptions of pupils of multicultural background are concerned, their multicultural competence, i.e. whether they perceive themselves as competent enough to teach pupils of multicultural background appropriately, has an enormous effect on their teaching as well. If teachers feel that they possess multicultural competence and thus feel secure about teaching pupils of diverse backgrounds, this is naturally reflected in the conceptions they have of these pupils. Teachers who are multiculturally competent and know themselves as teachers and as people, too, tend to feel more at ease with their work and are the most likely to have more positive attitudes towards pupils of multicultural background and towards multicultural teaching in general. According to Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 399), multiculturally competent teachers reflect on their work, are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, know how to face the otherness around them and within themselves and know their own limits in that they do not burn themselves out. Satisfaction with oneself and with one's work more than often results in a positive atmosphere and there is no need for resentment based on cultural and/or linguistic difficulties. Confident and competent teachers make confident and competent pupils and vice versa.

5 LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN MULTICULTURAL TEACHING

The following chapter shifts its emphasis from multicultural competence onto linguistic matters in relation to pupils of multicultural background. The mother tongue of pupils with foreign background is something other than the language used in schools and this presents a dilemma for all teachers working with multicultural pupils. The first section of this chapter aims at defining the terminology, i.e. what is meant by bilingual and multilingual education and also addresses multilingual education from the point of view of the teacher. In order for multicultural education to be successful, it is essential that teachers and pupils can find a common ground in their communication. In practical terms this means that they have to share a common language which can be problematic since the variety of language is becoming so great that teachers cannot be expected to master the languages of their pupils. This dilemma will be discussed in the first section. The second section focuses more on linguistic diversity in Finnish schools, describing the prevailing situation where Finnish is the language used in classrooms while there are more and more pupils of multicultural background who have insufficient or even nonexistent skills in Finnish. In the same context the status of the mother tongue in comprehensive education will be discussed in further detail. The third and final section will examine the little-researched area of foreign language learning and multilingual pupils and will shed some light on what it means to teach foreign languages through a language that might be foreign for immigrant pupils.

5.1 Bi- and multilingual education: teaching language minority pupils

Cenoz and Genesee (1998: viii) make a clear distinction between bilingual and multilingual education. Bilingual education has usually been the term used to describe education which is provided with more than one language. Cenoz and Genesee (1998: viii), however, state that multilingual education is an even more complex issue since it deals with not just two but several different languages. Nieto (2002: 205) uses the term bilingual education but uses it to refer to the language situation in American schools where English is the only language used in schools and most language minority pupils only need to acquire a good command of English in order to be able to cope in school. The situation is fairly similar in Finland: Martin (1999: 84) states that Finnish is the language used in Finnish schools and in order for pupils of multilingual background to

survive, they need to reach a certain level in their Finnish skills. *Bilingual education* would thus seem like the appropriate term to be used when the status of Finnish in comparison with the status of the pupils' mother tongues is concerned. Particularly section 5.2 will discuss this matter further and the term bilingual education will be used then. However, Cenoz and Genesee (1998: viii) define *multilingual education* as education where several languages, other than the pupils' mother tongues, are used in teaching and the aim of which is for the pupils to achieve communicative competence in more than two languages. Therefore, multilingual education seems to be the suitable term to be used when foreign language learning among immigrant and language minority students is concerned. All pupils in Finland, including pupils of multicultural background have to learn at least English, most of them also Swedish, and since the language of instruction is Finnish, multilingual education definitely holds its place and will be used as the recurring term in the final section of this chapter.

Consistent with the principles of multicultural education, multilingual education underlines the importance of linguistic diversity and desires to promote multilingual, not monolingual instruction. Arias (2008: 38) points out that respecting linguistic diversity contributes to tolerance and appreciation in schools. Raising awareness of multilingual matters is imperative and this only works by educating both teachers and pupils of the importance of language acquisition. Both multicultural and multilingual education are based on mutual respect, and Nieto (2002: 81) highlights the significance of viewing linguistic diversity as a resource, not as a shortfall. Most schools across the world still rely on integration and expect their multilingual pupils to adapt to the reality of the classroom, i.e. to learn the language used in instruction and pay no attention to the mother tongue of their pupils. However, according to Nieto (2002: 81) and Arias (2008: 43), bi- or multilingualism should be seen as something positive and it all begins with teachers. Nieto (2002: 205) states that teachers should have positive attitudes towards their language minority pupils and towards linguistic diversity in general, and Arias (2008: 43) confirms that it is the teachers' duty to encourage language minority pupils to take pride in their multilingualism and not feel separate from the native speakers of the language used in schools. This message is loud and clear: if teachers are disrespectful or indifferent towards the mother tongues of their pupils, the pupils themselves will feel left out and learn to see their multilingualism as a handicap, not as an advantage.

Nieto (2002: 93-96) provides three crucial guidelines for teachers who wish to implement bi- or multilingual education in their teaching. It must be pointed out that

more than often teachers do not have the luxury of choice anymore: classrooms are becoming increasingly multicultural also in Finland and teachers have to take a stand to linguistic matters, whether they want it or not. All teachers, not just language teachers have to deal with the language dilemma and that is why Nieto (2002: 93) states that first of all, every teacher working with pupils of multicultural background has to have some knowledge of language acquisition. Nieto (2002: 93) claims that learning what Stephen Krashen meant by teachers providing pupils with comprehensible input is crucial for every teacher if they want to succeed in establishing a functional and communicative relationship with their language minority pupils. Pupils will not learn unless they understand what the teacher is saying and teachers will not understand that their pupils might not follow their teaching if they have no idea which processes language learners undergo and how fast. Nieto (2002: 94) also recognizes the fact that most teachers will not have received this information during their teacher education and therefore might have to acquire it on their own. However, teaching will become more efficient and comfortable both from the point of view of the teacher and of the pupil if teachers have some knowledge of what is happening in the pupil's brain.

Nieto's (2002: 94) second guideline sends an important message to all teachers: they have to acquire an additive perspective towards bilingualism. An *additive perspective* is the term used by Nieto (2002) and it refers to an entirely different view on the status of languages. Nieto (2002: 94) states that teachers should discard the traditional view where immigrants are expected to adopt the dominant language and abandon their mother tongue in order to fit into society. Instead, they should choose the one that supports the idea that the dominant language, in this case Finnish plus the languages immigrants bring with them to the country can be of value, not of detriment. In the additive perspective all languages are considered equal and even though there is one or two dominant languages in the country, this does not mean that pupils of multilingual background have to abandon their native languages entirely. Section 5.2. will discuss in further detail the language situation in Finnish schools and will also address the matter of native language education for immigrant pupils. According to Nieto (2002: 95), even more important than knowing the languages of their pupils is the fact that teachers encourage their pupils to utilize their mother tongue and the cultural information they have in learning. This contributes both to learning and to cultural awareness and supports pupils' self-worth.

The third and final guideline introduced by Nieto (2002: 95-96) is that of promoting native language literacy among language minority pupils and this should become the responsibility of teachers and schools. Nieto (2002: 95) points out that teachers can promote their pupils' literacy in their native language by giving them time to work in small groups with other pupils of the same language. Nieto (2002: 95) also suggests that committed teachers might learn one of their pupils' languages and by struggling with language learning themselves, this might give them a better understanding of what their pupils' are experiencing. Becoming familiar with the structure of the foreign language spoken by the pupil might also help in making comparisons between the language the pupil is trying to master and his or her native language. This would be particularly useful for foreign language teachers. Furthermore, Nieto (2002: 95) insists that teachers should not be left alone in their attempt to promote native language literacy; schools have to be accountable for providing the suitable setting and for offering pupils the chance to have education also in their mother tongue. This is already the case in Finland where pupils of multilingual background attend classes where they learn their own mother tongue in addition to Finnish as a second language. The underlying idea behind Nieto's (2002) guidelines is to promote linguistic equality and thus contribute to the equality of the pupils as well. If pupils and their multicultural and multilingual heritage is seen as an advantage in school, they will also learn to appreciate it themselves and this results in better learning outcomes among these pupils.

5.2 Immigrant pupils and Finnish

Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 221) state that children who do not have a good command of English are unable to follow teaching at school and in addition to subject matter have to learn a language that is new to them. They also confirm that these language minority children often have trouble keeping up with others and are thus more likely to fail and drop out. This situation is also applicable to pupils of multicultural background in Finland. Maisa Martin (1999: 84), a pioneer of Finnish as a Second Language (FSL) studies, underlines the importance of Finnish in Finnish schools: it is used as the common language in all teaching thus making it almost impossible for pupils who do not understand and speak Finnish to follow instruction in the classroom. Since a good command of the language spoken at school is the basis for learning, Martin (1999: 84)

points out that multiculturally equal learning environments attempt to contribute both to the development of the school language, in this case Finnish, and to the development of the pupils' mother tongues. The following paragraphs will thus focus on the role of Finnish in Finnish classrooms and also on the role of the pupils' mother tongues in accordance with the principles of multicultural education. Lastly, the focus will shift on Miettinen and Pitkänen's study (1999: 13-15) by revealing more about the perceptions teachers have of the linguistic problems in the classroom. Language has an important role to play, particularly in foreign language teaching and language minority pupils' special needs have to be met in order for a learning environment to be able to call itself multicultural.

As far as immigrant pupils and Finnish are concerned, Martin (1999: 89) stresses both the importance of learning Finnish in academic achievement and the fact that learning a new language – any language – takes time. Pupils whose mother tongue is something other than Finnish have to not only tackle the new language but also learn the way Finnish is used to express cultural issues. Language, culture and thinking are interconnected and the way speakers of a certain language use their language also reflects the world they live in (Martin 1999: 87). Therefore, immigrant pupils have to learn how to express themselves in a foreign language and in addition learn to receive information provided in that language.

The language used at school is different from the language used in everyday life: it is more abstract and includes concepts which are often also culture-specific. According to Martin (1999: 90), it is thus the responsibility of the entire school community to support the immigrant pupils' development in Finnish, not only that of the teacher in preparatory studies or that of the FSL teacher. Teachers also have to realize that errors are part of the language learning process and if an immigrant pupil seems to be making grammatical mistakes which he or she did not make before, it might in fact mean that he or she is making progress by having learned a certain grammatical rule and is now applying it to all situations (Martin 1999: 89). Martin (1999: 90) also reminds teachers not to fall in the trap where the pupil seems to be speaking Finnish which sounds almost flawless because it might not in fact be an indicator of their comprehension skills. Sometimes pupils try additionally hard to sound like native speakers but in fact can only talk about basic topics such as their family, friends or hobbies and thus do not understand the more abstract matters discussed in class. Since everyone learns a new language differently and at a different pace, it is crucial that all teachers in multicultural

environments know something about the process of language learning in order to be able to support the development of their language minority pupils (Nieto 2002: 93).

Even though Martin (1999: 84) states that a fairly good command of Finnish is a prerequisite in Finnish schools, she also stresses that if schools want to be in line with the principles of multicultural education and teaching, they also have to support the development of these pupils' mother tongues. The role of the mother tongue in bi- and multilingual education is a complex one, also discussed by Nieto (2002: 87). She states that traditionally language diversity has been seen as something negative, something that is more of a hindrance to the pupil than an asset. Thus language minority pupils have been taught to forget their mother tongue as soon as they have been able to cope with the dominant language. According to Nieto (2002: 87), this approach is harmful for several reasons: firstly, it teaches pupils to resent their mother tongue and to think that they are lacking something instead of regarding their bi- or multilingualism as an advantage. Secondly, pupils have to begin their education from the beginning because the general conception is that if the pupil went to school in his or her native country, they have either not learned enough or have learned them from too different a perspective to take part in the current teaching. Thirdly, Nieto (2002: 87) confirms that in most cases pupils forget their mother tongues in the process, which is a shame and something they might regret later in life. This is probably more true of English-speaking countries but is becoming increasingly true of Finland, too. If home is the only place pupils of multicultural background hear their native language spoken and possibly never learn to write it, they are in danger of becoming monolingual. According to Nieto (2002: 90), it seems that promoting native language development also contributes to academic success and language learning in general. A multicultural school thus sees linguistic diversity as something that needs to be cherished and pupils who speak something other than the dominant language as their mother tongue should be encouraged to maintain their proficiency in their native language, along with the proficiency of the language spoken at school.

Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999: 13-15) have studied the conceptions teachers have of immigrant pupils and one aspect of their studies concentrates on linguistic matters. Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999: 13) conclude that teachers often feel burdened by language minority pupils because they worry about all pupils in the classroom: on the one hand, they are afraid that these pupils without good enough a command of Finnish will underachieve and thus drop out, and on the other hand, they fear that pupils of

Finnish background will be distracted by the pupils whose language skills are not sufficient and become frustrated. According to Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999: 13-14), teachers feel they have to work harder and try to make special arrangements for language minority pupils and in addition teachers are lacking resources which makes them feel even more burdened and frustrated. Communication is naturally more difficult between people who do not share a common language and according to Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999: 15), problems in communication with language minority pupils was not the only concern teachers have – they are also worried about their ability to communicate with these pupils' parents. According to Miettinen and Pitkänen's study (1999: 15), 84 percent of Finnish-speaking teachers consider linguistic issues to be a problematic matter. This percentage clearly indicates that language has an important role to play in teaching and that there is still a long way to go as far as promoting bi- and multilingualism among language minority pupils is concerned, never more so than now that the number of immigrant pupils has increased enormously in a decade.

5.3 Foreign language learning and pupils of multicultural background

This chapter will focus more on what it means to learn and teach foreign languages when pupils with multicultural backgrounds are concerned and a functional multilingualism is definitely the goal foreign language teachers should strive for. It might be easier said than done, though, and this chapter will attempt to shed some light on the complex matter that is teaching foreign languages through a language that is foreign to pupils whose mother tongue is something other than the language used at school. Little research has been conducted on how language minority pupils learn foreign languages and what type of problems teachers and pupils alike encounter in these situations. Sercu (2005: 1) discusses the importance of change in all teaching since linguistic minority children have become part of the everyday life in schools all around Europe and in other parts of the world too and goes on to say that particularly foreign language teachers should include the promotion of multicultural competence in their teaching. According to Sercu (2005: 1), the mere definition of foreign language teaching contains the dimension of multiculturalism but that along with the demographic change in European schools language teachers are now expected to teach their pupils how to acquire multicultural communicative competence, not just competence in the foreign language they are learning. Focusing on multilingualism and multiculturalism makes

teaching more equal for all pupils in the foreign language classroom but how this type of instruction is organized and what it demands of the teacher is another matter. Sercu (2005: 5) points out that teachers themselves have to be multiculturally competent in order to be able to increase their pupils' multicultural competence. Foreign language teaching has traditionally focused on increasing the knowledge of one particular language and culture but the new approach advocated by Sercu (2005) focuses on the idea of promoting the equality of all languages and all cultures in addition to providing information on one particular language and culture.

Since foreign language teaching for linguistically diverse pupils is a little-researched area and the few studies conducted on it are fairly recent, teachers are still lacking the practical applications needed to promote multicultural competence. Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999: 15) report that most teachers feel burdened by their multilingual pupils because they feel they do not know how to take these pupils into account in their teaching. However, according to Miettinen and Pitkänen's studies (1999: 14), Finnish teachers also feel that there are several advantages to having language minority pupils in the foreign language classroom: firstly, the motivation among the Finnish-speaking pupils increases when they see the benefits of language learning in practice. Secondly, teachers feel that pupils are not as afraid to speak in a foreign language when they have to do it for real communicative purposes and thirdly, it might promote tolerance when pupils encounter diversity through foreign languages and perhaps learn to see the similarities and differences in worldviews reflected in different languages.

It thus seems that pupils benefit from having pupils of different linguistic backgrounds in the classroom. However, there are still several questions waiting to be answered as far as foreign language teachers and language minority pupils are concerned. The study conducted by Castro and Sercu (2005: 21) confirms that foreign language teachers still attempt to develop the proficiency of their pupils in the language they teach and thus focus more on communicative competence instead of multicultural competence. This works against the pupils whose command in the language spoken at school might not be sufficient and thus try to master a foreign language through a language that is also foreign to them. It does not only encourage them to be ashamed of their multilingual background but also often results in frustration and insufficient skills in all three languages. Martin (1999: 90) also confirms that a language classroom is often far from being authentic and pupils who are possibly able to understand the pace of

their teacher's speech might be totally lost in situations outside of classroom. How foreign language teachers perceive their role as promoters of language equality and what types of actions they need to take in order for all pupils to learn, including those speaking the dominant language and those with a different mother tongue are in the focus of the present study and these matters will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

In conclusion, teachers' awareness of the processes of language learning seems to be crucial when it comes to teaching linguistically diverse pupils. Multicultural and multilingual teaching abandons the traditional view of immigrant pupils having to learn the dominant language as quickly as possible at the expense of their mother tongue and instead focuses on promoting linguistic equality and multicultural competence among pupils of every background. Martin (1999: 84) admits that Finnish is still the dominant language in Finnish schools and a much-needed tool also for immigrant pupils but the most important message conveyed by multilingual education is that there is no need for languages to exclude each other. Immigrant pupils can maintain competence in their mother tongue – and this should be encouraged by the school both by providing education in that language and also in the general attitudinal atmosphere – and acquire proficiency in the dominant language, in addition to learning foreign languages at school. Once again the change begins with teachers, particularly with foreign language teachers and it is not an easy challenge to respond to. Since there is so little research on how foreign languages should be taught to linguistically diverse pupils, teachers are facing this challenge unequipped, which in turn affects the academic achievement of these pupils. The present study aims at describing the ways English language teachers perceive themselves as multicultural teachers in multilingual classrooms and what they have done in order for all pupils to learn better. It goes without saying that further research is needed, particularly on how to make language learning and teaching for linguistically diverse pupils in practice as efficient as possible.

6 PREVIOUS STUDIES

The conceptions elementary school teachers have of immigrant pupils in the Finnish context have been researched to some extent (e.g. Miettinen and Pitkänen 1999; Miettinen 2001; Määttä 2008; Talib 2000) but it seems that English teachers, or language teachers in general for that matter, have not been examined, which, on the one hand, is a justification in itself for the present study but, on the other hand, makes it impossible to report on the findings of precisely identical previous studies. However, since a large part of the present study focuses on the multicultural competence and multicultural values of English teachers and not so much on the specific features of language teaching, the previous studies conducted on teachers' conceptions of pupils of multicultural background stand their ground and will thus be discussed in more detail in the following subsections. Firstly, a study conducted by Miettinen (2001) will be introduced. This researcher has summed up her results in four different teacher types, i.e. there seems to be four distinct categories teachers of immigrant pupils fall into in their multicultural teaching. Subsection 6.2 will briefly outline the results of Miettinen and Pitkänen's (1999), Talib's (2000) and Määttä's (2008) studies and summarize the implications these results have for the present study.

6.1. Different types of multicultural teachers

Miettinen (2001) conducted a study the purpose of which was to decipher the experiences and conceptions elementary school teachers in Eastern Finland have of teaching in a multicultural setting. The method used in this particular study was interviewing; firstly twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted and in addition, four teachers also provided videotaped interviews. The data were analysed qualitatively by using an Atlas/ti –program and the results revealed that teaching immigrant pupils is a double-edged sword: on one hand teachers find it to be enriching and challenging but on the other, they also consider it to be challenging and tiring. Based on the results, Miettinen (2001: 133) concluded there to be four different categories teachers of immigrant pupils fall into as far as their ideas of multicultural education and how they are realized in practice are concerned. These types were given the following names:

assimilative educator, routine-oriented educator, educator of tolerance and multicultural educator.

The first teacher type Miettinen (2001: 133-135) aptly calls *the assimilative educator*. A teacher who fits this profile has an active-passive professional orientation which means teachers of this type see themselves as instructors of teaching but often feel they are stuck in a rut and thus get tired of their work. According to Miettinen (2001: 133), assimilative educators seemingly state that pupils of multicultural background are an advantage in the school environment but in the end they see this multiculturalism as a shortcoming which needs to be corrected by assimilation, i.e. by turning pupils of multicultural background as Finnish as possible. Assimilative educators tend to rely on stereotypical thinking and thus have prejudices towards immigrant pupils. They see diversity as something that needs to be pointed out in the classroom – even if their stereotypes might be realized in the manner of calling pupils of multicultural background as something new and refreshing. They consider themselves to be tolerant but rarely think of organizing their teaching from the point of view of the multicultural pupil. In addition to tolerance, assimilative educators have feelings of superiority to their immigrant pupils because, according to Miettinen (2001: 133), their view of the world is ethnocentric and nationalistic. As far as reflection and questioning one's own thinking are concerned, assimilative educators do neither of them because they do not consider it to be necessary or even relevant. The previous experiences these teachers have of foreigners and encounters between different cultures they have acquired from their holiday trips prior to teaching pupils of multicultural background.

The routine-oriented educator has a passive orientation to his or her work and their teaching has been reduced to routines – as the name appropriately suggests. As stated by Miettinen (2001: 135), these teachers are patient in that they repeat and advise the pupils to the point of exhaustion because they feel that they are responsible for their pupils' learning. The teacher does all the work while the pupils are passive recipients and that is also why routine-oriented educators see pupils of multicultural background as cultural stereotypes and diversity as a problem. These teachers feel that multiculturalism is confusing the previously organized school and class environment because it takes time to initiate the pupils to the school system and tracking seems to be impossible. According to Miettinen (2001: 135), all this adds to the stress of the teacher thus making him or her even more frustrated and tired. Routine-oriented educators seem to lump pupils of similar backgrounds together thus adding to the stereotypical thinking by

stating for example that all Somali pupils are alike. The more hard-working and more adjusted to the school's norms these pupils are, the better stigma their entire cultural clique receives. On the other hand, Miettinen (2001: 135) states that routine-oriented educators see their pupils with distinct personal features that affect the way they act in school. Since the theoretical background these teachers have of teaching and learning is behaviouristic, learning is not supposed to be enjoyable and pupils only have to take in what the teacher says. Therefore, the specific cultural differences of immigrant pupils are not pointed out in class but the teacher tries to treat everybody in the same fashion. A routine-oriented teacher is in favour of first language education to immigrant pupils but since they have little or no experience of foreigners outside of school, they try to maintain their routines and keep their teaching as distraction-free as possible.

The third teacher type introduced by Miettinen (2001: 136) is *the educator of tolerance*. These teachers are actively oriented towards their own teaching but they are slightly afraid of the new and thus are inclined to burn out. However, these teachers have a realistic coping strategy: they do what they can and the rest of the problems will be solved in time. They are aware of their own deficiencies but tend not to do anything about them. Miettinen (2001: 136) affirms that educators of tolerance take responsibility for their pupils, also for their pupils of multicultural background but still might not have changed their teaching in order to make it more suitable and efficient for immigrant pupils. Educators of tolerance emphasize the significance of personality in teaching and their teaching is more pupil- than teacher-based. These teachers tend to be motivated but slightly insecure about their own abilities. They rely on empathy and attempt to see all pupils, including immigrant pupils, as individuals who have their own personalities and should be treated accordingly. Miettinen (2001: 137) states that these teachers see people as same and as different at the same time and that is why diversity is acceptable but nonetheless strange to some extent. Educators of tolerance want their pupils to reach their full potential and as far as immigrant pupils are concerned, these teachers try to make their pupils of multicultural background as beneficial for society as possible. In the beginning these teachers consider immigrant pupils to be difficult because they confuse the daily routines and demand a new set of actions. In terms of pointing out cultural differences, Miettinen (2001: 138) says educators of tolerance have a dual relation to it: some teachers want to hide it because they do not want to make it an issue in the classroom while others want to stress it because it is important for pupils of multicultural background to maintain their bi- or multicultural background and learn to take pride in

their multicultural heritage. Educators of tolerance generally highlight the importance of cultural education even if there were no pupils of diverse ethnic backgrounds in the classroom.

Miettinen's (2001: 138) fourth and final teacher type is *the multicultural educator*. These teachers are active towards their profession which is reflected in their pupil-based, interactive and constructive teaching, in their experience of pupils of multicultural background as an interesting challenge and in their need to self-reflect and develop as a teacher professionally. Multicultural educators are motivated and they do everything they possibly can to facilitate the learning of pupils of multicultural background, particularly if the pupil does not have a sufficient command of the dominant language, in this case Finnish. These teachers confess that pupils of diverse backgrounds have added to their workload but they see it as a positive challenge, not as a burden. Multicultural educators might sometimes be insecure about their own abilities but nevertheless they have faith in their ability to make a difference. According to Miettinen (2001: 139), this teacher type wants to work as a bridge between the Finnish culture and the culture of the immigrant pupil and wants to actively fight against racism and discrimination. Multicultural educators reflect on their work, they attempt to increase their professional knowledge and consciously change their way of thinking to better suit the needs of their pupils of multicultural background. They want to support the development of their pupils' identities, in addition to promoting positive attitudes and human rights. Diversity is not a problem, it is a reality and multicultural educators seek similarities instead of differences. One's culture is an important part of one's identity and Miettinen's (2001: 139) results showed that multicultural educators attempt to contribute to the multicultural identities of their pupils by letting them tell stories about their lives and about their culture. It is the teacher's responsibility to daily shed some light on as to why different cultures function differently and to make the pupils see that despite differences, there are similarities. According to Miettinen (2001: 140), multicultural educators want to promote their pupils' multicultural competence and they have realized that it starts within themselves: by learning their pupils' languages, these teachers aim not only at facilitating the learning of their pupils but also at supporting their emotional and cultural growth. Multicultural educators take into account the starting level of the pupil and approve of different ways of communication. By trying to oppose assimilation and integration, multicultural educators attempt to convey an important message to their

pupils of multicultural background: everyone is valuable for who they are and everyone should be proud of their cultural background, native language and ethnicity.

Talib (2000, 2002) has also conducted studies on teachers' conceptions on immigrant pupils and multicultural education. In her study conducted in 2002 Talib (2002: 105) added to Miettinen's (2001) list one more category which still prevails in Finnish schools despite the fact that immigrant pupils have been more or less an everyday phenomenon in Finnish schools for over a decade already. According to Talib (2002: 105), there are still teachers in Finnish schools who are intolerant, frustrated and have negative attitudes towards pupils of multicultural background. These teachers are aggressive towards immigrant pupils, they pity them and would rather not teach them at all. Some of these intolerant teachers do not express their frustration but instead maintain a certain laissez-faire attitude in that they become cynical towards teaching in general and towards their pupils. Frustration increases when teachers feel that their problems with immigrant pupils are larger than the resources they have to solve these problems. Talib (2002: 105-106) states that teachers have reported to have too little knowledge of different cultures and of their pupils in general, in addition to having inadequate teacher training and insufficient resources. When teachers become aware of not being in control in class, they also admit that immigrant pupils make them feel powerless which in turn increases intolerance and negative attitudes. According to Talib (2002: 106), frustrated and insecure teachers often rely on stereotypes and tend to make generalizations about their pupils of diverse backgrounds in the classroom. These teachers are unsatisfied with their own work but they choose to vent their anger on their pupils, and negative attitudes towards pupils of multicultural background might in fact be used to cover up their insecurities. All in all, immigrant pupils are just the tip of the iceberg – something which pushes these already tired and burnt out teachers over the edge.

6.2 Teachers' values, attitudes and beliefs concerning immigrant pupils

Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999), Talib (2000) and Määttä (2008) have all studied the conceptions elementary school teachers have of immigrant pupils and the results have been fairly consistent with each other, i.e. there are aspects which seem to reoccur in all of these studies. The following paragraphs will briefly outline the four major findings which Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999), Talib (2000) and Määttä (2008) have all found to be true and their implications for the present study will be discussed shortly at the end of

this subsection. The four main findings include the insecurity and ignorance among teachers teaching immigrant pupils; the insignificant role teachers seem to think they have in terms of having an impact on the lives and learning of immigrant pupils; the lack of resources and time which makes it difficult for teachers to implement multicultural values in their teaching even if they see consider multiculturalism to be important; and lastly, their own pedagogical competence and the way it is constructed. These major findings will be discussed in more detail after a short introduction to all of the three studies.

Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999) conducted their study on the views teachers in Finnish middle and high schools have of multicultural education and how they see the increased multiculturalism and immigration in Finnish classrooms. The method for the study was quantitative; the researchers sent questionnaires to teachers all around Finland and the data were coded by using an Atlas/ti programme to help form textual clusters out of the data. The results revealed that in theory teachers are in favour of multicultural education and multicultural issues in general but in practice multicultural principles are not reflected in everyday teaching. In fact, most teachers considered not taking cultural issues into account the most equal way of providing pupils with multicultural teaching. In addition, many of the teachers said to find multicultural education burdening and tiring and the lack of resources was mentioned to be one their main concerns. These results were compatible with other studies conducted on the same topic.

Talib's (2000) study combined both quantitative and qualitative research methods; 121 teachers in Eastern Helsinki took part in the study by filling out questionnaires and in addition, all of the teachers were interviewed by using a semi-structured interview model. The results of Talib's (2000) study will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraph but her results seemed to be in tune with Miettinen and Pitkänen's (1999) study in that teachers find multicultural education to be enriching and challenging but at the same time-consuming and burdening. Määttä (2008) also conducted a qualitative study by receiving filled out questionnaires from 143 teachers. Määttä's (2008) main findings were that the more experience teachers have on multicultural matters, the more comfortable they feel in front of a classroom where there are pupils of various cultural backgrounds. In addition, they feel that the modern teacher education does not provide them with sufficient tools to tackle the everyday realities of a multicultural classroom.

One of the main findings in Talib's (2000: 194) study is that teachers lack knowledge when it comes to immigrant pupils, their learning and their cultural heritage in general. In addition, teachers do not know how to teach pupils of diverse backgrounds and this results in insecurity and powerlessness which can, in turn, lead to burnouts. Määttä (2008: 64) confirms these results by stating that teachers feel insecure about their own abilities due to their lack of experience. Määttä (2008: 64) states that it is in fact experience which makes teachers feel more secure whereas Talib (2000: 196) emphasizes the importance of teacher education. Talib (2000: 196) says that in order for teachers to grow professionally and to increase their knowledge about multicultural issues, teacher education and updates in professional training are of paramount importance. In addition to cultural information, teachers are also lacking imperative information on learning difficulties among all types of learners, including those of multicultural background. Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999: 28) state that teachers need practical advice on how to interpret the behaviour of their multicultural pupils. Since teacher education does not reflect the state of schools in reality, teachers who are only starting their careers are faced with a difficult challenge when they first enter a classroom. Talib (2000: 194-195) confirms that teachers often have an ideal and unrealistic picture of the school as a neutral and democratic institution which in turn is reflected in their own work. If teachers are under the assumption that schools are already perfect as far as multicultural issues are concerned, they will see no need to make any changes into the status quo while still remaining insecure in the face of diversity.

Talib (2000: 195) states that another crucial finding in her study is the fact that teachers do not seem to consider their own role to be important in enhancing the academic achievement of pupils of multicultural background. Teachers believe, however, that their own attitudes are reflected in their teaching and thus have an impact on their pupils but nevertheless, they remain fairly pessimistic as far as the academic success of immigrant pupils is concerned. Talib (2000: 195) says that this tendency to underestimate the power teachers have can be harmful for pupils of diverse backgrounds since these assumptions often lead to low expectations and pupils themselves cease to have confidence in themselves and in their abilities. Teachers therefore have to have faith in all of their pupils, not just the ones who seem most likely to succeed. Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999: 29) state that all Finnish education aims at contributing to the development of the pupil's identity and self-esteem and if teachers fail to believe in some of their pupils, they in fact contribute to the development of low self-esteem and to

the disintegration of identity. Cultural heritage is an important part of one's identity and thus teachers should know how to support the personal growth of their pupils in order to promote learning. It all starts within themselves and with their own role: teachers need to feel that they are making a difference in their pupils' lives and particularly in the lives of their immigrant pupils who often have experienced cruelty and misery in their home countries and now have a chance for a somewhat normal life in the new country. Talib (2000: 195) says that for some immigrant pupils the teacher can be that one last glimpse of hope. Teachers have to realize that and try to establish a communicative relationship with their pupils because only by doing that can they contribute to their pupils' learning and truly make a difference.

Both Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999: 27) and Talib (2000: 195-196) mention the lack of resources and lack of time which stand in the way of true multicultural learning. Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999: 27) state that most teachers have a positive attitude towards diversity and in theory they see intercultural communication as something which could reduce prejudices and promote tolerance. However, in the harsh reality of classrooms it is difficult to maintain a positive attitude and thus Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999: 27) add that teachers proved to have several concerns when it comes to teaching immigrant pupils, the main of which are the lack of resources and lack of time. Teachers do not know what multicultural teaching contains and in addition to ignorance, they do not have ample time to give to the immigrant pupil and his or her development. Talib (2000: 196) also acknowledges this by stating that immigrant pupils need time for both cultural adjustment and language learning and since teachers cannot wait for too long, this results in teachers feeling stressed, guilty and burnt out. The lack of time thus prevents the teacher from establishing a meaningful communicative relationship with the immigrant pupil and mutual understanding will thus not be reached. This is a disadvantage both for the pupil and for the teacher and according to Talib (2000: 196) can even lead to neglect, cynicism and intolerance on part of the teacher. Failures in launching a communicative relationship can also result from linguistic difficulties, i.e. if the pupil has not yet reached good enough a command in the language spoken in the classroom. According to Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999: 27), language problems are a serious concern for teachers of immigrant pupils since teachers do not know how to approach and teach pupils who they do not share a common language with.

The final major finding discussed particularly by Talib (2000: 196) and Määttä (2008: 64) is the pedagogical competence of teachers and how it is constructed. Their

results have confirmed that in order for teachers to be able to feel secure and confident in the face of diversity and in order for them to be able to give the best possible education for all pupils of all backgrounds, they need to be multiculturally competent. Multicultural competence is part of their pedagogical competence and both Talib (2000: 196) and Miettinen and Pitkänen (1999: 28) state that teachers should be aware of the values and beliefs they have since they pass them on to their pupils, particularly when teaching pupils of multicultural background. This requires constant self-reflection and one has to be willing to develop oneself professionally and at the same time personally. According to Määttä (2008: 64), teachers who have lived abroad for longer periods of time seem to be multiculturally more competent than those who do not have this experience. Määttä (2008: 64) states that what makes it interesting is the fact that these teachers did not teach while they had lived abroad and yet still they felt particularly pedagogically more competent than the ones who had not lived abroad. It thus seems that living abroad widens one's horizons and makes one more susceptible to detect cultural differences and similarities. Since one has more experience on communicating with people of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the shock of having pupils of diverse backgrounds is not so strong. Talib (2000: 197) aptly summarizes the role of a teacher of immigrant pupils: teachers have to, above all, support and help themselves and their pupils in the construction of their sensitive identities and this requires knowledge and vision that is pedagogically and socially widened, i.e. ready to expand and adjust itself if necessary. There are always more than one option to choose from and multiculturally competent teachers know how to exploit this range of options.

To conclude, previous studies (Miettinen and Pitkänen 1999; Miettinen 2001; Määttä 2008; Talib 2000, 2002) confirm that teachers of immigrant pupils have to take multicultural issues into account and they have various approaches to these issues. Teachers can be categorized into multicultural teacher types according their beliefs, attitudes and values concerning immigrant pupils. In Talib's (2000: 191) study more than a half of the teachers participating in the study claimed to be multiculturally oriented but in some cases teachers tend to see themselves as multicultural while still remaining prejudiced or even discriminative towards immigrant pupils in a real classroom situation. It seems that teachers support diversity in schools in theory but the lack of resources, time, information and a common language are reasons why they might feel different in practice. It remains to be seen whether the present study will confirm the previous results thus stating that teachers in Finnish schools still feel unequipped and

uninformed when it comes to multicultural pupils or whether improvement, at least on part of the subjects of the present study, might be taking place while the first decade of the 21st century is coming to an end and immigrant pupils have been a reality in Finnish schools for nearly two decades now. At least one thing is clear based on the results of previous studies: major changes have to take place in Finnish teacher education in order for teachers to feel more secure and competent in their profession. The existence of multiculturalism in Finnish schools is an undeniable fact and can no longer be ignored. The present study aims at revealing how English teachers in Finnish classrooms today perceive themselves and their pupils of multicultural backgrounds and whether they feel something needs to be changed and how.

7 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

7.1 Aim of the study

Previous studies (Talib 2000; Miettinen 2001) have shown there to be a juxtaposition between theory and practice, i.e. teachers see themselves as multicultural and consider diversity to be an asset but nevertheless feel burdened by the linguistic and cultural heterogeneity that comes with pupils of multicultural background. The research questions and hypotheses of the present study consist of several parts which are also reflected in the interview plan (Appendix 1), explained more thoroughly in section 5.3. The main purpose of the study is to shed light on the conceptions middle school (*yläkoulu* in the Finnish school system) English teachers have of multicultural education and teaching and of pupils of multicultural background. The term conception was chosen for the title of the study because it refers to an idea that a person already has in his mind about some particular subject (*Cobuild advanced learner's English dictionary* 2003: 285). The present study is specifically trying to find answers to the following three questions: 1) How do middle school English teachers construct the term multicultural teaching, i.e. what do they think multicultural teaching entails? 2) How do they perceive teaching English in a culturally diverse classroom? and 3) What are their conceptions of their pupils of multicultural background?

The hypothesis for the present study derives from the juxtaposition mentioned between theory and practice, implying that teachers might still lack resources and knowledge which makes them feel unequipped in the face of diversity, thus making

them feel frustrated, even though these teachers might genuinely want to take all pupils into account in their teaching. The present study is particularly interested in multiculturalism in the English language classroom since it is a topic which has not previously been studied. The aim of this study is to elucidate whether teachers in their own view implement multicultural values and attitudes into their own teaching and if they do, how and how they view their own role in this implementation process. Emphasis will be particularly put on multicultural teaching and its principles and on linguistic matters, such as what it means to teach a foreign language to a linguistically diverse group and what roles other languages, such as the dominant language and the mother tongues of the minority pupils play in language teaching.

7.2 Methodology

7.2.1 Choice of research method

Interviewing is a frequent method in qualitative analysis and interviews vary in form (Dörnyei 2007: 134). Dörnyei (2007: 134) states that interviewing has a high social profile, i.e. interviews take place everywhere and most people have taken part in an interview, thus making it a method which does not require plenty of pre-interview explaining for the participants. Due to its versatile nature and the fact that it is so well-known as part of everyday communication, Dörnyei (2007: 134) affirms that interview has, in fact, become the most common method in qualitative research. Seidman (2006: 9) states that interviewing is for those who are interested in other people's stories because these stories have a value and for those who know how to keep their "egos in check". Interviewers should be aware of the importance of the interviewee and try to keep their own voice as neutral and as unheard as possible and let the other person share their story. The following two paragraphs will briefly outline the different interview types, focusing mainly on semi-structured interviews since the semi-structured interview is the type used in the present study.

Both Dörnyei (2007: 135-136) and Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002: 76) divide the different interview types into three categories based on the degree of their structure: one extreme being *the structured interview* and the other extreme being *the unstructured interview*. What is left in the middle is *the semi-structured interview*. These are the terms Dörnyei (2007: 135) uses whereas Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002: 76) prefer the terms *form*

interview, *theme interview* and *in-depth interview*. Since these terms are interchangeable, the ones preferred by Dörnyei (2007: 135) will be used in the present study. According to Dörnyei (2007: 135), *the structured interview* is, as the name suggests, a structured format where the interviewer uses a pre-prepared interview schedule which includes a specific set of questions to be discussed in detail with all of the interviewees. The advantage of this interview type is that it makes the answers between different participants more comparable but on the other hand the richness of the data is limited since there is not much room for deviation from the original set of questions. In contrast, the other end of the spectrum is *the unstructured interview* which leaves plenty of room for the interviewee to take the interview to unexpected directions and is the most flexible option for both the interviewer and the interviewee (Dörnyei 2007: 135-136). There is no pre-prepared interview guide and according to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002: 78), merely the topic, which the interviewee is supposed to elaborate on, is predetermined. This interview format is often used when only one person is the subject of the study and might be interviewed several times. Dörnyei (2007: 136) points out that in order for an unstructured interview to fully work, it is essential that the interviewer and the interviewee have an excellent relationship so that the interviewee does not feel uncomfortable in a situation where he or she is expected to speak freely about a given topic.

According to Dörnyei (2007: 136), the most common interview format in applied linguistics is *the semi-structured interview*. This interview type is in the middle of the spectrum between the two ends which means that there is a set of questions which have been prepared in advance but nevertheless, the interviewee is asked to explain in an open fashion about the topics that come up. It is not prohibited to give the interviewee more freedom, i.e. he or she can take the conversation into new directions even though the interviewer is there to provide certain guidelines and to keep the conversation loosely in order. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002: 77) use the term *theme interview* since this interview type often focuses on specific themes and the emphasis is particularly on how the interviewee interprets and perceives certain issues. Dörnyei (2007: 136) states that semi-structured interviews are apt in situations where the interviewer knows enough about the topic in order to be able to prepare broad questions in advance but is not willing to limit the interview by using predetermined response categories. Generally all of the interviewees are required to answer the same questions but the wording and the order of

the questions might vary depending on the interview situation and on the interviewee's talkativeness.

Since interviewing is such a popular and socially appreciated research method, there are several advantages to it (Dörnyei 2007: 143). Firstly, it enables the researcher to acquire plenty of in-depth data and thus ask the interviewee to elaborate on the topic in further detail if the information he or she has given is not enough or something remains unclear. Secondly, Dörnyei (2007: 143) asserts that interviewing is a method which most people are familiar with and thus feel comfortable using and this helps in acquiring rich data from the participants. Thirdly, since the interviewer is present in the data collection situation, there is a certain flexibility to the method, which cannot be gained by questionnaires, for example. This is also the main asset in interviewing mentioned by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002: 75). According to them, the interviewer has the chance to repeat a question or clarify it in a way someone conducting quantitative research by questionnaires would never be able to do. Fourthly, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002: 76) point out that the interviewer can also work as an observer, not only writing down *what* is being said but also *how* it is said. Intonation, rhythm, pitch and hesitation markers all have an impact on what is actually pronounced but only in research methods where the participants' real voices are heard, can these factors be taken into account. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002: 76), the fifth and final advantage in interviewing is that once the interview has been scheduled in person, participants rarely take back their promise and refuse to be interviewed or prohibit the data from being used for research purposes. The participants have generally been selected so that they have experience on the research topic which thus results in rich and useful data.

There are, naturally, disadvantages to interviewing as a method and one of the main weaknesses, both according to Dörnyei (2004: 143) and Seidman (2006: 12), is that it is extremely time-consuming. It takes time to set up interviews, find the participants, conduct the interviews and after that there is the analysis process which includes both transcribing and analyzing the transcribed data. Seidman (2006: 12) even goes on to say that researchers conducting interviews might want to hire additional help to do the transcriptions and if no such help is available, the researcher has to do it all. In addition, according to Seidman (2006: 12), the process of contacting strangers and interviewing them might be difficult for some researchers, particularly if the person is shy or insecure about his or her communication skills. However, sometimes choosing interviewing as the research method can at its best help the researcher to overcome his or

her shyness. In addition to the fact that interviewing is time-consuming and requires good communication skills, it is also a qualitative research method which means that it enables the interviewer to get in-depth data on a few participants but not to make any far-reaching generalizations based on the results. However, since the point is to go deeper into the insights of the limited number of participants, the setting of the study is different from a quantitative study to begin with.

With interviewing the researcher always runs the risk of affecting the results by being present in the data collection situation. However, qualitative research can be just as valid and reliable as quantitative research when the interview setting is well-prepared in advance and when the researcher is aware of these risks. Interviewing was chosen as the suitable method for the present study because the focus of the study is on the conceptions of the teachers and studying personal opinions and attitudes in a more quantitative format might not have given equally insightful results. Questionnaires and thus presenting the results in a numeral and general form could have been another alternative since previous studies have used both quantitative (Talib 2000) and qualitative (Miettinen 2001) data collection methods. Other methodological options could have been observing a classroom situation, group interviews and narratives to name a few but the current choice of method was limited to semi-structured interviews.

7.2.2 Participants of the study

The study included eight participants, all middle school English teachers with teaching experience ranging from four to thirty years. Two of the teachers were male and six of them female. Three of the women and one of the men had ten years or less of teaching experience and three of the participants, two women and one man, had been working as teachers for approximately thirty years during the time of the interviews in April 2009. In addition, one teacher had graduated over twenty-five years ago but she had worked as a principal and in other school administrative duties and thus had merely twelve years of teaching experience in English. Four of the participants were teaching in two different middle schools in eastern Helsinki, the capital of Finland. Two of the participants were teachers in two middle schools in Vantaa, a town of approximately 200 000 people, located in the capital region. The two remaining participants were teachers in two different middle schools in Jyväskylä, a town located in Central Finland and the population of which is circa 130 000. Merely the participants who taught in the same

schools in Helsinki knew each other prior to the study but other than that, the participants shared no connection with each other and were not informed about the identities of the other teachers taking part in the study.

The participants were chosen based on the schools where they taught at the time of the study. The schools were chosen based on an Internet search which was an indication of the number of immigrant pupils they had in relation to pupils of Finnish background and e-mails were sent to all English teachers in the selected schools. All of the middle schools in the present study had a high number of immigrant pupils and pupils of diverse backgrounds which was a prerequisite since it was crucial for the study that all the participants had experience of teaching a multicultural classroom. The original search included eight schools but responses were received only from six. Fortunately, in two schools in Helsinki both of the English teachers were willing to take part in the study, thus resulting in the total number of eight participants. In addition, one teacher was willing to take part in the study but she had not had any previous experience of teaching immigrant pupils and thus was not interviewed for this particular study. In order to maintain their anonymity, the eight participants will be called Jane, Helen, Kate, Sarah, Paul, Tom, Maria and Linda throughout the study.

7.2.3 Interview

The present study consisted of eight semi-structured interviews conducted in April 2009 (see Appendix 1). All of the interviews were one-on-one interviews conducted in a quiet space where only the interviewee and the researcher were present. The interviews were semi-structured including seven broader themes which were specified with more precise questions. All of the themes were discussed with each participant but not all the specific questions were covered since some of the questions overlapped and in order to avoid repetition and to make the conversation run smoothly, the researcher gave the participants the freedom to elaborate quite freely on the given themes. Thus none of the interviews were identical but they all included the same themes and were conducted in Finnish since the teachers were Finnish and so was the researcher. The questions aimed at revealing the type of conceptions the participants, i.e. middle school English teachers had of pupils of multicultural background and of multicultural teaching in general and particularly in the English classroom. The interview included questions such as: “What do you think multicultural education is?”, “Would you say your own teaching is

multicultural?”, “What do pupils of multicultural background bring into the classroom?”, “How much do you know of your pupils’ linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds?” and “What are the biggest challenges and the biggest gains in teaching foreign languages to immigrant pupils?”. For a complete list of questions, see Appendix 1.

All of the interviews were tape-recorded and the recorded interviews were transcribed word for word (see Appendix 2). It was essential to transcribe the recordings literally so that the researcher’s own opinions would not affect the process of analysis. However, an extremely fine transcription that would have included the length of the pauses and all the intonation markers was not necessary here since it is the contents, not the discourse level, which will be analyzed and discussed. Content analysis as a means to analyze data will be discussed in further detail in the following section but since it is text analysis and the data can be found in what the interviewees said, transcriptions were mandatory. The average duration of the interviews was approximately 38 minutes even though two of the interviews lasted up to 50 minutes or more. The total amount of recorded conversation was 304 minutes and 10 seconds.

7.3 Analysis

7.3.1 Content analysis

According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002: 93), content analysis is one of the basic analysis methods in qualitative research and in addition to being considered a single method, it can also be seen as a broader theoretical framework in qualitative research. However, since content analysis will be used as a precise method in the present study, it will be discussed as such in this particular section. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002: 105) state that content analysis works well with unstructured data since it makes it possible to present it in a systematic and objective manner. Dörnyei (2007: 245) points out that content analysis was in fact originally used in quantitative research but was later adopted into qualitative research and has thus evolved in the process: in content analysis the categories, i.e. the results of the study, arise from the data itself and are therefore not prearranged. It is essential that the researcher is aware of the nature of qualitative research and content analysis before conducting the actual study in order to achieve what Dörnyei (2007: 246) calls the “latent level analysis”, i.e. the stage where the researcher

is able to find deeper underlying meanings in the data and interpret it accordingly. When there is plenty of data to search those deeper meanings from, it is crucial that the researcher has a distinct idea of what is important and what is not.

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002: 106) define content analysis as text analysis which, instead of focusing on syntax or discourse level, examines the meanings in the utterances spoken or written by the participants of the study. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002: 110-111), content analysis as a process can be divided into three stages: the first stage is to reduce the data into transcriptions and to find the essential out of all the material. In the present study this meant making word-for-word transcriptions of the interviews. The second stage is to cluster the data by finding similarities and differences between different themes and different interviewees, i.e. taking out what is important and leaving out the data that is not. The third and final stage is to formulate theoretical concepts and draw conclusions from the reduced and clustered data. Content analysis is thus a process that is based on deduction and interpretation and which moves from empirical data into a more theoretical view of the research topic. Considering the present study and its data collection method, content analysis is the logical choice of analysis method since it is flexible in its possibilities to interpret the data and find what is relevant for the study.

7.3.2 Transcribing and analyzing the data of the present study

The total amount of recorded conversation was, as mentioned before, 304 minutes and 10 seconds. All the interviews were transcribed word for word but the finest possible transcriptions, including the length of the pauses, were not necessary since the study focuses on the meaning and the content of the interviews, not on the actual discourse. Content analysis being the analysis method, after transcriptions the data were clustered and interpreted into three broader themes: 1) English teachers and multicultural teaching, 2) teaching English to pupils of multicultural background and 3) English teachers' conceptions of pupils of multicultural background. These broader themes have been further divided into smaller sections and will be discussed in detail in the following three chapters. Since the present study is qualitative and the analysis method is content analysis, the conventional model of presenting the results first and discussing them later in a separate section will not be used in this particular study. Instead, the themes which have risen from the data will be presented and discussed in their separate sections, thus

combining the results and discussion sections. As a result, it is easier to get a clear picture of the data and its implications for this particular study and for future research alike.

8 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: ENGLISH TEACHERS AND MULTICULTURAL TEACHING

The focus of this chapter is on the teachers: on their knowledge of what multicultural teaching truly is, on the information they have received in teacher education and in further training on immigrant pupils and also on their multicultural competence. Section 8.1 will first discuss the teachers' personal background, putting emphasis specifically on work experience and how it may affect the teachers' attitudes and then moves on to the teachers' knowledge of their pupils, discussing also to what extent the interviewed teachers were interested in knowing about the backgrounds of their pupils. This section therefore provides a basis for further sections since it aims at shedding light on *why* the participants feel the way they do about their pupils of multicultural background.

8.1 Teachers' background and their knowledge of their pupils

There seems to be a correlation between what the participants of the study know and *want* to know about their pupils of multicultural background and how they perceive multiculturalism in the classroom in general. This subsection will provide further insight into the matter, discussing firstly the differences in work experience among the participants and the possible implications of these differences on how the teachers perceive immigrant pupils in their classroom. Secondly, subsection 8.1.2 will concentrate on the extent of the teachers' background knowledge of their pupils, taking also a closer look at how much interest the teachers showed in getting to know their pupils.

8.1.1 Work experience

The English teachers who were interviewed for this particular study were of different background in terms of work experience: three of the eight interviewees had worked as teachers for thirty years or more whereas the remaining five participants had worked in teaching ranging from four to twelve years. The decision was made to compare the teachers' attitudes towards multicultural education and pupils of multicultural background to see whether there would be differences as a result of differences in the length of one's teaching career since there clearly was an intriguing generation gap between the ones who had worked for thirty years and the teachers who did not have as much experience in the field.

Those teachers who had worked for thirty years had all undergone two different periods in their career: the period when there were no immigrant pupils in schools and the period when immigrant pupils started appearing in larger numbers. All of these teachers knew they had to take the new situation into account accordingly but all of them also said to have been somewhat confused and worried during the time when these new pupils started arriving. They had not received any kind of training in multicultural teaching and therefore had not known how to approach these pupils, which in turn had left them feeling incompetent, ill-equipped and bewildered. Linda expressed her feelings of insecurity and the lack of background information in the following manner:

Linda: -- meillä oli hyvin epäselvää esimerkiksi maahantulevien perheitten se en tarkota nyt yksityiskohtaista taustaa vaan se että minkälainen esimerkiksi kielellinen tausta näillä lapsilla on ja öm luku- kirjoitustaidon yleisyys siinä kulttuurissa mistä he tulee ja et me jouduttiin aika lailla niinku puhtaalta pöydältä lähtemään mikä teki meidän elämän joskus aika vaikeeks

('-- it was really unclear to us for example what the immigrant families – and I'm not talking about a detailed background – but for example what the linguistic background of these children was and um the generality of literacy in the culture they were coming from so we had to pretty much start fresh which sometimes made our life fairly difficult')

On the other hand, *all* teachers in schools where immigrant pupils had been placed at were in the same position and thus received support from each other. These teachers who had been working for thirty years said to have made mistakes in the beginning,

mainly because of their lack of knowledge but eventually had become accustomed to and now felt relatively confident in teaching pupils of multicultural background.

It became thus clear that these teachers who had experienced two different periods, the one without and the one with immigrant pupils had felt insecure and even prejudiced at first towards immigrant pupils but, on the other hand, had also been forced to reflect on their own teaching during the shift in school demographics. According to Talib (2006: 149), self-reflection generally results in a deeper sense of self as a teacher which in turn leads to more efficient teaching. This seemed to be the case with Sarah and Linda, two teachers who had been working for more than thirty years. However, Tom, who had also been working for thirty years, seemed to be tired of his work in general and did not seem to have reflected on multicultural education even during the time when immigrant pupils first started to arrive. Thus, the less experienced participants seemed to be overall more comfortable with having immigrant pupils in the classroom but once again, this depended more on the teacher's general attitude towards multiculturalism and prior knowledge on the topic than on the number of years he or she had been working. For example, one of the participants, Paul, had specifically applied for a position in a multicultural school because he *wanted* to work in such an environment and with pupils of various backgrounds whereas Maria commented on her arrival in a multicultural school as follows:

Maria: *Ei ollu kyllä mitään tietoa [siitä, että koulussa on maahanmuuttajaoppilaita]. Ei se nyt varmaan olis päätökseen vaikuttanu puolin tai toisin. -- mä en oikeestaan niinku ajatellu asiaa ollenkaan.*

(‘I had no idea [that there were immigrant pupils in the school]. I don’t think it would have affected my decision in any way. – I didn’t think about the matter at all.’)

This kind of thinking was common among some of the other participants, too, and it clearly affected the way they approached multicultural teaching and immigrant pupils – most of these teachers did not take pupils of multicultural background into account in any specific way, thus resulting in teaching that was similar to all.

Furthermore, there is one aspect which should be taken into account in terms of work experience: those who had witnessed the period during which immigrant pupils had started arriving used the *we*-form more to refer to all of the teachers working in their school at the time, whereas the teachers who had started working in a school which

already had a fairly high number of immigrant pupils seemed to have felt more alone in the beginning. Even though they might have been accustomed to seeing immigrants in society in general, they had neither the experience nor the know-how to start teaching pupils of multicultural background and had nowhere to turn to for help once they became part of the teaching staff. A conclusion that could be drawn from this finding is that this might be the reason for why the younger teachers seemed, on the one hand, to be at ease with their immigrant pupils but on the other, did not seem to take them into account in their everyday teaching. They had not reflected on their teaching in the same way the more experienced teachers had and thus were under the impression that teaching all pupils in the same way was multicultural teaching at its best.

8.1.2 Teachers' knowledge of their pupils and its effect on attitudes

All of the teachers were asked to give a ballpark figure of how many pupils of multicultural background they taught and how many pupils of immigrant background there were in their school. It was not that relevant to know if the teachers truly gave the real number, instead it was more important to see how they approached the matter. Most of the teachers seemed puzzled by this question and some started counting the immigrant pupils they could remember having seen in class. Some of the teachers advised the interviewer to check the real numbers with the assistant principal because they wanted to be sure they were not giving entirely wrong estimates. One teacher, Helen, also wisely avoided the question by stating that it was sometimes hard to know whether a pupil was of immigrant background or not. Another teacher, Kate, also pointed out that defining a pupil of multicultural background was by no means easy since some pupils had one parent who was Finnish and the other foreign. In addition, there were pupils of Russian background who spoke perfect Finnish, looked like they were of Finnish background and possibly had Finnish names. It thus became clear that some of the teachers had not asked their pupils where they came from but instead had either made assumptions based on their looks or checked their nationality from the student register if needed. They did not consider it crucial to know where their pupils came from because most of the participants said they treated all pupils equally and thus defining a person based on their background seemed irrelevant and even discriminative to some of the teachers. Helen shared her thoughts on the matter in this way:

Helen: -- *kyllä nyt aina välillä on semmonen tietysti olo että ois hyvä tietää niinku enemmän, mutta ei ei mul välttämättä niinku sit niitten kulttuurisesta taustasta niin kauheesti et mun pitäis jokaisen yksittäisestä kulttuuritaustasta saa[da tietoa]- ei mulla oo semmosta niinku tarvetta. -- koska **mä en niinku koe että se et se on mitenkään kauheen ongelmallinen asia.***

(‘ of course I sometimes feel that it would be good to know more about everyone’s cultural background but on the other hand I don’t need to because I don’t think that it’s a very problematic issue.’)

Helen’s response seemed to suggest that she would have considered knowing more of the pupils’ backgrounds necessary only if the pupil had caused trouble in the classroom or was having problems related to learning.

Lack of interest in the pupils’ backgrounds was also reflected in the knowledge the teachers had of the countries that the immigrant pupils in their school came from. All of the teachers were able to name the largest immigration groups, i.e. Russians and Somalians in the schools in Helsinki and in Vantaa; and Kurds and Afghans in the schools in Jyväskylä, Central Finland. However, only three teachers were able to give a full account of the nationalities the pupils in their schools represented and coincidentally these teachers, namely Paul, Jane and Linda, were the most informed and also the most open-minded in their attitudes towards immigrant pupils. In addition to Russian, Somalians, Kurds and Afghans, the participants of the study taught pupils who had their roots in countries all over the world: Estonia, Vietnam, Peru, Kenya, Congo, Gambia, Turkey, Iraq and Iran to name a few. Most teachers were unable to name all of the countries and one teacher, Maria, even said that she would suspect based on the appearance of their pupils that some of their pupils were of African background but could not define it any further since she had never taught the pupils in question and thus did not know them well enough.

Not knowing how to define a pupil of multicultural background and not knowing where the pupils had come from exactly was a reflection of the way most of the teachers encountered the matter of multiculturalism in general which was relative ignorance. The assumption that can be made based on this finding is that they neither knew nor were that interested in finding out more about their pupils and did not see this as a disadvantage. Some of the teachers also got slightly defensive due to the nature of the interview, perhaps fearing that they would seem discriminative based on their answers and thus underlined the fact that they had not regarded multiculturalism as an issue and

by no means as a problem in the classroom. According to the principles of multicultural education (Gay 1998), not having a clear picture of the pupils the participants taught, can definitely be seen as a shortcoming which could lead to prejudiced and even discriminative behaviour. In this case the results suggested that those teachers who did not know and did not see it as important to find out about their pupils of immigrant background were slightly more negative in their attitudes towards multicultural teaching and immigrant pupils in general.

Even though according to Talib (2005: 40) ignorance enhances stereotypical thinking and knowledge thus reduces it, the matter can also be considered from another angle. Not all of the teachers who did not know much about their pupils of multicultural background were reluctant to learn more about their pupils, and those who were said that they wanted to treat all their pupils equally without letting their background interfere too much with their view of their pupils. Kate, for instance, said that it would be impossible to find out about every pupil's background and her approach to the matter was as quoted:

Kate: Mä en oo koskaan ajatellu, et joku lapsi, et aha, maahanmuuttaja. Hm, savolainen. Hm, kiinalainen. Ei, oppilas on oppilas, ei se- en mä oo ikinä niinkun luokitellu silleen tai ajatellu, että apua, että noi on jostain muualta, mä en niitä voi opettaa. Ei ei, se se on täysin vieras ajatus mulle.

(‘ **A pupil is a pupil**, I have never labelled them that way or thought that since those are from somewhere else, I can't teach them. No, it's a totally strange thought for me.’)

This is a valid point and future research on multicultural matters could focus more on whether omitting the background factor in teaching altogether is just the colour blindness Finnish classrooms need in order to be truly multicultural. However, it must be stated that since research on multicultural education (Gay 2000, Gollnick and Chinn 2009) has shown that multicultural teaching can only be effective when the teacher is familiar with the pupils' cultural background, it seems that the approach these teachers had was not the most beneficial for the pupils and their learning.

Half of the teachers said they had pupils of multicultural background in every single group they taught. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, most of these teachers had little or almost no knowledge of their pupils and the most common reason for not knowing more about the pupils was lack of time. Since multiculturalism in the

classroom was not something these teachers felt to be the most urgent matter to be dealt with and teaching as a profession includes plenty of matters which need to be taken care of simultaneously, most of the participants said they left time for other matters at the expense of learning more about their multicultural pupils. The participants felt that if they tried to find out more about their pupils, they would have to do it in their own time which was also an essential reason for why they had not taken the initiative and started gathering more information about their pupils and their cultural backgrounds. In addition, one teacher, Kate, expressed her feelings in this manner:

Kate: -- sitä mitä ei tiedä niin ei vielä tiedä mitä se on. Niin sen tiedon hakemisen- mistä mä otan, kun mulla ei oo mitään kysymystä niin mistä mä otan vastauksen? Mun pitäis ensin osata laatia ne [kysymykset]... tietää mitä mä en vielä tiedä ja lähtee sit hakee siihen vastausta.

(‘Searching for that information- when I don’t have a question, where do I find the answer? I should first know how to form [the questions]... know what I don’t know yet and then try to find an answer to that.’)

This quote sums up the idea several teachers had of firstly not knowing what to look for and secondly not knowing where to find that information. It thus seemed that the concept of culture and cultural heritage was too vast for these particular English teachers to grasp, despite the fact that they were teachers of a subject which most definitely included implementing the culture of the target language areas into teaching. Culture being too extensive a concept was also proven in the two comments made by Paul and Maria alike where they said that they hoped there were a file of each and every student, particularly of the immigrant pupils, which would include all the necessary information on the pupil’s cultural, educational, ethnic, linguistic and family background. Paul in particular was adamant about the need to abolish all discreetness when it came to immigrant pupils and letting it all come out, at least to teachers who needed to know what their pupils had experienced, what they had learned and what they knew in order to be able to adjust their teaching to the level that was suitable for the pupils. Paul said that much of the background information schools received on immigrant pupils never reached teachers because of the discreet nature of the purpose these pupils had come to Finland in the first place. What can be concluded from this finding is that teachers might be afraid to ask their pupils directly about their background, fearing what they might learn and fearing that the pupil might not be comfortable with discussing his or her past.

It seems fair to say that teachers should be trained in how to encounter pupils of diverse backgrounds and how to approach these pupils in a straight-forward but nevertheless tactful manner. That way they might not let their own cautiousness stand in the way of establishing an effective and trusting pupil-teacher relationship.

8.2 Multicultural teaching according to English teachers

All of the participants were asked to define the term *multicultural teaching* and quite surprisingly, they had some trouble with providing an explicit definition. Based on their various responses, it seemed that the teachers had neither a clear view on what multicultural teaching consisted of in theory nor how those principles could be applied in practice. According to the teachers, multicultural teaching most likely included aspects such as taking individual pupils into account in terms of their cultural background, respecting and cherishing diversity and dispelling prejudices and stereotypes among all pupils in the classroom by providing them with information and by showing them that even though people are different, similarities can nevertheless always be found. Helen characterized multicultural teaching in the following fashion:

Helen: -- *emmä tiää onko monikulttuurinen opetus siis sitä että otetaan niinku huomioon se et oppilaat tulee eri kulttuureista... että tota, et otetaan huomioon sitte ne niitten eri niinku kulttuuriperinnöt ja mitä kieliä ne niinku puhuu... et ne niinku voi tuoda sitä niitten tietotaitoa sitä niinku- niistä eri asioista sit myös siihen luokkatilanteeseen et ne vois opettaa myös toisia. -- ylipäänsä tällasta erilaisuuden hyväksymistä ja et tietää tota noin kohtaa niinku... et ihmisillä on ennakkoluuloja, kohtaa niitä ennakkoluuloja ja vähentää niitä ennakkoluuloja niinku välittämällä tietoo ja sillä, että on niinku, on henkilökohtaista suoraa kontaktia johonki ihmiseen. ('-- I don't know if multicultural teaching is that you take into account the fact that pupils come from different cultures and that they can bring their know-how on different matters also to the classroom and teach others. -- accepting others and confronting people's prejudices and diminishing them by providing information and by having personal contact with someone.')*

One aspect which several teachers mentioned in this context and which was not directly linked to the idea of multicultural teaching was the fact that the teachers would have liked to take into account the diverse backgrounds of their pupils but the lack of interest in learning among *all* pupils, immigrant or non-immigrant, had been a hindrance to

teaching. Thus teachers had been too tired and too frustrated to begin with to have any energy left for multicultural teaching. Consecutively, this proved the point that the participants considered multicultural teaching to be something separate, something which was detached from “normal” teaching instead of regarding it as an irremovable and natural part of everyday teaching, which is how Gay (1998: 16) defined multicultural teaching to be at its best.

In addition to not having a distinct idea of what the principles of multicultural teaching were, some of the teachers seemed to reject the concept altogether. Particularly two teachers, Paul and Kate, shared the view of providing every pupil with the exact same teaching, which in their opinion was the best and most equal way of approaching the matter. Paul expressed his thoughts as follows:

Paul: --*mä en koe ollenkaan antavani monikulttuurista opetusta että mun oppilaat on monista eri kulttuureista ja monia erilaisia taustoja, mutta mut mä en kuitenkaan näe, että mun opetukseni on sen monikulttuurisempaa... -- kaikilla on samat artikulaatioelimet ja samat valmiudet periaatteessa niinku käyttää niitä. **Kuka tahansa oppii minkä tahansa kielen kun vaan yrittää, et se on oikeestaan aika hienoo niinku yrittää aina häivyttää se, että jos te luulette että te ootte erilaisia, ette te oikeesti oo, te ootte samanlaisia.***

(‘-- I don’t think that what I’m providing is multicultural teaching at all, my pupils come from several different cultures and from several different backgrounds -- everybody has the same organs of articulation and the same facility to use them. Anyone can learn any language if they just try, it is actually pretty great to try to dispel the idea of difference when we’re all the same.’)

The idea of similarity is noble as such and can be used to justify the need not to take diversity in the classroom into any account. However, as previous research (Gay 1998, Talib 2002) has confirmed, it is in the pupil’s best interest for the teacher to take his or her roots into consideration and thus promote positive appreciation for everyone’s cultural heritage in the entire classroom. As Talib (2002: 116) states, one of the main principles of multicultural education is to develop a bi- or multicultural identity within the minority pupil and by ignoring the cultural heritage of the pupil – no matter for which reasons – the teacher is in fact doing the opposite. Thus, when Kate takes pride in her approach of treating all pupils equally, she might not in reality be as efficient in her teaching as she presumes:

Kate: *Opetus on opetusta ja kulttuuri on kulttuuria ja monikulttuurinen opetus voi olla siis, onkse opetusta erilaisista kulttuureista? Onkse opetusta erilaisista kulttuureista tuleville oppilaille? Mitä se on? -- mä olen opettaja joka suhtautuu niinkun esimerkillisen tasa-arvoisesti kaikkiin oppilaisiin taustoista riippumatta.*

(‘Teaching is teaching and culture is culture and multicultural teaching can be, is it teaching about different cultures? Is it teaching pupils from different cultures? -- I am a teacher who treats all pupils in an exemplary manner and with equality regardless of their backgrounds.’)

The need to reject multicultural teaching and its principles among these particular teachers can be interpreted in several possible ways. Firstly, they seemed not to know how to actually define the term and since they had been able to teach their multicultural classes somewhat successfully so far, they might have felt there to be no need to grasp the theoretical underpinnings of something they had no use for. Secondly, it is possible that these teachers had become cynical to some extent over the years and felt that since theories were rarely applicable in practice, surviving the everyday teaching was enough. However, no matter what the reasons for rejecting the principles of multicultural teaching were, the fact that so many of the participants seemed not to know or to care about multicultural teaching was alarming to say the least.

Nevertheless, not all of the participants were ignorant of the notions of multicultural teaching. Jane, one of the teachers who had both experience of and interest in working with immigrant pupils, said that to her the most important aspect was to promote a sense of safety among immigrant pupils, particularly among those who had had negative experiences in their previous schools and thus had prejudices against learning in general. It was imperative for her to ensure that pupils felt safe enough to express their own opinions in class and that they felt that the teacher was there for them. In addition to Jane, Linda was one of the teachers who had truly understood the principles of multicultural teaching outlined by Gay (1998). According to her, multicultural teaching was a set of values where every culture had its own worth and all cultures were equal. It was therefore the school’s and the teacher’s responsibility to promote positive attitudes towards cultural diversity and to help pupils take pride in their multicultural identity and not be ashamed of their minority status. Linda also pointed out one important aspect in multicultural teaching:

Linda: -- *kaikkien oppilaiden tätä opiskelua täytyy yrittää helpottaa, mutta tietenkin täs on se opettajan rooli että ottaa selvää ja yrittää löytää ne ratkasut mitkä auttaa maahanmuuttajaoppilaita.*

(‘-- one should try to facilitate learning for all pupils but of course it is the teacher’s job to look for information and to try to find the ways to help immigrant pupils.’)

According to Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 384), Supporting immigrant pupils in their learning process is essential when it comes to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed in class. Despite the fact that most of the teachers were not able to pinpoint the exact principles of multicultural teaching, the fact that there were teachers such as Linda and Jane who were willing to do their best and take all pupils into account as individuals goes to prove that making all Finnish schools – and schools all over the world for that matter – multicultural is possible. What teachers clearly need is additional information, preferably in the form of multicultural training. The following subsection will discuss in more detail the matter of further training, as well as the role multicultural education has in teacher training. If awareness manages to diminish prejudices and discrimination among pupils of various backgrounds, it is presumable that increasing awareness about multicultural teaching should diminish prejudices among teachers alike.

8.3 Teacher education and developing one’s professional expertise

In response to the question whether multicultural education had been in any way part of their teacher education, most of the English teachers replied no. One of the teachers remembered there to have been some discussions about the subject but even a teacher who had been in teacher training less than a decade prior to the interview, in 2000, did not recall multicultural education having been mentioned at all. The fact that teacher education has not considered multicultural education to be an integral part of the teaching profession until during the past few years might be an indication that the entire educational field reaching from elementary school to university in Finland is only now waking up to reality. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that while immigration is becoming more and more common in Finland and is thus affecting Finnish schools, the majority of teachers are still lacking necessary tools how to approach these pupils. The change has been rapid and it was also reflected in the responses of the teachers. This is how Paul portrayed the situation in the 1990s:

Paul: -- *Ei ollu issue [monikulttuurinen opetus] sillon yheksänkymmentäluvulla ei sitä aihetta, aihetta oikeestaan ollu olemassa... -- kielenopiskelussa ei edes sivuttu asiaa ja aineenopettajakoulutuksessa niin... -- todettiin että että meillä on harjottelukoulussa joku oppilas joka on jostain mut se ei niinku näkyyny yhtään missään.*

(‘Multicultural teaching wasn’t an issue back in the 90s -- in language studies they didn’t even mention it and in teacher training they said that in the training school there was one pupil who was from somewhere but it didn’t make any difference.’)

If teacher education had not provided the participants with adequate information on multicultural education and teaching, it also seemed that the teachers were not that enthusiastic about taking part in further training either. Lack of interest and time were mentioned as the most common reasons for not seeking additional training. Schools provided funds for teachers who wished to further educate themselves, particularly on matters that they encountered daily and which they did not have previous information on but the participants seemed reluctant to take courses the contents of which they could never be totally sure of. This is how Maria described the situation:

Maria: -- *mitä nää monikulttuuriskurssit niitä ku on tarjottu ni ei oikein tiää että mihin ne painottuu että mitä siellä on tarkoitus sitte [tehdä]... -- no ainahan niinku apua varmaan kaikesta on että jos jotain hienoa kurssia olis tarjolla ja joku oikeesti sanos että toi on hyvä. Et sitähan on sitä kurssitarjontaa niin kamalasti että siellä on ne sata kurssia ja sitte jos vähän summassa ottaa no mä meen tonne vaikka niin et jos oikeesti tietäis et joku kurssi on hyvä joku joka on sen käynny ja näin nii sit varmaan sellaselle tulis lähettyä.*

(‘-- these multicultural courses that have been offered, it is hard to know what they emphasize and what you are supposed to [do] there then... There are so many courses, if you knew for real that some course was a good one and someone had taken it then I suppose I would choose such a course.’)

What the teachers seemed to have appreciated the most would have been practical tips how to teach immigrant pupils in a language class. Even though few of the teachers had actually participated in these courses, they seemed already to have prejudices against them, saying that additional training was too theory-based and not specific enough for teachers of a certain subject, in this case teachers of foreign languages. In addition, some of the teachers felt that they had managed in a multicultural classroom just fine so far and with all the other more important aspects of teaching, it was simply too time-

consuming and logistically difficult to first find courses that would be of any interest and then take part in them. Thus some of the teachers did not seem to find it necessary to further educate themselves as teachers. As far as multicultural teaching and immigrant pupils are concerned, this type of an attitude is not beneficial, neither for the teacher nor the pupils, in fact on the contrary. As previous research (Yli-Renko et al 1997) has confirmed, since teacher education does not provide teachers with enough information on multicultural matters, teachers need to further educate themselves in order to become more efficient and multiculturally competent (Gollnick and Chinn 2009: 397).

Those who would have needed help the most were the teachers who had been working the longest. The shift in school demographics had been the most drastic to them, given that they had started their careers in a situation where there had been no immigrant pupils in the classroom and they had not been prepared for all the issues they were to encounter as a result of the change. Sarah took it even further, saying that the entire country of Finland was not equipped to handle an immigration issue of this proportion:

Sarah: -- *ne vaan tuli luokkaan ja eikä varmasti Suomessa ollu mitään semmosii niinkun tämmösiä rakenteita vielä muodostettu että millä tavalla ulkomaalaisia kohdellaan*

(‘-- they just came into the classroom and I’m sure there were no structures built in Finland yet how to deal with immigrants’)

Hence it may be concluded that once again theory does not meet practice – the additional training available for teachers either provides general theoretical information on multicultural teaching or is mainly focused on Finnish as a Second Language teaching and is therefore not useful for foreign language teachers. Simply the fact that teaching English in a multicultural classroom in a Finnish context has not been studied goes to prove that further research is needed and that courses specifically designed for teachers of a certain subject on how to teach pupils of multicultural background should be organized. If throughout the Finnish educational field multicultural education received more attention, teachers might realize how crucial it is to take immigrant pupils into account in the classroom and how important it is that they acquire the necessary tools to do that. According to the teachers’ responses, it seemed that the entire immigration issue had in many schools been delegated to various language

assistants and translators due to the incompetence and lack of time of the actual teachers to handle the situation. The repercussions of teachers not having enough theoretical information and expertise to cope with the diversity in the classroom can be detrimental, not only for the teacher's own work motivation but particularly for the success of immigrant pupils and in the end of the entire classroom.

8.4 Teachers' multicultural competence

Multicultural competence as a concept is fairly personal and thus the participants in the study were also asked some questions concerning their personal experiences with foreign countries, foreign languages and foreign people. According to Talib (2006: 147), since multicultural competence is a worldview and is best developed through interaction with foreign cultures and people, it was also assumed during the present study that the teachers who had had experience of living abroad for longer periods of time would also be multiculturally more competent and would have reflected on their own teaching. As a result of the interviews, it can be stated that this hypothesis was confirmed. Some of the teachers had lived in numerous countries all over the world for various periods of time and those who had the most experience seemed to have the least fixed attitudes towards different cultures and people of diverse backgrounds. This personal process of realizing that people are people no matter which country one finds himself in was reflected in the participants' responses – whether they were consciously aware of it or not. Paul, who had lived abroad the longest of all the participants, explained his views in the following manner:

Paul: *[ulkomailla olo] on vaikuttanu ihan ihan niinkun maailmankatsomukseen ja just se kaikkein tärkein havainto on että me ollaan kaikki samanlaisia. -- kulttuuri ja kieli on on tietysti tärkeitä ja menee ihmisen syvälle mutta ne on kuitenkin, ne on kuitenkin päälle liimattuja asioita –*
 ('[living abroad] has influenced the way I view the world and the most important realization has been that we are all alike.')

Maria shared Paul's view by saying that to her all people had always been similar in a way, no matter where she travelled and this was also reflected in her teaching. There is, however, a distinct difference between regarding all people as equal and teaching all pupils of multicultural background in the same way. A multiculturally competent

teacher is able to see that all languages, cultures and thus people are equal but in addition realizes the importance of cultural differences, their effect on learning and knows how to adjust his or her teaching accordingly. Taking individual differences into account in teaching is in fact not – as thought falsely by many – discriminative but ultimately beneficial for the success of the pupils (Gay 1998: 13).

One of the main aspects of multicultural competence is self-reflection, i.e. teachers of multicultural pupils should become aware of their own attitudes towards diversity and towards teaching pupils of various backgrounds in order to truly be able to teach their pupils effectively (Talib 2006: 149). Unfortunately the majority of the participants in the present study did not seem to have reflected on their teaching to a larger degree. They were puzzled by the question of how they felt their teaching had developed over the years and instead of reflecting on their personality as a teacher, many of the participants tried to offer concrete words of advice on how to cope with immigrant pupils in the classroom. It looked as if these teachers were aware of the fact that by increasing their knowledge of their immigrant pupils, they would have also developed their multicultural competence but due to the lack of resources, such as time and energy, they had focused on everyday teaching, at the expense of the immigrant pupils. Even though most of the teachers had encountered some sort of cultural clashes either in teaching or in communication with the pupils outside the classroom, most of them considered it to be necessary to take action and develop their own professional expertise as well as their multicultural competence only if there truly were problems with one particular pupil. Linda, who had been working as a teacher for thirty years and had thus a fifteen-year experience of working with immigrant pupils, duly noted that it had taken her several years to understand why certain immigrant pupils acted the way they acted in her classroom and that had she taken the time to get more acquainted with these cultures, she might have learned it earlier. However, the most important point was that she had already comprehended the essence of multicultural competence: that it is a life-long process of self-reflection (Talib 2005: 45) which among teachers of immigrant pupils continues both on a professional and on a personal level. One is never ready and there is always room for development.

Even though most of the teachers had not reflected on their own teaching and on how they perceived themselves as teachers of multicultural pupils, there was a particular trace of realism that echoed from the responses of particularly two teachers, namely those of Linda and Jane. Jane's multicultural competence had a personal

attachment: she was married to a foreigner and thus had contemplated on the issues of diversity, foreignness and multiculturalism both in her personal and professional life, which had clearly affected her way of viewing the world as a human being and as a teacher. As far as Linda was concerned, due to her long career she said she had become more relaxed and more realistic in terms of teaching immigrant pupils. In her opinion she had learned along with her pupils – even if some of the behavioural patterns of the immigrant pupils had not become clear to her until several years later – and she said that both interest and motivation to learn more and the ability to see diversity as an advantage in and outside the classroom had made her the teacher she was today. Jane aptly summarized the fundamental nature of multicultural competence:

Jane: -- *ei se ole mustaa eikä valkosta vaan se on sitä harmaata eri sävyissä että niinku niinku ihmiset on erilaisia ja ihmiset on samanlaisia siltikin mutta että ei voi sanoa että maahanmuuttajat näin ja suomalaiset näin vaan vaan että siis niinkun ihan samalla tavalla kun kellä tahansa muulla niin maahanmuuttajilla on sit niitä omia ennakkoluulojaan ehkä niitä toisia maahanmuuttajia kohtaan tai suomalaisia kohtaan tai koulua kohtaan tai – että niinkun kaikilla on niitä hyviä ja huonoja puolia.*

(‘-- it’s not black or white, it’s different shades of grey and people are different and people are alike... just like anyone, immigrants have their own prejudices – we all have good and bad features.’)

Realizing that life is not black and white and that there are two sides to everything is quintessential for the mere existence of multicultural competence and a prerequisite for a competent teacher. Making teachers aware of the importance of reflection is of paramount importance and a responsibility that teacher education needs to take (Räsänen 1998: 37). For practicing teachers, particularly for those who work with pupils of multicultural background, further professional training is needed and it is therefore the principals’ duty to realize how important it is for the success of schools throughout the country to use resources for the multicultural training of teachers. Teaching that is anti-racist, individual-based and provides the same chances of succeeding in life for everyone can only begin when the teacher is willing to work towards these goals.

9 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: TEACHING ENGLISH TO PUPILS OF MULTICULTURAL BACKGROUND

The following chapter will focus on the linguistic aspects of teaching English to pupils coming from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It goes without saying that in terms of language abilities, immigrant pupils are by no means a homogeneous group, which can present a dilemma particularly for language teachers. Subsection 9.1 will discuss the language skills the participants of the present study already confirmed pupils of multicultural background to have and the remaining two subsections will present in more detail what it means to teach a foreign language, in this case English, to pupils with various mother tongues. Since teaching a foreign language does not merely consist of grammar and vocabulary, subsection 9.3 will focus on the cultural aspects of teaching English, shedding also some light on the linguistic and cultural attitudes the teachers said they would like to convey.

9.1 Language skills in Finnish and English

Most of the teachers seemed to agree that in terms of their Finnish skills, immigrant pupils were heterogeneous. The command of Finnish seemed to depend on a number of factors, including duration of residence in Finland; environment, i.e. the language spoken among friends and family; education received in the home country and general ability to learn foreign languages, to name a few. Linda's response perfectly summarized the opinion shared by the participants on the matter:

Linda: Joillakin on ihan erinomaisen hyvät kielelliset taidot ja ja tuota puhuvat suomea niin että ei todellakaan huomaa muuta kun ihan ehkä jostain aivan pikku vertausten tuntemattomuudesta, joku kansanperinteeseen liittyvä juttu mikä he mikä paljastaa että eivät ole suomenkielisiä. Mut sitten on sellasia jota on olleet maassa pitkäänkin ja puhuu todella kömpelösti vielä suomea ja siis sanavarasto on suppea että se on hirveän yksilöllistä.

(‘Some of them have excellent language skills but then there are those who have lived in the country for a long time and their Finnish skills are still poor so it really depends on the person.’)

Most of the teachers were of the same opinion that one year in preparatory studies was most definitely not enough for immigrant pupils to learn Finnish to the extent that they would be able to follow Finnish-speaking teaching. Even though the teachers were eager to blame the system for not providing immigrant pupils with more time, what can be concluded from their answers is that they themselves seemed to sometimes forget or ignore the fact that not all of the pupils in their classroom had the same command of Finnish. One teacher, Helen, also admitted that it was not only the immigrant pupils who sometimes had poor Finnish skills but also pupils of Finnish cultural and linguistic background had insufficient skills in their own mother tongue, thus presenting a double dilemma for the language teacher. Having a homogeneous group in many aspects was the most significant challenge faced by the participants on a day-to-day basis.

One crucial factor was apparent in all of the responses of the teachers, that is that a good command of Finnish was considered necessary in order to be able to go to school in Finland. Finnish education is provided in Finnish, almost regardless of the subject, and the participants of the study acknowledged the importance of providing immigrant pupils with enough FSL teaching. The current situation was not seen as ideal: many of the immigrant pupils were struggling at school, were having trouble keeping up with other pupils and thus had a high risk of either never graduating from middle school or dropping out right after it. Paul described the situation in his school in the following way:

Paul: *Meillähän on näitä näitä tota oppilaita jotka integroidaan tuolta valmistavalta luokalta. Eihän se vuosi riitä mihinkään. Ei ne opi siinä ajassa suomee jos ne oppiiki suomee niin ei se tarkoita että niillä ois vielä valmiudet osallistua yläasteen työhön normaalisti.*

(‘We have pupils who are being integrated from the preparatory studies. One year is not enough. They won’t learn Finnish in that time and even if they do, that doesn’t mean they have the ability to follow teaching in a middle school just like everybody else.’)

Problems in following the teaching can lead to frustration, lack of motivation and potentially to the failure of the learning process, thus leaving the pupil with poor grades and a slim chance of being accepted into secondary education. Based on the teachers’ responses, it seemed that they were worried about the insufficient Finnish skills of their immigrant pupils but understandably also felt ill-equipped to actually take action on the

matter. Their first responsibility was to teach English to *all* of the pupils in the classroom, not Finnish to a minority. Paul went on to say that since the existing FSL teaching system and preparatory studies were not enough, he suggested that a co-existing parallel education system should be organized for the immigrant pupils who at the moment were not only deprived of equal possibilities to succeed in life after school but were also in danger of being left outside society without a chance for a happy future. As noble an idea as a parallel education system seems to be, funding such a system would, however, be next to impossible for the Finnish government. Thus teachers are left with the current one-year education and possible support from special education depending on the school.

As far as the English skills of pupils of multicultural background were concerned, in correlation with the Finnish skills, the teachers verified that the pupils showed immense variation. Once again, according to the teachers, the level of English depended on several factors, such as language education received in English prior to coming to Finland, Finnish skills since Finnish was also used in the English class, motivation and encouragement received at home and the general ability to learn foreign languages. There seemed to be a clear connection between a good command of Finnish and a good command of English. However, most of the teachers confirmed that as a group immigrant pupils tended to be at the lower end of the grade spectrum and that generally speaking they were not able to reach the level of English that pupils of Finnish-speaking background were. Teachers seemed to consider this to be only natural, given that most of these immigrant pupils had not received as much training in English as their Finnish-speaking classmates prior to coming to Finland and in addition had poor Finnish skills and thus trouble following the partly Finnish- partly English-speaking instruction. Maria even mentioned the grades these pupils often managed to reach in English:

Maria: *Yleensä [he] kuitenkin on keskimäärästä heikompia. Sellasta niinkun jos nyt numeroita puhutaan niin vitosen kutosen tasoa.*

(‘Usually [they] do worse than average. If we’re talking grades here, they might get a five or a six [on a scale from four to ten, ten being the highest grade one can get].’)

If this was the level the other teachers in addition to Maria were referring to as well, it can be concluded that schools are facing a challenge which needs to be addressed as

soon as possible, not ignored, or else with the continually increasing number of immigrants in Finland, the consequences could be severe.

Nonetheless, the teachers also reported on exceptionally gifted immigrant pupils who were not only motivated to learn English but also had obvious talent for it. Linda was the only teacher who said that in general her pupils of different linguistic backgrounds had been eager to learn English which had resulted in excellent academic achievement. She suspected that the reason for this could have been found at home – she was under the impression that the parents of these pupils had underlined the importance of English as a lingua franca and had encouraged their children to work hard in order to learn the language. In addition, some of the teachers said they had had pupils who either came from an English-speaking country or had received their entire education in English, in which case their English skills were so good that they spent English lessons learning Finnish instead. These were, of course, rare occasions which the teachers clearly remembered as fruitful and pleasant both for the pupil and the teacher.

Furthermore, some of the teachers reported on differences between the strengths pupils of multicultural background had shown to possess in English, compared to those of the majority. Even if many of the pupils had not received as much English education before coming to Finland as their Finnish-speaking peers, they had had to cope with English in various situations after having arrived in Finland, thus resulting in a more advanced capability to speak, interact and solve problems in a foreign language. Paul gave an account on his experiences as follows:

*Paul: Sillon kun ei oo tulkkia käytettävissä niin yleensä englantia on se millä pärjätään. Lapset on siinä koko ajan, koko ajan mukana että että **suulliset valmiudet ja tämmönen niinkun asia- asiainhoitovalmius saattaa olla parempi** kun niillä jotka on vaan vaan opiskellu sitä [englantia]. Mut sit taas ihan selvästi huomaa että **rakenteet ja sanasto on ihan hukassa** että... osaa hoitaa tietyt asiat mutta sit ei oikeesti osaa kieltä sen syvällisemmin ollenkaan.*

(‘When there is no interpreter available, then English is usually the language they try to cope with. Children are present all the time so their oral skills and their ability to run errands is better than among those who have studied it [English]. But then again it’s obvious that they don’t know grammar or vocabulary at all...’)

There are two sides to everything and in this case even if immigrant pupils had better oral skills and the threshold for speaking was perhaps not as high as for pupils of Finnish background, their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary was not good enough, which ultimately resulted in poor grades. A question which can be raised in this particular context is whether the Finnish way of teaching foreign languages, i.e. putting emphasis on correct grammar and expanding one's vocabulary through textbooks is ultimately the most beneficial way, particularly for immigrant pupils. Changing the stress of foreign language education from form towards communication and towards practice-related tasks might not benefit only the immigrant pupils in the classroom but also various types of special education pupils. Teachers should try to exploit the few strengths that immigrant pupils have in the English classroom and that way show them that studying a foreign language is worth the trouble because they already have something to start with and an evident need to master the language. How teachers can do that and what types of means the participants in the present study have used will be discussed in further detail in the following section.

9.2 Teaching English

Teaching English to pupils of different cultural and linguistic background is a challenging task and is in the Finnish context by no means similar to teaching English to pupils where everyone is of Finnish background. However, the results of the present study concerning teachers and the manner in which they approach the matter seem to indicate that teachers rarely even realize what it means to teach pupils who do not only share the same mother tongue but who also come from several different countries and have enormous variation in how much previous education in English they have received. In addition, English teachers in Finland, particularly in middle school, still seem to use Finnish as their majority language in the classroom, thus leaving pupils with poorer Finnish skills in a situation where they have to try to keep up with others but more than often fail to succeed. The following four subsections will discuss in further detail how the participants in the present study reported to teach their multicultural classes and what their opinions on multicultural English teaching were.

9.2.1 The language used in the classroom and its implications

Almost all the participants in the present study admitted to using mainly Finnish while teaching English, particularly when teaching structures and giving instructions. The teachers provided several reasons for doing so: firstly, they said that often pupils protested if the teacher spoke English. Secondly, they felt that since most of their pupils had insufficient skills in English, it was more beneficial for the pupils if the teacher used Finnish as the language of instruction. When asked what the teachers thought about the fact that not all immigrant pupils had the same level of Finnish as native Finnish speakers and thus were in danger of losing important information due to language problems, most of them replied that they had not given the matter much thought. Thus, it seemed that since most of the interviewees, particularly in the capital region, worked in schools where learning results were poor, the teachers had tried to use English as the language of instruction but had gradually given up because it was impossible in practice to speak only or even mainly English. This is how Kate reasoned her choice to use Finnish in the classroom:

Kate: Et se on se mun tapa varmistaa et heikommatkin [oppilaat] ymmärtää mis mennään. Et jos mä niinkun – se semmonen tietty turvallisuudentunne minkä mä tykkään et luokassa vallitsee niin se tulee kyllä suomen kielen kautta ja sen avulla.
(‘It’s my way of making sure that even the weakest [pupils] understand what I’m talking about. Using Finnish creates a sense of security.’)

The participants also gave other reasons for using mainly Finnish, such as that teaching a subject to middle school pupils had more to do with raising the pupils than teaching the actual subject content, in which case it was not seen as problematic that the language mainly used in the classroom was Finnish. In addition, according to many of the teachers it was not necessary for pupils at the middle school level to master grammar terminology in English and therefore the teachers had chosen to teach structures in Finnish. It thus seemed that many of the teachers would have been pleased to use as much English as possible but in the course of several years of working in the field it had become clear to them that using Finnish was the only option if they wanted the majority of pupils to learn – perhaps at the expense of pupils of various linguistic backgrounds. Paul described the situation in the following manner:

Paul: *Mä haluaisin käyttää englantia. Ja mä oon yrittänykin joskus että koittais pelkästään yseillä tai esimerkiks tällasilla syventävillä kielen- syventävillä kielen kursseilla niin pyrittäs pelkästään englannin käyttöön, mutta... mutta niinku **tän koulun tolla osaamisen tasolla niin ei siit tuu mitään.***

(‘I would like to use English... but with the level of knowledge in this school it is not going to work.’)

What can be concluded based on the results is that immigrant pupils are often placed in schools of low academic achievement which, in turn, is a societal problem in that immigrants in general are placed in residential areas the socioeconomic status of which is poor. It is a vicious circle where people entering the country are put to school in areas where they, on top of the language barrier, have to deal with other types of social problems, such as crime, alcoholism, drugs and domestic abuse, to name a few. In contrast, as mentioned by one of the teachers, Helen, it is true that sometimes immigrant pupils would not understand the teaching even if it were in English but it should instead be provided in their own mother tongue, thus making it perfectly acceptable for the teachers to use Finnish since it is the native tongue of the majority of the pupils in the classroom.

There was, however, one exception to the rule among the interviewees and that was Linda, a teacher who said to use English as the main language in her classroom and said that it had worked well for her and her pupils – except for those immigrant pupils who had not studied English prior to coming to Finland. She said there was no reason not to use English because those immigrant pupils who had not studied English before, were in any case in partial special education and thus not present during English lessons. However, according to Linda, the reason for using English was by no means the fact that there were immigrant pupils in the classroom but instead Linda saw it as beneficial for the learning of all pupils, immigrant or non-immigrant. Hence, the results seemed to indicate that choosing to use English or Finnish in the classroom had not much to do with whether the pupils were of diverse or similar linguistic and cultural background. Instead, what seemed to be the key issue was the teacher’s own conception of what contributes to foreign language learning. That is also why Helen said the following in relation to using English in the classroom:

Helen: *mä oon niinku päätyne siihen et ei se aina onnistu et et vaik ite on Espanjassa kurssilla ja siel on puhuttu vaan espanjaa ni sit on oppinu espanjaa, ni se on eri asia koska me ollaan Suomessa. Et se onnistuu kyl niinku Englannis puhutaan vaan englantia ja Espanjas puhu- puhutaan vaan espanjaa mutta täällä se onnistuu paljo huonommin.*

(‘I’ve come to the conclusion that it doesn’t always work out, meaning that even if you took a course in Spain and all they did was speak Spanish, it’s a different matter because we’re in Finland.’)

In addition to thinking that Finnish was rightfully the language used across classrooms all over Finland, some of the teachers were also ignorant as far as the native tongues of their immigrant pupils were concerned. Many of the teachers did not know what languages their pupils spoke and did not see it that relevant. Some of them did admit that a person’s first language had an effect on second and foreign language learning but that there were so many other matters that these teachers had to take into account in their everyday work that getting to know the native languages of their pupils had been at the lower end on their list of priorities. Hence, some of the teachers had been surprised in the past by the deficient level of Finnish among their immigrant pupils and did not know how to approach the issue once they had realized that their pupils were in danger of dropping out or were at least missing a noticeable part of teaching due to language problems. Moreover, some of the participants had falsely believed that the one-year-long preparatory studies had been enough for the immigrant pupils to acquire the Finnish skills needed in the classroom, which had later been found out to be a misconception. At that point they had not considered switching the language to English to be a possible solution to the problem and thus had continued teaching in Finnish since it, according to them, served its purpose among the majority of the pupils.

In conclusion to the language issue, it can be stated that the lack of information among teachers in terms of their pupils’ mother tongues was also reflected in the language used in the classroom. It is likely that most of these teachers would not have changed the language of instruction from Finnish to English even if they had had more information about the language skills of their immigrant pupils since they did not consider English to be the solution. However, what is concerning is the fact that if even language teachers show little interest in learning more about the linguistic background of their pupils, that can only indicate that the rest of the teachers in middle schools across the country most likely know even less. It all comes down to the teacher’s

personal desire to learn more and whether or not one is willing to put some effort into getting to know one's pupils. As confirmed by Gollnick and Chinn (2009: 397), only by knowing more can one take all types of learners in the classroom into better account.

9.2.2 Techniques used by teachers to facilitate learning among immigrant pupils

Most of the interviewees did not possess any specific techniques as to how they would have taken pupils of multicultural background into account, thus teaching all the pupils in the same manner. However, some of the teachers had given the matter more thought and Jane was the one who was willing to facilitate learning among immigrant pupils the most. The most popular concessions teachers were ready to make as far as the immigrant pupils were concerned had something to do with language – since having insufficient skills in Finnish was the most common reason for not being able to follow regular teaching, some of the teachers said they had made different types of exercises for immigrant pupils, for example, by removing all translation exercises from the exams that non-native Finnish speakers were to take and by measuring the extent of their vocabulary in other ways than by comparing it to the extent of vocabulary in Finnish. In Maria's school they had also tried a different approach:

*Maria: No meillä on ikään kun semmosia... no helpotettuja kirjoja ollu käytössä. Ja joillaki pojilla esimes nyt näillä mitkä mulla oli ni niillä oli viime vuonna mutta he ilmeisesti ite koki et se oli pikkasen hankalaa... -- tälle vuodelle he – **halus normaalikirjat.***

('Well we've used facilitated books. But some boys felt that it was difficult so for this year they wanted normal books.')

What Maria's example reveals is that it is not only more work for the teacher when he or she has to prepare a different set of exercises or teach two different books at the same time but it is also the pupils who might not like the fact that they are being treated differently. Depending on the age, some pupils of multicultural background want nothing but to fit in, in which case facilitating learning for them might make them even more frustrated. However, teachers need to be able to accurately assess the needs of all their pupils and act accordingly. If a pupil is not learning due to language or cultural differences, something needs to be done and reasons for teaching that particular pupil

differently must be provided and thoroughly explained to the pupil. Most pupils are most likely to appreciate the fact that their teacher cares enough to try to make their learning as trouble-free as possible.

Linda was also one of the teachers who was willing to use different methods to smooth the learning process among immigrant pupils and she considered it to be an essential part of multicultural teaching. According to her, the main challenge was not, however, to facilitate the learning process among immigrant pupils of normal learning background but instead the pupils who had not been diagnosed with any learning difficulties in the past even though they clearly suffered from one. Linda mentioned that many of the pupils who had come to their school in the past had suffered from dyslexia and different types of problems in identifying forms and shapes. Since coming to their school, they had been diagnosed as in need of special education but according to Linda, that kind of a damage control should have been done much earlier. Linda considered these pupils to be the challenge whereas teaching immigrant pupils in a regular classroom was, according to her, educational both for the teacher and for the other pupils.

As mentioned before, of all the participants in the study, Jane was the one who had made different types of allowances the most as far as pupils of multicultural background were concerned. This is what Jane had to say about how she took her pupils and their limitations in Finnish into account:

Jane: -- sanojen kyselyä tai muuta niin aika paljon yritän turvautua sit kuviin esimerkiksi että ei tarvii tavallaan- että se ei oo siitä kiinni että muistanko tämän sanan suomeksi vai enkö että et se ei niinku se mittari sitte että miten se suomi sujuu.

(‘-- when I’m checking their vocabulary I try to make use of for example pictures so that it doesn’t depend on whether you remember the word in Finnish.’)

The conclusions that can be drawn based on Jane’s account are that using pictures and making the teaching as illustrative as possible is not only beneficial for immigrant pupils but for all pupils alike and that Jane’s answers clearly reflected the effort she put into her work. In addition, she mentioned that sometimes using Finnish served its purpose, particularly when one was making comparisons between Finnish and English since immigrant pupils were then learning both Finnish and English. Other techniques which Jane said to use included using phrases and vocabulary that were clear, precise

and straightforward and changing her approach to the matter if it seemed that the pupils had not comprehended what she was trying to convey. What was reflected best in Jane's responses was her attitude not only towards pupils of multicultural background but towards teaching in general: she clearly wanted to help smooth the learning process of all her pupils and was willing to work towards reaching this goal. What Jane had learned during the course of many years was that one must not take anything for granted as far as immigrant pupils were concerned and that it was always better to check whether the pupils had learned something than to later realize that something had been left unclear. The teacher's attitude towards multicultural teaching proved once again to be of paramount importance.

9.2.3 Challenges in teaching English in a multicultural classroom

The teachers had faced several challenges in teaching English to multicultural groups and naturally the list of difficulties was significantly longer and more complex than the list of all the advantages teaching immigrant pupils contained. However, what could be concluded based on the responses of the participants in the study was that facing the challenges was considerably easier had the teachers a positive attitude towards teaching and immigrant pupils in general. Those who were frustrated and tired of their work to begin with, saw these challenges as insurmountable obstacles which deprived them of the joy of teaching.

The most common challenge mentioned by the teachers was the insufficient Finnish skills which seemed to be a problem almost with all the immigrant pupils who had come to Finland later in their life, particularly if they had already hit puberty when arriving in the country. In connection with poor Finnish skills was the diversity in cultural and linguistic background as well as the wide range of academic achievement and command of English among immigrant pupils. Teachers felt ill-equipped and powerless in the face of different native tongues and various backgrounds in studying English. Paul had an ideal solution for the problem, even though he acknowledged the lack of resources preventing it from becoming a reality:

Paul: -- *näillä [oppilailla] joilla suomen kieli on on huonoissa kantimissa niin ongelma on ihan se että että tota niille pitas olla eri materiaalit ja ja tota valitettavasti niin niin en pidä kauheen onnistuneena sitä että että valmistavalta kesken vuotta tai sitte heti sen jälkeen joudutaan integroimaan tavalliseen ryhmään.*

(‘-- those [pupils] whose Finnish is fairly poor should have different materials and I don’t think it’s successful to integrate pupils from preparatory studies to a normal group in the middle of the school year or right after.’)

Teaching was considered to be exceptionally difficult when there were pupils ranging from native speakers of Finnish to immigrants who had studied Finnish for one year in the English class. Inadequate Finnish skills were also the reason for why some of the teachers viewed teaching structures and grammar as the most challenging task of all. The fact that teachers were unable to compare the structures they were teaching to the pupils’ own native languages made them insecure as to whether the pupils had actually learned the structures. In addition, since they used mostly Finnish, some of the teachers considered it to be a disadvantage to all those pupils who did not know Finnish well enough to understand the comparisons between Finnish and English. This is how Jane illustrated the matter:

Jane: -- *jos meillä ei ole yhteistä kieltä niin sä opiskelet sen yhden vieraan kielen kautta sitä toista vierasta kieltä tavallaan.*

(‘-- if we don’t share a language then you learn that one foreign language through another foreign language.’)

Another challenge mentioned by several teachers was the extent to which all teaching was related to the culture it was surrounded by, thus causing possible problems among pupils who did not share the same cultural frame. Some examples that the teachers mentioned included different types of metaphors, proverbs and sayings that were both related to the culture and to the language in question, popular culture such as artists, films and television series which sometimes were totally lost by immigrant pupils and cultural customs and holiday traditions, to name a few. According to the teachers, the most challenging part for them was how to make their teaching as culturally neutral as possible when they still had to teach cultural aspects as language teachers. Maria mentioned an incident where she had had to function as a negotiator between two different immigrant groups in a fight which had its roots in cultural clashes between

those two nationalities and which Maria knew nothing about. She said she had felt powerless since as a cultural outsider she did not understand the significance of the event for her pupils. Thus, cultural references work both ways and if immigrant pupils sometimes have difficulties understanding Finnish culture, teachers and pupils of Finnish background can have trouble understanding the culture of immigrant pupils. Helen shared her example of an incident where she took the celebration of Christmas for granted:

Helen: -- *mä kysyin nytte tammikuussa et mitä **mitä ihmiset sai joululahjaks** mun valvontaluokalta et what did you get for Christmas ni sitte mä **kysyin sitä myös yheltä muslimityöltä** jolla on kyllä aina huivi päässä. Sit muut oli silleen et ope tyhmä, mitä sä siltä kysyt. -- mut se ei ollu siit mitenkään niinku häiriintyny.*

(-- I asked in January what people got for Christmas and then I asked this one Muslim girl who always wears a scarf [hijab] the same thing. Then the other pupils asked me why I asked her that. -- but she wasn't disturbed by it in any way.)

Closely related to different cultural and religious customs is the matter of racism. Kate mentioned that to her the most challenging aspect of dealing with pupils of diverse backgrounds had been the racist comments that she had had to witness, not so much among other pupils but among teachers in the teachers' room. According to her, coping with discriminative comments was easier with pupils since she saw it as an educational situation where she had the power of correcting misconceptions and ensuring that everybody was treated with respect and equal appreciation. Teachers, in contrast, were adults and Kate did not have the power to tell them not to make racist comments. She was aghast by how differently teachers could approach the matter and how some teachers had no desire to teach pupils of foreign background. Hence it can be concluded that since multicultural teaching can only begin from an unselfish need and want to become acquainted with different cultures and languages, this type of thinking is an obstacle that needs to be conquered before the principles of multiculturalism can be applied in schools across the country.

One major challenge mentioned by Jane was the amount of work pupils of multicultural background had to face compared to their Finnish-born peers and how this also affected the teacher's workload. According to Jane, many immigrant pupils were in the situation where they had to catch up with the others by working twice or even three times as much as the others in the classroom, often resulting in them not being

able to handle all the work and either by dropping out or by constantly struggling with just trying to keep up. This is how Jane explained the complicated situation:

Jane: -- *he niinkun haluaisivat mahollisimman nopeesti osaksi sitä muuta porukkaa tavallaan niin niin sillon jos kerran tietenkin meillä englantia opiskellaan jo kolmannesta luokasta lähtien niin sehän on hirveen iso se ero sitten et jos sitä alotetaan sitte yläkoulussa opiskelemaan... -- se on niin epäinhimillinen niinku se työmäärä, mikä heidän pitäis tehdä että he saisivat kiinni.*

(‘-- they would like to become part of the group as soon as possible but there’s a huge difference if they start studying English in middle school... -- the amount of work they would have to do in order to catch up is inhuman.’)

According to Jane, for the pupils to succeed in their attempt, the teacher needs to be not only in tune with the needs of the pupil but also an expert both in the cultural and linguistic aspects of the pupil and in the subject content. That is why it is more than often virtually impossible for the pupils to catch up, at least to the extent they wish to catch up. What is essential here, according to Jane, is that the teacher understands and takes into account the workload that pupils of various backgrounds have to face and try to help and support them as well as possible. What matters the most is the teacher’s attitude and that these pupils feel that they are cared for both as learners and as people.

9.2.4 The positive aspects of teaching English to pupils of diverse backgrounds

Pointing out the positive features in teaching English to immigrant pupils was unexpectedly difficult for the interviewees and it was evidently easier for them to discuss the negative aspects related to teaching multicultural groups. When the teachers were asked to name what made teaching pupils of multicultural background enjoyable, the most common reply was the general diversity in the classroom. The participants mentioned that it was nice to see how different cultures were able to work together and how pupils of Finnish background learned from their multicultural peers. One teacher, Helen, also mentioned that for her teaching immigrant pupils was easy because she did not consider it to differ in any way from regular teaching. To her multiculturalism was so mundane that she felt no need to exaggerate its significance and Helen even went on to say that she considered it to be unnecessary to take immigrant pupils into account in any specific manner. Whether this approach is beneficial can be questioned, particularly

when previous studies (Gay 2000, Gollnick and Chinn 2009) have shown that for the principles of multicultural teaching to be realized, the teacher has to play an active role and take immigrant pupils into account and teach them to take pride in their cultural heritage. Nevertheless, it is obvious that this type of an approach is favourable for the teacher since she or he does not have to put additional energy into multicultural issues.

Facing diversity in all its forms was mentioned by several teachers as a factor that made multicultural teaching pleasant. Linda had an excellent example to share about an immigrant family which had truly managed to persevere through hardships and had succeeded in a society that does not always allow immigrants to fully participate in education and work life:

Linda: -- mä ajattelen yhtä parhettä erityisesti miskä- minkä kaikkea ne kaikki neljä lasta on tätä koulua käyneet ja... lähtivät sotaa pakoon ja tulivat tänne ja rakens elämänsä uudestaan ja kaks vanhinta opiskelee yliopistossa ja seuraava lukiossa ja nuorin on nyt täällä. Niin sellanen kotoutuminen todella [hienoa] että et niinkun yhteiskunnasta hankitaan koulutusta ja on tavoitteita ja päämääriä ja kaikkee tällasta. Se on aivan mahtavaa.

(‘I have one particular family in mind, all the four children of which went to this school and... they fled the war and came here and built their lives again and two of the oldest [children] are university students and the next one is in high school and the youngest is now here. That kind of an adaptation is truly magnificent.’)

Witnessing the success of pupils from diverse backgrounds was described to be a fulfilling and truly satisfying experience by several teachers and personal interaction between different cultures was also regarded as gratifying and life-enriching. Paul stated that even though the everyday work was sometimes strenuous, he would have not wanted to be anywhere else because he felt that the grass root work he was doing was extremely valuable. He described the experience in the following fashion:

Paul: Sit nythän on käynnissä ennennäkemättömän suuri ihmiskoe. Ihmismassat siirtyy, liikkuu. Miten ne toimii yhdessä? Minkälaisia... mi- mitä siitä seuraa? Niinku pelkästään sen takia mä haluan olla tässä koulussa edelleenkin että mä haluun olla näkemässä kun se tapahtuu. Mä en haluu lukee siitä Ilta-Sanomista.

(‘What is going on right now is an unparalleled human experiment. Masses of people are shifting, moving. How do they work together? What are the consequences? Just because of that I still want to be in this school, I want to be there when that happens.’)

An attitude such as this is a statement made by a teacher who truly believes that even though working with pupils of multicultural background can sometimes be challenging and tiring, it is a reality in the 21st century, also in Finland and intriguing as such.

One positive aspect mentioned by several teachers and best summarized by Jane was that of witnessing the joy of learning among immigrant pupils. According to Jane, immigrant pupils – even though clear-cut generalizations cannot be made – are often motivated to learn and eager to actively participate in the classroom whereas Finnish pupils are often more passive in the classroom. Jane, as well as the other participants, considered this to be a motivational factor also for the teacher and even though the certain unreservedness many of the immigrant pupils possessed was not typical for Finnish people, this was generally seen as a positive aspect. Jane reported on her feelings in the following manner:

Jane: -- *mikä tietysti siinä on tosi kivaa on se että yleensä he on tosi motivoituneita sitten, varsinkin että jos on vähemmän aikaa ollu maassa vasta niin niin heillä on niinku hirvee into sitte että tuntee ittesä oikeesti niinku hyödylliseksi ja tärkeeksi-*
(‘ -- what is really nice about it is that usually they are really motivated, especially if they have been in the country for a shorter period of time, they want to feel themselves useful and important-’)

Thus, even though some of the teachers had trouble finding something favourable to say about teaching pupils of multicultural background, they managed to find several positive features in the end. In addition, none of them had yet resigned which could be seen as a clear indication of them not disliking working among immigrant pupils so much after all. On the whole, it can be concluded that despite the difficulties and challenges that all of the interviewees had encountered in their work, they were not willing to renounce because of all the good that teaching multicultural groups entailed.

9.3 Cultural values and attitudes in teaching English

Culture is a complex concept to define and most of the teachers seemed somewhat puzzled when they were asked to mention the types of cultural values and attitudes they would wish to convey in their teaching and what part they considered culture to play in teaching. The most common reply in relation to immigrant pupils was that schools have organized theme days or weeks when pupils of diverse backgrounds have had the

opportunity to acquaint others with their own cultural customs as well as their language. Theme days were seen as the best outlet for immigrant pupils to show that they did come from different cultures, had their own traditions and were nevertheless part of the Finnish society. However, as previous research (Gay 1998: 14-15) has shown, reducing the image of multiculturalism to special ethnic events is far from being enough and might in fact sometimes only reinforce stereotypical thinking. Naturally, having multicultural theme weeks and days was better than nothing but no matter how proud some of the participants were of their schools and of the days they had spent getting acquainted with their pupils of diverse background, it is not enough in the long run if the principles of multicultural education are not being implemented in the everyday teaching in any other way.

As far as letting pupils introduce their own cultures and languages in the classroom was concerned, there were opposite opinions among the interviewed teachers. On the one hand, some of the teachers were of the opinion that it was crucial to let immigrant pupils to show their cultural and linguistic roots in the classroom in order for them to develop a multicultural identity where they could take pride in their cultural heritage but also know that they belonged to the dominant culture and society. On the other hand, some teachers thought that there was no need to underline the differences because it was not only unfair towards the other students but also prejudiced to some extent. According to them it was better to treat everyone in the same manner and thus offer equal teaching for all. This is how Sarah phrased her reluctance to bring up cultural matters in the classroom:

Sarah: Eikä siihen tunneilla oikein semmoseen oo aikaa sitten että... meillä on niinku kaikenlaisii oppilaita et sit jos kauheesti rupeis syventymään tuntien puiteissa johonkin oppilaaseen niin tuota ne kokee että se ei oo oikein.

(‘We have all kinds of pupils so if you started going into one pupil in detail then the rest would feel that it’s not fair.’)

Lack of time was mentioned most frequently as the factor preventing the teachers from bringing up the subject of multiculturalism in class. In addition, many of the teachers said that the immigrant pupils themselves felt uncomfortable discussing their ethnic backgrounds since they were at that age where they merely wanted to fit in. Thus, many of the teachers did not want to force them to speak out but instead were fine with not dealing with the issue in general. However, even though Jane had noticed that there was

a fear of standing out among her immigrant pupils, she nevertheless felt the need to promote a positive self-image as far as cultural heritage was concerned:

Jane: -- *vois puhua niinkun tavallaan innostuneesti siitä että meillä tehdään näin ja et mejän maassa... mutta se on ehkä yläkoulussaki se **ikä on se että oppilaat kaikki haluaa olla** niinkun **samanlaisia**, kaikki haluaa kuulua johonki porukkaan... -- he [maahanmuuttajaoppilaat] aattelee et se [heidän oma kulttuuri] kuuluu vaan kotiin -- haluaa sitte koulussa ottaa esille ollenkaan.*

(‘-- it’s the age in middle school when pupils all want to be alike, everyone wants to belong in a group so immigrant pupils might think that their own culture belongs only home.’)

It thus seems that there is a middle road as far as letting immigrant pupils take pride in their culture in the classroom is concerned if teachers were only willing to find it. However, some of the teachers did not seem to be too eager to let all cultures and languages flourish in the classroom. Tom expressed his thoughts on the matter as follows:

Tom: -- *se on niinku käsistä räjähtäny se et **ne puhuu sitä omaa kieltään**, varsinkin venäläiset oikein mielellään niinku... mä sanos et se on joko tai, että sit mieluummin täällä puhutaan jompaakumpaa [englantia tai suomea] mut **ei sitte sitä omaa kieltä**... Eihän se mitään haittaa jos nyt jotain vähän mut ku se on jotkut tosiaan **häiritsevästi** sitä aika kovaakin viel käyttää...*

(‘-- them speaking their own language has gotten out of hand, I tell them that it’s either English or Finnish but not their own language... It’s not a problem if they speak it a little but some of it is disturbing and they speak pretty loudly too...’)

The conclusion that can be drawn from Tom’s comment is that attitudes such as this are the reason why the principles of multicultural education have not been implemented in Finnish schools, at least not to the fullest. The change must begin with teachers who need to comprehend the importance of one’s own cultural heritage and how by being able to show it, one becomes empowered and manages to create a positive multicultural identity.

Another matter which seemed puzzling for the participants in the study was the definition of culture, particularly since English was a subject which, in addition to teaching the actual language, entailed teaching about English-speaking cultures. Helen, for example, considered presenting cultural values and attitudes in the classroom to be

more the presentation of those of English-speaking cultures rather than taking into account the various cultures in the classroom. Since hardly any of the pupils who had come from a different culture originally came from English-speaking areas, Helen did not see them discussing their own cultures in the classroom that useful for English teaching in general. Thus, for her conveying cultural values was an entirely different concept and had little or nothing to do with the principles of multicultural teaching. In addition, one of the teachers, Kate, seemed to be using cultural differences as a weapon against the pupils instead of making them embrace their multiculturalism:

Kate: -- *kurinpito* somalipojille, auttaa kyllä että tietää heidän uskonnosta ja ymmärtää miten vahva merkitys ja mikä asema perheellä ja vanhemmilla on heidän elämässä. Se näkyy siis semmosen vuorovaikutustilanteessa jossa oppilas käyttäytyy esimerkiksi jotenkin huonosti tai kiroilee. ”**Miten sun uskontos suhtautuu kiroilemiseen?**” Kysymys saa aika hiljaseks. ”Mitä isäs sanoo jos kerron?”
 (‘ -- disciplining Somali boys, it helps when you know about their religion and understand the significance of family and parents in their lives. If the pupil for example misbehaves or swears: “What does your religion say about swearing?” That question makes them go quiet. “What would your father say if I told him?”)

Based on Kate’s account, it can be concluded that this kind of conduct is unacceptable, particularly when it is the conduct of a teacher and using the pupil’s different cultural norms and values against him, even if it was just to discipline the pupil, is in fact cultural abuse and discriminative behaviour. If anything, examples such as these show that Finnish schools are far from being multicultural and that before even coping with the situation from the pupils’ point of view, teachers need to be made aware of the destructiveness of this type of behaviour.

When asked what kind of cultural and linguistic attitudes the teachers would like to pass on, most of the attitudes were in one way or the other related to the equality of languages and cultures. According to most of the teachers, all languages are valuable as such and one cannot rank them or the people speaking these languages. The underlying tone was that since we are all human beings and therefore alike in many ways, our languages and cultures are all expressions of our humanity and thus equal. Many of the teachers said that what they would like to put across is that one should have an open-minded attitude towards *all* languages and they saw it as their mission to teach their

pupils to be prejudice-free and interested in learning about new cultures. This is how Paul described his approach to the matter:

Paul: -- *mä pyrin opettaa sitä että pyrkikää ymmärtämään miksi ihmiset tekee- sitä ei oo pakko hyväksyä. On paljo asioita mitä ei voi hyväksyä. Ja sen saa sanoo ettei hyväksy. Mut jos kuitenkin pyrittäis ymmärtämään.*

(‘-- I try to teach them to understand why people do certain things. You don’t have to accept it but if we nevertheless tried to understand.’)

In addition, many of the teachers mentioned that they would like to teach their pupils to speak foreign languages as much as possible – several teachers pointed out the fact that languages are meant to be used in communication and that the main focus in language teaching should not be in grammar. They seemed to want to illustrate the possibilities that knowing foreign languages opened up for a person. However, ironically they had trouble utilizing the resources they had already in the classroom and many of the teachers mentioned that making good use of the already-existing multiculturalism in the classroom had room for development. However, what was reflected in the responses of several teachers was the fact that they wanted to emphasize the importance and equality of all languages and thus were in that respect applying the notions of multicultural education in their everyday teaching. Jane aptly summarized the teachers’ general position on passing on cultural and language attitudes:

Jane: -- *tässä ollaan samalla viivalla kaikki, että nyt me opiskellaan sitä suomea kun sä tarvit sitä täällä tai sit opetella sitä- opiskella sitä englantia mut sit on myös se sun äidinkieli mikä on ihan yhtä hyvä ja yhtä tärkeä.*

(‘All languages are equally important, now we’re learning Finnish because you need it here and then we’re learning English too but then there’s your native tongue which is just as good and just as important.’)

Jane’s account clearly reflects the idea how teaching that all languages are worthy as such is the beginning of teaching that all cultures and all human beings are equal in a similar way. Whenever the message of equality is forwarded, the core of multicultural education has been reached.

10 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: ENGLISH TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF PUPILS OF MULTICULTURAL BACKGROUND

This final chapter of results and analysis will focus on two specific matters: firstly it will discuss the positive aspects that the teachers saw in teaching pupils of multicultural background and secondly, subsection 10.2 will concentrate on the descriptions the interviewees provided of their pupils and of their multicultural classes. Subsection 10.1 will put specific emphasis on what the teachers felt their pupils brought into the classroom in a positive sense. These positive aspects were, according to them, not apparent in groups where there were merely pupils of Finnish background. The final subsection will shed more light on all the different accounts the teachers provided throughout the interviews and will thus be an appropriate way to summarize the section of results and discussion since it brings together the general conceptions the participants of this particular study had of their pupils of multicultural background.

10.1 The advantages of teaching a multicultural class

When asked what the teachers thought their pupils of diverse backgrounds brought into the classroom, particularly in the positive sense of the concept, there were two distinct approaches to the question. Firstly, some of the teachers were clearly of the opinion that their pupils of multicultural background were not different from the rest of the pupils and since they were all individuals, no matter what their background was, they brought their personalities into the classroom. Kate phrased her reply in the following manner:

Kate: Mitä nyt oppilas ylipäänsä tuo luokkaan. Itsensä, äänensä, tavaransa, tuoksunsa, tapansa liikkua, olla, elehtiä, tapa suhtautua kavereihin. -- Jokainen tuo sinne jotain, oman persoonansa ne tuo.

(‘What a pupil in general brings into the classroom. Himself, his voice, his things, his scent, his way to move, be, gesture, his way to treat his friends. -- Everyone brings something, their personality that’s what they bring. ’)

Secondly, some of the teachers felt that their pupils of multicultural background brought not only colour and life into the classroom but along with their more impulsive personalities a sense of spontaneity that might have not existed in classrooms consisting merely of pupils of Finnish background. According to these

teachers, the impulsiveness these pupils brought with them was both an asset and a disadvantage, depending on the situation. It was considered to be advantageous when the pupils took part in the classroom and motivated not only the teacher but also other pupils to be more actively involved in class. However, some of the teachers also acknowledged the fact that sometimes the spontaneity of these pupils was not channelled into learning but instead created situations where the pupils had trouble concentrating and instead disturbed the learning of other pupils. Thus, spontaneity and impulsiveness were seen as characteristics that were useful in certain occasions and unfavourable in others. This is how Jane described her experiences:

Jane: Siinä on sellanen ero että monet näistä muualta tulleista oppilaista, vaikka ovatkin asuneet Suomessa suurimman osan ikänsä niin heidän tämä tapansa reagoida asioihin saattaa olla aivan toisenlainen. Et siis hyvin paljon semmonen spontaanimpi ja käyttäytyminen- mä en sano huonoa ollenkaan mut erilaista.

(‘There is a difference in that the way react to things among pupils who have come from elsewhere is totally different. It’s a lot more spontaneous and their conduct- I’m not saying it’s bad but it’s different.’)

This certain liveliness and a way to react to life differently were seen as features pupils of Finnish background rarely possessed and thus most teachers considered these qualities to be refreshing from the teacher’s point of view. In addition, according to Paul, some of these spontaneous and active pupils of multicultural background managed to bring the sort of drive to the classroom pupils of Finnish background rarely did and therefore enhanced the motivation of the teacher as well.

Furthermore, some of the teachers were grateful for their pupils of multicultural background since, according to them, they brought along with them a sense of diversity to the classroom which, in turn, forced the other pupils to deal with issues of multiculturalism at an early age and hopefully helped them to become more tolerant adults. Many of the teachers regarded having immigrant pupils in the classroom as a factor that would expand the worldviews of the pupils belonging to the majority since they would get to know on a personal level their peers who had a different cultural and linguistic background. According to the teachers, there was a greater chance of these pupils realizing that despite superficial differences, people were the same at bottom and thus equal. Therefore, teaching a multicultural class was equality training at its best and thus valuable.

10.2 Descriptions of pupils of multicultural background

The main conclusion that could be drawn based on the responses of the teachers was that pupils of multicultural background were pupils just as well as the others, meaning that they were teenagers, human beings and similar to their peers in so many ways that there was no need to make a distinction between those who were of Finnish background and those who were not. Particularly once teachers had learned to know their pupils as individuals and not just as those Somali girls or those Russian boys but more as Fatima and Igor, they had realized that individual differences always existed and generalizations based on ethnicity should not be made. Many of the teachers stated that they treated all their pupils in the same fashion and had no intention of changing their teaching due to multicultural issues. Paul expressed his thoughts as follows:

Paul: *Ne ei oo ensisijaisesti maahanmuuttajia vaan niinku meidän oppilaita. -- ne tuosen oman persoonansa, että joku yksittäinen vieraan kulttuurin edustaja ryhmässä saattaa olla huippu, niinkun jotkut on tai sit se saattaa olla tavallinen tai sit se voi olla ihan pihalla.*

(‘They are not primarily immigrants, they are our pupils. They bring their own personality into the classroom and some of them are great at school and some of them are not.’)

What was reflected in Paul’s account, and in the accounts of several teachers was that teachers did not want to emphasize the part where the pupil was a representative of a certain ethnic, racial, linguistic or religious group but instead they wanted to give the individual a chance as they were similarly giving their pupils of Finnish background a chance to show what they could or could not do in the classroom. What became evident in the responses of the teachers was that they did not take diversity into account in the classroom unless there were problems closely related to it. Since there had been few or no conflicts deriving from racial or ethnic issues, it had reinforced the individualistic view the teachers had. In addition, many of the teachers saw their pupils first and foremost as teenagers who had the same hopes, dreams and fears as their peers of Finnish background and thus were to be treated accordingly. Since in many of the schools the interviewees were teaching there had been immigrant pupils for the past fifteen years, the teachers did not see it as a new challenge anymore and many of the

pupils had already been in Finland for such a long period of time that their lifestyle was comparable to that of their Finnish-born classmates.

Moreover, many of the teachers did not consider their pupils of multicultural background to be in any way challenging, implicating that since these pupils did not cause commotion in the classroom and did their school work conscientiously, the teachers did not have to pay any special attention to these pupils. In many schools the problematic pupils were those of Finnish background and thus the teachers had their hands full with just managing the Finnish-born pupils with social problems such as alcoholism, crime, divorces and domestic abuse. This was seen more as a societal phenomenon since many of the immigrants arriving to Finland were still situated into poorer neighbourhoods where social problems prevailed. Many of the teachers declared that unlike their peers of Finnish background, many of the immigrant pupils had support from home and had been taught the significance of education for their future which thus made them obedient students. Helen described the situation in the following manner:

Helen: -- *kaikkein ongelmallisimmat* niinku lapset *on mun mielestä usein ihan suomalaisperäisiä* ja niitten vanhemmat niinku ryypää, *on sit alkoholismii.*

(‘-- the most problematic kids are in my opinion often of Finnish background and their parents drink, there’s alcoholism [in the family].’)

There are, however, problems to being obedient. Since many pupils of Finnish background took the attention of the teacher, immigrant pupils were in danger of being forgotten and they had, based on the accounts of the teachers, become invisible. One can debate whether this was in line with the general idea of equality – at least they were not being treated differently because of their cultural and ethnic background – but then again they were not being paid the attention they might have required in order to surmount some of the learning obstacles that they had and the others did not have. Based on the reports provided by the teachers, it became clear that deeper societal problems are still reflected in Finnish schools and the reality is that lack of money and resources, such as school assistants, are the reasons why teachers more than often are forced to deal with these problems alone, at the expense of for example immigrant pupils.

Pupils of multicultural background were described to be often more polite than their classmates of Finnish background by most of the teachers. They had been taught

to have respect for education, for teachers and for older people in general, the same which could not be said of many Finnish-born teenagers anymore. Thus, many of the teachers felt that it was pleasant to teach pupils who clearly respected them and knew to appreciate the education they received since it was not something to take for granted. Jane reported her experiences in the following fashion:

Jane: -- *käytöstavat* -- on *hyvät*. -- *harva opettaja nyt ehkä kuulee ihan suomenkieliseltä oppilaalta ku tunti loppuu että kiitos. No heippa nyt tietenkin tulee mutta se kiitos niinku että kiitos tästä nyt.*

(‘ Their manners are good. Few teachers get a thank you from a Finnish-speaking pupil after class.’)

All of the teachers who mentioned pupils of multicultural background to be well-mannered saw it as a refreshing change to “normal” teenagers who neither expressed their thanks nor showed in any way that they would have appreciated the teaching they were receiving. This, in turn, had an effect on how these teachers saw their immigrant pupils – many of them thought these pupils to be well taken care of and were of the opinion that these pupils clearly had their parents’ support for their studies and were thus motivated to learn more. In addition, many of these teachers compared their male pupils of multicultural background to their male pupils of Finnish background and noticed a distinct difference in their conduct. First of all, immigrant pupils seemed often to be more mature in their behaviour and additionally were more polite towards the teacher. All of the teachers who had paid attention to manners, considered this to be surprising and were happy to have noticed this difference.

Teachers had also noticed immigrant pupils to be exceptionally motivated to learn, at least compared to their Finnish classmates. Particularly if these pupils had begun their schooling in their home country, they were happy to be in a Finnish school where education was free and teaching was of good quality. According to Jane, many of her immigrant pupils were not only eager to learn but also eager to be useful and eager to matter in the classroom. This was also why some of the pupils were active to the point of irritation in the classroom and why the teacher had had to sometimes ask some pupils to let the others get a word in edgeways. In addition, in Maria’s opinion, some of the pupils became *too* motivated in that they wished to become something that Maria as a teacher did not see them to possess the needed qualities and facilities for. This is her account on the matter:

Maria: -- *suurin osa [maahanmuuttajaoppilaista] on kunnianhimosempia, että heillä on oikeesti tavoitteita ja varmaan -- ammatitavoitteet on jotain lääkäriä tai näin -- että heillä on jopa liiankin korkeita tavoitteita sitten ja sitten joutuu pettymään jonkun verran.*

(-- the majority [of immigrant pupils] are really ambitious -- their professional goals are to become a doctor or something, they might aim too high and then they're going to be disappointed to some extent.)

There are two conclusions that can be drawn based on Maria's declaration. On the one hand, one could claim that the teacher's low expectations are exactly the factor preventing multicultural teaching from being fully implemented and that it is not the teacher's responsibility to decide what the pupil can or cannot do (Gay 2002: 614, Gollnick and Chinn 2009: 383). On the other hand, teachers can often have a more realistic view of what the pupil's capabilities are and therefore if the teacher clearly sees that aiming as high as becoming a doctor with insufficient language skills and learning difficulties, then as subtly and as discreetly as possible the teacher can try to channel the pupil's decision-making towards a more suitable direction. However, having ambitions and goals is something to be encouraged since pupils of multicultural background are nevertheless in a greater risk of dropping out (Talib 2002: 117).

Some of the teachers, Tom in particular, described the immigrant pupils to often form groups based on their own nationality, ethnicity, race, religion or linguistic background. This was seen as something negative and some of the teachers saw it as a threat if they saw pupils of a specific nationality spending time together in school, generally also speaking their own language. This might truly be the case in many schools and it clearly is an indication of a deeper issue. Firstly, there must be a reason for why these pupils have the need to mainly interact with people who are of the same national and ethnic background. Maybe they have not felt themselves welcome in the school and have been left outside of all the mainstream groups. A large part of the teenage culture is to fit in and since pupils form groups within their classes, it might come naturally to immigrant pupils to associate with people who they share a similar history with. Secondly, some of these pupils might have the need to stand out as people and show everybody that they do not have to sacrifice their own cultural and linguistic roots in order to find friends and a group to belong to. However, there is no need for teachers to feel threatened by this but instead they should take the time and become acquainted with their pupils and try to function as a mediator between different pupil

groups. Showing the pupils that the teacher cares enough to make them all feel at home at school promotes the learning and thus the well-being of all pupils (Gay 2002: 620; Gollnick and Chinn 2009: 384).

All in all, many of the teachers described teaching pupils of diverse backgrounds as a life-enriching experience, assuming that one had a genuine interest in teaching and foreign cultures in general. Several teachers stated that teaching as a profession was interesting in that one had to evolve with the pupils and that particularly with teaching immigrant pupils one was fortunate to be able to help these pupils who had overcome sometimes unimaginable tragedies. Those teachers who had realized the essence of multicultural teaching, saw it as a profession where they had the chance to expand their worldviews, the chance to help their pupils and also the chance to grow as human beings. Encountering people from completely different cultures had not only helped to appreciate what one had in Finland but had also helped the teacher to understand that despite differences in culture, language and traditions, deep down human beings shared similarities beyond comprehension. This is how Linda expressed her feelings:

Linda: -- *hehän [maahanmuuttajaoppilaat] rikastuttaa elämää paljon, et sä kuulet kaikkia jänniä juttuja heiltä, joskus kauheen traagisia juttuja tietysti -- mut toisaalta se avaa maailmaa ihan eri tavalla.*

(‘-- they [immigrant pupils] enrich life tremendously, you hear all kinds of exciting stories from them, sometimes really tragic stories of course -- but on the other hand it opens up the world in a totally different way.’)

Facing difficulties related to language and culture in everyday teaching was seen as worth it when teachers had had the chance to witness wonderful stories where pupils of multicultural background had not only succeeded in catching up with the others but had also clearly managed to create a positive multicultural identity for themselves. Knowing that the teacher had contributed to this process was seen as the best prize a teacher could ask for.

11 CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to examine the conceptions English teachers have of multicultural teaching in general and of pupils of multicultural background. The three main research questions were the following: 1) How do middle school English teachers construct the term multicultural teaching, i.e. what do they think multicultural teaching entails? 2) How do they perceive teaching English in a culturally diverse classroom? and 3) What are their conceptions of their pupils of multicultural background? This closing chapter will firstly discuss the main results of the present study and secondly the implications of the results both in the light of previous studies and in the light of this type of research in general. Thirdly, both the merits and the limitations of the present study will be discussed, also in terms of reliability, validity and objectivity and finally, suggestions for further research will be provided.

The main results of the present study reveal that firstly, teachers are not that familiar with the term multicultural teaching due to several reasons, the most essential of which is the lack of education during teaching training on these matters. Secondly, the most common theme that rose from the data concerning teachers' conceptions of their pupils of multicultural background was the idea of similarity – the idea that we are all the same despite our differences in race, ethnicity, language or religion. Thus, teachers most often treat all their pupils in a similar manner since they consider them to be teenagers first and foremost, not representatives of a certain culture. Thirdly, the results of the study reveal that teachers find teaching diverse classrooms challenging and even burdening to some extent due to the lack of resources and information, hence confirming the results of previous studies (e.g. Talib 2000: 193). However, there are also teachers who, once they manage to find what is essential in multicultural teaching, see diversity as life-enriching and find the interaction between different cultures favourable. Fourthly, since English in Finland is still mainly taught through Finnish, most teachers find the insufficient Finnish skills of many pupils of multicultural background to be problematic in that they have trouble keeping up with others. English, however, is not considered to be the solution to this since the native tongue of most immigrant pupils is not English. Teaching structures – a linguistic area which most teachers teach in the mother tongue of the majority, in this case in Finnish – is seen as the most challenging task.

As far as previous research (e.g. Gay 1998, Talib 2000, Miettinen 2001) is concerned, it has mainly focused on elementary school teachers' conceptions of

multicultural teaching and pupils of immigrant background, thus excluding subject teachers from the equation. However, language teachers in particular are facing a dilemma where they are teaching a foreign language through a language that is just as foreign to some of the pupils. Previous studies (Miettinen 2001, Talib 2000) have stated that teachers feel burdened by the linguistic and cultural diversity which is present in the classroom and feel that there are not enough resources, both mental and financial, to cope with the situation. The present study partly confirms, partly contradicts these results. On the one hand, teachers still know little about the theoretical framework of multicultural education and teaching and do not know how to take immigrant pupils into account. There is a fine line between what makes these pupils stand out in a negative way and what is essential special attention paid to them to facilitate their learning. Thus, the solution many teachers have come to is to not take them into account in any specific way. This can partly result from the adaptation process: the teachers have already become accustomed to the existence of diversity in the classroom during the past two decades but partly it can result from their lack of knowledge. On the other hand, since teachers do not seem to pay any special attention to pupils of multicultural background, to some extent the issue has ceased to be an issue and has become reality. Whether teachers are any better-equipped to encounter their pupils of multicultural background than they were in mid-1990s is another question but in the light of the results of the present study, it seems that teachers have become accustomed to the phenomenon and no longer see it as something peculiar.

Since English teachers and their conceptions on multicultural issues is a topic which has not been studied before in the Finnish context and is nevertheless contemporary in its nature, it is justified to state that there was a clear need for this type of research. The present study has managed to substantiate that not only is there an evident need for further research but also that teachers are still struggling with multicultural issues in their everyday work and feel that they have not received enough training. As previous studies have affirmed (Miettinen 2001, Talib 2000), there is still a clear juxtaposition between theory and practice in that teachers want to be multicultural in theory but do not know how to be that in practice and consider it to be something separate from regular teaching while the principles of multicultural teaching (Gay 1998: 16) insist that multicultural teaching should go through the entire curriculum and education system as a set of values, thus setting the tone for everything that is being taught. This results in either indifference, i.e. teachers falsely believe that it is in the

pupils' best interest if they do not receive any special attention or in frustration and resentment on part of the teachers which can be channelled either to their occupation in general, to their pupils or to their fellow teachers. Teachers who feel ill-equipped to meet the demands of their profession, in this case the diversity in the classroom, tend to have more negative attitudes towards multicultural issues in general and are reluctant to change the status quo.

However, the present study has also succeeded in finding out that teachers no longer consider diversity to be a new phenomenon, in fact on the contrary. Teachers have adapted to it but then again it seems that nothing has changed in terms of the general climate. Teachers are still unaware of the theoretical underpinnings of multicultural teaching and some of them even see no need for a change. Thus, the results of the present study clearly imply that multicultural teaching should be included as a more visible part of teacher training and particularly those practicing teachers who work in schools with a large number of immigrant pupils should receive additional training in multicultural issues. Further professional training should, above all, have its focus on practical teaching applications, despite the fact that teachers also lack general theoretical knowledge on multicultural teaching. The participants in the present study were adamant in their need to receive *functional* training, not just idealistic and empty words which are of no use in the classroom. In addition, the results of the present study imply that there is a clear need for an *attitudinal* change, i.e. teachers need to find the joy of multicultural teaching within themselves before they can pass it on to their pupils. This calls for self-reflection and the development of multicultural competence which, in turn, is not possible unless the teachers are made aware of the necessity of this process, not only for the well-being of their pupils but above all, for their own professional and personal well-being as well, as confirmed by Talib (2005: 45). If teachers knew that by reflecting on these issues more they could have a more fulfilling professional life, it is probable that at least some of the presently ignorant teachers would gladly begin the process of reflection.

The limitations of the present study are mainly related to the methodology and to the topic of the study. Since this a qualitative study and thus the results cannot be generalized to the extent those of a quantitative study would be, the validity and reliability of the study need to be evaluated. Firstly, reliability in qualitative research can be improved by describing the research process in detail and through the self-reflection of the interviewer. It is important that the interviewer is aware of his or her

preconceptions prior to conducting the study. As far as validity is concerned, according to McKay (2006: 13-14), a thorough recording and analysis of the data is the most advantageous way to achieve internal validity whereas in order for external validity to be fully secured, the researcher needs to provide a detailed account of the participants in the study and the context in which the study took place. In addition, providing authentic extracts from the data are there to support the analysis and to illustrate to the reader how the researcher has come to such an analysis (Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara 2009: 233). Presenting extracts from the transcribed data also decrease the subjectivity since they are there to prove that the researcher has drawn his or her conclusions from an objective data source.

In the present study, the data were analyzed based on interviews which were transcribed in the attempt to minimize the effect of the researcher's preconceptions on the analysis. In the results section, the conclusions have been supported by providing authentic extracts from the data. The starting point for the analysis was to formulate broader themes that rose from the transcribed data and therefore there was some subjectivity related to it. However, since the researcher was both aware of this aspect and used the same interview schedule with all the interviewees, the themes rising from the data more or less correlated with the interview questions, thus increasing the objectivity of the analysis and the validity and reliability of the results. Appendix 1 shows the revised interview schedule and Appendix 2 provides examples of the transcribed data. The extracts which were chosen to illustrate and support the analysis were selected due to their interesting and clarifying nature and the decision was made to provide translations for them in the same context as opposed to having provided the translations in another appendix. In chapter 7 the participants were described in as much detail as possible while still preserving their anonymity. It is, thus, possible for the readers of the present study to assess the objectivity, reliability and validity of the study and contemplate the applicableness of the study to other research contexts. As far as the topic is concerned, since it is related to the feelings and opinions of the participants, there is some subjectivity related to it. However, since the purpose of the study was not to provide one hundred percent objective information which could be generalized to apply to all teachers across Finland but instead to shed some light on as to how particular English teachers viewed the matter and what type of stories they had to share, the choice of methodology and topic go hand in hand and are thus justified as such. If anything,

qualitative research is interpretation and thus it has been given an important role in the present study as well.

Since the present study is qualitative in nature and provides accounts given by teachers in certain areas in Finland, more extensive research is needed. Particularly qualitative research should be conducted to provide a more wide-ranging view of what the current situation in terms of multicultural language teaching in Finland is. Based on the findings of the present study, future research could focus more on what it means to teach English through Finnish to pupils who do not have Finnish as their mother tongue. Since there are evident problems related to teaching foreign languages to pupils of diverse linguistic backgrounds in the Finnish context, what future research could focus on is how to ease the teaching process in practice, i.e. what types of techniques teachers could use to facilitate the learning of pupils of multicultural and multilingual background. In addition, future research could also concentrate on what could be done in practice to change the attitudinal climate that seems to prevail at the moment which is that of ignorance and indifference. Since multiculturalism is not a phase that will pass but has instead become reality in schools across the country, teachers need to adopt multicultural values as their everyday agenda and in addition attempt to see the positive aspects of diversity. How to go along with and adapt to the current situation instead of fighting the current could be something future research could try to find answers to.

To conclude, teachers should be allowed to express their insecurities and lack of emotional resources if a change to the situation can ever be expected. First and foremost, schools need to be aware of the change in demographics and need to act by taking multicultural education into their agenda and by teaching their teachers how to cope with the changing situation. A gradual shift in how pupils are taught and in the values they are being provided with must begin with adults in schools in order for it to ever be a reality.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Opetustausta

Kuinka kauan olet toiminut opettajana?

Missä kouluissa olet aiemmin opettanut?

Onko sinulla muuta työkokemusta pohjalla?

Oletko aiemmin työskennellyt kouluissa, joissa on ollut paljon maahanmuuttajia?

Oletko kenties työskennellyt muilla aloilla, joilla olisit työskennellyt kansainvälisessä ilmapiirissä?

Millä aloilla ja mitä teit?

2. Koulutustausta & monikulttuurisuuskasvatus opettajankoulutuksessa

Kerro hieman koulutustaustastasi: **mitä opiskelit ja missä?**

Milloin valmistuit ja mistä yliopistosta?

Millaiset pedagogiset opinnot sinulla on takanasi (esim. ainoastaan aineenopettajakoulutus vai kenties myös luokanopettajaopintoja/erityispedagogiikkaa)?

Kun muistelet omaa opettajankoulutustasi, muistatko, että maahanmuuttajaoppilaista tai monikulttuurisesta opetuksesta olisi puhuttu?

Jos puhuttiin, kerro vähän tarkemmin, mitä muistat.

Tarjosiko opettajankoulutus tarpeeksi tietoa maahanmuuttajaoppilaiden opetuksesta?

Jos ei tarjonnut, mistä luulet tämän johtuvan?

Ja minkäläisten asioiden suhteen olisit kaivannut lisätietoa?

3. Tämänhetkinen opetustilanne

Mitä aineita opetat?

Mille luokille?

Kuinka kauan olet työskennellyt tässä kyseisessä koulussa?

Miten tulit opettajaksi tähän kouluun?

Tiesitkö jo hakiessasi, että koulussa on paljon maahanmuuttajaoppilaita?

Montako maahanmuuttajaoppilasta sinulla on (lukumäärä/prosentteina)?

4. Omat maahanmuuttajaoppilaat

Löytyykö jokaisesta opetusryhmästäsi maahanmuuttajia?

Mistä eri maista maahanmuuttajat ovat tulleet?

Miten kuvailisit heidän kielellisiä taitojaan?

Entä oppimistaitoja?

Miten paljon tiedät oppilaidesi koulutustaustoista?

Entä perhetaustoista?

Haluaisitko tietää enemmän?

Tiedätkö maahanmuuttajaoppilaidesi äidinkielet – jos tiedät, mitä kieliä ne ovat?

Oletko perehtynyt näihin kieliin?

Jos olet, oletko tehnyt sen omalla ajallasi vai onko koulu tarjonnut tähän tukea?

Onko sinulle tärkeää tietää oppilaidesi kielitaustoista? Jos on, miksi? Jos ei ole, miksi ei ole?

5. Monikulttuurinen opetus

Mitä käsität sanalla monikulttuurinen opetus? Mitä se pitää sisällään, kerro tarkemmin. **Mitkä ovat mielestäsi monikulttuurisen opetuksen peruseriaatteet?**

Oletko perehtynyt monikulttuurisen opetuksen ns. teorioihin vai onko kaikki tietämyksesi tullut käytännön kautta?

Miten kuvailisit opettajan roolia monikulttuurisessa opetuksessa?

Miten se eroaa ns. tavallisesta opetuksesta vai eroaako mitenkään?

Koetko, että oma opetuksesi on monikulttuurista opetusta?

Mitkä konkreettiset asiat tekevät opetuksestasi monikulttuurista?

6. **Tavallinen englannin tunti monikulttuurisessa luokassa**

Koska luokastasi löytyy maahanmuuttajaoppilaita, millä tavalla otat heidät huomioon (vai otatko mitenkään)?

Käytätkö tunnilla pääasiassa englantia vai suomea?

Miksi käytät englantia/suomea?

Luuletko, että tuntisi olisivat erilaisia, jos luokkassasi ei olisi maahanmuuttajia?

Millä tavalla ne olisivat erilaisia?

Mitä maahanmuuttajaoppilaat mielestäsi tuovat luokkaan (vai tuovatko mitään)? Miten itse kuvailisit suhdettasi maahanmuuttajaoppilaisiisi?

Onko se muuttunut vuosien varrella vai onko se aina pysynyt samana?

Mitkä ovat suurimmat haasteet maahanmuuttajien kielenopetuksessa?

7. **Opettajan oma monikulttuurinen identiteetti/kompetenssi ja kieliasenteet**

Onko sinulla paljon henkilökohtaista kokemusta ulkomaalaisista/ulkomailla asumisesta? Jos on, mitä kokemusta ja minkälaisista yhteyksistä? Jos ei ole, haluaisitko lisää kokemuksia?

Koetko, että kokemuksesi ovat vaikuttaneet omaan opettajuuteesi?

Miten kuvailisit suhdettasi englantiin?

Entä muihin kieliin?

Minkälaisia kieliasenteita haluaisit välittää oppilaillesi?

Miten haluaisit kehittyä maahanmuuttajien opettajana?

Minkälaisiin asioihin kehityksessäsi tunnet tarvitsevasi ulkopuolista ohjausta/apua ja mitkä asiat ovat taas itsestäsi kiinni?

Oletko tyytyväinen siihen, millainen maahanmuuttajien opettaja sinusta on tullut?

Oletko kaiken kaikkiaan tyytyväinen työhösi maahanmuuttajien parissa? Jos olet, mistä asioista tyytyväisyys koostuu? Jos et ole, mistä asioista luulet tyytymättömyytesi johtuvan?

Mikä on vaikeinta maahanmuuttajien opettamisessa?

Entä mikä on helpointa?

APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLES OF THE TRANSCRIBED DATA

An extract of Paul's interview:

TRANSCRIPTION: Interview conducted April 20th 2009

Explanations for markings:

H = the interviewer

R/J/L = the interviewee

(...) indicate pauses

[] indicate overlapped speech

() indicate actions

x incomprehensible item, probably one word only

xx incomprehensible item of phrase length

THE INTERVIEW:

H: Joo, niin tota.

R: Niin, shoot.

H: Ensiks, ensikskin sellanen et kuinka kauan oot toiminu opettajana?

R: Kahdestoista vuosi menossa.

H: Joo. Tota, onks tää, kuinka monta vuotta oot tässä koulussa?

R: Neljäs vuosi menossa. Kohta neljä vuotta.

H: Okei. Missä aikasemmin, minkälaisissa kouluissa oot opettanu?

R: No, Tampereella, Tampereella yläaste ja lukio yhdistetty, sitte Tampereella ala-asteella sitte Hämeenlinnassa ala-asteella ja Helsingissäki yhdellä ala-asteella mutta nyt sitte Helsingissä yläasteella.

H: Okei. [Et sulla on tota...]

R: x maantieteellistä hajontaa ja sitte tota ikähaitari ja niin sitte oikeestaan niin vissiin pitäs laskee siihen opettajavuosien päälle viel se, että mä oon ollu myös kaks, kaks vuotta aikuisopetuksessa, yksityisellä kielikoululla.

H: Okei.

R: Et ihan pienestä kolmasluokkalaisesta eläkeläisiin on kaikkea...

H: Joo. Tota onko – o- ootko aikasemmin ollu niinkun maahanmuuttajien kanssa tekemisissä tai semmosissa kouluissa, missä ois ollu maahanmuuttajia?

R: Kyllä tota... no esimerkiks siinä mun Tampereen pitkäaikasimmassa virkakoulussa niin siellä oli vissiin Tampereella eniten suhteellisesti, mikä on paljon vähemmän kun täällä, mutta siinä mittakaavassa kyllä niin Tampereen viitekehyksessä niin oli niitä eniten

[H: Eli eli eli oli jo kokemusta siinä vaiheessa kun tulit tänne?]

R: Joo, joo.

H: Onksulla muunlaista työkokemusta niinkun kun opettajana toimimisesta?

R: Kaikkena oon ollu paitti ajanvittaksena että ihan ihan niinkun mitä, mitä, mitä vaan löytyy että mitä, mitä sä haluat x

H: Mut silleen niinku pitempiaikasta et sen jälkeen kun oot valmistunu niin ootko, ootko tehny...

[R: Ei valmistumisen jälkeen mä oon tehny alan töitä, koska siitähän se raha tulee, että siihen mennessä kuitenkin kuitenkin niin ehtiny tehdä kaikki mahdolliset, mä oon ollu matkaoppaasta pitsanpaistajaks ja...

H: Joo, joo.

R: Mutta valmistumisen jälkeen vaan opettanu että...

H: Okei.

R: Siitähän ne hillot saa että...

H: Joo. Tota mitä sä oot opiskellu ja missä?

R: Englantia, ruotsia, historiaa. Tampereen yliopistossa. Kasvatustieteet.

H: Ja sä oot valmistunu vuonna...?

R: Yheksänseittemän.

H: Joo.

R: Sen jälkeen ka- ihan niinkun katkotta alan töissä.

H: Joo. Eli sä mainitsitkin, sulla oli kasvatustieteet, onk sulla ollu niinkun sivuaineena periaatteessa ne vai ne opettajan pedagogiset...?

R: Aineenopettajan opinnot, joo. Ei, ei kasvatustiede varsinaisesti.

H: Joo. No, kun muistelet sitä omaa opettajankoulutusta niin muistatko, että ois puhuttu ylipäänsä monikulttuurisesta opetuksesta ja maahanmuuttajaoppilaista?

R: Ei ollu *issue* silloin yheksänkymmentäluvulla, ei sitä aihetta, aihetta ei oikeestaan ollu olemassa et sitten sitten tota... öm...virassa toimiessa jo niin silloin kaupunki järjesti tämmöstä tämmöstä tota koulutusta lähinnä kun tuli, tuli isompia porukoita niin vähän... öm... joo kaupunki järjesti tämmöstä niinkun tiedostamis... että kerrottiin että että mistä mistä tulija- tulijoita on ja mistä on odotettavissa ja mitä, mitä tota ki- esimerkiks kieliä, kieliä on niinkun nyt uusia kaupungin opetusohjelmassa. Bataani oli just silloin tullu, se oli niinkun uus, sitä esiteltiin, että meilläpä on tämmönen uus, uus juttu mutta nyt meil, nyt meillä on sitten bataanin kielistä, tietääks kukaan missä se on ja kaikki x nyt kaikki tietää bataanit että.

[H: Joo.]

H: Okei. Joo. Mut että opettajankoulutuksessa ei puhuttu?

R: E- ei, ei se ollu silloin niinkun merkittävä, se se oli tota... kielenopiskelussa ei edes sivuttu asiaa ja aineenopettajakoulutuksessa niin... niin tota... ihan sillä, todettiin että että meillä on harjottelukoulussa joku oppilas, joka on jostain mut se ei niinku näkyny yhtään missään.

[H: Joo.]

H: Joo. Joo. Tota eli periaatteessa niinku kaikki mitä sen jälkeen on oppinu niin on oppinu käytännössä?

R: Joo.

H: Joo. No, mitä aineita opetat tällä hetkellä?

R: Englantia ja ruotsia.

An extract of Jane's interview:

H: Löytyyk sun jokasesta opetusryhmästä maahanmuuttajia?

J: No mulla on nyt sitte sitä alakoulun... no kaikista muista paitsi sitten mulla on seiskan yks englannin ryhmä, joka on siis A-englantia

H: Mm.

J: pitkää englantia niin siellä ei oo ketään.

H: Joo.

J: Mutta kaikissa muissa on.

H: Joo. Mistä eri maista teillä on?

J: Noo se kyllä vaihtelee, no ehkä eniten on tällä hetkellä afgaaneja. Mut sitte kun heiltäkin kysyy, että mistä maasta olet, niin se on vaikeata sanoa, koska välttämättä

kaikki eivät oo koskaan käyneet Afganistanissa et he on asuneet aika pitkään esimerkiks Iranissa ja sitten sieltä tulleet tänne. Muita syntyperä- taikka jos aatellaan näin, että mistä vanhemmat on lähtösin, niin afgaaneja ja sitten venäläisiä on aika paljon, Thaimaasta on, sitte on tämmösiä yksittäisiä et on Bosniasta, Kroatiasta, Venezue- eikun hetkinen Perusta. Ja sitte onnn... mm mm Turkista... kurdeja on. Ja mite- no sitten Afrikan maista on nytten tänä vuonna viime vuonnakin nyt tullu sitten Keski-Afrikan maista on myöski.

H: Joo. Mitkä ois niinku ehkä semmoset suurimmat ryhmät?

J: No afgaanit on, kurdit ja ehkä venäläiset sitte.

H: Joo. Miten kuvailisit näitten, näitten oppilaitten kielellisiä taitoja?

J: No, nyt nää minun seiskan ryhmäläiset esimerkiks siinä S-kakkosessa niin he on kaikki olleet alakoulussa jo koulussa täällä Suomessa.

H: Mm.

J: Että ihan vaihtelee sillä tavalla, että kolme vuotta tai sitten jotkut on ihan syntyneetkin täällä mut kuitenkin koska heidän äi- äidinkieleksi on merkitty joku muu kun suomi, ni sitten sitten tota jos ei vanhemmat erikseen sitä halua vaihtaa, ni se on sit se S-kakkonen se tai suomen kieli on sit se toinen kieli.

H: Joo, mm, mm.

J: Että heillä vaihtelee, he on aika pitkään ollu, mut sitten on esimerkiks se seiskan enkun, enkun ryhmä, B-englannin ryhmä, jossa on oikeestaan, osa heistä on vielä valmistavalla luokalla elikkä ei oo vielä vuotta opiskellu suomee ja osa on nyt joululta päässy sieltä valmistavalta luokalta

H: Joo.

J: pois. Elikkä niinku runsas vuosi on heillä sitten suomen kielen.

H: Et vaihtelee, vaihtelee se suomen taso?

J: Vaihtelee, kyllä vaihtelee joo. Eikä sekään aina kerro totuutta, että miten monta vuotta on ollu Suomessa, että että se on niin riippuu hirveesti siitäkin, että miten paljon on niinku tavallaan semmosta... tai on koulu- koulutusta esimerkiks aikasemmin ollu että että miten miten osaa opiskella toisaalta, opiskelu- opiskelutaidotkin on semmoset sitten, mitkä vaikuttaa. Tietysti se kiinnostuneisuus ja motivaatio varmasti vaikuttaa tosi paljon että.

H: No entäs englannin taidoiltaan?

J: No taas sit nää jotka on pitempään ollu Suomessa niin niin tota he yleensä ovat sitte tuolla jo A-englannin ryhmissä, jos ei mitään ihmeellistä oo, vaikeutta sit ollu siinä kielen opiskelussa et heitä, he ei välttämättä sit siellä lyhyemmän englannin ryhmässä oo, että ne, jotka on siellä B-englannin ryhmässä ni yleensä on semmosia, jotka on opiskellu hyvin vähän taikka ei ollenkaan sitte aikasemmin sitä englantia. Että heidän kanssa me alotetaan sitte alusta ja

H: Joo.

J: Ja tota niin... ja sitte varsinki nyt näitten, jotka on valmistavalta luokalta melkein suoraan tulleet niin niin mahdollisimman paljon niinku toisaaltahan se on hyvä, että sitä suomen kieltäki siinä voi treenata ja miettiä, että mitä tää on suomeksi mut sitte niinku just tämmönen joku... jos aatellaan koetta taikka taikka jotakin muuta niin tämmöstä sana-... sanojen kyselyä tai muuta niin aika paljon yritän turvautua sit kuviin esimerkiks, että ei tarvii tavallaan, että se ei oo siitä kiinni, että muistanko tämän sanan suomeksi vai enkö että

H: Aivan.

J: et se ei niinku se mittari sitte että miten se suomi sujuu.

H: Joo. Tota, miten paljo tiät sun sun niinku maahanmuuttajaoppilaiden taustoista, ylipäänsä niinku äidinkielestä tai tai ööö perhetaustoista tai opiskelutaustasta?

J: No kyllähän sitä aina jonkunlaisen kuvan saa niinkun et mulla on nyt pieniä ne ryhmät nii mulla on se etuoikeus, että minä pystyn sit heidän kanssa niinku juttelemaankin

H: Mm, mm.

J: sitten enemmän ja ja niinkun... no sitten aina kyllä kysynkin, jos jos niinku tuntuu siltä, että voi kysyä, että että ei kai- kaikilta ei aina arvaa kysyä

H: Mm.

J: kaikenlaista, koska saattaa olla tosi rankkojakin ne jutut sitten, mitä mitä on, mutta semmosia niinku yleisiä niin niin tota... kyllä aika hyvin.

[H: Tiiätsä], tiiätsä sun oppilaiden äidinkielet?

J: No kyllä mä yleensä aina kysyn, että että mitä kieltä mitä kieltä

H: Joo.

J: kotona puhutaan tai tai mitä niinkun osaat, mitä kieliä osaat tai ja sit yritän aina kysyä välillä sit sitäkin, että ku jotakin asiaa opetellaan että miten tämä on sinun kielessä, että että onko tää nyt samalla tavalla vaikka esimerkiksi jos kellonaikoja opetellaan, että suomessa sanotaan näin, että puoli kaksi ja silloin se ei oo vielä kaksi ja englannissa sanotaan taas just toisin, että se on jo menny sen kahen yli, että mites sulla on et onks teillä näin vai näin ja sit niinku tavallaan he miettii sitten, että joskus voi myös sanoa, että en tiedä

H: Mm.

J: että ei välttämättä tiiä.

An extract of Linda's interview:

H: Joo. Noo sitten monikulttuurisesta opetuksesta vähän, että koska teil ei silloin opettajankoulutuksessa puhuttu siitä mitään niin mitä käsität ylipäänsä sillä sanalla monikulttuurinen opetus? Mitkä ois ehkä semmosia peruseriaatteita?

L: No, tietysti mä se on semmonen niinku arvonäkemyks myös, että kaikki kulttuurit on samanarvoisia. Ja niille pitäis antaa myös siis niinku arvoisensa paikka tässä kouluyhteisössä, että, että vaikka meidän maan pääkulttuuri on tämä suomenkielinen kulttuuri, no tällä alueella tietenkin, niin meidän täytyis myös muistuttaa tai siis niinku saada oppilaat tunteemaan ylpeyttä siitä omasta kulttuuristaan ja sen ylläpitämisestä. Ettei olla tosiaan niinkun, minusta hirvittävää on se, että meillä monet venäjää äidinkielenään puhuvat oppilaat kieltäytyivät venäjän tunneista, koska he eivät halunneet tuoda sitä taustaansa esille. Tää on siis yhdeksänkytlukua ja kakstuhattaluvun alkua. Nyt on toisin.

H: Joo.

L: Et nyt he puhuu venäjää ihan reippaasti käytävällä, mutta siinä semmonen häpeä omasta kulttuurista, mikä on aivan kamala asia.

H: Mm, mm.

L: Ja sit tietysti toinen asia on se, että, että se myös et niinku sen ku- eri kulttuurin vaikutus sen oppilaan niinkun maailman hahmottamiseen ja käyttäytymiseen ja arvoihin ja siihen, mitä oppilaalle voi opettaa ja millä tavalla

H: Mm.

L: niin se minusta on myös sitä monikulttuurisuutta, et täytyy niinkun ymmärtää, että, että kun oppilaalle opetetaan asioita, sun täytyy nähdä sitä niinkun oppilaan silmin myös.

H: Aivan. No miten sä näkisit, mikä on niinkun opettajan rooli?

L: Opettajan rooli siinä olis tietysti se minusta, että että siis se kulttuuri, oman kulttuurin arvot opettaja yrittäs tuoda sitä esille siinä. Että se ei häivy sinne unholaan tämä, sitähan me yritetään aina

H: Joo.

L: meillä on ollut tällaisia kielipäiviä ja kulttuuripäiviä, missä oppilaat muualta tulleet oppilaat esittelee omaa kulttuuriaan ja ne on yleensä hirveen kivoja ja onnistuneita päiviä. Ja tietysti sitten se, että opettajan, paitsi niinkun kaikkien oppilaiden tätä opiskelua täytyy yrittää helpottaa, mutta tietenkin myös täs on se opettajan rooli, että ottaa selvää ja yrittää löytää ne ratkasut, mitkä auttaa maahanmuuttajaoppilaita.

H: Mm. No tuota jos vertaat niinku esimerkiks semmosta ryhmää, missä on vaan suomalaisia oppilaita ja sitten semmosta ryhmää, mikä on niinkun monikulttuurinen niin onksiinä jotakin selkeätä, esimerkiks ihan konkreettisia eroja siinä oppitunnissa?

L: On. Siinä on sellanen ero, että monet näistä muualta tulleista oppilaista, vaikka ovatkin asuneet Suomessa suurimman osan ikänsä (naurahtaa) niin heidän tämä tapansa reagoida asioihin saattaa olla aivan toisenlainen. Et siis hyvin paljon semmonen spontaanimpi ja ja käyttäytyminen, mä en sano huonoa ollenkaan, mut erilaista.

H: Mm.

L: Et esimes oppilas saattaa tulla ja ottaa opettajaa kaulasta, mikä on semmonen, mitä suomalainen oppilas tuskin yläkoulussa koskaan tekee.

H: Luultavastikaan ei.

L: Ei.

H: Mm.

L: Eli heidän niinku se, heidän käyttäytymisensä saattaa olla toisenlaista

H: Joo.

L: ihan kokonaan ja silloin se ryhmä tietysti... jotkut ryhmät ehkä muuttuu spontaanimmiks tai sitten joissakin ryhmässä saatetaan katsoa pitkään.

H: Joo.

L: Mut et mulla on lähinnä se semmonen tuntuma, että niissä ryhmissä, missä heitä on, että he ovat niinku ihan, erittäin hyväksytyjä siellä, että aivan samanlaisina kuin muutkin.

H: Joo. No vaikuttaakse sun omaan opetukseen jotenkin?

L: Eei oikeastaan. Kyllä siis mä yritän tietysti aina ottaa ryhmän huomioon jo- sähän et opeta kaikkia ryhmiä tietenkään samalla lailla

H: Mm.

L: mut et se täytyy niinku sillä tavalla ottaa ottaa huomioon, että öö no, jos esimes kysytään mielipidettä jostakin, niin mä voin olla melkein varma, että mun kosvolaistytöillä on kymmenen mielipidettä esitetty ennen kuin kukaan suomalainen saa muotoiltua edes sitä (nauraa). Mut sehän on vaan kivaa.

H: Mm. Mm. Helpompaa opettajalle.

L: Ihan hauskaa sillä tavalla tietysti, että joskus sitä innostutaan liikaa, mut se on sitten opettajan asia

H: Mm.

L: viedä se oikeille urille.

H: Mm. No kielten tunneilla niin käytätkö pääasiassa englantia vai suomee?

L: Ö englantia aina. Siis kaikkiin, mä opetan kaiken englanniksi, paitsi rakenneasiat suomeksi, jotka on kielioppiasiat mä otan suomeksi sen takia et se on, käsitteistö on sen verran vaikeeta vieraalla kielellä

H: Mm.

L: mutta ihan niinkun mä yritän aina opettaa kohdekielellä mahdollisimman paljon.

H: Joo. Onko ollut koskaan ongelmia siinä esimerkiks sitten niinku niitten maahanmuuttajoppilaitten suhteen, et ku käytetään paljon englantia ja jos ei välttämättä...?

L: Ei. Englanti tuntuu menevän ihan hyvin, paitsi tietysti niitten raukkojen kohdalla, jotka ei oo koskaan sitä englantia lukenu

H: Mm.

L: ennen kuin tömähvät suomalaisen peruskouluun. Mutta meillä on onneks on semmonen hyvä tilanne, että meillä on osa-aikasta erityisopetusta ja yleensä nää meidän erityisopettajat on ottaneet sitten hoiviinsa nämä, jotka ei, joitten kanssa alotetaan pisteestä nolla.

H: Joo, joo. No entä sitten kun opetetaan niitä rakenteita vaikka suomeks, niin onko siinä sitten koskaan tullu mitään?

L: Siinä on joskus tullu vastaan esimes juuri nämä sanavalmiit kosovolaistytöt niin usein sitten keskenään neuvottelevat, että mitä se, mikä se sana vois oikein olla. Mikä on oikein hyvä, et heillä on tämmönen vertaisapu siinä sitten.

H: Aivan. Joo.

L: Että se on... he on hyödyntäneet sen mutta tietysti jos sulla on vaan yks kieliryhmän edustaja luokassa niin ei voi sanoa, että neuvottele keskenäs (naurahtaa) että siinä ei oikein tuu mitään siitä.

H: Niin, niin. No mitä sun mielestä maahanmuuttajoppilaat tuo sinne luokkaan? Sä jo sanoitkin, että ne tuo semmosta spontaaniutta, mitä muuta ne ehkä vois tuoda sinne?

L: Ja ehkä semmosen näkemyksen myös semmosta tiettyä suvaitsevaisuuskasvatusta, että oppilaat niinku hyväksyvät toisensa, hyväksyvät sitä erilaisuutta enemmän siinä. Ja tietysti sitten maailmankuva laajenee. Että mulla on nyt semmonen luokka opetettavana, niin yhdeksän oppilaan luokalla, missä on on tuota kosovolaistytöjä iso määrä ja sitten siellä on venälä- venäjä- venäläistä alkuperää oleva tyttö, joka on aika myöhään tullut Suomeen ja sitten näissä suomenkielisissä oppilaissa mulla on poika, jonka äiti on Meksikosta ja toinen jonka äi- jonka isä on Portugalista. Elikkä siellä on aika semmosia mielenkiintosisia kulttuurisekotelmia juuri sitten.

H: Mm, aivan.

L: Joissakin luokissa öö tää nyt on muinaishistoriaa, mut minusta tää on hyvä esimerkki, mää olin luokanvalvojana sellaselle luokalle, johon sijoitettiin kaikki jos voi lainausmerkeissä sanoa poikkeavat että mulla oli kaikki luokalle jääneet ja kaikki sellaset, joilla oli opiskeluongelmia ja sitten joukossa muutama ihan tavallinen suomalainen koululainen ja kaikki maahanmuuttajat, mikä kouluun tuli, tästä nyt on aikaa. Mutta tulos oli se, että uskontoja oli niin paljon, että kaavaketta piti jatkaa, koska siellä (nauraa) oli niin monta erilaista. Ja äidinkieliä oli ihan riittävä määrä siellä siinä vaiheessa mulla oli sieltä luokasta oli venälä- venäjänkielisiä, sitten oli oli tota albaaninkielisiä, sitten siellä oli oli Somaliasta, sit Irakista, sitten oli yks kurdi, sitten sitten sinne tömähäti Etiopiasta tyttö ja tämä on minusta paras esimerkki, miten tämä toimi, toimi tämä (naurahtaa) luokka, ovelle ilmestyi tyttö, vieras tyttö rehtorin kanssa ja rehtori sano, että tämä tyttö tulee teidän luokalle, mä olen pitämässä oppituntia, mä sanon et hei mikä sun nimi on, tyttö sanoo, että Rosa ja mä sanoin, että ai tervetuloa Rosa, että haetaan sulle paikka niin sieltähän yks albaanipoika huutaa sieltä nurkasta et mistä sä oot Rosa? Rosa vastaa Etiopiasta. Aha, sanoo poika ja jatkaa töitä. Eli siis (nauraa) pa- kaikki niinkun x et noni, täällä on tätä väkeä vaikka mistä.

H: Aivan.

L: Luokanvalvojan tunnilla me käsitellään suomalaisia liikennesääntöjä se oli joku liikennekasvatustunti. Mä kävelen luokassa, katselen mitä ne tekee ja mä kuulen semmosta kummaa sähinää. Ja kun mä menen sinne lähemmäksi niin siinä on tämä somali- tämä tuota anteeks kurdityttö ja irakilaistytö istuu rinnakkain ja ja puhuu kieltä, jota mä en osaa. Ja mä kysyn et hei et mitä kieltä te puhutte? Arabiaa. Kato me osataan molemmat sitä. Niin että kurdi- kurdi (nauraa) ja irakilainen selvitteli suomalaisia liikennesääntöjä toisilleen arabian kielellä.

H: Aivan

L: et näin se käy.

H: Mm-m.

L: Ihan käytännössä.

H: Joo.

L: Et se oli minusta semmosia tuli semmosia ahaa-elämyksiä et no niin, näinhän tämä menee.