"YOU CAN GET SURPRISINGLY FAR WITH JUST NORMAL INTERACTION"

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Intercultural Communication Competence and the Cultural Identity Negotiation of

Finnish Basic Education Teachers when Teaching a Multicultural Class

Heta Mattila

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Department of Language and Communication Studies

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

This study analyses the intercultural communication competence of Finnish basic education teachers who teach a multicultural classroom. The study was conducted through interviews with 10 Finnish Basic Education teachers from four cities in Finland.

This study uses Ting-Toomey's Identity Negotiation Theory to analyse the collected data. The key findings of the study were; Teachers with strong connection to their cultural identity are less mindful in their communication and teachers who have been subjected to other cultures are more aware of their culture's impacts on their communication. The study also found that teachers succeed in their profession without previous education but those with more experience are able to negotiate their cultural identity and communication more mindfully.

Asiasanat – Keywords: Identity negotiaiton, Cultural identity, Intercultural Communication Competence, Multicultural classroom education, Teacher education, Teacher's Intercultural Competence

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Tämä tutkimus analysoi suomalaisten peruskouluopettajien kulttuurienvälistä viestintäkompetenssia, kun he opettavat monikulttuurista luokkaa. Tutkimus toteutettiin teemahaastattelujen avulla. Haastatteluihin osallistui 10 peruskouluopettajaa neljästä kaupungista.

Aineiston analysoinnissa hyödynnettiin Ting-Toomeyn identiteetin neuvottelu teoriaa (Identity Negotiation Theory). Analyysin tulokset paljastavat, että opettajat, joilla on vahva yhteys kulttuuri-identiteettiinsä ovat vähemmän tietoisia viestinnässään verrattuna niihin opettajiin, jotka ovat altistuneet muille kulttuureille. Muiden kulttuurien tuntemus auttoi opettajia olemaan tietoisempia oman kulttuurinsa vaikutuksista heidän viestintäänsä. Tutkimuksen perusteella voidaan esittää, että opettajat voivat toki selvitä perustyöstään ilman aimpaa koulutusta kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän osalta, mutta että ne heistä, joilla oli pidempi kokemus kulttuureihin liittyvistä tekijöistä opetuksessa kykenivät neuvottelemaan kulttuuri-identiteettiään ja viestintäänsä tietoisemmin.

Asiasanat – Keywords: Identiteetin neuvottelu, kulttuuri-identiteetti, kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän kompetenssi, monikulttuurisen luokan opettaminen, opettajakoulutus, opettajan kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän kompetenssi

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JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

1. Introduction

The last decades have seen an increase in migration, as moving to other countries has become easier. Borders have opened in areas like the European Union and people have migrated around the world at an increasing pace. In Finland migration has become more evident since the 1990s. With increasing migration Finnish institutions, such as schools, have become increasingly multicultural. Migration has changed the general demographic of Finnish population in schools.

School provides a place for children to learn, interact with other people, grow and develop as individuals. Globalisation has changed the Finnish classroom in the past decades (Pitkänen, 2014). According to Pitkänen (2014) the increase in international and intercultural communication has been one of the most significant changes to the Finnish classroom. Ability to communicate across cultures has become an increasingly important skill for Finnish teachers and students. Change in the student population has left many teachers feeling unprepared to teach children who come from other cultures (Vuorikoski & Kiilakoski, 2005; Isosaari & Vaajoensuu, 2002; Räsänen, 2002a; Järvelä, 2002; Soilamo, 2008). This paper analyses Finnish basic education teachers' intercultural communication competence when teaching a classroom where the students come from culturally different backgrounds.

Finland is often viewed as a culturally homogenous country. Out of the population of 5,5 million around 7 % have immigrant background and around 5% belong to a linguistic minority (Statistics Finland, 2018a). Since it's independence, Finland has had some cultural variation but migration is slowly increasing the amount of multiculturalism in Finland. Finland's history, cultural minorities in Finland and migration to Finland will be discussed to provide more understanding of the situation in the country. To provide a more thorough

understanding of multiculturalism inside Finnish classrooms some of the most current statistics of cultural variations in Finnish classrooms will be examined. Furthermore, the role of intercultural communication and multicultural classroom teaching in the teacher training programmes in Finnish universities is also explained.

Stella Ting-Toomey's (1993; 1996; 2005a) Identity Negotiation Theory will be used in the analysis of the teachers' intercultural communication competence. Identity Negotiation Theory will be explained to improve understanding of how identity affects intercultural communication. Identity Negotiation Theory has rarely been used to study intercultural communication competence in teachers, but it has been applied to the education field. These other applications of the theory will be explained further.

Based on the review of immigration and the identity negotiation theory, the study proposes research questions to be studied. The data for the analysis was collected through qualitative interviews with Finnish basic education teachers who teach a classroom that has pupils from various cultures. The results of the interviews are analysed and discussed to review the proposed research questions.

1.2. Relevance

Ability to communicate with people from different cultures is becoming increasingly important as the world becomes more globalised (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Teachers in Finland gain limited or no access to training on intercultural communication (Vuorikoski & Kiilakoski, 2005a; Isosaari & Vaajoensuu, 2002; Räsänen, 2002a; Järvelä, 2002; Soilamo, 2008). According to the new Finnish Core Curriculum (2016) teachers are expected to help students from different cultures to build their cultural identity, to help all their students to be interested in other cultures and communicate with people from different backgrounds. Liebkind, Jasinskaja-Lahti and Haaramo (2000) also argue that teacher's support increases

immigrant youths performance and integration to Finland. This is why it is important to assess whether the Finnish basic education (1-9th grade) teachers are interculturally competent to teach their students who come from culturally different backgrounds. Teachers need to become interculturally sensitive and obtain intercultural communication competence to be able to educate their students coherently (Cushner & Mahon, 2009). Effective contact with other cultures and proactive communication is seen as a tool to diminish stereotypes in Finland (Liebkind, Haaramo & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000; Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000; Liebkind & McAlister, 2000).

The assessment of the Finnish teacher's intercultural communication competence is needed. Intercultural communication skills are an important part of Finnish teacher's job (Kosonen, 2000; Jokikokko, 2002). Many teachers in Finland have not had preparative education on multicultural classroom teaching in their university studies as the course was added as an elective course after 2000s (Vaajoensuu & Isosaari, 2002; Soilamo, 2008). Due to the expectations of the new curriculum and the state of increasing migration to Finland it is important to research the current state of intercultural communication competence of Finnish Basic Education Teachers.

2. Migration and minorities in Finland

2.1. Definitions

2.1.1. Immigrant and migrant

A migrant is defined as a person who moves from one region or country to another (EU Immigrantion Portal, 2018; Oxford English Dictionary online, 2018). As terms immigrant and migrant are often confused. A migrant often moves to a new region in search

for better life (EU Immigration Portal, 2018). An immigrant is someone who moves to a new country to settle there (OED online, 2018).

2.1.2. Refugee

In contrast to voluntary relocation refugees are people who are forced to leave their original home (OED online, 2018; UNHCR, n.d.a). Reasons for becoming a refugee can be war, conflict, persecution or natural disasters (OED online, 2018). International laws protect refugees and their human rights (UNHCR, n.d.a).

2.1.3. Immigrant child in Finland

An immigrant child or student is a person who has arrived to Finland from another country (Ministry of Education of Finland, n.d.a). Children who are born in Finland but have parents who are immigrants are also considered as immigrant children (Ministry of Education of Finland, n.d.a)

2.2. History of migration and minorities in Finland

As previously mentioned, Finland is commonly seen as a homogenous, monocultural country. Even though it has always been a multicultural country the minority cultural groups live in separation from the general public which is why the majority of Finnish people have lived in a monocultural society. (Leitzinger, 2010; Nissilä, 2010).

The concept of a monocultural country has been slowly changing since the rise in immigration in the 1990s. Statistics Finland (2018b) states that the amount of immigrants has grown from 0,8 % to 6,6 % between 1990 and 2016. These percentages keep growing which suggests that cultural variation will increase in the coming years.

Finland's history of migration is multi-layered. The current immigrant population consists of migrants, immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Additionally, Finland has

some significant cultural minorities. The most significant cultural minorities are the Roma people, Sami and the Finn-Swedes (Leitzing, 2010; Paavola & Talib, 2010; Pyykkönen, 2015).

According to Pyykkönen (2015) the Roma settled into Finland sometime during the 1600s. There is almost no written data on the Roma before the 1800s as their culture was based on spoken tradition and not recorded in written form (Paavola & Talib, 2010). The Roma have been known to fear forced integration to Finland which is why they have avoided Finnish people for centuries (Paavola & Talib, 2010).

Leitzing (2010) suggests that over the course of history the geographical locations of the cultural minorities also contributed in their separation from the majority culture. The Finn-Swedes maintained their separation through having their own schools and closed communities (Leitzing, 2010). Paavola and Talib (2010) argue that the Finn-Swede population's history as aristocrats also caused them to experience hostility from the majority population which is why they stayed separate from it. The indigenous Sami have isolated themselves from the Finnish population by moving from their original regions when the Finnish population spread to their areas (Paavola & Talib, 2010). This explains why Finnish people may believe they live in a homogenous monocultural country as the Finn-Swedes still live in only certain cities and closed communities, the Roma avoid Finnish people and Sami have moved to remote areas (Nissilä, 2010).

Apart from the cultural minorities the amount of cultural variation was limited in Finland before the 1990s. Russians began immigrating to the country in early 1800s, over a hundred years before Finland's independence in 1917 (Paavola & Talib, 2010). Russians are still one of the largest immigrant groups in the country; according to Statistics Finland (2016b) the amount of Russians living in Finland was near 70,000 in 2015.

The decades after the country's independence had very little immigration. In addition to Russian immigrants the majority of immigrants were descendants of Finnish people (Saukkonen & Pyykkönen, 2008). Furthermore, in the 1970s and 1980s Finland had tight immigration policies resulting in only small numbers of people coming to Finland during that time (Leitzing, 2010). Regardless of the tight policies, Finland received its first refugees in the 1970s from Chile (Leitzing, 2010). After the Chilean refugees Finland received larger refugee groups from Somalia and Yugoslavia during the late 1980s (Saukkonen & Pyykkönen, 2008).

The Somali refugees became the embodiment of Finnish people's fears about immigration (Paavola & Talib, 2010). According to Statistics Finland (2016b) there was over 7,000 Somali citizens' living in Finland whilst simultaneously there were over 19,000 Finnish citizens who spoke Somali as their mother tongue. Somali refugees are often considered as the beginning of the new era of immigration to Finland (Paavola & Talib, 2010). They have remained a topic of discussion even decades after the first refugees came to the country. Tiilikainen (2000) argues that this is because of the differences in culture and religion that separated Somalis from Finnish people in the beginning. Finnish people's attitudes are known to be hostile towards immigrants (Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000). Paavola and Talib (2010) argue that Finnish culture has "traditionally aimed to disregard differences or avoid discussing them" (p. 112, translation by HM, original in Appendix C). This can be seen as one of the reasons for poor integration of Somalis in some areas of Finland where their community has stayed separate (Tiilikainen, 2000; Alitolppa-Niitamo; 2004).

Labour-based migration to Finland began in the 1990s (Saukkonen & Pyykkönen, 2008). The first labour-based migrants to Finland came from Russia and Estonia and were soon followed by other nationalities (Saukkonen & Pyykkönen, 2008). Labour-based migration became easier for some people after Finland joined the European Union in 1995.

This allowed people from the European Union to move to Finland freely (Finnish Immigration Service, 2015). Furthermore, the amount of study-based migration increased in the early 2000s as people from all around the world arrived in Finland to study (Finnish Immigration Service, 2015).

The immigrant population of Finland is currently spread unevenly across the country. The majority of the current immigrant population lives in the southern municipality of Uudenmaa (Statistics Finland, 2018a). The late 2000s saw a slow change as the population began moving upwards in the country (Statistics Finland, 2018b). The amount of immigrants continues to increase yearly; in 2000 the amount of the population with foreign background was just over 110,000 when in the end of 2016 364,787 people had a foreign background (Statistics Finland, 2018b).

2.3. Immigrants in Finnish schools

In Finland the children who are between the ages of 7-17 and have Finnish citizenship must attend school (Finlex 1998/628 § 25). Furthermore, all the children who do not have a Finnish citizenship, but live in Finland are entitled to the same right to education (Soilamo, 2008). Cultural variation in Finnish classrooms has steadily increased with the rise of immigration. Measuring cultural variation is difficult as there are many ways in which cultural difference is calculated in research. The Family Federation of Finland (2015) explains that in 2014 7.1% of Finland's youth (0-24 years old) spoke a foreign language at home. This means a language other than Finnish, Swedish or Sami. The National Audit Office of Finland (2015) states that between 2007 and 2012 the amount of students attending Finnish as a Second Language classes rose from 13,551 to 21,364 students. The Education Ministry of Finland's statistics service Vipunen (2016a; 2016b) explains that there were 18,489 1-6th grade students and 7,729 7-9th grade students studying Finnish or Swedish as a

second language. The Education Ministry of Finland (2015) states that there are 16,609 students attending lessons of their mother tongue in spring 2015 and 17,289 in autumn 2015. Statistics Finland (2017a) states that in 2016 there were 17,373 children between the age of 7-15 with a dual nationality living in Finland. In addition, according to Statistics Finland (2017b) the amount of 7-14 year olds with a foreign background grew from 1,542 children in the 1990's to 30,604 children by 2015. According to Myllyniemi (2010) the Youth Barometer of Finland found that in 2007 there were 42,000 children who were born in Finland but whose parents were both immigrants and 120,000 children whose parents were in an international marriage.

As seen above, the ways to measure multiculturality and cultural variation are many and the numbers in each set of data are different. However, the statistics show that the amount of cultural variety is increasing. There is also an increase in children between the ages of 0-6 born to immigrant parents in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2017c). This suggests that the growth in numbers will continue to rise. Relating to multicultural classrooms the immigrant children are not the only ones who bring cultural variation. There are children of immigrants, children of international marriages, children from the previously mentioned cultural minorities, second-generation immigrant children and many others who bring cultural variation to the classrooms.

An immigrant child can be a part of different types of classrooms when they begin their school journey in Finland. Nissilä (2010) explains that:

> The education for immigrants is organised for example with kindergarten teaching, as a preparatory class before basic education, Finnish or Swedish as a second language teaching, assisted teaching, their own mother tongues education, education of other religions, preparatory class for vocational school and as integration education and

teaching for those who cannot read and write (p. 24, translation by HM, original in

Appendix C)

If the child has only recently arrived in Finland they are offered a preparatory class for a year before they join their peers in basic education. Once the child starts the general basic education they can attend Finnish or Swedish as a second language classes. Pollari and Koppinen (2011) emphasise the importance of Finnish or Swedish as a second language classes in diminishing the division between a Finnish student and an immigrant student. According to Pollari and Koppinen (2011):

Once a child or adolescent with immigrant background knows Finnish so well, that they can study all the subjects in school normally, including the Finnish and literature, why would it be necessary to separate them from others just because of their immigrant background? As a person with their own cultural heritage they can be compared to any proto-Finn (kantasuomalainen) who just happens to have cultural originality. (P. 13, translation by HM, original in Appendix C)

Learning the language allows the immigrant children to attend their classes normally and thus brings them closer to their proto-Finn counterpart. According to the Finnish Core Curriculum (2016) the school should also support the child in maintaining a connection with their cultural heritage. The children should also be provided with opportunities to practice and maintain their language and religion (Soilamo, 2008). Providing the students with education in their mother tongue allows them to develop a healthier cultural identity (Paavola & Talib, 2010). According to Paavola and Talib (2010) denying the child from speaking their mother tongue will have negative effects on them.

Finnish education relies strongly on the curriculum. According to Pitkänen (2014) the previous curriculums have been created from a monocultural and ethnocentric point of view. A student in a Finnish classroom was expected to live by the same values and customs that

are present in the majority culture (Pitkänen, 2014). The new Core Curriculum acknowledges the changing society and increase of multiculturalism inside classrooms in various themes of cross- and intercultural education. According to the Finnish Core Curriculum (2016) schools should provide a place where identities, languages, religions, views and values live alongside each other and in constant interaction. The multicultural classrooms can provide the students with these opportunities.

The amount of cultural variation is expected to rise. According to the Ministry of Education (2010, quoted from Paavola & Talib 2010) "the amount of children between 7-15 is going to grow between 2010 to 2020 by around 24,000 and by 2030 around 20,000 people" (p. 23, translation by HM, original in Appendix C). Schools and classrooms are going to keep becoming more and more multicultural and it is important that the education and curriculum react to these changes accordingly. The greatest challenge is posed on the teachers whose responsibility it is to implement these changes and to teach a multicultural classroom.

2.4.Intercultural communication and multicultural classroom education in teacher education

Intercultural communication skills and knowledge about other cultures help a teacher to teach a multicultural classroom. In Finland schools and homes are in close contact with each other and teachers also communicate with parents regularly. Parents in some cases can represent their culture more strongly than their child. Teacher education in Finnish universities does not provide teachers with relevant tools to teach these multicultural classrooms.

Kosonen (2000) argues that a better education of teachers would be the key to a more inclusive education. Finnish teachers have been positive about multiculturalism, but simultaneously scared of the challenges that multiculturalism may bring (Pitkänen, 2014). Many Finnish basic education teachers often expect similarity of all their pupils regardless of

their cultural background (Miettinen & Pitkänen, 1999). According to Vaajoensuu and Isosaari (2002) universities in Jyväskylä and Oulu have run a specific multicultural teacher education programmes since the early 2000s. Teachers who have graduated before then received no education on multicultural classroom teaching (Soilamo, 2008). The multicultural teacher education programme is separate from the general teacher programme. In the general teacher programme there are some elective studies on multicultural education (Vaajoensuu & Isosaari, 2002). These elective studies are most commonly a week-long course that not all students take (Vaajoensuu & Isosaari, 2002). By separating multicultural teacher education as its own degree the teacher education system leaves the general basic education teachers without knowledge of intercultural communication and multicultural classroom teaching (Vaajoensuu & Isosaari, 2002).

The lack of preparation explains why many teachers feel unprepared to teach a multicultural classroom and wish there had been more obligatory studies during university (Vaajoensuu & Isosaari, 2002; Timonen & Kantelinen, 2013). Increasing teacher students' knowledge about intercultural communication could improve their ability to teach a multicultural classroom (Räsänen, 2002a; Vaajoensuu & Isosaari, 2002). The lack of information about additional training and communication across the teaching community leaves teachers without useful knowledge that they could gain from others (Soilamo, 2008; Timonen & Kantelinen, 2013).

Soilamo (2008) argues that the increase of cultures inside classrooms has forced the Finnish educational institutions to re-evaluate the values and cultural structures they teach. Education and the pedagogical values often represent the majority cultures views (Talib & Paavola, 2010; Ramsey, Williams & Vold, 2002; Parekh ,1986). Research argues that teachers fail to acknowledge cultural aspects of the Finnish education system that are often hard for children and parents from other cultures to understand (Räsänen, 2002b; Vaajoensuu

& Isosaari, 2002; Saukkonen, 2014). The culture defines what is taught and what is left outside the educational system. Problem is that by doing this the system might define what information is "*worth* studying" (Parekh, 1986, p. 20).

Furthermore, Urpola (2002) argues that teacher education should prepare teachers to see traditions and values that education systems impose on children and how this may cause internalised conflict for students in classrooms. Parekh (1986) and Ramsey et. al (2002) state that monocultural education systems were often very insensitive towards the cultural traits of the students representing minorities in classrooms. It is important that teacher education prepares teachers to becoming self-aware of the cultural hierarchies and social structures present in the society and in themselves (Soilamo, 2008; Pollari & Koppinen, 2011; Jokikokko, 2002).

As discussed above, the teacher education rarely provides teachers with tools to teach these multicultural classrooms. It is possible that teachers obtain these skills from outside their education but help from their studies can benefit their wellbeing in their job (Talib & Paavola, 2010). Teachers intercultural communication competence should be assessed further as teachers are expected to pass their intercultural communication competence to their pupils, support their cultural identity and take interest in their cultural heritage (Finnish Core Curriculum, 2016; Paavola & Talib, 2010; Timonen & Kantelinen, 2013; Soilamo, 2008). Intercultural communication competence can be assessed through Ting-Toomey's (2005a) identity negotiation theory. This theory is discussed in the following chapter.

3. Negotiating Cultural Identities

3.1. The Identity Negotiation Theory

Intercultural competence has been studied for decades, but specific interest to the field began after World War II after the need for intercultural communication abilities became necessary for international peace and politics (Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009). Different fields, disciplines, and researches have tried to define intercultural communication competence ever since (Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009). Since the 1990s the research into intercultural communication competence has shifted slowly from knowledge and skills based models to more human connection, identity and relationship based models (Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009).

There are various models and theories that have been developed to understand intercultural communication competence. These vary from causal models to compositional models and concentrate on different aspects of intercultural communication processes (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). This study concentrates on the interpersonal models and especially on the domain of identity. According to Gudykunst, Lee, Nishida and Ogawa (2005a) there are four major identity theories on intercultural communication competence. These have been developed by Ting-Toomey (1993;1996;2005a), Collier and Thomas (1988), Cupach and Imahori (1993) and Hecht (1993). Each theory focusses on a slightly different aspect of identity. Ting-Toomey's (1993;1996;2005a) identity negotiation theory concentrates on the individual's ability to utilise their knowledge, their communication skills and their mindful self-conception of their own identity to successfully communicate with an individual from a different culture. Collier and Thomas' (1988) Cultural identity theory concentrates on how individuals maintain their cultural identities during an intercultural encounter. Cupach and Imahori's (1993) identity management theory discusses how individuals of differing cultures maintain face during communication and Hecht's (1993) communication theory of identity concentrates on how identities are formed and enacted during the intercultural communication process (Gudykunst et al. 2005a).

This study uses Ting-Toomey's (1993; 2005a) identity negotiation theory to analyse the intercultural communication competence of Finnish basic education teachers. Ting-Toomey (1993) defines intercultural communication competence as one's ability to negotiate their identities when communicating with individuals of other cultures. For Ting-Toomey (2005a) identity means "our reflective views of ourselves and other perceptions of our self-images" (p. 212).

The concept of identity has been thoroughly defined and redefined in scholarly work (Kim, 2009). Ting-Toomey's (1996;1993;1996;2005a) research into the role of identity in intercultural encounters spreads over three decades. Ting-Toomey's (1993; 2005a) identities exist on multiple domains commonly divided into two categories: personal and social. The division of identities was first discussed in Erikson's (1950) works, (as cited in Kim, 2009, p. 54), where he divided identities between self and group. The original identity domains ranged from cultural to role and symbolic interaction identities that have since been concluded under the two main categories (Ting-Toomey, 1996; 2005a).

Ting-Toomey's (1993; 1996; 2005a) research argues that each person obtains multiple identities throughout their lifetime. Ting-Toomey (1996; 2005a) sees culture as one of the strongest factors affecting the identity development process. This study specifically concentrates on the cultural identity aspect of the identity negotiation theory.

Cultural identity in research often applies to a sense of belonging to a group. Kim (2009) defines cultural identity as "group dimension of identity" (p. 54). Similarly, Ting-Toomey (2005a) cultural identity is the "emotional significance we attach to our sense of belonging or affiliation with the larger culture" (p. 214). Cultural identity can be perceived differently within a group. Cultures within a nation can be mixed due to the different groups one is affiliated in (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). The flexible nature of cultural identity makes it unique for each individual due to different ways they feel connected to their larger culture.

Cultural identity is therefore defined as an identity developed in connection to other individuals of a group (Ting-Toomey, 2005a; Kim, 2009).

Identity negotiation is about finding balance with one's own identity whilst acknowledging the identity of the other. Ting-Toomey (2005a) explains that "in order to engage in mindful identity negotiation work, we have to increase our knowledge base, our attunement level, and our honesty in assessing our own group membership and personal identity issues" (p. 217). Without mindful self-reflection one may struggle when communicating with a dissimilar other. According to Ting-Toomey (2005a) identity negotiation should be mindful rather than mindless. Successful communicators are aware of both themselves but also the issues that might affect how their counterpart communicates. According to Ting-Toomey (2005a) the communicators can either challenge or support the other's identities whilst communicating with them. It should be acknowledged that in some communication encounters the circumstances may pose problems for successful communication encounter. For example, the lack of common language can make communication a struggle to even the most mindful communicator.

According to Ting-Toomey (2005a) "a competent identity negotiator is a dynamic ice skater who can maintain an optimal sense of balance and grace as she or he waltzes through the maze of identity chaos and the identity discovery process" (p. 230). Ting-Toomey's (2005a) identity negotiation is a constant process where the two or more parties in the communication encounter try to "assert, define, modify, challenge, and/or support their own and others desired self-images" (p. 217). Identity negotiation theory is built on five identity dialectics that the individual tries to balance during a communication encounter (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). These are identity security-vulnerability, inclusion - differentiation, predictability- unpredictability, connection-autonomy, consistency-change. The balance of

the dialectics allows the individual to feel successful in an intercultural communication encounter.

In addition to the identity dialectics Ting-Toomey (2005a) also includes identity salience and value content to the identity negotiation process. Identity salience refers to the affiliation that an individual feels towards an aspect of their identity (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). Ting-Toomey (2005a) often emphasises especially cultural identity salience as an important aspect of an intercultural communication encounter as it can affect an individual's communication. Being self-aware of one's own identity salient issues helps a person to communicate more effectively. A strong connection is more likely to affect their communication style and behaviour (Ting-Toomey, 2005a).

The value content refers to the effects that a group affiliation has on the individual. These can be conscious or unconscious aspects of one's personal preferences such as in individualism-collectivism divide (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). One's culture imprints them with a set of values and norms such as whether one is more individualistic or if they consider themselves as a unit in a larger community such as in collectivistic cultures. These potentially unconscious aspects of one's identity can affect communication with a person coming from a culture with differing value contents. Understanding that these values are connected to ones culture help when communicating with dissimilar others (Ting-Toomey, 2005b).

Ting-Toomey (2005a) states that "the (identity negotiation) theory assumes that human beings in all cultures desire both positive group-based and positive person-based identities in any type of communicative situation" (p. 217). Everyone wishes to feel validated, safe and secure regardless of whom they communicate with (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). Identity negotiation theory was chosen for this study because Ting-Toomey (2005a) believes that a successful intercultural communication encounter can happen when at least one of the individuals is mindful and self-aware about their identity in the communication

encounter. This means that successful communication can exist even in a situation where only the teacher is aware of their identity and mindfully listens and validates the other's identity.

Ting-Toomey (2005a) uses 10 core assumptions to emphasise the aspects that affect an intercultural communication encounter and identity negotiation theory. The importance of group association is emphasised in the first of the core assumptions. The assumption explains how "the core dynamics of people's group membership identities (e.g., cultural and ethnic memberships) and personal identities (e.g. unique attributes) are formed via symbolic communication with others" (Ting-Toomey, 2005a, p.218). The values, norms and beliefs are obtained through enculturation to a certain culture (Ting-Toomey, 1996). Each individual has at least one significant group membership (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). In communication these memberships can affect one's thinking, behaviour and values. One is required to be mindful of how their enculturation affects their beliefs and thinking, whilst also acknowledging that the other person is also affected by their own culture (Ting-Toomey, 1996).

Ting-Toomey's (2005a) assumption two provides the frame for the theory. As previously mentioned, need for validation and sense of security are important for a functioning intercultural communication encounter. As assumption two states:

> Individuals in all cultures or ethnic groups have the basic motivation needs for identity security, inclusion, predictability, connection, and consistency on both group-based and person-based identity levels. However, too much emotional security will lead to tight ethnocentrism, and, conversely, too much emotional insecurity (or vulnerability) will lead to fear of outgroups or unfamiliar strangers. The same underlying principle applies to identity inclusion, predictability, connection, and consistency. Thus an optimal range exists on the various identity negotiation spectrums. (Ting-Toomey, 2005a, p. 218)

The assumption emphasises the importance of identity balance. Being in the extreme end of any of Ting-Toomey's (2005a) dialectics will hinder the communication encounter as explained before.

Communicating with culturally similar others in contrast to culturally dissimilar others can affect both feeling of security and predictability. Assumption 3 concentrates on the balance of identity security and vulnerability. Ting-Toomey (2005a) argues the following: "individuals tend to experience identity emotional security in a culturally familiar environment and experience identity emotional vulnerability in a culturally unfamiliar environment" (Ting-Toomey, 1996, p. 218). One is more likely to have a sense of security when communicating with a similar other than with a dissimilar other. The sense of dissimilarity can also be caused by imbalance in the identity dialectics.

Assumption 4 continues on similar themes with assumption 2. Ting-Toomey's (2005a) core assumptions are all interlinked which is why there are some similarities between them. Assumption 4nstates that when an individual's identity is positively validated they feel included and when in contrast their identity is stigmatized they feel differentiation from the group (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). This can be connected to the identity inclusion-differentiation dialectic and the themes of extremes discussed in assumption 2 (Ting-Toomey, 2005a).

Assumption 5 explains assumption 3 further. Ting-Toomey (2005a) explains that people are more likely to experience "interaction predictability when communicating with culturally familiar others and interaction unpredictability (or novelty) when communicating with culturally unfamiliar others - thus identity predictability leads to trust, and identity unpredictability leads to distrust, second-guessing, or biased intergroup attributions" (Ting-Toomey, 2005a, p. 218). Being mindful of how cultural similarity affects the experience of the other is important for successful communication.

Developing interpersonal relationships can help communicating in dissimilar environments with dissimilar others. Connection-autonomy dialectic is more balanced if the parties have a personal level to their relationship (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). In assumption 6 Ting-Toomey (2005a) argues that people desire close meaningful relationships and the lack of those can leave them feeling separated from the other person. Ting-Toomey (2005a) also argues that these "intercultural-interpersonal relationships can create additional emotional security and trust in the cultural strangers" (p. 218). Ting-Toomey (2005a) argues that all individuals seek stability and security in their lives.

New, unfamiliar, environments can cause an identity change (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). Assumption 7 suggests that when an individual is placed in a culturally similar environment they experience identity consistency, while the unfamiliar environment can cause a transformation of the identity. Being aware of the environment's effects on one's identity improves the ability to communicate with others and validate their identities simultaneously. According to Ting-Toomey's (2005a) assumption 8 "cultural, personal, and situational variability dimensions influence the meanings, interpretations, and evaluations of these identity-related themes" (Ting-Toomey, 2005a, p. 218).

The aim of identity negotiation is to create a balance of the identity dialectics for all the parties in the communication encounter. During a communication episode the individuals should aim to mindfully acknowledge their own identity and the identity of the other and seek balance between them to be able to understand one another (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). Assumption 9 states: "A competent identity negotiation process emphasizes the importance of integrating the necessary intercultural identity-based knowledge, mindfulness, and interaction skills to communicate appropriately and effectively with culturally dissimilar others" (Ting-Toomey, 2005a, p. 218). Ting-Toomey (2005a) argues that mindful listening and observation is the key to a successful identity negotiation process in communication. If

one fails to understand culture's effects on communication they are more likely to misunderstand the other. In addition, if one fails to know the identities their partner deems valuable, whether those are the social or personal identities, it is harder for the person to validate the other's identity in communication. Mindfulness in intercultural communication extends to an individual's own identity. By being mindful of one's own identity salient topics, thoughts, behaviours and feelings one can be more aware of their own communication and also acknowledge differences in dissimilar communication partners (Ting-Toomey, 2005a).

Mindless communication is a risk for the intercultural communication process. A mindless communicator expects similarity in communication (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). Ting-Toomey (2005a) argues that an individual needs to be mindful of their own identity formation whilst also openly accepting other types of identity construction. This allows individuals to negotiate between differences proactively. The successful identity negotiator and intercultural communicator is aware that individuals are unique and that different membership groups, whether these are cultural or other, have similarities and differences (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). The individual can observe and learn the salient topics of their communication partner by mindfully listening and through identity validation (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). A mindful listener is able to decode and find meanings in verbal and nonverbal communication cues and consciously listens to identity meanings (Ting-Toomey, 2005a).

Furthermore, identity validation happens through acknowledging the other's identity positively. Ting-Toomey (2005a) argues that acknowledging identity can happen through confirming the others identity in words, behaviours and gestures. This allows the other person to feel validated. A failure in identity validation can deem the other's identity invalid, which is harmful for communication. Individuals need to increase their cultural knowledge to succeed in identity negotiation as intercultural communication competence relies on

perceptions (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). One communicator may feel successful in their communication tactic when the other feels offended due to cultural dissimilarities.

An individual who successfully applies their knowledge of other cultures and mindfully listens to others whilst acknowledging differences can gain intercultural communication competence. According to assumption 10 the outcomes of identity negotiation include "the feelings of being understood, respected and affirmatively valued" (Ting-Toomey, 2005a, p. 218). An individual who is sensitive to other's identity and aims to understand the cultural differences in communication can succeed in making the other feel like their identity salient issues are understood (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). People who also manage to successfully endorse the others identity through communication can make them feel valued. A successful or failed identity negotiation process can harm or improve the development of relationships between individuals (Ting-Toomey, 2005a).

Furthermore, it should be remembered that identity negotiation theory is only one of the theories concentrating on intercultural communication competence. Identity negotiation theory was chosen for this study due to its concentration on the individuals ability to affect an intercultural communication encounter through their own actions and thoughts. The theory has been studied in a variety of contexts. The following section (see 3.2) will discuss how identity negotiation theory has been applied to these contexts.

3.2. Identity negotiation theory in research

Ting-Toomey's (1993; 1999; 2005a) identity negotiation theory has featured in various kinds of research. The theory is often used as a supportive theory to explain the context of the research (Arasaratman & Doerfel, 2005; Liu, 2015; Eguchi, 2009). Some research employs Ting-Toomey's (2005a) theory to analyse the actual identity negotiation

process (Jackson, 2002; Huang, 2011; Toomey, Dorjee & Ting-Toomey, 2013; Collie, Kindon, Liu & Podsiadlowski, 2010; Jameson, 2007).

Ting-Toomey's (2005a) theory is at times connected to research that seeks to develop a new theory, practice or paradigm (Jackson, 2002; Cseh, 2003; Moriizumi, 2011a; Anderson-Lain, 2017). In practical research, identity negotiation theory is applied to qualitative interviews and used to analyse the experiences, identity negotiation and communication skills of the interviewees (Toomey et. al, 2013; Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013; Liu, 2015; Brockhall & Liu, 2011; Te Huia & Liu; 2012; Jurva & Jaya, 2008; Sharapan, 2016; Coon Sells, 2013).

Bicultural and immigrant identities are often researched in connection to identity negotiation theory (Liu, 2015; Hsieh, 2006; Yoon, 2012; Collie et al, 2010; Toomey et. al; 2013; Huia & Liu, 2012). Toomey, Dorjee and Ting-Toomey (2013) use identity negotiation theory as a tool to understand how Asian-Caucasian bicultural individuals balance their identities in their lives. Bicultural individuals are often forced to negotiate between their two separate cultural identities to succeed in communication rather than communicate with a bicultural identity (Toomey et al., 2013; Liu, 2015). Liu (2015) found that bicultural individuals Australian-Chinese descent often employed cultural similarity tactic when communicating with others. When they communicated with Australians they aimed to use their Australian identity and when communicating with Chinese they used their Chinese identity. Liu (2015) explains that this identity juggle often generated conflicts between different immigrant generations.

The ethnic identity studies into identity negotiation theory often examine the experiences of second and third generation immigrants (Liu, 2011; Jurva & Jaya, 2008, Huang, 2011). Jurva and Jaya (2008) investigated the ethnic identity negotiation of Finnish second generation immigrants in Canada, whilst Liu (2011) studied Chinese immigrants in

English speaking countries. Ethnic identity negotiation for second and third generation immigrants was often similar to cultural identity negotiation, where the participants struggled to maintain balance between the surrounding majority and home minority ethnicity (Liu, 2011; Jurva & Jaya, 2008). Most of these research concentrates on minority identities such as the cultural identity of Chinese immigrants in Australia (Liu, 2015), the ethnic identity of Finns in Canada (Jurva & Jaya, 2008) or the lesbian and gay identities on large predominantly straight online platforms (Coon Sells, 2013).

Majority cultures are less studied in identity negotiation research. Huia and Liu (2012), and Jackson (2012) discuss the identity negotiation of individuals of majority cultures. Individuals in majority cultures have to negotiate their identities similar to minority cultures but if their surroundings are homogenous they may be less aware and mindful in their communication when compared with minorities (Huia & Liu, 2012). Huang's (2011) study investigates how Chinese tour guides negotiate their identities when working with international tour groups in China. Chinese tour guides have to balance between their ethnic identity, professional and personal identities whilst adapting to their customer groups (Huang, 2011).

As previously mentioned, the qualitative research into Ting-Toomey's (2005a) theory is used either as a tool to explain intercultural communication and identity negotiation process or merely to explain that identity negotiation exists. Chamberlin-Quinlisk (2010) refers to identity negotiation theory's core themes to strengthen arguments but avoids mentioning the theory throughout the study. In contrast Jackson (2002) uses identity negotiation theory to comprehensively explain how African-American communication researchers must negotiate their professional identity in their everyday working lives and how Ting-Toomey's (2005a) dialectics and core assumptions exist in that process. Te Huia and Liu (2012) use Ting-Toomey's (2005a) assumptions to explore Maori immigrants'

experiences in Japan. Te Huia and Liu (2012) argue that Maori's experiences as a bicultural minority in New Zealand made them more aware and prepared as immigrants in Japan when compared to the Western immigrants.

Cultural identity negotiation as a concept is widely studied also outside Ting-Toomey's (2005a) theory (Dunlop, 1999; Hsieh, 2006; Kumar, Seay & Karabenick, 2015; Cohen & Kassan, 2018; Yagi & Kleinberg, 2011). These studies relay to similar themes with Ting-Toomey (2005a) but connect the negotiation process to other aspects of life than communication. Similarly to the research into identity negotiation theory bicultural and immigrant identities are often researched (Cohen & Kassa, 2018; Yagi & Kleinberg , 2011; Hsieh, 2006; Kumar et. al, 2015). Cohen and Assan (2018) and Kumar, Seay and Karabenick (2015) explore the cultural identity negotiation in immigrant adolescents as a way to exist in both their host culture and home culture. Both studies explore themes similar to Ting-Toomey (2005a) such as awareness, mindfulness and desire for validation but from the angle of fitting in rather than from communication perspective. The studies that concentrate on cultural identity negotiation in an intercultural context emphasise the importance of intercultural encounters in the process of understanding ones own culture (Yagi & Kleinberg, 2011; Hsieh, 2006; Ozer, Bertelsen, Singla & Schwartz, 2017). Yagi and Kleinberg (2011) explore Japanese immigrant workers experiences of their culture when working in the US when Ozer, Bertelsen, Singla and Schwatrz (2017) explore Ladhakis cultural identity after being introduced to other cultures due to globalisation.

These studies exemplify the variety of perpectives and experiences that can be studied in reference to cultural identity negotiation. Identity negotiation has been applied to the field of education similarly from various perspectives. How the theme and Ting-Toomey's (2005a) theory have been applied to education is explored in the following section.

3.3. Identity negotiation in education

Research into identity negotiation in education extends beyond identity negotiation theory. The majority of the research relating education and identity negotiation theory to each other concern intercultural couples and their children (Moriizumi, 2011b; Lawton, Foeman & Brown, 2013; Lawton, Foeman & Braz, 2013). Other studies that investigate Ting-Toomey's (2005a) theory look at relations between university students (Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013; Chamberlain-Quinlisk, 2010). These studies concentrate on how students from different cultures form friendships and communicate during university but do not investigate these relations from the perspective of education.

Education and the role of parents are linked in many identity negotiation researches (Moriizumi, 2011b; Lawton, Foeman & Brown, 2013; Lawton, Foeman & Braz, 2013). This is due to how different cultures, socio-economic classes, nationalities and races view education differently (Moriizumi, 2011b; Lawton, Foeman & Brown, 2013; Lawton, Foeman & Braz, 2013). Individuals in relationships must negotiate their multiple identities to reach a consensus with one another to make the best choices for their children's education (Moriizumi, 2011b; Lawton, Foeman & Brown, 2013). Lawton, Foeman and Brown (2013) argue that one significant education related struggle for parents is the level of education. A parent viewing good education differently from another can cause conflicts in their communication.

Identity negotiation theory is rarely connected to teachers and students. Yoon (2012) does adapt Ting-Toomey' (2005a) theory into an ethnographic analysis of two immigrant boys' experience of the school system in the USA. Additionally, teachers and primary school students' identity negotiation process is the centre of many more general studies that do not utilise Ting-Toomey's research. As previously mentioned, many identity negotiation studies refer to similar themes with Ting-Toomey (2005a) and this occurs also in education research.

(Garrett & Segall, 2013; Milner, 2010; Fielding, 2016). Ting-Toomey (2005a) discusses the sense of security and feeling of validation as some of key features of successful communication. Similar themes are explored in Milner's (2010) and Fielding's (2016) studies that both discuss teachers role in guaranteeing a safe environment where students can feel secure to communicate with everyone, regardless of their culture. Teachers have great role in education and especially when teaching children from multiple cultural backgrounds. Teachers ability to negotiate their own identities and accomodate their communication to their students is researched in this study.

3.4. Research questions

Identity negotiation theory provides range of opportunities for research in the education field. Even though the theory has been studied before it has rarely been applied to majority culture or to teachers as individuals. Identity negotiation provides an individual with the opportunity to improve the quality of communication independently from their communication partner (Ting-Toomey, 1993,1996,1999,2005a). A successful identity negotiation process allows people to understand and communicate with one another regardless of their cultural background (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). A teacher who is able to successfully communicate with children in their classroom regardless of their cultural background improves both the wellbeing of the child and themselves (Milner, 2010; Räsänen, 2002b; Jokikokko, 2002; Vaajoensuu & Isosaari, 2002; Saukkonen, 2014).

Finnish teacher education provides a limited education to teachers on multicultural classroom teaching, even though Finland is becoming increasingly multicultural (Pitkänen, 2014; Paavola & Talib, 2010; Timonen & Kantelinen, 2013; Soilamo, 2008; Räsänen, 2002a; Jokikokko, 2002; Vaajoensuu & Isosaari, 2002; Saukkonen, 2014). Intercultural communication is becoming a daily aspect of teaching as classroom demographics are

changing. Study on teachers intercultural communication competence is essential at this moment as the New Core Curriculum (2016) has just been implemented. The New Core Curriculum (2016) expects teachers support students' cultural identities and teach all students about intercultural communication skills when their own skills have not been analysed or evaluated (Paavola & Talib, 2010; Timonen & Kantelinen, 2013; Soilamo, 2008).

Being mindful of one's own identity and culture helps individuals communicate with others more successfully (Ting-Toomey, 1996, 2005a). In an increasingly multicultural classroom it is important that Finnish teachers are also aware of their own cultural background and identity, and how it potentially affects their worldviews and teaching (Soilamo, 2008; Pollari & Koppinen, 2011; Jokikokko, 2002). This is why the study aims to analyse the intercultural communication competence of Finnish basic education teachers based on Ting-Toomey's (2005a) identity negotiation theory. The study analyses whether Finnish basic education teachers are able to mindfully attune their communication when communicating with someone from a culturally different background and whether the teachers are aware of their cultural backgrounds effects on their communication. The study also aims to find out how teachers have obtained their intercultural communication skills or knowledge and whether the education they received was sufficient.

This study employed the following research questions in the research conducted:
RQ1: Are Finnish teachers aware of their own cultural identity's effects on their communication when teaching?
RQ2: How do Finnish teachers perceive their attunement to communicating with students and their parents from different cultural backgrounds to their own?

The methodology and collection of data are explained in the following chapter. The results and possible findings are discussed in a later chapter.

4. Methodology

4.1 Method

The study used semi-structured interviews to conduct a qualitative research. Interview as a method and as a form of human communication has existed for a long time (Kvale&Brinkman,2009; Platt, 2002). According to Platt (2002) interview techniques are often incorporated to other research methods such as surveys, case studies and life stories. Interview as a method provides valuable intel of the world of the participant (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Brenner, Braun & Canter, 1985). Interviews have been commonly used in social sciences since the 1920s (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Platt, 2002; Brenner et al, 1985). Research interview is set for the purpose of knowledge. Interview technique is also used outside the research field in journalistic and therapeutic interviews (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). This study chose interview technique as it provided access to Finnish teachers own experiences of their intercultural communication competence

In a qualitative research interview, the information is gained through discourse (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Brenner et al, 1985). The quality of the data depends on the skills of the interviewer (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Additionally, the interviewer must have obtained vast knowledge of their subject prior to interviewing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The preparation and design of the interview are important for its success (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Silverman, 2006). Interview is often scripted to provide an outline for the themes researched (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In a semi-structured interview the interviewer can more freely move within the outline, allowing for additional questions on topics that rise during the interaction (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Silverman, 2006). This study used semi-structured interviews as it allowed the interaction to be more reactive. Semi-structured interview provided a chance to ask for complementary questions on topics that were discussed (Silverman, 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Interview process is always subjected to the quality of human connection between the interviewer and the interviewee (Dijkstra, Van Der Veen & Van Der Zouwen, 1985). Furthermore, the interviewer must always be aware of possible ethical or interpersonal conflicts that may rise during interview situation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Interviewer needs to balance between social interaction and direct research mindset (Dijkstra, Van Der Veen & Van Der Zouwen, 1985). During the study each of the interviewees were informed of the nature of voluntary participation; they were not required to answer the questions to an extent they were uncomfortable with. Additionally, each interview began with casual conversation to establish a level of comfort that allowed for open conversation during the interview.

4.2. Sampling

Priori research design, convenience and snowball sampling are common in interview research (Warren, 2002). Priori research design was set as the sample accepted only Finnish basic education teachers. Convenience sampling was chosen, as access to all the Finnish basic education teachers with multicultural classrooms was not possible. Due to this a random sample could not be achieved. The participants were gathered through public social media posts, mutual connections and principals of schools that had high percentages of cultural variation in their pupils. The volunteered participants were able to suggest new candidates for the study. Through this kind of snowball sampling the research was able to extend from acquintances to strangers (Warren, 2002).

To diversify the sample the teachers themselves volunteered for the study if they felt that they taught a classroom with cultural diversity in it. This tactic was chosen to reach a more diverse group of participants as defining a certain number of students or percentage of diversity of cultural backgrounds could have limited the sample too much and restricted it to

certain regions in Finland. The interviews were organised either in the teacher's home city or via Skype if scheduling became an issue. Teachers from Kemi, Oulu, Kajaani, Turku, Tampere, Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Rovaniemi and Joensuu were contacted for the study. Due to the availability of participants the interviews were only conducted in four cities; Oulu, Turku, Helsinki and Jyväskylä.

4.3. Participants

Nine interviews were conducted with 10 participants. One interview was conducted with two teachers. This was due to an unexpected incident when the separately recruited participants were co-teachers for same classrooms, which is why the participants suggested a double interview. The criteria for the participants was that (1) they were basic education teachers currently working in a Finnish school and (2) that they taught a classroom with children from multiple cultural backgrounds.

Out of the originally found 12 potential candidates 10 were interviewed. The two volunteers who were excluded from the study were not currently teaching a regular class rather than a preparatory class for immigrant students. Teachers of preparatory classes were left outside of the sample as the class was not part of the basic education grade structure. Also it could be assumed that teachers of preparatory classes had different exposure to cultural variation in a classroom as they taught only children from multiple backgrounds. In contrast the research accepted resource teachers who taught as an additional teacher in a basic education grade in Helsinki.

Out of the 10 participants nine (9) were female and one (1) male. This is not a surprising divide, as out of the basic education teachers in Finland, almost 80% are female (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2017). Out of the teachers one taught in Jyväskylä, two in Oulu, one in Turku and six in Helsinki. As the capital city, Helsinki has higher

population and more cultural variation, which explains why Helsinki had more participants when compared with other cities. Nine of the teachers have a Finnish nationality and one a Finnish and Turkish nationality. Each participant had multiple students of culturally diverse backgrounds in their classrooms. Most were able to define the amount in numbers but few defined the amount in percentages due to the class structure. The youngest participant was 25 years old and the eldest 56 years. The earliest graduation year of the participants was 1988 when the latest was 2017. Out of the participants only one had received education on teaching a multicultural classroom during their university studies. The statistics and details on the participants can be found on Table 1.

Table 1

Information of Participants

#	Age	Sex	Year of graduation	Finnish students in classroom	Students of other cultural background	Access to education of a multicultural classroom during university
1	30	F	2014	50%	50%	No
2	25	F	2016	2	6	No
3	52	F	1992/2006	16	10	No

4	27	F	2016	50%	50%	Yes
5	56	F	1988	8	13	No
6	27	F	2017	29	25	No
7	39	M	2003	25	50%	No
8	26	F	2016	3	Rest	No
9	27	F	2017	9	9	No
10	56	F	1990	50%	50%	No

4.4. Conducting interviews

Eight of the nine interviews were conducted face-to-face and one was conducted via Skype due to scheduling difficulties. Each interview was conducted on the same basic frame of semi-structured interviews. The interviews began with few ice-breaking questions about the classroom and the teacher's background in education. After these questions the interviews followed a thematic base in which questions on teachers own cultural identity were followed by questions about communication and potential challenges and tactics. The guideline questions can be found in the Appendix A. As the interviews were semi-structured, each interview obtained sections differing from one another due to individual differences of the interviewees. The interviewer only participated by asking questions and possible follow-up questions on topics that arose in the interview. Interviews were conducted in Finnish to guarantee a comfortable experience for the participants. Even though majority of the

participants could have been interviewed in English using Finnish allowed a more fluent form of expression. The author translated the quotations from participants, and the originals can be found in Appendix C.

The interviews lasted approximately 39 minutes. Each interview was recorded and the interviewees agreed to be recorded by signing an informed consent form.

4.5. Analysis

After conducting the interviews they were transcribed and analysed. Thematic analysis was used to establish key themes and comparative method was used to compare interviews with one another. The interviews were analysed and coded to provide grounds for comparative analysis.

Each interview was first separated based on the questions. After individual analysis the answers were analysed together and this allowed for analysis of the larger narrative (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Analysing the answers as a complete narrative provides more meaning to codes, words and regular occurrences of the interviews (Mostyn, 1985; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Analysis of the data provided themes and categories that were important for the study. The categorisation was developed based on the recurring codes or significant differences in the data analysis (Silverman, 2006; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). All the interview transcripts were first read through to analyse their content thoroughly as independent interviews. Then recurring themes were highlighted and furthermore significant differences were analysed. Later these findings were compared and contrasted with each other to see any significant similarities or differences in the experiences and narratives of the participants.

The collected data was compared to the history of migration in Finland (compare 2.1.) and the education provided about multicultural classroom teaching (compare 2.4.). Ting-

Toomey's (2005a) identity negotiation theory was used to analyse the intercultural communication competence of the Finnish basic education teachers. As Ting-Toomey (2005a) suggests that awareness of ones own culture and ability to mindfully listen and attune ones communication to accommodate their communication partner are important for intercultural communication competence, the questions asked in the interviews aimed to establish whether these conditions were present in the Finnish basic education teacher's communication.

As there were only 10 participants in the study the results could not be generalised to concern all Finnish basic education teachers. The study was anonymous, which is why all participants names have been replaced by numbers in the text and their order has been randomised from the interview order.

5. Results

5.1. Culture, salience and learning about other cultures

During each interview the participants were asked to define what culture meant for them. Furthermore, they were asked to tell about their own cultural identity and what it meant for them. This was done to gain understanding of how they viewed culture whilst also to see how salient their cultural identity was.

The definitions of culture varied for each participant. Culture was defined by words such as "all the behaviours, beliefs and customs that a certain group of people share" (Participant 4) and "behaviours and skills and knowledge that we embody" (Participant 9). Many of the participants emphasised that teaching a multicultural class had made them think about culture more regularly and the experience of culture had become more important since teaching a multicultural class.

9 of the 10 participants described their cultural identity as Finnish, with the only exception being the participant with a dual nationality who described herself as Finnish-Turkish. Some used heritage and geographical connections to explain their cultural identity further, such as:

I am quite strongly a traditional Finn, my family does not have anyone from elsewhere. I am from Carelia and I maybe especially in my age I have started to emphasise my Carelian roots" (participant 3)

"I am from southern Ostrhrobothnia.(...) I still do not feel like a Northern Finn rather than I am still a southern Osthrobothnian, (...) even though I have lived (here) most of my life. (Participant 5).

Furthermore, few participants described their cultural identity through international interests rather than their heritage. One participant emphasised the importance of international encounters as follows: "I am not very patriotic, (...) rather than a Finn who has travelled a lot (and) whose parents have moved from the countryside to the city" (Participant 6). The emphasis on dividing patriotism and international Finnishness is interesting and arose in few answers. The impact of international or intercultural experiences seemed to have affected these participants cultural identity. One participant explained her cultural identity the following way:

(I base) my behaviour strongly on, maybe like, those Finnish traditions and maybe those include, those, those, influences from other cultures. I don't think I am a globally oriented or I have never really felt the need to travel, or things like that, but I am really interested in how people experience their own culture (...) but I am not interested in, like, sweeping the world and (...) seeing it myself but I want to hear everything. (Participant 9)

The openness to other cultures can improve intercultural communication competence (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). Interestingly the ones who described their culture as Finnish through region were more likely to deem their cultural identity as very important when compared with the ones who explained it through their interest to see the world or meet other cultures. For example a Participant 2 described the importance of her cultural identity as follows: "It really is (important). Especially now that there have been changes to my living environment, I have realised that it is actually not easy to react to those changes and get used to (the changes) has been challenging. Like you (...) do (need) a certain base, that if, you are removed from (that environment) completely it is a big change". This can be compared with a participant who described her identity through 'curious attitude towards cultures' who stated that: "Well, I don't really have a very emotional attachment to (my cultural identity) but, like, it is not negative either" (Participant 4).

Later in the interview the participants were asked whether they familiarised themselves to the cultures within their classrooms. This was due to Ting-Toomey's (2005a) belief that knowledge of cultures improves person's intercultural communication competence. The teachers were very divided in their responses. Curiously, there were connections between how teachers felt about their cultural identity and then consequently how they felt about learning about other cultures. Some of the participants with strong cultural identity did not see learning about other cultures as important. This may be due to lack of experience as these participants had little previous experience with intercultural communication encounters. The participants, whose Finnish cultural identity was less salient, all deemed learning about other culture's as helpful or important. The participant whose identity was divided between Finnish and Turkish explained the importance of increased knowledge on certain cultures as follows:

Yes, it does affect, especially with students, especially now that I have this inner knowledge about islam and the islamic culture and, well, Turkish culture, so I feel that I can, like, understand and comprehend the students who come from said family backgrounds better than before, and well, like, maybe I myself have a broader views towards cultures now and I have seen other cultures and been allowed to know more (of them). (Participant 9).

Participant 8 also emphasised the importance culture has on behaviour and how important it is to understand the cultures impact on students behaviours. Majority of the participants who deemed learning about other cultures important defined their cultural identity international interests, therefore their positive attitudes towards other cultures and learning about them could be expected.

One of the participants stated that they do not learn about the cultures, but instantly continued to tell a story of how they received previous training on cultures in university. Another participant stated that "it would be an insane richness to learn,(...) but there just is not enough time. (...) Anyway it feels that there is no time for the conversations that we really would need. We just have to carry on (touhottaa eteenpäin)" (Participant 1).

There were only two participants who spoke against learning about cultures in their classrooms. One participant stated: "(I do) not learn them (and) I do not see it needed. I do not get to know anyone else's backgrounds either" (participant 3). The other participant experienced negative identity validation during her work days which may have affected her opinions. She described her experiences as follows:

For me, my Finnishness is sometimes highlighted in a negative light during my days. (...)As there are so many children with migrant background, then they say things about Finnish people, like Finnish people cannot speak English and Finnish are like

this and if you are Finnish you are, like, somehow worse in my school world.

(Participant 2)

According to Ting-Toomey's (2005a) assumption 5 when someone feels that their identity is not validated they can feel outgrouped and experience less positive attitudes towards the others. As Ting-Toomey (2005a) explains, ones cultural identity salience affects their communication. Participant 2 felt her identity negatively validated during her work, therefore her cultural identity would affect her communication and experience negatively at times. Finnish culture's effects on communication are discussed further in the following section.

5.2. Finnish culture's effect on communication

The participants were asked if they have encountered moments when their Finnishness felt more evident and whether they feel their cultural background affects their communication. Majority of the participants were aware that their cultural background probably affected their communication on some level. One participant described it as follows:

Yes it probably affects it even though I am not aware of it or realise it. I, though, try to be aware of it and in my previous job I had to really think about (it) as I made education planning (koulutussuunnittelua). (...). I had to think about things structurally whether there were some (cultural) aspects that I had left unnoticed. (...) I let myself believe that as I am aware that I might miss something, then, that helps me be, maybe, more critical of how I am (at work). (Participant 10)

This participant had worked with multiple cultures for decades which can be seen in their awareness. She exhibited Ting-Toomey's (2005a) mindful communication as a tool in their daily working life.

Liebkind (2000) and Talib and Paavola (2000) argue that experience of intercultural communication helps teachers succeed better in their profession. Especially two of the participants exhibited deep awareness towards their cultural identitys effects on their communication. These two were the participants with the most experience teaching a multicultural classroom. One participant explained their experiences as follows:

> (I) often think about where (my), kind of, emphasised calmness, like really, comes from. (It) does not come naturally, or even commonly, to many of (...) my students who come from an immigrant background, and then I think about that why for some reason I, like, try to offer this as the only right path to react to things (...) when the other (person's) way of handling the world is so much more lively. And then when you are, like, in the teacher's role, there is a lot of responsibility of what, (...) tools (you try to give them) to survive life. Like this is my way but that really does not mean that it is the best possible or the right (option) and one really should be able to come towards (them) in things like this. (Participant 7)

Similarly to Participant 7 other teachers emphasised the importance of calmness as well. Some participants felt that calmness was beneficial when communicating with children from different cultures. Participant 5 explained this as follows:

> Finns are, like, naturally stolid, so in class situations I have had to accept that (...) not everyone will behave the same way because they are not like that, they are, from their natural character, more lively because it is part of their culture (...) and this does not certainly mean they are misbehaving rather than it is who they are. They ask much more from the teacher than a Finnish child. A Finnish child can sit quiet the whole day when they will not stay without talking.

Experience, mindfulness and acceptance are important tools for a teacher. (Jokikokko, 2002; Liebkind, 2000). All of these aspects can be connected to identity negotiation theory (Ting-

Toomey, 2005a). These participants have learnt to be mindful of their own personalities and identities which have helped them communicate more effectively (Ting-Toomey, 2005a).

Language is an important part of communication and was featured in most of the interviews. There were few teachers who felt that their culture linguistically affected their communication. Language and linguistic difficulties were a regular topic in all the interviews. Language is an integral part of communication which explains why many teachers viewed that more important difference between them and their pupils and parents. One teacher explained that she felt that her roots in Oulu and the Oulu dialect had caused misunderstandings with their pupils who were from a different area completely. This did not mean just students who came from families that spoke different language at home rather than the dialect separated the teacher from their Finnish pupils also.

Some of the teachers, especially the ones teaching lower grades, had incorporated body language, facial expressions and movement into their communication when teaching. Pollari and Koppinen (2011) argue that this is one the most important tools for a basic education teacher when there is a linguistic difference between the teacher and the student. Finnish teachers have until now been able to teach with words rather than with expressions but with students from different cultures and different linguistic abilities it is important that the teacher uses assistive techniques (Pollari & Koppinen, 2011). One teacher explained the importance of the assistive techniques as follows; "language limits getting to know some children (...) so the movements and facial expressions mean a lot" (participant 1). Another teacher explained the way she has incorporated body language and more expressive language in the following way:

> Especially with children with whom I have a language barrier I try to knowingly use
>
> more facial expressions and I try to knowingly bring closeness and warmth into the
>
> interaction (...) and I think it is good for the Finnish children as well because, that, it is

not easy for everyone to understand feelings and read them and know if they have done well or badly or if it is now ow ow ow (aijaijai). (...) This really supports everything and is useful. If I only stood there (pönöttäisin) in the front and did not move or express myself in any way then this could be really hard. (Participant 4)

Participant 9 felt that going to the level of the child improves the communication and using terms and expressions they would use. These teachers have managed to attune their communication in the physical realm of communication (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). Finnish culture, as any other culture, has its own body language and expressions. Being mindful and attuning their communication helped these participants communicate with their pupils better.

Furthermore, many teachers felt that their Finnishness was visible in the directness on communication. Participants elaborated that there is a difference in how they communicate with Finnish parents and their parents from other cultures. With Finnish parents they were more direct when with others they were more likely to discuss more before going to the point. One participant explained that:

If I started (a discussion) with a Finnish parents with "how has your day?" they would be saying that "this is not what I came here for, I came to talk about my child." (...) Like our culture is just like that, that everyone takes care of their things and time is of the essence when in contrast if you speak with a Somali parent you can see from them that they are not in a hurry and that they have time to actually talk about their child. (Participant 1)

As Ting-Toomey (2005a) argues, accommodating ones communication to the other and being mindful of ones communication helps reach a more successful dialogue. Realising that the directness of Finnish communication would not be successful with parents and students from other cultures helped many participants communicate more effectively.

The cultural aspects were also emphasised in contact with students from different cultures. One participant explained that her students who come from culturally different backgrounds are the first ones to hug them (Participant 5). Another teacher told that some boys in their class come hug them first thing in the morning and ask how they are, even if they saw each other the day before (Participant 7). Both teachers were seemingly amused by the warmth of their pupils and viewed these differences kindly.

Finnish education system and its connection to culture was discussed in majority of the interviews. As previously discussed, the majority culture affects the education system of the country (Räsänen, 2002b; Ramsey, Williams & Vold, 2002; Parekh ,1986). The teachers were divided when discussing the education system and its connections to the Finnish culture. Some were very aware that the school system itself is also part of Finnish culture and that the Finnish school culture and system could be confusing people from other cultures. One teacher explained that: "of course, one has to remember that from this (Finnish) point of view some things are self-evident. (...) They are used to a completely different (system). (They ask) if we ever give homework here when of course we do but it might be that the student did their work in school. (...) It is annoying (when you feel like you are not being understood) and frustration becomes aggression" (participant 3). The feeling of not being understood can harm successful communication (Ting-Toomey, 2005a).

There were multiple participants who experienced frustration at times during intercultural encounters. One of the common causes for frustration was swimming lessons that are part of the curriculum but girls from certain cultures did not attend classes. Participant 6 explains her frustration as follows: "(It is frustrating) when these kinds of self explanatory things are explained really thoroughly (to the students and parents) and then after all that the child still does not show when there is swimming lesson". Teachers who struggled the most with these differences were the newest to teaching classrooms with cultural

variation. As earlier discussed, experience improves acceptance and accepting that cultural differences exist improves teachers wellbeing at work (parantaa jaksamista) (Talib & Paavola, 2000). Being mindful of differences and spending more time with the students and parents was a tool that some of the more experienced participants used. Some teachers explained how they dealt with these moments as follows:

> There are many situations where things are gone through maybe more thoroughly or for a longer time but I aim to go through everything so well that misunderstandings will not happen (...) and I think that is part of that trust building. (...) I am in those parents territory and I have to do my job in a way that the parents can trust me. (Participant 10)

> When you discuss with a parent you have to find out that what in their country were things like highschool (lukio), basic education (peruskoulu) and university (yliopisto). (...) You must discuss what going to school is like and what it is like here as for many of them the Finnish school system is one huge horrible questionmark. (Participant 5)

Ting-Toomey (2015) emphasises the importance of self-awareness when communicating with culturally different people. Being aware that the culture one comes from and the cultural identity one obtains can strongly affect their communication can also help the teacher in their job (Koppinen & Pollari, 2011; Talib & Paavola, 2000).

5.3. Developing safe environment and trust

None of the participants were directly asked about developing safe environment and trust with their students and their families but these themes were present in nine out of ten interviews. Ting-Toomey (2005a) emphasises the importance of understanding individuals need for stability, safety, validation and appreciation in their communication.

Being understanding and mindful about other peoples identities and cultures are the key for successful intercultural communication (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). The participants

emphasised the need to develop a safe space and safe environment for the students, and their parents. Participant 10 explained that every encounter begins from establishing a sense of safety. Participant 7 emphasised the importance of being a safe person in the following way:

> When you, as like, a safe person take them to you and truly really teach them and you are present, then yes, the children are open and it is easy to, like, work together when they see that this one (teacher) in some way respects and listens to me.

Some teachers saw the sense of safety as the only way to create a communication channel to the children in their classroom. Participant 8 explained this as follows;

> (It is important that from the beginning) you are clear and consistent. (...) That you are safe and that you are yourself in the space. That way the students can come to you and ask questions. (...) Also if the student is a bit weaker in Finnish you have to encourage them a bit and create that safe environment and atmosphere where it does not matter if someone uses wrong words (...) as the most important thing is that the student is allowed to tell (their stories without always being corrected). As it is important to just (feel) understood. (Participant 8)

Security to speak openly was mentioned in variety of the interviews. Five out of 10 participants mentioned that they tried to create a safe space also in the parental meetings so that parents who may not feel so comfortable speaking Finnish could feel safe to express themselves in the language. Participant 6 also felt that adjusting her communication helped her gain teachers trust. She employed emojis and images when communicating with certain parents and felt that this helped the parents trust her better.

The Finnish Core Curriculum (2016) regularly features themes such as tolerance and acceptance (suvaitsevaisuus) which were also present in the interviews. Four teachers especially referred to acceptance as a tool in successful classroom communication. Participant 8 explained that "(I try to reach) an accepting environment where everyone can

show their culture and and (we) can discuss them, and ask about (each others cultures)". One can feel insecure about their identity when communicating with culturally dissimilar others (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). Therefore, it is important that teachers aimed for a secure and safe environment for everyone to communicate in.

5.4. Communication difficulties

Ting-Toomey (2005a) suggests that one is at more ease with culturally similar others. Many participants elaborated on this suggestion. One participant explained that communicating with parents who knew Finnish was easier as it feels that "they have already specialised in the Finnish culture" (participant 5). In this case the sense of similarity made communication easier (Ting-Toomey, 2005a).

As previously discussed experience and accepting differences helps intercultural communication (Talib & Paavola, 2000; Jokikokko, 2002; Liebkind, 2000). Some participants had encountered cultural differences first time at work. Participant 9 recounted the first time she realised cultural difference exists. This occurred during a class with a student whose hair had smelled different than what she was used to. She explained the moment as follows:

> (When it happened) I thought that it is good that I realised that and acknowledged (my thoughts) as it helped to get over the moment faster. (...) That was like an aha-experience for me. Like, I was not really aware that these (sensory experiences) affect how one feels and I think that you feel more at easy and natural (when things are similar to you) and you do not even consider these things. (Adjusting to new things) does not take long, like a conscious few minutes and then you are in the same world with everyone. (Participant 8)

Ting-Toomey's (2005a) suggests that people from culturally dissimilar countries might experience more struggles. Seven of the ten participants used Somali children and parents as their examples of communication difficulties. As previously discussed (compare 2.1) the role of Somalis is significant as an immigrant group in Finland. Interestingly each teacher had struggles with students and parents from other cultures as well but commonly used Somalis as Somalis have become the personification of immigrants in Finland (Paavola & Talib, 2010).

The lack of discipline in Finnish schools and the discipline culture of Finland was discussed in few interviews. Some teachers struggled with gaining mutual understanding with parents on how discipline is organised in Finnish school system. According to one teacher:

(There is one set of) parents who expect a lot stricter take from me as a teachers and (they) feel that I do not ask enough of their child and then in that moment I had to have a very tough and direct communication with this mother that this is how our systems are different and this is how we do things and here we do not make our children cry rather than we try to learn through joy. (Participant 9)

One of the most significant culture-based communication difficulty discussed in the interviews was the treatment of women by male students and male parents. One of the participants explained her experiences the following way:

Yes, you feel it (the culture difference) strongly still, even more last year, that I am young and a woman so (...) with boys from immigrant background I receive really negative reactions sometimes. It is hard for them to understand that young woman is above them. Like (they say) that they will not listen to me as I am nothing (...) I find it really annoying. As a person I am one of those people that does not have time for anything like that. Like for goodness sake if I have studied for five years I really do not have energy to listen to some thirteen fourteen year old boys telling me that I

know better than you, I will be a doctor. (...) Then I get this (feeling) that if this is coming from the family, from the culture, then that annoys me too and I have this small (feeling) like okay we are now in Finland and we will behave like Finnish people here and have the Finnish equality. (Participant 2)

Many other participants had experienced similar challenges concerning their gender. Gender roles in different cultures were seen as challenges to their role as teachers. One teacher had even wondered if she should behave more "masculine in authoritative situations" (participant 6). The differences in gender roles in other cultures also affected the translator communication. Some parents did not accept a translator of different sex or just did not accept the chosen translator. Participant 5 explained that a translator that the mothers approved was more often understood when if the mothers had not approved the translator was the meeting often difficult.

Teachers whose gender had been challenged felt negatively about the encounter. Ting-Toomey (2005a) emphasises the importance of identity security in communication. For many of these teachers their gender identity was interlinked to their cultural identity Finnish. As Finnish women these situations hindered their encounters with some parents.

Interestingly the only male participant of the study had not experienced any significant communication struggles with the parents in general. He had experienced struggles when discussing additional study aid for a child, but those struggles were due to the difficult nature of the topic (participant 7). He was aware that his female colleagues had different experiences. Women make 80% of the teachers in basic education (Kumpulainen, 2017). The differences in teachers experiences based on gender is something that should be further researched to establish ways to manage these culture connected communication difficulties.

5.5. Mindful listening and communication attunement

Participants were not directly asked if they attune their communication or listen mindfully. Eight of the interviewees discussed listening as an important part of their communication process. Avoiding mindless communication is important in intercultural communication, as mindless communicator expects all individuals to behave similar to themselves when an individual can through mindful listening learn to attune their communication to validate the identity of their communication partner (Ting-Toomey, 2005a).

Mindful listening improves intercultural communication competence (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). Especially two of the participants emphasised the importance of listening in their work. They explained this as follows:

> I listen and of course tell a lot about my own (experiences) and you cannot keep subjects like family and behaviours outside of school rather than whole spectrum of life is present here, sometimes it horrifies and sometimes it makes one laugh and (I) have heard everything here. (Participant 7)

> In conversations (with) just the two of us (...) that is where I hear and listen what (the students) tell about their families and backgrounds as that affects on what their future orientation is. We go through things and it can, depending on the culture, be that for example a patriarchal culture can be a burden for the young person when they think of their future profession if it contradicts their background. (Participant 10)

Through listening they gained access to valuable information on cultures of their students. These moments of listening allowed the participants to know what identities their pupils deemed valuable (Ting-Toomey, 2005a).

Being present and aware in the moment when listening to the children was emphasised in some of the interviews. One participant explained; "You cannot be, as you say,

blind to (culture and everything related to it), rather than you need to be, in a way, sensitive. You need to be excited if something (that the other is telling you) is the world's most important thing to them" (participant 7). Jokikokko (2002) emphasises importance of sensitivity in teachers' intercultural communication competence development. Another participant emphasised that "(you have) be truly interested in what the child is trying to saying" (participant 8). Mindful listening is a key for identity negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2005a) as it helps each participant mindfully negotiate their identities whilst supporting the identity salient subjects of their communication partner.

The participants were divided when discussing the importance of being understood. Some teachers were less aware of not being understood whilst majority were concerned with misunderstandings. The participants described in the following ways:

I do, like, think about my own interaction (for example) how I encounter different kinds of families. (Participant 9)

I often wonder if I speak clearly enough and if I am understood. (...) Sometimes the children have so many things to say and tell so I have learned to understand what they are saying. (...) I try to reach a stage where we can discuss so that (no one) is left feeling that they are not understood. (Participant 6)

Awareness of how one communicates shows mindfulness of communication difficulties. These same teachers had also become aware of cultural differences and how this affects the expectation on them. They explain this as follows:

Like yes, teacher should treat everyone the same way like all the children but well then, for example, if some culture has a really strict views on authority then to them maybe I do not need to be as strict with them. (Participant 6)

Now that I am slowly learning about other cultures and nationalities I have come to realise that some (children) from similar cultural backgrounds can have very similar

features or like behaviours. (...) and I have learned to understand maybe that it also

affects communication in that with some, you behave a bit differently. Like I have to

know that in a certain group the students have a certain type of upbringing at home so

they require different kind of communication and encounter from me as a teacher.

(Participant 9)

Increasing knowledge about other cultures helps intercultural communication competence
(Ting-Toomey, 2005a). Knowledge helps teachers to be more mindful of the cultures that
their pupils come from and due to this attune their communication accordingly.

5.6. Previous experience and skills obtained from education

As previously mentioned (Compare 2.4.) the Finnish teachers receive a limited

amount of education on intercultural communication and multicultural classroom teaching

during their studies. Each participant was asked whether they received any education on the

topics during university. 9 of the 10 participants received no education on these topics during

university. The only one who received intercultural communication education had graduated

from the multicultural teacher education programme which explains why she had a different

experience to the other participants.

All the participants stated that they had gained their intercultural communication

skills from working life or outside of university. They had obtained their skills abroad or

during employment. Majority of the teachers felt that additional education would have

benefitted them. Participant 5 explained; "It would have helped as now I have learned

through the heel (kantapään kautta). Like it would be a cold ride (kylmää kyytiä) for that

class teacher who now would be put in my seat". Most participants felt that intercultural

communication and multicultural classroom teaching should be included in education of

teachers. Working life had taught most participants the required skills. One participant summarised this as follows:

> You get surprisingly far with basic interaction and just by being interested. (...) Like they (the parents) do not know everything about Finns so it is good space for learning for all. We can learn together and at least that is how I think that I have learning attitude towards this so that we can all learn together which is everyone's benefit. (Participant 8).

Most of the participants elaborated Ting-Toomey's (2005a) mindful communication. As participant 9 elaborates the end goal is for everyone; students, teachers and parents to feel understood and accepted.

6. Discussion

Comparing the data collected to Ting-Toomey's (2005a) theory and connecting it to the existing literature provided rather surprising results. The results suggest that Finnish basic education teachers obtain sufficient intercultural communication competence when analysed based on Ting-Toomey's (2005a) theory.

Two research questions were established to frame the study in this paper: *Are Finnish teachers aware of their own cultural identity effects on their communication when teaching?* And *How do Finnish teachers perceive their attunement to communicating with students and their parents from different cultural backgrounds to their own?* The analysis of the data suggests that many of the participants are aware of their cultural identity's impacts on their communication. The participants who were aware of their cultural identity's impact were conscious of many personality and communication traits that were connected to their Finnish identity. They were aware that these traits were not present in their

pupils and that they could not expect similarity from their students. These teachers were also constantly adapting their communication and teaching to support their students.

Few participants were less aware of all the aspects in which their culture impacted their communication. Within those teachers majority were aware that different cultures communicate differently and aimed to support their students' identities. Many participants final goal was to help their students and their parents feel understood, which is also the final goal for identity negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2005a).

According to the teacher's self-reports, they did not exhibit hostile attitudes towards students from different cultures. Some participants were less mindful of their communication and did not try to accommodate their communication to their students. These teachers exhibited imbalance of Ting-Toomey's (2005a) dialectics which could explain their attitudes towards. These participants emphasised strong identity connection to their Finnish culture and also sense of differentiation from their students and families from other cultures. The challenge to their cultural identities from the students and families from other cultures made them feel more tightly connected to their own culture (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). Although Ting-Toomey (2005a) emphasises the impact that a strong cultural identity can have on communication and mindfulness it does not mean that an individual with strong cultural identity could not be mindful in their communication. As Ting-Toomey (2005a) explains it is important to understand and be self-aware of the impacts of cultural salience to our communication and to increase our knowledge of others to help us be more mindful in our communication. Identity negotiation is a process that improves with increased knowledge (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). Examples of this are the participants with strong cultural identities who seemingly succeeded in sufficient intercultural communication. These were the teachers with the longest experience in teaching multicultural classrooms. This could suggest that exposure to other cultures helped to develop that balance in Ting-Toomey's (2005a)

dialectics which allowed teachers to be more mindful of their communication. In contrast to the previous research on Finnish teachers abilities to communicate across cultures, based on the participants reports they seemed more attuned in their communication than expected (Vaajoensuu & Isosaari, 2002; Saukkonen, 2014).

The lack of security and identity hostility affected communication negatively. Most of the female participants of the study had experienced identity emotional insecurity during intercultural communication (Ting-Toomey, 2005a). These participants had experienced negative reactions towards their cultural background or their gender which caused negative experiences with their communication partners. Most of the participants were able to communicate through these instances.

Data analysis suggests that the individuals that are most aware of their cultural identity's impact on their communication seemingly were more mindful in their communication. These participants showed more interest towards other cultures and exhibited willingness to adjust their communication.

The study found that participants with more experience of other cultures, and more experience in teaching culturally diverse classrooms were more aware of culture and its importance. These individuals were also more attuned with their own identity and how it affected their teaching and communication. Ting-Toomey (2005a) argues that listening, adjusting and attuning one's identity and communication are integral to intercultural communication competence. These were evident especially with the participants who had been more exposed to intercultural communication situations through their job or in their personal lives. This suggests that providing more education on these topics during university could help teachers in their careers.

In conclusion, the study was able to provide a small analysis of the intercultural communication competence of Finnish basic education teachers. Many of Ting-Toomey's

(2005a) assumptions were present in the answers from the participants. Not only did the awareness of the cultural identity and its effects in communication seemingly affect their intercultural communication competence but also the amount of exposure and experience affected the teachers skills to mindfully negotiate their cultural identity.

7. Limitations of the study

The study interviewed 10 individuals in 9 separate interviews. The participants represent a small portion of the basic education teachers in Finland which means that the study could not make any generalisations based on the interviewees. To find out more definite patterns in the intercultural communication competence of basic education teachers in Finland further research would have to be conducted.

Majority of the participants were recruited through common friends and acquaintances. A sample collected through other sources could have provided a more diverse sample. Due to the connection the participants had to the researcher it is likely the values conveyed by them do not represent the entire teacher pool as it is likely the participants exhibit similar liberal values to the researcher.

The geographical divide of the interviewees is uneven as six of the interviewees were from Helsinki and the rest from other cities in Finland. The realities in different cities are rather far apart which is why a more comparative analysis of intercultural competence in each city should be conducted. More interviews from each city would have maybe provided a more accurate idea of the situation in different cities.

The study failed to collect an even variation of teacher's age and graduation year as majority of the participants had graduated in the past 17 years. In addition to this gender balance between participants was flawed, as only one participant out of 10 was male. Another

male participant would have been preferable, even though 80 % of Finnish basic education teachers are female (Kumpulainen, 2017). Due to the imbalance in the gender divide the study cannot provide effective comparisons between the intercultural communication competence of teachers.

Using another data collection method could have provided different data. Due to the personal nature of some questions, a more anonymous form of data collection such as an online questionnaire could have been successful. All the participants seemed comfortable with a personal interview form but there is a possibility that complete anonymity would have provided even more personal experiences.

8. Further research

Globalisation as phenomena provides infinite opportunities for research. Its impact on Finnish classrooms is interesting and the changing demographics in Finland ask for further research. Individual's ability to communicate with people from culturally diverse backgrounds is becoming increasingly important in everyday life not only in school setting. Therefore, Finland, intercultural communication competence and identity negotiation theory should so be studied also in the future.

Intercultural communication competence has been studied in variety of contexts. In Finland this competency study should be expanded to other fields where regular intercultural encounters occur such as hospitals, police offices and places of work. Intercultural communication competence research in Finland should also be expanded to socio-economic intercultural communication. In the study this rose as a theme from teachers who felt disconnected from their students who came from socio-economically different backgrounds.

Identity negotiation research in education should be expanded to children in multicultural classrooms and also to parents' communication with the teacher not just between themselves. This could provide valuable knowledge of their experience as well. This same study should be conducted with a larger group of Finnish teachers to reach generalisable results. A quantitative study on teacher's experiences of communicating with culturally different people could also provide information important for the future of the teacher education programme. These studies could concentrate in identity negotiation from perspective of multiple identities.

Identity negotiation theory is easily applicable to the education field which is why this research could be also duplicated in other countries. The ability to mindfully negotiate one's identity to successfully communicate with people is a skill useful for teachers everywhere in the world.

As discussed earlier, a study into the intercultural communication of teachers from different genders should be further examined. This study suggests that male and female teachers experience these communication encounters differently especially with parents from male dominant cultures.

Intercultural communication competence is an increasingly important skill in the globalising world. Immigration is not an ending phenomena and cultural diversity within countries, such as Finland, will only keep growing with new generations of immigrants. In coming years there could also be similar research of bicultural identities from Finland's perspective also. This research could be done already but especially at the speed the demographic of Finnish people is changing this will be an interesting study in few years. All the studies into the intercultural communication skills of people in all professions are important to guarantee that the systems can address potential shortcomings before it is too late.

9. Conclusion

Migration is happening across the world at an increasing pace. Migration brings with it the need to be able to communicate with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Finland is no exception and the need for people's intercultural communication competence is becoming more and more important. Migration is visible in everyday lives of people and extends to infrastructures from schools to hospitals. Finnish classrooms are becoming more multicultural and the teachers communicate with students and parents from different cultures daily. The curriculum for basic education is also changing to adapt to the increasing need for intercultural communication skills and cultural knowledge in education.

Cultural differences can cause problems in everyday classroom communication. This study found that teachers with more experience with culturally different students were more able to mindfully listen and attune their communication to fit their students and their parents needs. Awareness of ones culture and cultural identity helped these teachers in their careers. Furthermore, teachers with strong connection to their Finnish identity and less experience in teaching culturally dissimilar people struggled more in attuning their communication.

This study was able to elaborate on some interesting communication difficulties and communication tactics used by teachers in Finnish basic education. As a qualitative study it provided a more personal perspective on the experiences of the teachers. It also elaborated the potential of intercultural communication competence research in education field. Identity negotiation theory provided a sufficient frame for the study. By using Ting-Toomey's (2005a) theory the study was able to assess intercultural communication competence of teachers and highlight the potential need for further education based on the interview data.

Finnish teachers receive very little education on different cultures, intercultural communication and multicultural classroom teaching during their studies. This study suggests that even experience and knowledge about these topics helped teachers to communicate with

their students. Furthermore, the study found that teachers regardless of their background feel that more education would benefit them in their careers. More education could improve their awareness of cultures impact on communication and help them communicate and attune their communication from the very beginning of their careers.

Teachers hold an important role in the lives of their students. The ability to communicate successfully across cultures in education can increase the students integration, help their learning and improve the experience of both teachers and parents. The ability to adjust ones own identities and balance the identities of the other through communication can help everyday situations in schools. This is why intercultural communication competence and identity negotiation should be further researched as it can help to further intercultural communication competencies of the parties involved. In the end, it is all about everyday interaction and ability to communicate with everyone regardless of their cultural background.

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APPENDIX A

1. What does culture mean to you?/ Mitä kulttuuri mielestäsi tarkoittaa?

2. When did you first teach a classroom with students from multiple cultures?/Milloin opetit ensimmäisen kerran luokkaa, jossa oli oppilaita useista kulttuureista?

3. How would you describe your cultural identity? Do you feel connected to it? / Miten kuvailisit omaa kulttuuri-identiteettiäsi?

4. Do you ever think about how "Finnishness" may affect how you communicate? Oletko koskaan miettinyt josko suomalaisuutesi vaikuttaa siihen miten viestit?

5. How do you get to know your students? / Miten opit tuntemaan oppilaasi?

6. Do you feel that communication affects how you "get to" than others? / Koetko, että viestintä vaikuttaa siihen miten luot yhteyden helpommin kuin toisiin?

7. Your classroom has students from multiple cultures in it, do you learn about the cultures of your students? Luokallasi on oppilaita monista kulttuureista, opitko tuntemaan oppilaittesi kulttuureita?

8. How is it when you communicate with students from different cultures? Does it differ? / Millaista on viestintä muista kulttuuritaustoista tulevien oppilaittesi kanssa? Onko se erilaista kuin suomlaisten oppilaittesi?

9. Has there been communication difficulties? Onko ollut haasteita?

10. When you communicate with parents through Wilma-portal do you communicate similarly with all the parents?/ Kun viestit vanhempien kanssa esim Wilmassa, onko viestintä kaikkien vanhempien kanssa samanlaista?

11. Have there ever been times when you feel like you haven't been understood, or that you misunderstood your student/parent? How did you handle this?/

Onko ikinä tullut vastaan tilanteita, jolloin tunsit ettei sinua ymmärretä tai et ymmärtänyt? Miten käsittelit tilanteen?

12. How are the different cultures incorporated in your communication? Are they?/ Miten huomioit eri kulttuuriset taustat viestinnässäsi? Huomioitko niitä?

12. When you communicate do you try to awarely listen to cues on topics that might be sensitive?

13. Where have you obtained icc skills the most? Anywhere? /Missä olet saanut "suurimman osan" kulttuurienvälisistä viestintätaidoistasi? Missään?

Generals:

1. What is the demographic of your class

2. How many multicultural classes have you taught

3. When did you graduate?

4. How was teaching a multicultural classroom covered in teacher ed when you graduated?

5. Have you learned multicultural classroom teaching from school/classes or through work?

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

I have been informed about the study and I agree to participate. I acknowledge that my participation in this study is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time. This interview will be recorded and your signature indicates your consent to being recorded.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

By signing above, I consent to participate in and being recorded for the interview conducted for this study. Please fill out this information sheet, which will be used in order to provide demographic data for the study.

Age:

Year of graduation:

Sex:

Country of Origin:

City of Residence:

Demographic of your class (Finnish and other cultural backgrounds):

Did you receive multicultural classroom education during your time in university:

If you would like to be informed about the results of the study, please provide your email address:

Thank you for your participation,

Heta Mattila

Master's Degree in Intercultural Communication

University of Jyväskylä

Heta.hl.mattila@student.jyu.fi

Tietoinen suostumus

Tutkimus on selitetty minulle ja hyväksyn osallistumiseni tutkimukseen. Tiedän, että osallistumiseni tutkimukseen on vapaaehtoista ja voin vetäytyä siitä milloin tahansa.

Tämä haastattelu nauhoitetaan ja allekirjoituksesi antaa suostumuksen nauhoitukselle.

Nimi

Allekirjoitus

Päivä

Allekirjoituksellani suostun osallistumaan tutkimukseen ja annan luvan tutkimustarkoituksessa tehtyyn nauhoitukseen.

Täytäthän alla olevat tiedot, joita tullaan käyttämään ainoastaan tutkimuksen demografisina tietoina.

Ikä:

Valmistumisvuosi:

Sukupuoli:

Kotimaa:

Luokkasi oppilaiden demografiset tiedot (suomalaistaustaiset ja ulkomaalaistaustaiset):

Saitko opetusta monikulttuurisen luokan opetuksesta yliopisto-opintojesi aikana:

Mikäli toivot saavasi tietoa tutkimuksen tuloksista laitathan alle sähköpostisi:

Kiitos osallistumisesta,

Heta Mattila

Master's Degree in Intercultural Communication

University of Jyväskylä

Heta.hl.mattila@student.jyu.fi

APPENDIX C

This appendix includes all the translated quotes in Finnish in order divided based on the chapters where the quote occured:

2.1

"on perinteisesti pyritty sivuuttamaan eroja tai vaikenemaan niistä" (Paavola & Talib, 2011, p. 112)

2.2

Maahanmuuttajien opetus järjestetään muun muassa muun esiopetuksen yhteydessä, perusopetukseen valmistavana opetuksena, suomi tai ruotsi toisena kielenä -opetuksena, tukiopetuksena, maahanmuuttajien oman äidinkielen opetuksena, muiden uskontojen opetuksena, ammatilliseen peruskoulutukseen valmistavana koulutuksena sekä kotoutumiskoulutuksena ja luku- ja kirjoitustaidottomien opetuksena. (Nissilä, 2010, p. 24)

Kun maahanmuuttajataustainen lapsi tai nuori osaa suomea niin taitavasti, että voi opiskella normaalisti kaikkia koulun oppinaineita, myös äidinkieli-ja kirjallisuus oppimäärää, miksi olisi tarpeen nostaa äntä esiin maahanmuuttajataustansa vuoksi? Oman kulttuurisen taustansa edustajanahan hän on verrattavissa kehen tahansa kantasuomalsieen, jolla on kulttuurista omleimaisuutta. (Pollari & Koppinen, 2011, p. 13)

"peruskouluikäisten eli 7-15 vuotiaiden kokonaismäärä kasvaa vuodesta 2010 vuoteen 2020 noin 24 000 hengellä ja siitä edelleen vuoteen 2030 noin 20 000 hengellä. (Opetusministeriö, 2010, cited in Paavola & Talib, 2011, p. 23).

5.1.

"Kaikkia tapoja, uskomuksia ja tottumuksia mitä tietty ihmisryhmä jakaa" (Participant 4)

"Tapoja ja taitoja ja tietoja mitä ilmennetään" (Participant 8)

"Minä olen aika voimakkaasti perinteinen suomalainen, sukuun ei kuulu muualta. Olen Karjalasta, ja ehkä erityisesti tässä iässä tulee se, että korostaa karjalaisia tapoja." (Participant 3)

"Minä olen eteläpohjanmaalta kotoisin. (…) En vieläkään ole pohjoispohjanmaalainen, vaan olen edelleen eteläpohjalainen, (...) vaikka olen asunut suurimman osan elämästäni (täällä). (Participant 5)

"En ole kauhean isänmaallinen, (...) vaan suomalainen, joka on matkustanut paljon, jonka vanhemmat on muuttaneet maalta kaupunkiin." (Participant 6)

 (Pohjaan) aika vahvasti semmoisiin, ehkä, suomalaisiin perinteisiin ja ehkä niihin liittyy sitä, semmoista, semmoisia, muiden kulttuureiden vaikutteita. Minä en itseäni pidä mitenkään kovin globaalisti suuntautuneena tai minua en ole hirveästi koskaan kiinnostanut matkustaa, tai tommoiset asiat, mutta sitten kuitenkin kiinnostaa se että miten ihmiset oman kulttuurin kokee (...) mutta minulla ei ole semmoista halua, jotenkin, haravoida maailmaa ja (...) nähdä kaikkea, mutta minua kiinnostaa kuulla. (Participant 8)

"Kyllä se on (tärkeä). Nyt varsinkin, kun on tullut muutoksia siihen omaan ympäristöön, niin tajuaa sen että niihin muutoksiin suhtautuminen tai niin kuin tottuminen on ollut aika

haastavaa. Eli kyllä sen (...) tietyn pohjan (tarvitsee) missä on, että jos niin kuin poistetaan siitä ympäristöstä kokonaan niin se on suuri muutos."

" (Participant 2)

"No, ei minulla siihen ole kauhean tunnepitoinen suhtautuminen ole, mutta ei mitenkään myöskään negatiivinen." (Participant 4)

Kyllä, se vaikuttaa, varsinkin oppilaiden kanssa, varsinkin nyt kun minulla on tällaista sisäistä tietämystä islamista ja islamin kulttuurista ja, tuota, Turkin kulttuurista, niin tuntuu, että pystyn, niinku, ymmärtämään ja käsittämään sellaisista perhetaustoista olevia oppilaita paremmin kuin aiemmin, ja, tuota, niin, ehkä itsellä on vähän semmoinen laajempi näkemys kulttuureja kohtaan ja nähnyt muita kulttuureja ja saanut oppia tuntemaan (niitä). (Participant 9)

"Olisihan se siis ihan älytön rikkaus, (...) mutta ei vaan riitä aika. (...) Muutenkin tuntuu että semmoiselle keskustelulle, mitä hirveänä tarvittaisi ei ole vain aikaa. Pitää vain touhottaa eteenpäin." (Participant 1)

" (En) mitenkään enkä minä näe sitä mitenkään tarpeelliseksi. En minä tutustu kenenkään muunkaan taustoihin sen kummemmin" (Participant 3).

Minulle se suomalaisuus korostuu ehkä ajoittain huonolla tavalla tuolla päivissä. (...)Kun siellä on niin paljon maahanmuuttajataustaisia, sitten siellä (puhutaan) siitä suomalaisuudesta (niin) että suomalaiset ei osaa puhua kunnolla englantia ja että suomalaiset on tämmöisiä niin

jos sinä olet täysin suomalainen sinä olet, niinku, huonompi tuolla maailmassa. (Participant 2)

5.2.

Kyllähän se varmaan vaikuttaa, vaikken minä sitä huomaa tai tiedosta. Kyllä minä sitä pyrin aina ottamaan huomioon ja silloin kun olin edellisessä työssä jouduin miettimään (sitä) kun tein paljon koulutussuunnittelua. (...). Jouduin miettimään struktuurisesti että onko siellä jotain semmoisia asioita joita en ole huomannut. (…) Annan itseni uskoa siihen, että kun minä tiedostan sen etten minä kaikkea hoksaa ,niin, minä olen, ehkä, silloin vähän kriittisempi siitä miten minä toimin (työssäni. (Participant 10)

Minulla tulee aika paljon mietittyä, mistä semmoinen, jonkinlainen, korostunut rauhallisuus, oikeen niinku, tulee. (Se) ei ole kovin niinku sisäsynnynnäistä, tai edes kovin tavallista, monelle minun (...) maahanmuuttaja oppilaista, ja sitten sitä miettii että minkä ihmeen takia minä yritän, niinku, tarjota tätä niinku ainoana oikeana tienä kuinka suhtautua asioihin (...) kun taas toisen tapa käsitellä maailmaa on hyvin paljon elävämpi. Ja sitten kun on, niinku, opettajan roolissa niin siinä on aika paljon vastuuta siitä miten sinä yrität antaa toiselle eväitä selviytyä maailmasta. Silleen, että jos tämä on minun tapa niin ei se tarkoita ollenkaan sitä että se olisi se paras mahdollinen oikea (tapa), ja pitäisi osata tulla vastaan (heitä) näissä aika hyvin. (Participant 7)

Suomalainen on, semmoinen, jäyhä, niin on täytynyt luokkatilanteessa hyväksyä se että ne kaikki (...) ei käyttäydy samalla lailla koska ne ei ole sellaisia, että he on jo, niinku, omalta olemukseltaan eläviä, koska se kuuluu heidän kulttuuriinsa (...) eikä se ole välttämättä, että he olisivat häiriköitä, vaan se on semmoinen heidän tapansa olla. He kysyvät enemmän

opettajalta asioita, kun suomalaistaustaiset. Suomalaistaustainen lapsi voi istua hiljaa vaikka koko päivän, he kun eivät taas kyllä pysy hiljaa (Participant 5)

"Kieli rajoittaa joihinkin oppilaisiin (...) tutustumista(...) että ne eleet ja ilmeet merkitsee niin paljon." (Participant 1)

Tämmöisten kanssa, joiden kanssa se kielimuuri on olemassa niin kyllä minä heidän kanssaan tietoisesti enemmän käytän ilmeitä ja tietoisesti yritän tuoda läheisyyttä ja lämpöä siihen vuorovaikutukseen (...) ja kyllä minusta tuntuu, että se suomalaisillekin on hyvä, että, ei kaikkien ole niin helppoa ymmärtää tunteita ja lukea tunteita ja tietää että onko nyt tehty oikein vai väärin vai onko nyt aijaijai. (...) ja se, niinku, tukee kaikkea ja on ehdottomasti hyödyllistä. Jos minä tuolla vain pönöttäisin edessä enkä millään tavalla elehtisi ja ilmehtisi niin voisi olla tosi vaikeaa. (Participant 4)

Mutta, jos suomalaiselle vanhemmalle rupeaisi, että "no mites on päivä mennyt?" niin hehän olisivat että "en minä tästä tullut tänne juttelemaan vaan minä tulin juttelemaan minun lapsesta."(...) Meidän kulttuuri on niinku semmoinen, että kaikki hoitaa omat asiansa ja että aika on tiukilla kun sitten taas jos Somalivanhemman kanssa juttelee niin heistä näkee ettei heillä ole kiire mihinkään että he jaksavat jutella siitä heidän lapsestaan. (Participant 1).

"Toki, täytyy muistaa et täältä (suomalaisesta perspektiivistä) katsoen jotkut asiat on itsestään selviä. (...) He on tottuneet ihan erilaiseen (systeemiin). (He kysyvät) vaikka että tuleeko täällä ikinä läksyä ja tuleehan täällä läksyä mutta voi olla et on ehtinyt tehdä sen tunnilla. (...) Onhan se turhauttavaa (kun ei ymmärretä) ja frustraatiosta syntyy agressio." (Participant 3)

"(On se turhauttavaa) kun itsestään selviä asioita pitää käydä tosi perusteellisesti (oppilaalle

ja vanhemmille) eikä sitten siltikään välttämättä tyttö tule kouluun, kun on uintia"

(Participant 6)

On sellaisia tilanteita että asioita käsitellään ehkä vähän laajemmin tai kauemman aikaa mutta

minä pyrin, että käsitellään asia niin hyvin, ettei väärinymmärryksiä tule. (...) ja sehän on osa

sitä luottamuksen rakentamista (…)minä olen niiden vanhempien tontilla ja minun täytyy

tehdä työni niin, että ne vanhemmat voivat luottaa minuun. (Participant 10)

Kun huoltajan kanssa keskustelet, niin on pakko ottaa selville mikä se on siellä heidän

maassaan ollut tämä lukio, peruskoulu ja yliopisto. Tällaisista asioita, joutuu keskustelemaan,

että minkälaista se koulunkäynti on siellä ja miten täällä toimitaan, koska niille tämä

suomalainen koulujärjestelmä on aivan voi olla ihan kauhea kysymysmerkki (Participant 5)

5.3.

Jos sinä, sillä lailla niinku, turvallisena ihmisenä otat heidät luoksesi ja opetat tosissasi ja olet

hyvin läsnä, niin kyllä kyllä, lapset ovat aika avoimia ja on, sillä lailla, helppo tulla toimeen,

kun näkee että toi (opettaja) tietyllä tapaa kunnioittaa ja kuuntelee minua. (Participant 7)

(On tärkeää, että heti alusta on) selkeä ja johdonmukainen. (...) Se että on se turva ja että on

ihan omana itsenään siinä. Sillä lailla oppilaat saa tulla luokse ja saa kysyä kysymyksiä. (...)

Jos on semmoinen, että se kieli vähä heikohkoa jollain oppilaalla, niin siihen tarvis vähä

rohkaista ja luoda semmoinen turvallinen ympäristö ja ilmapiiri, että se ei haittaa jos joku

käyttää vähä vääriä sanoja (...) koska tärkeintä on et se saa (kerrottua ilman, että aina korjataan). Tärkeintä on (tuntea, että) tulee ymmärretyksi

(Participant 8)

"(Yritän luoda) avoimen ilmapiirin, että voi tuoda esiin niitä kulttuurisia piirteitä ja niistä voidaan keskustella ja niistä voidaan kysyä." (Participant 8)

5.4.

"he ovat jo perehtyneet suomalaiseen kulttuuriin" (participant 5).

(Kun se tapahtui) muista et ajattelin, et hyvä et sen huomaa ja sitten voi jotenkin vaan hyväksyä että joo tämmöinenkin on ja sitten pääsee nopeammin yli. (...) se oli silloin minulle semmoinen ahaa elämys. En ollut ihan tietoinenkaan kuinka ne (aistimukset) kaikki vaikuttaa siihen millainen olo on (ja tuntuu) että kun menee johonkin (jossa) kaikki on samantyyppisiä niin on jotenkin luontevampaa olla että ei kiinnitä edes huomiota. (Totuttelu) se ei kestä kauan, että tietoinen muutama minuutti ja sen jälkeen ollaan samoissa maailmoissa kaikkien kanssa. (Participant 8).

(Yhden) lapsen vanhemmat odottaa tosi paljon tiukempaa otetta minulta opettajana ja (he kokevat) että minä en vaadi tarpeeksi ja siinä kohtaa oli kyllä tosi tiukka keskustelu tämän äidin kanssa siitä että miten eroaa nämä meidän koulutusjärjestelmät että täällä toimitaan näin ja täällä meillä ei itketetä lapsia koulussa vaan koitetaan ilon kautta oppia (Participant 9)

Niin, kyllä sen (kulttuurieron) huomaan hyvin vahvasti edelleenkin, viime vuonna vielä enemmän, niin kun olen nuori ja nainen niin (...)maahanmuuttajataustaisten poikien, se suhtautuminen, on tosi negatiivistakin välillä. Niiden on vaikea ymmärtää että nuori ja nainen

on heidän yläpuolellaan. (He sanovat) että en aio kuunnella tuota, että ethän sinä ole mitään. (...)Minusta se tuntuu ärsyttävältä. Olen ihmistyyppinä semmoinen että en kestä tommoista minkäänlaista. Että jos on hyvänen aika viisi vuotta opiskellut niin en todellakaan jaksa kuunnella mitään tommoista joltain kolmetoista neljätoistavuotiailta poitsuilta et minä osaan sinua paremmin, minusta tulee lääkäri. (...)Sitten tulee semmoinen (tunne), että jos tämä on lähtöisin sieltä perheestä, siitä kulttuurista, niin se myös ärsyttää, siihen tulee semmoinen pieni (tunne) et okei me ollaan Suomessa ja tehdään täällä niinku suomalaiset ja suomalainen tasa-arvo. (Participant 2)

"miesmäisempi niissä auktoriteettitilanteissa" (participant 6).

5.5

Minä kuuntelen ja toki paljon kerron niinku omista (kokemuksistani) ja eihän tämmöistä asiaa, kuten perhe tai tavat, niin eihän ne pysy sillä lailla koulusta poissa vaan kyllähän täällä on se koko elämisen kirjo tulee esille, välillä hirvittää, välillä naurattaa, ja kaiken täällä on sillä lailla kuullut. (Participant 7)

Meidän kahdenkeskisissä keskusteluissa (...) niin siellä minä kuulen ja kuuntelen että mitä he kertovat siitä omasta perheestä ja taustasta kun sehän vaikuttaa siihen minkälainen tulevaisuusorientaatio on. Niin käydään asioita läpi, ja voi olla riippuen mistä kulttuurista on, että voi olla hyvin patriarkaalinen kulttuuri niin se voi olla taakkana sille nuorelle, joka miettii ammatinvalintaa, jos se on jotenkin ristiriidassa sen taustan kanssa. (Participant 10)

"Ei niille (kulttuuriasioille) saa ,sillä lailla, sokea olla vaan sillä lailla vaaditaan herkkyyttä. Pitää olla innoissaan. jos (se jokin josta toinen kertoo on) toiselle se on maailman tärkein juttu."(Participant 7)

"(Täytyy)olla aidosti kiinnostunut siitä mitä se lapsi yrittää sanoa. (Participant 8)

Kyllä, niinku, mietin sitä omaa vuorovaikutusta, miten kohtaan erilaisia perheitä. (Participant 9)

Minä useasti mietin että puhunko minä tarpeeksi selkeästi että tulenko minä ymmärretyksi. Kun lapsilla on kauheasti kerrottavaa niin kyllä minä olen harjaantunut ymmärtämään mitä he kertoo. (...) Pyrin siihen että pystyisi keskustelemaan, ettei (kellekään) jäisi semmoinen olo ettei heitä nyt ymmärretä.(Participant 6)

Kyllähän opettajan pitäisi kohdella kaikkia samalla tavalla, silleen kaikkia lapsia, mutta, sitten tuota niin, kyllä jos jossakin on vaikka tosi tiukka auktoriteetti käsite ehkä semmoiselle ei sitten tarvitse olla tosi tiukka. (Participant 6)

Nyt kun on oppinut tässä pikkuhiljaa tutustumaan erilaisiin kulttuureihin ja erilaisiin kansallisuuksiin niin huomaan, että tietyn saman kulttuuritaustan omaavilla (lapsilla) on hyvin samanlaisia piirteitä tai niinku toimintamalleja. (...)ja olen oppinut ymmärtämää ehkä myös sitten että (kulttuuri) vaikuttaa siihen vuorovaikutukseen että toisten kanssa täytyy toimia vähä toisella tavalla. Täytyy tietää että tietyn ryhmän oppilaat niin heillä on tietynlainen kasvatus kotona niin he vaatii minulta opettajana sitten erilaista vuorovaikutusta. (Participant 9)

5.6.

Olisi ollut apua koska nyt on ihan kantapään kautta joutunut opettelemaan. Että kylmää

kyytiä sellaiselle luokanvalvojalle, joka tähän minun paikalle nyt istutettaisi.

 (Participant 5)

Yllättävän pitkälle pääsee sillä ihan perus vuorovaikutuksella ja sillä että on kiinnostunut. (...)

Ei hekään (,vanhemmat), tiedä suomalaisista kaikkea, että se on tosi hyvä oppimisen paikka

kaikilla. Saadaan yhdessä opetella silleen minä ajattelen, että on itselläkin semmoinen

oppijan ote siihen asiaan että voidaan yhdessä oppia niin se on kaikkien etu. (Participant 8).