

Teachers' Perceptions of the Adaptation of Immigrant Children within the Finnish Education
System

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>During the past few years Finnish schools have experienced the effects of increased immigration within their classrooms. It is important to examine how teachers and the education system affects the adaptation of immigrant children and what adaptation goals the education system holds for these children. Data was gathered by interviewing five comprehensive school teachers, and the transcripts of these interviews were analyzed using Qualitative Content Analysis.</p> <p>The data reveals that teachers' expectations regarding the adaptation of immigrant children in the education system cannot be connected to popular adaptation theories in a meaningful way. Statements made by interviewees seem to oppose assimilationist notions of cross-cultural adaptation theory, as well as the suggestion by additive acculturation theory that education systems expect immigrant children to assimilate to a new culture. The data suggests that teachers support integration and multiculturalism, which allows for a connection to be made to the acculturation strategies. The data also shows that interviewees hold quite essentialist views of culture, similar to most adaptation theories discussed in this study.</p> <p>The majority of the interviewees agreed that teachers play a great role in the adaptation process of immigrant children. Teachers found that although peers can play a big role in this process as well, it is the teachers' responsibility to ensure the school is a safe place for all students and to correct racist attitudes of peers.</p> <p>The data reveals multiple methods teachers could use to affect the adaptation process of immigrant children. Interviewees highlighted the importance of teacher training, language education for immigrant students, preparatory education, integration among peers, support, and the promotion of multiculturalism within the school.</p> <p>Based on the findings of this study, I suggest that the education system and multicultural training should steer away from providing an essentialist understanding of culture in order to better accommodate students of all backgrounds and avoid othering immigrant students.</p>	
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Kuluneiden vuosien aikana myös suomalaiset peruskoulut ovat saaneet huomata lisääntyneen maahanmuuton vaikutukset luokissaan. Onkin tärkeää tarkkailla miten opettajat sekä koulujärjestelmä vaikuttaa maahanmuuttajalasten sopeutumiseen, sekä mitä sopeutumistavoitteita koulujärjestelmällä saattaa olla näitä lapsia varten. Aineisto kerättiin haastattelemalla viittä peruskouluopettajaa ja analysoitiin käyttämällä Qualitative Content Analysis -menetelmää.</p> <p>Aineisto paljastaa, että opettajien odotuksia liittyen maahanmuuttajalasten sopeutumiseen ei voida yhdistää suosittuihin kulttuurisen sopeutumisteorioihin merkitsevällä tavalla. Haastateltavien lausunnot näyttävät vastustavan assimilaatiota, jota korostetaan Kimin (2017) teoriassa, kuten myös Gibsonin (1995) teorian käsitystä, että koulujärjestelmät odottavat maahanmuuttajalasten assimiloituvan uuteen kulttuuriin. Aineisto antaa ymmärtää, että opettajat tukevat integraatiota sekä monikulttuurisuutta, minkä vuoksi on mahdollista yhdistää aineiston tulokset Berryn (1997) teoriaan. Haastateltavat ilmaisivat myös essentialistisia käsityksiä kulttuurista, samoin kuin tässä tutkimuksessa käsitellyt sopeutumisteoriat.</p> <p>Valtaosa haastateltavista olivat sitä mieltä, että opettajien rooli maahanmuuttajalasten sopeutumisprosessissa on suuri. Haastateltavat huomauttivat, että vaikka ikätovereillakin voi olla suuri vaikutus tässä prosessissa, opettajien vastuulla on varmistaa, että koulu on turvallinen paikka kaikille oppilaille, sekä korjata ikätovereiden rasistisia asenteita.</p> <p>Aineisto paljastaa monia menetelmiä, joita opettajat voivat käyttää vaikuttaakseen maahanmuuttajalasten sopeutumisprosessiin. Haastateltavat korostivat opettajakoulutuksen, maahanmuuttajalasten kielenopetuksen, valmistavan opetuksen, integraatiotuntien, yleisen oppilaiden tukemisen sekä monikulttuurisuuden tukemisen tärkeyttä.</p> <p>Tämän tutkimuksen löydöksiä perusteella ehdotan, että monikulttuurista opetusta sekä koulujärjestelmää muutettaisiin niin, että pyritäisiin välttämään essentialistista käsitystä kulttuurista, jotta voitaisiin tarjota paremmat olosuhteet kaikille oppilaille, taustasta riippumatta.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

With increasing immigration to Finland and with the number of immigrants coming to Finland having grown a great deal during the past few years, Finnish comprehensive schools have become increasingly diverse. In 2015 Finland experienced a surge of asylum seekers, with 32 477 applications for international protection alone being submitted, and 22 870 first residence permit applications (Finnish Immigration Services, 2019). In that time, all in all 19 672 permits were for children, both asylum seekers and first residence permit applicants, between the ages of 0 – 13, and 6 297 for children between the ages 14 – 17 (Finnish Immigration Services, 2019). However, these numbers have dropped dramatically in the past years. In 2018, 28 610 first residence permit applications were submitted in Finland, but only 4 548 applications for international protection (Finnish Immigration Services, 2019). Out of those applying for permits, 18 551 were between the ages of 0 – 13, and 3 407 between the ages of 14 – 17 (Finnish Immigration Services, 2019).

Based on these numbers it can be assumed that there is a great deal of immigrant children and adolescents already in and just entering the education system in Finland. These children require help from the education system and their teachers in order to adjust both to their new community and the Finnish education system, not to mention to just learn the language of instruction. Thus, the growing number of immigrant students within the education system does give reason to examine further what goals the system may have regarding the adaptation of these students, the role the education system plays in this process, as well as the measures the system is taking to answer the needs of immigrant children.

In general, most adaptation theories focus on the experiences of migrating adults, with little theory focusing specifically on children. For example, out of the adaptation theories discussed in this study only one theory focuses specifically on the adaptation of children, while the rest do not even mention the adaptation of children. However, a great deal of research with

the experiences of immigrant children in mind has been done regarding immigrant students within the education system. Yet, much of this research is concerned specifically with the academic success of these students (e.g. Gibson, 1997; Good et al., 2010; NESSE, 2008; OECD, 2015; Ogbu, 1987; Ohinata & van Ours, 2013).

Although it is certainly important to study the issues that affect immigrant students' academic success, which in the long run can guarantee success in their lives and futures, it should not be the only focus of research. Schools act as an important gateway into the new society for immigrant children (OECD, 2015, p. 34), and thus how immigrant children fare within the education system, both academically and socially, can have a great impact on their adaptation and how they experience their new country. Therefore, the actions and effects of school on children's adaptation should be considered more extensively in research.

In addition to academic interest in the topic, I have personal interest in the cultural adaptation of immigrant children. Having lived abroad for two years as a child, I have experienced the strategies used by a highly assimilationist education system in the US in the early 2000s. Years later, during a short language practice period in a Finnish elementary school, I encountered a considerably different approach within the Finnish education system in the 2010s. As a result, I have become interested in the goals education systems have regarding the cultural adaptation outcomes of their immigrant students, as well as the role of both teachers and the education system in this process.

In this thesis I will be examining the perceptions of Finnish teachers regarding the adaptation process of immigrant students, and the role that teachers and the education system in Finland plays in this process. I will focus on possible expectations that teachers have regarding adaptation outcomes of their students of immigrant background, and how those expectations relate to adaptation theories popular within the field of intercultural communication studies. In addition, I will examine how teachers perceive their and the

education system's role in the adaptation process of students of immigrant background, as well as what methods of support teachers find particularly important in supporting the adaptation of these students. I begin this by first going over different adaptation theories (see section 2.1) and examining their features and how they describe the adaptation process. Following this, I discuss some of the issues that immigrant children face upon migration and adaptation, which may influence their adaptation process (see section 2.2). I also discuss some of the practices education systems have reported to commonly use in aiding immigrant children adapt to their new communities, societies and education systems, followed by a closer focus on how the Finnish education system deals with immigrant students and multicultural education (see section 2.3). To help analyze the data of this study, I use Qualitative Content Analysis and a coding frame designed to answer my research questions.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The theories and literature discussed in this chapter have helped guide the focus of this study and gain information about what is known about the issues that immigrant children face, their adaptation to a new environment, and how education systems have responded to the increase of immigrant children as students in schools. I begin the literature review by discussing how cultural adaptation has been discussed in research and what kind of theories are commonly used. Following this, I discuss the variety of issues immigrant children face upon migration, as well as what issues can affect their adaptation. Finally, I discuss how education systems around the world accommodate immigrant students, as well as what kind of recommendations have been made by non-governmental organizations as to how to better accommodate immigrant children within education systems. The different methods that have been adopted in Finland to accommodate immigrant students are also discussed.

2.1 Cultural Adaptation in Research

For many decades, research with an interest in cross-cultural and intercultural communication has studied what happens to individuals who have lived and grown in one cultural context when they migrate to another cultural context (Berry, 1997, p. 5). Cultural adaptation has been studied extensively since the 1930s in the United States, and recently cultural adaptation has been the focus of research in other countries as well (Kim, 2017, p. 3). With the increased attention, cultural adaptation as a field has benefited from extensive insights from researchers, but at the same time it is hindered by disconnectedness, as researchers use different terms, focus on various issues and look at the subject from different perspectives (Kim, 2017, p. 3).

Yet, despite the disconnectedness Kim (2017) brings attention to, many theories do follow the footsteps of those before them, and some terms and concepts live on in various theories. One such example is the work of Oberg (1960), who discusses culture shock in his

article. Oberg (1960) treats culture shock as an “occupational disease”, caused by the loss of familiar social cues, but which individuals can “recover” from (p. 142). Similar to those after him, Oberg (1960) claims that culture shock and the recovery from this “ailment” follows similar, universal steps, and the key to recovery is “communication with the new culture” (p. 142 – 145).

Here, already at the very beginning, it is reasonable to criticize this view. Cultures are concepts, not physical things or beings that can be interacted and communicated with. Dervin (2016), for one, has criticized such a view of culture as a physical being, stating that “one cannot meet a culture but people who (are made to) represent it” (p. 9). In addition, it needs to be considered that Oberg’s (1960) work originally focuses on North American missionaries migrating to unfamiliar countries, which is also why he describes culture shock as an “occupational disease”. The origins of this term alone give reason to criticize the applicability of “culture shock” as a concept in modern research, as it focuses on the examination of the experiences of a very specific group of individuals. Yet, the notion presented by Oberg (1960) continues to live on even in later works of researchers. Many researchers, e.g. Kim (2001) and Berry (1997), present similar issues in their more recent theories, and the term culture shock has lived on in cultural adaptation theories in many different forms (e.g. acculturative stress, psychological stress).

In this chapter I will introduce five theories of cultural adaptation. By doing so I hope to present issues and perspectives that the field has focused on in the past, and what the future of cultural adaptation research may hold.

2.1.1 Cross-Cultural Adaptation, Kim

The first adaptation theory which will be discussed here is Kim’s (2017) theory of cross-cultural adaptation. The theory has some serious problems and has been criticized for various issues, such as its determinist take on culture (see, for example, De la Garza & Ono, 2015).

Kim's (2017) theory assumes that cultures are "discrete, separate, independent, and unchanging" and that the members of an assumed culture must not differ from their representation of it dramatically (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 274). Kim's (2017) view of culture is thus highly limited, and she does not leave any room for diversity among individuals.

Kim (2001) defines cross-cultural adaptation as "the entirety of the dynamic process by which individuals who, through direct and indirect contact and communication with a new, changing, or changed environment, strive to establish (or reestablish) and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment" (p. 31). According to Kim's (2017) acculturation model, individuals adapt to a new "culture" through a stress-adaptation-growth dynamic, which is based on the assumption that people attempt to achieve and maintain internal stability even in difficult situations and environments (p. 1).

In the cross-cultural adaptation theory, at the center of the adaptation process are deculturation and acculturation, the unlearning of previous "cultural habits" and the learning of new ones from the new environment (Kim, 2017, p. 1). Kim (2017) claims that the cross-cultural adaptation process begins with psychological stress, also known as "culture shock", which passes over time as individuals achieve functional and psychological competence (p. 1).

Beside its blatant cultural determinism, Kim's (2001) take on the role of stress in the acculturation process can be seen as yet another problematic aspect in her explanation of cultural adaptation. The stress reaction highlighted in her theory is not unique only to the adaptation process, but common in all aspects of life. Stress in itself is not particular to moving from one country to another or coming into contact with an unfamiliar environment. Stress is a common reaction to any kind of change in one's life, and one can experience stress even when moving to a different city within their home country, starting a new job or experiencing new things.

However, in the cross-cultural adaptation theory stress is the basis for the adaptation-growth dynamic, which Kim (2017) describes as “a psychological movement in the forward and upward direction of increased chances of success in a changing or changed environment” (p. 5 – 6). This process is depicted as an upward spiral: individuals react to stressful experiences by “drawing back”, and this reaction helps an individual to make an adaptive change in themselves, and “leap forward” (Kim, 2017, p. 6). But, yet again, this dynamic ignores the fact that all individuals go through stressful times in their lives, and such a dynamic can take place even when individuals move to a different city within a country and must learn to cope in a new environment.

Kim’s (2017) theory assumes that migrants wish to assimilate and not remain so-called “cultural outsiders”, and that individuals experience psychological stress as they strive to change and match their new environment (p. 5). Kim (2017) also seems to assume that all immigrants inevitably take on their new societies as their “only home”, which in turn affects their acculturation (Kinefuchi, 2010, p. 232). Yet, this is not always the case: sometimes immigrants do not become so-called “cultural insiders” with ease, instead resisting or coming up with alternatives to assimilation (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 274). Kim’s (2017) theory treats those who resist assimilation as individuals who have failed in adapting to their new environment and does not consider any other options or strategies that might exist in adaptation. In doing so, Kim (2017) places herself on a pedestal from which she can criticize other people’s choices and behavior, which is quite patronizing and arrogant. It is not realistic to generalize the goals of all migrants in the way Kim (2017) does, and it is unjustifiable to claim that all those who do not attempt to assimilate in their new environment have failed somehow. Placing such responsibility and even blame on the shoulders of individuals who may be struggling in a new environment or who do not wish to abandon their existing values or behaviors is irresponsible and even cruel.

Just as most of the theories that are going to be introduced here, Kim (2017) believes that the migration and adaptation process can be explained with a universal theory and that there exists a “right kind of immigrant” who migrates willingly, wishes to conform, adapts and pursues so-called “cultural fitness” (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 274). Yet, reality is somewhat different. It is individuals who enter migration and adaptation processes, and it is perhaps unfair to assume that there is only one universal path to adaptation and only one type of individual who can “succeed” in the adaptation process. Due to this it can be argued that Kim’s (2017) cross-cultural adaptation theory somewhat fails to represent adaptation processes in a truly realistic way. Instead, it would be perhaps be more realistic and compassionate to follow a route to adaptation similar to that of De la Garza and Ono (2015), and consider migration experiences as unique, complex and dynamic.

Additionally, Kim (2017) assumes that the adaptation process is a one-way street, so to say, in which the individual is changed by the society, but the society itself never changes (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 274). It is assumed that immigrants need to change themselves and sacrifice their identities, which will allow them to fit into the new society, while any attempt to resist the societal pressure to change or to change the society is seen as obstacle in the adaptation process (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 274). Again, assuming that migrating individuals are the only ones who change when migrating to a new environment seems slightly unrealistic. It seems highly unlikely that once faced with new customs, values and norms, the new country does not change in any way to accommodate its new residents.

Finally, Kim (2017) indeed tends to place the responsibility for “successful” adaptation on the shoulder of the immigrants, assuming immigrants alone must put in the effort to change and fit in in the new society. By doing this Kim (2017) fails to take into account “multiplicity, contradictions, and power dynamics” which are present in the new society and which immigrants must face (Kinefuchi, 2010, p. 232). The theory also fails to consider that even

when immigrants may wish to adjust to their new environment and society, the surrounding society may in fact be preventing this from happening. In the new society immigrants may be faced with “prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion”, and may also lack the chance to communicate regularly with members of the new society, e.g. due to segregation into separate neighborhoods (Kristjánsdóttir & Deturk, 2013 p. 196 - 197). Thus, it is unfair to place the responsibility for “successful” adaptation and the blame for “failed” adaptation on the shoulders of individuals, when the surrounding society may in fact be preventing acculturation.

2.1.2 Acculturation strategies, Berry

Kim (2001) and Berry (2005) both highlight that in order to adapt in a new society, an individual should make changes in themselves. But unlike Kim (2001), who offers only one path or strategy for migrating individuals to acculturate, Berry (2005) identifies four possible acculturation strategies for individuals to follow: *integration*, *assimilation*, *separation*, and *marginalization* (p. 705)

Similar to Kim (2001), Berry (2005) presents a universal and determinist theory of cultural adaptation. Contrary to these theories, De la Garza and Ono (2015) have argued that cultural adaptation is an individual experience which varies to a large extent, and that it is not possible to create a truly universal theory of adaptation based on such varying experiences (p. 270). Berry’s (1997) theory also fails in that it restricts the cultural universe into the interaction between merely two cultures (Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001, p. 43). Thus, he ignores that within the social environment there are constantly people with various beliefs, values and norms in contact with each other.

Berry (2005) defines acculturation as “the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members” (p. 698). This process involves changes on group and individual levels, “with changes in social structures, institutions, and cultural practices” taking place on the group

level, and changes in behavioral repertoire on the individual level (Berry, 2005, p. 699). Berry (2005) claims that these adaptations can happen easily and peacefully, but “culture conflict” and acculturative stress may also take place during such intercultural interaction (Berry, 2005, p. 700).

Berry (1997) argues that despite the varying reasons and situations that lead to acculturation, the basic process of adaptation is similar to all groups (p. 9). This already somewhat simplifies the variety of human experience in migration, which De la Garza and Ono (2015) advocate in their theory. According to Berry (1997) there are great differences in how people pursue acculturation, yet all the strategies people aim to use are made up of two factors: attitudes, or one’s acculturation preference, and behaviors (p. 704). He claims that when these preferences and behaviors are considered, a consistent pattern or strategy can be identified, which Berry (2005) terms acculturation strategies (p. 704). Four acculturation strategies are defined, which Berry (2005) terms differently depending on whether the dominant or non-dominant group is the focus.

From the point of view of the non-dominant or minority group, Berry (2005) terms four acculturation strategies: *integration*, *assimilation*, *separation*, and *marginalization* (p. 705). According to Berry (2005), when using the *assimilation* strategy, individuals do not want or attempt to preserve their so-called previous “cultural identity”, opting instead to shed this in favor of being absorbed into the “majority culture” and society of the new country (p. 705). Those applying the *integration* strategy, on the other hand, are said to wish to both preserve their so-called original “cultural identity”, as well as interact with other groups and be a part of the larger society in the new country (Berry, 2005, p. 705).

Opposite to assimilation, those that apply the *separation* strategy are said to prefer to retain their so-called “heritage culture” and avoid interacting with other groups (Berry, 2005, p. 705) Lastly, Berry claims (2005) that the *marginalization* strategy is applied when there is

not much interest or opportunity to maintain one's so-called "heritage culture" or interacting with others (p. 705).

Despite Berry (2005) presenting far more options for adaptations than e.g. Kim (2001), his strategies do present some issues. For one, Rudmin and Ahmahzadeh (2001) argue that when it comes to Berry's (1997) acculturation strategies, integration is not necessarily possible, and that "cultural practices" are not always a question of personal preference (Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001, p. 42). For example, Rudmin and Ahmadzadeh, (2001) present that as laws, values and norms, for example, vary across societies, it is not always possible for individuals to apply an integration strategy in their adaptation to match personal values and local laws (p. 43). However, this criticism itself can be criticized because of its determinism: it assumes, just as Berry (1997), that individuals must be the results of the "cultures" and environments they are brought up in, and must hold the same values, norms and beliefs as all the individuals with the same background. Although the criticism can indeed be considered, it is perhaps somewhat grasping at straws, so to say. Berry (1997) does not, after all, demand that all "cultural practices" be negotiated in integration.

Marginalization as a strategy, on the other hand, is criticized for implying that people could "marginalize" themselves. It is unlikely that individuals be able to do so, as marginalization is not a preference or choice, so to say, but inconsistency between reality and the inclination of an individual (Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001, p. 43). Thus, individuals can only be marginalized from the point of view of the dominant group, not by themselves (Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001, p. 43).

Although Berry's (2005) theory has its issues and it gives a deterministic image of culture, it should be given at least some praise for taking into account that the option to acculturate is not always freely chosen. Berry (2005) terms the four acculturation strategies from the point of view of the dominant cultural group as follows: the *melting pot*, when

assimilation is required by the majority group, *segregation*, when separation is forced on to the minority group, *exclusion*, when marginalization is forced by the majority group, and finally, *multiculturalism* when diversity and an integrative approach are embraced by the new society (p. 706).

Just as both Oberg (1960) and Kim (2001), Berry (2005) continues to apply a version of culture shock in his theory. When acculturating individuals are facing large amounts of problematic yet controllable “cultural conflict”, Berry (2005) conceptualizes acculturative stress, which is a “stress reaction in response to life events that are rooted in the experience of acculturation” (p. 708). According to Berry (2005), in this situation individuals understand that their problems are caused by intercultural contact and understand, that these problems cannot be resolved with ease by adjusting or assimilating (p. 708). However, just as Kim’s (2005) conception of stress, it needs to be pointed out that stress is not exclusively related to acculturation, and such a stress reaction is normal in any environmental change, not only one specifically related to acculturation.

Although Berry (2005) offers more options for individuals in terms of acculturation strategies than Kim (2001), his theory is still limited. Similar to Kim (2001), Berry (2005) attempts to create a universal theory of cultural adaptation, assuming that migration experiences are so similar that this can be accomplished, an assumption which De la Garza and Ono (2015) have criticized cultural adaptation theories of (2015, p. 270). Finally, it has been argued that Berry’s (1997) framework is difficult to be operationalized, and it is criticized for not being explanatory enough, and, finally, not useful enough (Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001, p. 42).

2.1.3 Cultural Fusion, Croucher & Kramer

Croucher and Kramer (2017) voice their displeasure over former adaptation theories, which treat the adaptation process as a one-way process and do not take into account the effect

that immigrants have on the so-called “new culture” in their new countries. With the intent to fix this deficiency in the field, the authors Croucher and Kramer (2017) build on the approaches and works of previous cultural adaptation researchers to propose a theoretical framework of cultural fusion theory (p. 98).

Initially cultural fusion theory does seem promising, yet, despite their intents, I find that Croucher and Kramer (2017) fail to present anything new with their theory. The authors base their approach on previous works by other researchers, such as De la Garza and Ono (2015), even using excerpts from Kim’s (2001) work in crucial parts of the theory, which the cultural fusion theory initially seems to set out to criticize and replace. Perhaps the cultural fusion theory as it is outlined by Croucher and Kramer (2017) is not yet fully formed, but thus far it seems that the authors are picking parts they find useful from other more complete theories, without introducing anything new themselves. At the current stage of the cultural fusion theory, I find that it is more useful to simply introduce oneself to the works of De la Garza and Ono (2015) and Kim (2001). In addition, as is important from the point of view of this thesis, cultural fusion theory, just as all the other theories discussed so far, fails to take migrant children into account.

Croucher and Kramer (2017) define cultural fusion as follows:

“Cultural fusion is the process through which newcomers to a culture adopt behaviors/traits of the dominant culture and maintain elements of their minority identity to function in the dominant culture. Moreover, during this process the dominant culture is also transformed as a result of the introduction of the newcomers’ cultures.” (p. 98)

Cultural fusion theory assumes that migrating individuals have been enculturated into a so-called “cultural environment” in childhood, and by moving to a new environment they initiate adaptation in themselves (Croucher & Kramer, 2017, p. 99). Thus, despite highlighting that cultural fusion theory differs in the extent to which newcomers are expected to change or

adapt (Croucher & Kramer, 2017, p. 99), the theory follows a traditional understanding of culture, presenting a determinist and essentialist view of it.

Both cultural fusion and cross-cultural adaptation theory claim that humans are driven to adapt to changes and at the same time they have a desire to maintain their individuality and existing identity (Croucher & Kramer, 2017, p. 100). Additionally, just as Kim (2001), cultural fusion theory highlights the importance of communication in the adaptive process. However, while some researchers (e.g. Kim, 2001) claim that it is harmful for individuals to communicate with their “cultural groups” beyond the initial adaptation period, cultural fusion theory finds that this actually helps individuals in their adaptation by allowing them to maintain their so-called “cultural identity” and operate in the new society (Croucher & Kramer, 2017, p. 100). This point is quite similar to the one De la Garza and Ono (2015) make, as they deny the “dangers” of what they term “ethnic enclaves” which Kim (2001) criticize in her adaptation theory.

According to cultural fusion theory, the adapting individual is constantly changing in their new environment, but contrary to most other adaptation theories, the environment and “new culture” is constantly changing as well (Croucher & Kramer, 2017, p. 101). Croucher and Kramer (2017) explain that it is impossible for the so-called “host culture” to remain unchanged when different cultural groups are interacting within it and new cultural beliefs, norms etc. are introduced (p. 101). However, presenting cultural change in this way assumes in somewhat of a determinist fashion, that without the influence of “outsiders” or “different cultures”, social environments would never change. Yet, even without migration and immigrants presenting new beliefs, norms and values, social environments change throughout history. “Newcomers”, then, are not the only forces of change in societies, despite what adaptation theories might suggest.

Although Croucher and Kramer (2017) present cultural fusion as an alternative to cross-cultural adaptation theory, they base many of their assumptions, axioms and notable features of their theory on Kim's (2001) theory, which they initially seem to set out to challenge. The theory in itself does not seem to bring much new into the field either, as the basic idea seems to be based on previous work by De la Garza and Ono (2015). Similar to the previous theories, cultural fusion seems to have a deterministic view of culture as well: individuals enter a society which has a "majority culture", and in interaction with it, cultural fusion takes place. Finally, just as all of the theories presented so far, cultural fusion theory leaves out a large part of the migrating population: children.

All in all, for now cultural fusion theory seems like a skeleton of a theory which does not have much flesh on it. Much has been taken from earlier research and theories, and the theory has yet to take on a personality of its own, so to say, and the theory might require a lot of work if it is to present something new to the field.

2.1.4 Differential Adaptation Theory, De la Garza & Ono

The final cultural adaptation theory presented here is the differential adaptation theory presented by De la Garza and Ono (2015). De la Garza and Ono (2015) criticize past cultural adaptation theories for a number of things and present the theory of differential adaptation as a better alternative. The theory presents that migrants adapt in many different ways, which do not require for the individual to give in to pressure from the new culture to assimilate, and that migrants themselves may change the society that they enter (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 269). "Differential" here means that the ways that immigrants adapt vary depending how agency, power and discourse organize their adaptation experience (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 275).

De la Garza and Ono (2015) disagree with the assumption of most adaptation and assimilation theories that the immigration experiences of migrants are alike enough that it is possible to create universal, generalized models of adaptation (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p.

270). They find that adaptation is complex and dynamic, and researchers need to look at the individual contexts that define what relationships individual immigrants have to “culture” (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 270). The authors also point out that each immigrant migrates for different reasons and each has different goals, and thus “success” in adaptation needs to be measured using different criteria for each immigrant (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 270).

De la Garza and Ono (2015) find that cross-cultural adaptation theory, for example, has limitations, and that their differential adaptation theory manages to present a fuller understanding of the adaptation process. The differential adaptation theory takes into account the “interplay of power, agency, and diversity of experience”, an interaction which, according to De la Garza and Ono (2015), can facilitate as well as inhibit the opportunities immigrants have to adapt to a new society (p. 275).

Indeed, when compared to Kim (2001), differential adaptation theory does have a more extensive view of the issues that affect adaptation. Kim (2001) claims that individuals must assimilate and places all the responsibility of this on their shoulders, without taking into account that other individuals may have more chance of accomplishing this (e.g. due to a ‘more acceptable’ ethnicity). Kim (2001) also tends to generalize the adaptation process without taking into account individual factors that can affect adaptation, while De la Garza and Ono (2015) make a point of emphasizing the diversity of migration experiences. However, De la Garza and Ono (2015) do not necessarily present any model of the process of adaptation in itself, but instead discuss the different issues that are at play in the adaptation process. Although interesting and refreshing in comparison to the previous theories presented, it is perhaps misleading to say they present an understanding of the adaptation process.

De la Garza and Ono (2015) argue that “migration should be thought of as complex and diverse, not universally consistent across time, culture, and geography”, and that it should not be expected or speculated that in adaptation only the migrating individual changes (p. 275).

The advantage of differential adaptation theory is that it considers how immigrants can resist pressure to adapt or assimilate, make changes in their new culture, and how so-called “native hostilities” and “native discomfort” can affect the adaptation process (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 275 – 276). Differential adaptation theory acknowledges that individuals create new so-called “cultural identities” in their new society by affirming their own identities, by attempting to alter the “cultural values and beliefs of their new society”, or by conveying their relationship to their original society (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 276).

The theory of differential adaptation recognizes the difference between the pressure applied by the surrounding society to assimilate and immigrants’ own methods and processes of adaptation by highlighting the role of the subject: De la Garza and Ono (2015) argue that “people do not assimilate”, as assimilation is pressure from “a State” to conform (p. 276). Yet, although the new society applies power and discourse to “normativize” immigrants, immigrants themselves negotiate how and how much they adapt to the new culture: they choose if, when, and to what extent they either downplay or alter depiction of “cultural” difference, which allows them to “maintain personal integrity”, associate with political and “cultural” groups, and defy authority (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 276 – 277).

Unlike e.g. cross-cultural adaptation theory, differential adaptation theory also validates so-called “ethnic enclaves” (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 277). Differential adaptation theory recognizes that such spaces allow new and old migrants to live in relative peace from intolerance within the new society, while accepting minimal assimilation pressures (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 277). Once again, this shows that differential adaptation theory has a somewhat more humane approach to adaptation than cross-cultural adaptation theory. Instead of expecting individuals to avoid those with a similar background and seeing so-called “ethnic enclaves” as detrimental, such networks are seen to be supportive and helpful.

Still, immigrants may not always wish or mean to change themselves consciously and may resist subtle pressure from the society to conform (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 279). Differential adaptation theory points out that adapting to a new society can even be harmful for immigrants in some situation, e.g. if the new society requires for the immigrant to embrace racism (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 281). If we were to follow Kim's (2001) theory, embracing racism would be necessary for assimilation, or else individuals would be deemed to have failed in adaptation. Previous adaptation theories do seem to have ignored this possible negative outcome of cultural adaptation altogether.

It is also pointed out that societies have the power to limit immigrants' adaptation or being accepted in the new society. This is achieved through e.g. racist discourse, actions and institutions which prevent immigrants from being accepted, and denying access to "elite institutions" which would allow political participation (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 281). In addition, while e.g. Kim (2001) implicitly blames migrants for not assimilating and adjusting, De la Garza and Ono (2015) point out that in a globalized world racists and nativists are the ones who have not adjusted successfully to a changing society (p. 282). Kim's (2001) stance may even feed racism and nativity by placing cultures on a pedestal, stating that a society's so-called "host culture" is, in a way, superior.

Unlike most previous adaptation theories, differential adaptation theory does not attempt to be a universal theory, and instead argues that "recognizing the fluidity of identity and culture" is more productive (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 278). According to De la Garza and Ono (2015), the way individuals understand and deal with the various challenges of migration depend on various differences between individuals, and these differences result in different migration and adaptation experiences (p. 278). In addition, a strength that differential adaptation theory has compared to the previous theories presented is that it recognizes that immigrants and "cultures" are constantly changing, and that adaptation is not a one-way

process, with immigrants changing and challenging existing norms in the new society (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 277).

Although a refreshing stance, differential adaptation theory may also be hard to utilize in research, as it requires researchers to look only at individual experiences and each detail that is involved with it. Although the theories presented before can be criticized for essentializing and over-simplifying culture and the migration experience, they do try to present some explanation as to how the adaptation process takes place. In addition, although the theory does present a seemingly drastically different approach to the process of cultural adaptation, it does tend to essentialize culture in the same way as the other adaptation theories discussed above.

2.1.5 Additive Acculturation, Gibson

So far four different theories of cultural adaptation have been discussed, all approaching the topic in more or less different ways: Kim (2001), Berry (1997), Croucher and Kramer (2017) and De la Garza and Ono (2015). Kim's (2001) stress-adaptation-growth dynamic argues that individuals must assimilate to their new society and shed their past cultural identity, treating any other outcome as a failure on the migrant's part. Berry (1997) presents his acculturation strategies as a universal model of cultural adaptation, also supposing that in each society a so-called "majority culture" exists which individuals can adapt to. Building on previous approaches, Croucher and Kramer (2017) present cultural fusion theory as an alternative which allows that individuals do not need to assimilate into their new society and takes into account the changes that migrants make in the society. De la Garza and Ono (2015) criticize attempts to create universal adaptation, arguing that migration experiences are far too diverse to accomplish this. Instead, they advocate that adaptation experiences be considered unique.

However, an important aspect of cultural adaptation not taken into consideration in the earlier mentioned theories is the adaptation of immigrant children and children of immigrants.

In her work, Gibson (1995) focuses specifically on this topic. Gibson's (1995) work fills an important gap in cultural adaptation research and is relevant to this thesis specifically. In this thesis I wish to find out how teachers perceive their role in supporting immigrant students' adaptation into the new society and what adaptation goals they may have in mind when doing so, and out of the theories discussed, this theory is the only one that considers both the adaptive goals of both children and educators.

In the 1980s Gibson (1995) studied Punjabi Sikh immigrant parents, who had children attending high school in the US. During her research Gibson (1995) identified different preferred acculturation strategies among immigrant parents, children of immigrants, and schools. Gibson (1995) identified three strategies altogether: *accommodation and acculturation without assimilation*, *additive acculturation* and *subtractive acculturation* (p. 10).

According to Gibson (1995), immigrant parents prefer *accommodation and acculturation without assimilation* (p. 10). It is stated that immigrant parents following this strategy wish for their children to gain the sufficient academic and social skills required to succeed in the new society, but not at the expense of their so-called "original cultural identity" (Gibson, 1995, p. 10). To discourage children from straying too far from their heritage, or what is perceived to be their heritage, parents are said to sometimes establish penalties for their children (Gibson, 1995, p. 10).

Children of immigrants, on the other hand, Gibson (1995) claims to prefer to employ *additive acculturation* (p. 10). Gibson (1995) finds that instead of viewing learning and acquiring new skills, behavioral repertoire and knowledge as rejecting their so-called existing "cultural heritage", children view this as a chance to incorporate new tools and features into their repertoire (Gibson, 1995, p. 10).

Finally, Gibson (1995) claims that schools employ, or at least have employed in the past, *subtractive acculturation* (p. 10). According to this, schools expect immigrant children to replace their customs, norms and traits with those present in the new society (Gibson, 1995, p. 10). As per this strategy schools do not see the traits of the child's so-called "heritage culture" as something to be appreciated or honed, and even their mother tongue is treated as a "temporary tool" to help the children transition to a fully English curriculum (Gibson, 1995, p. 10).

According to Gibson (1995), children who experience pressure from the school to discard their so-called "heritage culture" can have a troubling relationship with both school authorities as well as their classmates (p. 10). In such a troubling situation, they can choose to either conform to the pressure to assimilate or resist this pressure. Yet, conforming is said to possibly alienate the child from their family and peer group, while resistance may lead to contradictory feelings about school or conflict with teachers and school authorities (Gibson, 1995, p. 10).

Unlike other adaptation theories discussed so far, Gibson's (1995) theory focuses specifically on the adaptation of school-aged children and adolescents, which fits the frame of this thesis. Yet, it does seem that at least Gibson's (1995) original work has become outdated, and no longer necessarily holds true within current education systems. Upon reading literature related to the steps taken by the education system both in Europe and worldwide to accommodate immigrant students, it seems that subtractive acculturation as Gibson (1995) theorizes it is no longer being supported by or applied among educators (see OECD, 2015; Eurydice, 2004).

If we are to follow Gibson's (1995) theory for this example, the modern education systems in various countries seem to have chosen to apply additive acculturation instead of subtractive acculturation. For example, according to the global report by OECD (2015), many

countries aim to support immigrant students' integration into the new society, as opposed to assimilation, which Gibson's (1995) subtractive acculturation resembles. The report also shows that most countries aim to appreciate "cultural diversity" and the so-called "cultural heritage" of their immigrant students. However, to my knowledge there is no current research which studies this phenomenon.

At first glance the notion of "embracing diversity" or additive acculturation within the education system may sound positive, but this approach is not without issue. Whereas in the past education systems have treated "otherness" as a flaw that may pose a risk for students, more recently education systems have taken a different approach, where students' cultural background is taken into account in a multitude of ways, and even advertised (Breidenbach & Nyíri, 2009, p. 164 – 165). Diversity is emphasized, and education systems expect teachers to do so as well, e.g. through presentations (Breidenbach & Nyíri, 2009, p. 164 – 165). By doing so education systems may be essentially emphasizing the differences between their students instead of promoting diversity in their societies. Although such measures may stem from a well-meaning place, emphasizing difference may in fact lead to immigrant students being othered. In addition, attempts to promote multiculturalism in school may in fact be based on an essentialist understanding of culture, leading to possible misrepresentations and generalizations.

In addition, it needs to be considered that although the official stance of education systems nowadays may support additive acculturation, in practice local teachers and schools may have differing opinions or stances on the preferred acculturation method. Even though national policy may promote additive acculturation or integration, individual teachers who have a bigger influence on immigrant students' adaptation experiences might support subtractive acculturation or assimilation. In this thesis I am interested to find out what teachers themselves perceive to be doing to support the adaptation of immigrant students, and thus it

would be interesting to see if they can be seen to maybe follow one of the strategies introduced here.

In this thesis, my intention is to find out if the Finnish education system has a specific conscious or unconscious stance regarding the cultural adaptation of immigrant students. It would be interesting to identify if the educational system in Finland follows the principles of a specific adaptation theory described above. Whether any of the above theories actually describe reality in a truly realistic way is debatable, as has been discussed, but they can still give some idea of how institutions and individuals approach cultural adaptation.

2.2 Children as Immigrants

Immigrant children have only recently become a topic of interest among researchers, even though immigrant children and youth have been a rapidly growing portion of populations in western countries for some time (Chuang & Moreno, 2011, p.11). Hicks et al. (1993) note that migration is a huge change for children and their families, and due to this immigrant children encounter unique stresses distinct from other children (as cited by Este & Van Ngo, 2011, p. 28). In this chapter, I discuss some of the issues that can cause immigrant children stress in their new countries as a result of migration, as well as issues that can affect their adaptation process.

Immigrant children, just as adults, come from various migration backgrounds. They come from many different countries, communities of different sizes, some arrive voluntarily and some involuntarily, and some may have experienced severe violence before their migration (Chuang & Moreno, 2011, p. 13). Many involuntary migrants may have experienced trauma before their migration, lived in difficult conditions before arriving in their new country, experienced violence, or been separated from their family members, which for children can be very overwhelming (Kurtz-Costes & Pungello, 2000, p. 123 – 124). All of these various experiences influence immigrant children's family lives as well as their adaptation to the new

society (Chuang & Moreno, 2011, p. 13). This is an issue that most adaptation theories (e.g. Kim, 2001) do not take into account, but which De la Garza and Ono (2015) emphasize. Due to the variety of experiences children may have gone through before and during migration, no migration experience is the same. Each migrant child is an individual with an individual migration experience, and they will face different issues depending on their migration background.

However important the distinction between voluntary and involuntary migrants, it can be argued that children cannot truly be “voluntary” migrants, as they rarely have a say in the matter of migration. Majority of the time parents are the ones who make the choice of moving their family from one location to another, and children must go where their parents decide to take them, sometimes more willingly and sometimes less so. Yet, this detail does not change the fact that e.g. refugee children, who have had to flee their countries of origin, may have experienced violence and trauma that children of voluntary migrants have not, and this can have a drastic effect on their adjustment into the new society. Thus, the distinction between voluntary and involuntary migrant should not be dismissed.

Research has found that various things can affect the acculturation process of immigrant children. These include for example: children’s age at migration; language skills; gender; children’s skills, attitudes, and personality traits; contact with the new society; parents’ attitudes and life-style; pre-migration experiences; disparity between the original and new societies; and the attitudes the new society has towards immigrant groups and cultural pluralism (Kurtz-Costes and Pungello, 2000, pp. 121 – 124). In addition, immigrant children can feel stress in the new country due to language issues, separation from previous social networks, feeling different than the majority peers in the new country, readjusting to the changes in how the family functions, and confusion surrounding norms in the new country (Kaman Lee & Chen, 2000, p. 766 – 767). Those children who have experienced trauma and violence in the

country of origin, in refugee camps or during migration can also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, and experience depression and anxiety (Este & Van Ngo, 2011, p. 36). As there is such a wide variety of issues identified by previous research, only a few points will be discussed here

To start off, immigrant children's adjustment to the new society may be affected by how similar or different the new society and their society of origin are (Kurtz-Costes & Pungello, 2000, p. 124). If things such as life-style and customs are similar to each other, researchers say adaptation to the new culture may be easier, and if the opposite applies, adaptation may become harder (Kurtz-Costes & Pungello, 2000, p. 124). A tremendous change in the surroundings children find themselves in may also have a great effect on migrating children, e.g. when moving from a rural area to an "urban center" (Este & Van Ngo, 2011, p. 44). In such a situation a great disparity between children's former surroundings and pace of life will certainly occur, and thus forcing one to adapt both to a new society and a drastically different living environment. Yet, a drastic change in surroundings can have a great effect even on children moving from rural areas to urban centers within a country. This then is not necessarily an issue specific to immigrant children, but an issue that any child may be faced with when faced with migration even within a country.

Migration can be a big and stressful change for the entire family moving from one country to another, and among the many stressors included in the process, cultural adaptation in itself can cause a great deal of conflict within migrant families. For example, the stress parents experience regarding the migration and settlement process in itself has a great impact on the children of the family (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003, p. 6). In addition, when parents need to work longer hours with less pay, they tend to have less time to become involved in family activities, which sometimes leads to their children needing to assume more responsibility in the home, e.g. staying alone at home, taking care of siblings, cooking, and

translating and interpreting for parents (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003, p. 6). Depending on the history and background of the family before migration, such arrangements can be a great change in the lives of children, who need to suddenly assume some of the roles of adults. At the same time, issues experienced at home, e.g. not knowing the local language, unemployment, social isolation, illiteracy, poverty and discrimination, can affect the health and happiness of immigrant children (Este & Van Ngo, 2011, p. 40).

The time it takes for family members to adjust to the new society can also cause stress in the family: it has been noted that upon migration and attempting to adapt to a new culture, children tend to be more likely to acculturate faster than their parents (Suárez-Orozco & Chuang, 2011, p. 8). This can lead to problems within the family, for example communication issues, absence of support and conflicts between generations, which can lead to children experiencing stress, insecurity and loneliness (Kaman Lee & Chen, 2000, p. 769). In such a conflict situation, immigrant youth in particular can feel that they are being pulled in opposite directions by “irreconcilable values or cultures” and a wish to adapt to the new country (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003, p. 5). As discussed in the earlier chapter, Gibson (1995), for example, has also identified such issues in her research, and describes such issues as families having differing adaptation strategies (acculturation without assimilation and additive acculturation).

Consistency between the adaptation process of parents and their children, on the other hand, is connected to “feelings of belonging and family support” (Kaman Lee & Chen, 2000, p. 770). In addition, the adaptation of immigrant children’s parents has an effect on the adaptation of the children, with parents who are more adapted having more knowledge of the features of the new society, and can thus help facilitate their children’s adaptation (Kaman Lee & Chen, 2000, p. 768). Immigrant children living in such circumstances could be assumed to be in general happier, as they do not have to struggle with similar issues as those who must

find some way to reconcile both their desire to adapt to the new society and hang on to cultural values which may be at odds with those of the surrounding society.

In many ways, immigrant children have more opportunities than their parents to be in touch with members of the new society. Schools, for example, can be an important gateway for immigrant children to enter the new society. Face-to-face interaction with members of the new society is vitally important, as this way immigrants gain knowledge of the local language, worldviews, norms and rules of social conduct (Kaman Lee, Chen 2000, pp. 765 – 766), and in schools immigrant children will be able to be in contact with members of the society frequently (Kurtz-Costes and Pungello, 2000, p. 123). Similarly, various adaptation theories emphasize the importance of communicating with members of the new society and gaining communicative competence within the new surroundings (e.g. Kim, 2001; Berry, 1997; Croucher & Kramer, 2017). Being able to communicate with peers in school and make friends might even help children feel at home in the society and help them adjust.

Additionally, children who attend school in the new society have more contact with members of the surrounding society than parents who stay at home, and because of this immigrant children can actually become a bridge for parents into the new society (Kurtz-Costes & Pungello, 2000, p. 123). Schools in the new society can thus facilitate the adaptation of entire families and ensure that individuals do not find themselves to be outsiders.

However, even though schools are a great way for students to learn about their new society, schools can be stressful places for immigrant children. Nowadays most countries strive to make their education systems diverse and inclusive (see OECD, 2015), but immigrant children may still experience racial discrimination on accord of both teachers and students within the education system (Este & Van Ngo, 2011, p. 38). As De la Garza and Ono (2015) emphasize in their theory, the new society may in fact prevent newcomers from adapting to the new culture. Despite steps taken on a governmental level to ensure diversity and tolerance

within the education system, individual teachers can hold values that differ from official values and have a negative effect on immigrant students. In addition, it cannot be ruled out that other students may also present discriminatory tendencies. Thus, it is important that teachers be provided training in anti-racist education (Este & Van Ngo, 2011, p. 38), and that the education system facilitate multicultural education and diversity within schools and education.

In addition to possible prejudice and racism, immigrant children may experience stress when beginning school in the new country, as they are expected to understand the routines, rights, responsibilities and customs within the school environment (Este & Van Ngo, 2011, p. 37). Although all students need to learn the norms that exist in the education system once beginning school, this situation could be even more stressful for immigrant students who may not yet know the language of instruction or the customs and norms of the social environment in the new country.

Students may also find themselves somewhat lost if age-appropriate classroom placement is practiced, as some immigrant students may have an irregular education history or limited literacy skills, for which they require extensive support (Este & Van Ngo, 2011, p. 38). However, Este & Van Ngo (2011) state that students who are placed in classrooms of students who are much younger than themselves but of similar skill-level, may experience “socio-psychological difficulties” (p. 38). Here the difficulty lies in determining a middle-ground: is it best to focus on the academic success of students, or the socio-psychological development of immigrant children? To solve this issue, countries have adopted various methods to address this, varying from preparatory education to other choices (see OECD, 2015 and Eurydice, 2004).

It has been noted that age has an effect on the adjustment of immigrant children in the new society. Within education, immigrant children who have arrived in the new country at a younger age may have less difficulty adjusting than older adolescents, as it is claimed that they

have more time to adapt to the local education system and the values of the society (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003, p. 6). Initial adjustment to the new society in general can be difficult for young children, but on average they have been said to adapt more easily and more “completely” to their new environment than teenagers and adults (Kurtz-Costes & Pungello, 2000, p. 121). Kurtz-Costes and Pungello (2000) suggest that this might be due to children having had less experience with their so-called “heritage culture” than older immigrants, and thus so-called “culturally” related values, beliefs and customs of this are not yet quite so ingrained in them (p. 121).

However, similar to Kim (2001) this explanation assumes that groups of people share a common, unified culture that is passed down, unchanged, from one generation to another, an assumption which can be argued to be quite deterministic and essentialist. It suggests that there exists a single, majority culture within a nation that all members of the society share. It also assumes that individuals must assimilate to a so-called majority culture in the new society in order to adjust. If there is truth to the observation that children adjust to the new society more easily and more completely than adolescents, a different explanation for this ought to be provided, one which does not rely so heavily on determinism.

Many adaptation theorists highlight the importance of learning the local language and gaining communicative competence in the new country (e.g. Kim, 2001; Berry, 1997; Croucher & Kramer, 2017), and for school-aged children language skills are just as important as adults. Language skills are related to their adjustment in school, making friends, and emotional health, all of which promote their adaptation in the new society (Kurtz-Costes & Pungello, 2000, p. 121). Being frustrated in school and being socially isolated from new society peers, on the other hand, have been linked to poor communication competence and psychological issues (Kaman Lee & Chen, 2000, p. 783). Having a better handle of the language in the society will motivate children to communicate with other children in school and spend time among other activities

that expose them to the new culture, e.g. watch television and read (Kurtz-Costes & Pungello, 2000, p. 121). Being able to communicate and create relationships with their peers could also support children's sense of belonging in the society.

Another important factor that can aid immigrant children's adjustment process is peer relationships in the new society (Chen & Tse, 2011, p. 51). Yet, researchers have suggested that children may find it difficult to create cross-ethnic relationships and can feel somewhat alienated and isolated in the new country (Este & Van Ngo, 2011, p. 34). For older immigrant children creating friendships in the new country may be difficult, as at an older age peers may already have established social networks that are hard to change or enter (Este & Van Ngo, 2011, p. 34). In addition to having difficulties creating friendships and relationships, Este & Van Ngo (2000) state that immigrant children may "over-rely" on the support of peers with similar "cultural" backgrounds (p. 34).

However, what Este & Van Ngo (2000) mean by "over-relying" on peers of similar "cultural" background remains unclear. This seems to assume, similar to Kim (2001), that immigrants should avoid being in contact with individuals with the same background, as this may "interfere" with their assimilation to the new society. This statement comes off somewhat determinist and suggests the existence of a single, unified and unchanging culture within a nation, as well as that migrant individuals must shed features of their identities in order to adapt or assimilate in a manner deemed acceptable by the new society. As has been mentioned before, such a depiction of culture has been criticized by researchers (e.g. De la Garza & Ono, 2015), and due to this, such a statement of "over-relying" on peers ought to perhaps be disregarded.

In addition, although some researchers (e.g. Kim, 2001) claim that migrants should aim to surround themselves with members of the new society and avoid too much contact with people of a similar background, it has been noted that children may adjust better to a new society if they are not separated from individuals who share a similar background with them

(Kurtz-Costes & Pungello, 2000, p. 123). According to Kurtz-Costes & Pungello (2000), contact with peers who share a language or a so-called “cultural background” provides a safe base for immigrant children to adjust to the new society and new norms and customs, or “break into a culture”, as Kurtz-Costes & Pungello (2000) phrase this, and adjustment can be eased with the presence of such peers who understand their behaviors and assumptions (p. 123).

As has now been discussed, various issues can affect immigrant children both before migration and as they are adjusting to a new society. A few of such issues have been discussed more closely, e.g. issues within the family, the effect of school and peers, and communication competence. It seems apparent that researchers who have studied the issues that affect immigrant and immigrant children are somewhat held back by determinist and essentialist assumptions about culture. Such research should, however, be praised for taking into account the difference of experience that migrant children may have, as well as the differentiation between those experiences of refugee and “voluntary” migrant children. As all immigrant children have different migration experiences, not all of the issues discussed necessarily affect each and every migrant child. However, the above discussion has given some light to what issues may affect immigrant children’s migration experiences and adaptation.

2.3 Immigration and the Education System

With the prevalence of immigration and migration, it is important to ensure the integration of immigrant children in schools and societies, as this is a pre-condition for “democratic stability and for social cohesion” (NESSE, 2008, p. 10). According to reports by non-governmental organizations, in immigration countries schools have an important role in integrating immigrant children into their new society (NESSE, 2008, p. 8). Schools are said to act as a gateway for children to enter the new society, learn about the new “culture”, integrate into the new community, meet peers and learn the local language (OECD, 2015, p. 34). Schools also play an important role in developing friendly intercultural relationships, introducing the

norms, values and expectations of the new society to immigrant students, and acting as an arena where different groups in the community meet, build relationships and acknowledge differences between one another (OECD, 2015, p. 40).

Yet, at the same time, education systems may emulate the dynamics that are widespread in the society: for example, immigrant children may still face racial discrimination carried out by both teachers and students within the education system (Este & Van Ngo, 2011, p. 38). The OECD (2015) notes that this contributes to the self-perception of immigrant students as outsiders and intensifies students' difficulties (p. 41). On the other hand, positive relationships between immigrant students and students without an immigrant background are said to help immigrant students adjust to the new society, and the perception of support from teachers and peers are said to be related to motivation and invested effort of immigrant students (OECD, 2015, p. 40).

How well education systems react to migration greatly impacts how successfully immigrants integrate into their new communities, as well as the social well-being of all other community members (OECD, 2015, p. 22). It is important that schools and teachers are aware of their role in helping their students adapt to their new country, and education systems must be prepared for the challenge they are faced with and be able to provide immigrant students with the tools and help they require.

Eurydice (2004) suggests that action aimed at "the integration of immigrant children into the new country's education system should be taken in three areas: adapting the system to their special educational needs; including lessons on the language and culture of the country of origin in mainstream school curricula; and promoting intercultural education for all" (p. 15). However, education systems have a variety of tools and practices they can apply to aid immigrant students and their families, and these practices vary across countries (see OECD, 2015 and Eurydice, 2004). In the following subchapters I will discuss how education systems

around the world, in Europe, and in Finland have reacted to help immigrant students adapt to the new education system and new society.

This chapter focuses heavily on the reports and recommendations of international non-governmental organizations regarding the steps countries and education systems are currently taking and ought to take in order to help integrate and offer quality education for immigrant students. It is important to discuss these recommendations, as they are based on PISA results, academic research, and reports of practices education systems around the world are currently applying to integrate immigrant students. They also show on what basis different steps have been taken in countries around the world, as well as on what basis organizations such as OECD (2015) present their recommendations. These reports give a current picture of the practical measures education systems have taken, what they have found effective, and what should be improved on, and thus I find that they are an important and useful source of information for this thesis. Not only do they cite research, they focus on practice and the reality that the education systems currently exist in.

2.3.1 Recommendations of International Non-Governmental Organizations

When it comes to immigrant students and their adaptation to their new environments and society, education systems and researchers often inspect this phenomenon from the point of view of students' academic success (e.g. Gibson, 1997; Good et al., 2010; NESSE, 2008; OECD, 2015; Ogbu, 1987; Ohinata & van Ours, 2013). Indeed, first and foremost the education system aims to ensure that immigrant students have the chance to succeed academically (OECD, 2015, p. 3). Yet, in their new society and school, many things can disturb immigrant students' ability to succeed academically, and the difference in performance between students with and without an immigrant background varies greatly across countries (OECD, 2015, p. 6).

What seems to be somewhat missing from this field is a focus on the social aspect of integration or adaptation of immigrant students within the education system. Even though it is

important to study what contributes to the academic success of immigrant students, it ought to be just as important to see what things contribute to students having a sense of belonging in school and in the new society. Students' academic success does not, after all, ensure or necessarily correlate with a sense of belonging in school or the new society. Thus, students' emotional well-being and social adjustment should be studied more.

Researchers have emphasized the role and impact that education policies have on immigrant students (Gibson, 1997, p. 441). It has been pointed out that issues such as unequal schools, "white flight", "dustbin classes", prejudice of teachers, early tracking, and the discontinuity that exists between the home and school lives of students all devalue the identities of immigrant students as well as affect their academic performance (Gibson, 1997, p. 441). Good integration policies can help reduce the disadvantage that immigrant students experience in the education system and the long-term effects of stress experienced by immigrant students (OECD, 2015, p. 5).

Countries around the world have a wide variety of policies and practices they use to accommodate their immigrant students, and each system faces different challenges in accommodating immigrant students in the education system, such as needing to integrate large numbers quickly, or accommodating children who do not speak the language of instruction, or who are from socio-economically disadvantaged families (OECD, 2015, p. 3). Integration of immigrants into the new society is a big issue for policy-makers, and countries have varying levels of expertise in this, with some countries having substantial experience on policies to use in the integration of immigrant students in the education system, and others only recently having acquired such experience, or only beginning to adapt the education system to the needs of immigrant students (Eurydice, 2004, p. 3).

OECD (2015) has identified several issues that countries should consider in their policies and has gathered together data to create a more solid foundation for practices that

educators and institutions should apply to meet the needs of immigrant and refugee students and help them reach their full potential (p. 3). Based on this data OECD (2015) offers the following guidelines, to ensure the integration and academic success of immigrant students:

“Provide language instruction quickly

Offer high-quality early childhood education

Encourage all teachers, not just specialists, to prepare themselves for diverse classrooms

Avoid concentrating immigrant students in the same, disadvantaged schools

Re-think education policies

Reach out to immigrant parents” (OECD, 2015, p. 9 – 10).

Yet again, these guidelines mainly focus on the academic success of students. Many of the things mentioned do help students’ adaptation in the long-run (e.g. language education, early childhood education, avoiding concentration of disadvantage), but little focus is given to students’ social adjustment or general adaptation. However, a positive aspect that arises from the reports mentioned, is that education systems seem to be focusing less and less on assimilating immigrant students into a single, assumed majority “culture”, and are instead focusing on integrating these students into the society. Countries seem to be striving towards more multicultural and diverse societies by encouraging education systems to embrace rather than reject the diverse backgrounds of their students.

However, as discussed earlier, “embracing diversity” within the education system can sound like good practice, however this possibly well-meaning mission may in fact hinder immigrant students. With the goal of “embracing diversity”, differences between students are emphasized, and teachers are expected to do so as well in the form of e.g. presentations on the “cultures” of their students (Breidenbach & Nyíri, 2009, p. 164 – 165). By doing so, teachers and the education system may in fact be doing a disservice to their immigrant students by

singling them out and othering them. Although the intentions behind such practices may be well-intended, they may end up achieving the opposite of what was intended.

Based on OECD (2015) and Eurydice (2004) reports, it seems that education systems focus particularly on providing extensive language support for immigrant students. It is highlighted that upon arrival to their new country, students must master the language of instruction as soon as possible in order to succeed in school (OECD, 2015, p. 85). Schools and educators have indeed taken this into account, and linguistic forms of support have been found to be among the most extensive support measures that education systems in Europe have taken to help immigrant students upon arrival to their new countries (Eurydice, 2004, p. 44).

Many of the adaptation theories discussed earlier also emphasize the importance of migrants gaining communicative competence in the new society, e.g. Kim (2017), Berry (1997) and Croucher and Kramer (2017). All of these researchers emphasize that in order to adapt to a new environment, individuals must be able to communicate in the new society. Of course, the education system has a more practical reasoning for language support, this being the academic success of immigrant students. Issues such as adaptation and assimilation (as per Kim, 2017) are not brought up, and the focus is on the ability to participate in teaching.

In addition to providing sustained language support for immigrant students, education systems are encouraged to teach students their mother tongue. According to Eurydice (2004), such “heritage language support” is often introduced because it will allegedly improve the “development and learning ability” and sense of identity of those students whose mother tongue differs from the language of instruction (p. 51 – 66). Valuing immigrant students’ mother tongue is claimed to ensure that children feel that their cultural and linguistic heritage is appreciated as much as the majority culture and language, as well as help in “bridging the gap between their home and school” (OECD, 2015, p. 93).

Here in particular it can be seen how policy has more and more distanced itself from assimilationist practices of Kim (2017) and subtractive acculturation first presented by Gibson (1995). Instead of demanding immigrant students to abandon their so-called “cultural heritage” and identities in favor of the so-called “new culture”, education systems are, at least seemingly, choosing to show appreciation of diversity and students’ heritage. Based on what has been discussed so far, education systems can be seen to follow a policy of integration or additive acculturation. However, even the well-meaning goal of appreciating students’ so-called “cultural heritage” can turn on the education systems, as this easily leads to a simplified, essentialist view of culture and students’ backgrounds, which may not at all hold true. As mentioned earlier, such practices may also lead to students being singled out and othered.

In addition, although the benefits of bilingual education to migrant children is promoted and encouraged by non-governmental organizations such as Eurydice (2004) and OECD (2015), the experiences of immigrant students may be quite different from the initial goals of heritage language education. For example, in the 2000s in Norway, one Pakistani student was reported to having spoken five different languages, but none of them fluently (Breidenbach, Nyíri, 2009, p. 167 – 168). Having been taught multiple languages at the same time, the student apparently did not have the chance to master any language and ended up dropping out of school due to being ridiculed by classmates (Breidenbach, Nyíri, 2009, p. 167 – 168). Although the intentions of the education system and educators may certainly have been well-meaning, in the end this particular student suffered due to such policy aimed directly at immigrant students. Thus, for some students it might be beneficial to have the choice of bilingual education, but the benefits of this should perhaps be considered individually, with the interest of the student in mind.

Although many of the policies introduced by OECD (2015) are interesting, what especially stands out from the report is the need for schools to increase their capacity to handle

multiculturalism, as well as avoid concentration of disadvantage in schools. Globally there are great differences in how prepared schools are to handle multilingualism and multiculturalism (OECD, 2015, p. 71). Most OECD countries require institutions which train teachers to include topics about intercultural education in their training, however clear instructions as to how to accomplish this is missing (OECD, 2015, p. 89). In addition, on a more governmental or municipal level, it is recommended that immigrant students be distributed to a variety of schools and classrooms instead of focusing them into schools that already struggle with students of non-immigrant background (OECD, 2015, p. 10). According to the OECD (2015) this practice will lead schools to struggle even further, as the new students do not understand or speak the language of instruction, while even distribution of immigrant students to a variety of schools alleviates pressure from schools and teachers (p. 10).

Many of the policies recommended by non-governmental organizations focus greatly on ensuring the academic success of immigrant students in one way or another. However, academic success is not the only indicator of integration for immigrant students. Schools are an important social environment for children, and students' sense of belonging in school is a important sign of whether or not they are integrated into the surrounding society (OECD, 2015, p. 6). For an individual, being a part of a community includes feeling like one is part of a group, or having a sense of belonging (Osterman, 2000, p. 324). Therefore, educators should try to pay attention to how happy immigrant students feel at school, and if they feel they belong there. After all, academic success does not necessarily correlate with a sense of belonging.

In fact, it has been shown that immigrant students may do well academically in one society and still feel they do not belong, while in another they may do worse academically but have a greater sense of belonging in school (OECD, 2015, p. 6). In many non-European countries first-generation immigrant students have been found to express even higher levels of happiness at school than their peers (OECD, 2015, p. 34). It has been suggested that this may

be because in schools, immigrant students are given support and opportunities for socialization and integration, and because they see schools to be “bearing the fruits of sacrifices” that migrating families have made (OECD, 2015, p. 34). It is thus claimed that it is not only the so-called “cultural differences” between the so-called “heritage” and new “culture” but also the support that schools and communities provide that affect the psychological well-being of immigrant students (OECD, 2015, p. 37).

In the past and in previous research, students’ sense of belonging alone may not have drawn as much attention for a few reasons. Academic achievements and mastering the curriculum have been seen to be more important in schools, while sense of belonging has been seen more as a reward for achievement and conformity (Osterman, 2000, p. 324). However, students’ sense of belonging is certainly important in itself, but also because it promotes healthy social and psychological development, and it is related to lower rates of school dropout (OECD, 2015, p. 35). Schools can help immigrant students’ well-being by helping them deal with daily issues surrounding their learning, communication and living in the new environment (OECD, 2015, p. 6).

To sum up, based on the reports by OECD (2015) and Eurydice (2004), currently education systems focus mostly on assuring the academic success of immigrant students, while less attention seems to be paid to the adaptation of immigrant students. However, from the reports it can be seen that integration into the new society is mentioned often, and thus it can be seen to be a common adaptation goal. Based on the different practices of the education system, it is apparent that assimilation as theorized by Kim (2017) or subtractive acculturation as theorized by Gibson (1995) is not supported or practiced. However, it should be taken into account that based on such reports it is impossible to know what happens in practice in individual schools. It should be pointed out, though, that although wanting to show appreciation of immigrant students’ so-called “cultural heritage” and “cultural background” as is mentioned

in these reports may be well-meaning, it can lead to education systems having an essentialist idea of “culture” and their students’ backgrounds. Therefore, education systems should perhaps consider shifting the focus of their intentions when accommodating immigrant students away from the notion of culture altogether, and focus on immigrant students as individuals.

2.3.2 Immigration and the Education System in Finland

Finland has somewhat of a shorter history of immigration than many other European countries, and thus the education system in Finland is not yet “an all-encompassing multicultural environment for all” (Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2014, p. 167). Schools do, however, utilize various methods to help their immigrant students and their families become familiarized with the education system in Finland and integrate into the society. Many of those methods follow what has been recommended by organizations such as OECD (2015) and Eurydice (2004) in their reports: immigrant families are provided with information about the Finnish education system, academic possibilities after basic education, the curriculum, student evaluation, teaching methods and their children’s personal study plans (Finnish National Agency for Education [EDUFI], 2017, p. 13).

The Finnish education system focuses particularly on ensuring that upon starting school immigrant students learn the language of instruction promptly. The most common practice to assure this seems to be Finnish as a second language education and preparatory education, which municipalities can choose to offer to those students of immigrant background who are entering pre- or basic education but lack the necessary language skills to attend basic education (EDUFI, 2017, p. 3).

In Finland, preparatory education was first offered in the 1990s, when growing immigration in Finland called for new, different ways of arranging education for students who did not have the necessary language skills required for Finnish or Swedish basic education (Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2014, p. 168). Preparatory education was then established to offer

students the chance to learn Finnish and adjust to the school system in Finland for one year (Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, p. 168).

Nowadays students do not, however, spend the entirety of their preparatory education only within their own group, but are instead integrated into mainstream classrooms of their peers during this time (EDUFI, 2017, p. 10). Mainstream classrooms in this context refers to classes where the basic education curriculum is taught to students who are able follow teaching in the language of instruction. The goal of integration during preparatory education is to help improve students' language learning and knowledge in different subjects, allow students to experience what an authentic Finnish learning environment is like, and help the student adapt to the new society (EDUFI, 2017, p. 10). In the curriculum for preparatory education it is also stated that preparatory education helps students recognize the values and norms that connect different cultures, encourages students to connect with other cultural groups, supports good ethnic relations, and prepares students to function in a culturally diverse society (EDUFI, 2015, p. 9).

However, despite the diversity of the goals stated, it should be noted that the main focus of preparatory education is to teach students Finnish or Swedish as a second language, as learning the language of instruction will enable the student to move from a preparatory class into a mainstream classroom (EDUFI, 2015, p. 7). Even after completing preparatory education and moving into mainstream classroom, immigrant students continue to be taught Finnish as a second language. This is said to support students to build their linguistic and cultural identities in a multicultural society, as well as support their integration to Finnish society (EDUFI, 2016, p. 6).

Although preparatory education has been able to solve some of the more burning issues in immigrant education, it has been noted that other issues remain unanswered (Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2014, p. 168). For one, the Finnish education system and academia both are said to

lack a consistent manner of carrying out multicultural education (Dervin et al., 2012, p. 1). In addition, it has been criticized that although possibilities for multicultural education within the Finnish education system may exist, it is still mainly concerned with learning about “the others”, with white Finnishness seen as the norm (Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2014, p. 168 – 169). Finnish multicultural education has also been criticized for how it is taught differently for the “ethnic majority” and “ethnic minority”: immigrant students are taught about their “own culture” and “Finnish culture”, while the majority is taught about multiculturalism in Finland, with cultures being talked about as “solid” and unchanging (Dervin et al., 2012, p. 2).

Cultural and linguistic diversity in a school poses a challenge for individual immigrant students as well as teachers who should be able to take into account students’ ethnic identities, culture and background in their teaching (Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2014, p. 170). However, Sinkkonen and Kyttälä (2014) criticize Finnish teacher education programs for not being equipped to develop the skills necessary for teachers who must work with diverse classrooms (p. 170). Thus, it should perhaps be considered that teachers already working in schools be offered training in handling diversity in their schools, while teacher training programs should perhaps make sure to introduce the topic already in training. However, such training should aim to steer away from the concept of culture as differences between people and cultures, and perhaps focus more on, as Byram (2000) says, “seeing relationships between different cultures” (as cited in Dervin et al., 2012, p. 3).

In regard to cultural adaptation theories, it certainly seems that official policy at least is leaning away from assimilation as presented by Kim (2017). Immigrant students are not expected to assimilate to an assumed version of majority Finnish “culture”, but instead it seems that diversity and students’ “cultural” backgrounds are supported. Thus, it would seem that a strategy of integration as per Berry (1997), or additive acculturation as per Gibson (1997) is supported instead. An adaptation process similar to De la Garza and Ono’s (2015) differential

adaptation theory is perhaps not recognized here quite as much, as students are expected to at least integrate into the Finnish society. However, once again, although supporting diversity may seemingly be only positive, it can lead to excess emphasis being placed on differences between students, which can lead to immigrant students being othered.

It should be noted that the information provided by the Finnish National Agency for Education and municipalities, as well as the information collected by OECD, may very well differ from actual practices of schools and teachers in reality. For example, although it is stated by the Finnish National Agency for Education or the municipalities that extensive linguistic support is provided for students even after “graduating” from preparatory education, in reality it could be that not all schools have the means to carry this out extensively.

3. METHOD AND DATA

So far different adaptation theories have been discussed, as well as their relevance to this thesis. As was pointed out, with the exception of Gibson (1995), most adaptation theories discussed do not consider the adaptation process of immigrant children, seemingly focusing on the adaptation of adult immigrants. Following this the different issues that immigrant children face, and which can affect their adaptation process in their new environment were discussed. Finally, issues which education systems around the world find important to address and focus on when aiding immigrant students to adjust were examined. This included considering some of the methods that education systems have in place to help immigrant students adjust to their new environment and the education system, as well as a focus on the Finnish education system. Having discussed the theory and past research in the previous chapters, the aim of this study as well as the methods used will now be discussed.

3.1. Aim and Research Questions

In this thesis I aim to find out if the teachers interviewed can be perceived to have a specific conscious or unconscious stance regarding the cultural adaptation of immigrant students. Based on the reports of OECD (2015) and Eurydice (2004), Gibson's (1995) findings regarding the expectations the education system places on immigrant students is already dated and no longer correct. While Gibson (1995) theorizes in her research that the goal of the education system and teachers is, in essence, for immigrant students to assimilate to the new culture, these reports imply that nowadays it is more common and more advisable to embrace multiculturalism within the education system. Thus, I am interested to find out if teachers themselves can be seen to still follow the principles of any of the cultural adaptation theories discussed above. Based on this, I introduce my first research question:

RQ1: How can teachers' expectations regarding immigrant students' cultural adaptation be related to adaptation theories?

As has been established above, a great deal of research regarding immigrant and immigrant students is focused on their academic success, while little attention has been paid to the cultural adaptation of these students, especially in Finland. Seemingly little attention has also been paid to the role of teachers and the education system in the adaptation process of immigrant students. In order to ensure that the education system is able to answer to the needs of immigrant students properly, it is important to fill this gap in current research. In order to find out the full extent of the role of teachers and the education system on the cultural adaptation process of immigrant students, more extensive research should be carried out. However, in hopes of beginning to bridge the current gap in research, I hope to find out in this thesis how teachers themselves perceive their role in the adaptation process of their immigrant students. Based on this, my second research question is as follows:

RQ2: How do teachers perceive their role in the adaptation process of immigrant students?

In the previous chapter it has also been established that different agents have their own recommendations, guidelines, plans and curricula that education systems are encouraged to follow in the integration of immigrant children. For example, the Finnish National Agency for Education has formulated a curriculum specified for immigrant students in Finland, OECD and Eurydice have compiled material explaining what schools around the world and in Europe specifically are currently doing, and in addition OECD offers suggestions as to what educational systems ought to do in order to help students of immigrant background within the education system. However, reports and guidelines do not necessarily depict the reality that exists in schools and classrooms. That is why in this thesis I aim to find out what it is that teachers themselves claim to do to support students' adaptation in the new society in practice, and what of their and the education system's actions they themselves find to be important in this process. Based on this I introduce my third research question:

RQ3: Based on teachers' narratives, how are they and the education system supporting immigrant students' adaptation?

3.2. Data and Method

Data for this thesis was gathered by interviewing five comprehensive school teachers in Finland who were at the time teaching immigrant students or had previous experience in teaching immigrant students in Finland. Three of the interviewees taught preparatory education classes, one teacher was a class teacher in an elementary school, and one teacher was a subject teacher in a secondary school. Thus, the interviewees had a varying level of expertise in teaching immigrant students: some focused daily specifically on the needs of immigrant and immigrant students, and while others had immigrant students in their classes, the daily focus was not specifically on their needs.

Interviewees were chosen for this study based on their experience in teaching immigrant students. Initially I hoped to only interview teachers who had experience working as preparatory education teachers, but later expanded the conditions to teachers who had other experience in teaching immigrant students (e.g. teachers who had taught immigrant students for several years or had been otherwise involved in supporting immigrant students in their schools). Interviewees were gathered by first researching what schools had preparatory education classes in the school year 2018 – 2019, and thus had a number of immigrant students and teachers with experience teaching students with immigrant backgrounds. Teachers and schools were also contacted by recommendation from thesis supervisors. The principals of the schools were contacted by email to request participation in the study, after which the teachers in question were contacted by email personally. Teachers who agreed to take part in this study were then interviewed.

The interviews were carried out as semi-structured interviews, hoping that a less strictly structured interviewing style would help yield more data and themes, while still allowing me

to follow a similar path and discuss similar topics with most of the interviewees. I decided to use interviews in general to gather data, hoping that by discussing face-to-face with interviewees I would be able to get richer data than I would by, for example, sending out a questionnaire, which might have yielded briefer replies and less data. I also believed that interviews could give interviewees a chance to discuss topics and issues I had not considered beforehand.

Of course, it needs to be considered that the interview data gathered for this study is by no means objective. The narratives expressed by the interviewees are based on their subjective experiences and knowledge, and do not necessarily express the full reality of their or other teachers' experience. In addition, the interview questions have likely guided the answers provided to some extent, and the data has been constructed together by the researcher and the interviewee regarding a specific topic. Thus, the data cannot be treated as a representation of an objective reality.

In regard to formality, a semi-structured interview ranks somewhere between a structured interview and a theme interview (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, p. 47). A semi-structured interview is suited for situations where the researcher wants information regarding specific topics and does not want or need to give interviewees as much liberty in the interview as in a fully unstructured interview (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka, 2006). Thus, based on this, it was deemed that a semi-structured interview would be the best interview format for this thesis. Basing the interviews on only some pre-prepared questions was deemed useful, as this way relevant themes and topics which I had not thought of beforehand could arise during the interview. This way the interviewees were also able to express their ideas more freely and with fewer interruptions.

Thus, 15 pre-prepared open-ended interview questions focusing on the teachers' teaching experience, views regarding cultural adaptation, and methods for adaptation were

asked during all interviews, and other questions were raised during the interviews when necessary or appropriate. Open-ended questions were designed to collect information about teachers' views on topics such as cultural adaptation, the role of the teachers in cultural adaptation, arrangements by the education system to aid immigrant students, and multiculturalism within the education system. Yet, contrary to original goals, the interviews often did not stray far from the pre-prepared interview questions. This was most likely due to inexperience as an interviewer on my part. However, the replies of the interviewees turned out to be very extensive, and often it was found that further questions were not necessary at the time. The interviews were recorded, and about 230 minutes of interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) was applied to analyze the interview data. QCA is a method of content analysis where qualitative material and its meaning is described in a systematic manner (Schreier, 2012, p. 1). This is done by assigning parts of the research material into the categories of a coding frame (Schreier, 2012, p. 1). QCA can be applied to a variety of data, ranging from interview transcripts to advertisements, and it can be used as a method of analysis if interpretation is required in order to identify meaning in the research data (Schreier, 2012, p. 2 – 4). QCA is a specific method, helping to describe research material from an angle specified by the research question of the study instead of providing a “holistic overview” of the research material (Schreier, 2012, p. 4).

The benefits of QCA as a method are that it is systematic and flexible while also reducing the data used in the analysis, which in a qualitative study can at times be very extensive (Schreier, 2012, p. 5). In QCA segments of the research material are assigned to categories of a coding frame (Schreier, 2012, p. 58), which consists of main categories that specify relevant aspects of the analysis, and subcategories within the main categories, which specify the important meanings regarding the aspect (Schreier, 2012, p. 61). As I had gathered

a fairly extensive amount of data through interviews, QCA offered a convenient way of approaching the data and identifying relevant themes from the interviews. I also found QCA to be fairly similar to the way I had already been working with my data prior to coding, thus finding it a very natural method for me to use in my analysis.

In this thesis themes and topics relevant to the interview questions were initially identified from the interview transcripts. Extracts relevant to the individual research questions were picked out, after which themes that were relevant to the extracts were identified and marked into the extracts. At this point themes were chosen to be included in the analysis based on how often they appeared in the interviews and their relevance to the research questions. Based off these themes an initial coding frame was drafted. Main and subcategories were identified and named, and each code within the coding frame was given a tag in order to help identify coding units within the transcripts. Using this method, passages and topics to be discussed in the analysis were identified.

During this initial coding the coding frame did go through some changes. The coding frame was simplified to consist of simply categories and subcategories, instead of having a more complex coding frame, and some subcategories were moved to be included under different categories, and some subcategories were split into separate subcategories. For example, subcategory B2, Promoting Multiculturality was moved from category A, Role of the Teachers and School to B, Actions of Importance. Some subcategories were removed completely, e.g. from subcategory C, Adaptation Expectations and A, Role of the Teachers and School. Finally, after some thought subcategory B6, Preparatory Education was created (see Figure 1).

Following the principles of QCA, it is recommended for several coders to code a text that is used in a study (Schreier, 2012, p. 146). If only one person is coding a text, it is recommended that the text and coding frame be recoded after 10 – 14 days (Schreier, 2012, p.

146). However, due to time constraint, in this thesis the coding has been done by only one person without a recoding after 10 – 14 days. To make up for this, the coding frame was approved by the thesis supervisor. This shortcoming should be taken into consideration nonetheless, as it has an effect on the reliability and validity of the results in this thesis.

4 FINDINGS

In this chapter themes and topics related to teachers' perceptions of the adaptation processes of immigrant students as well as their perceptions of their own role in this process will be presented. The data will be discussed using the coding frame presented in Figure 1.

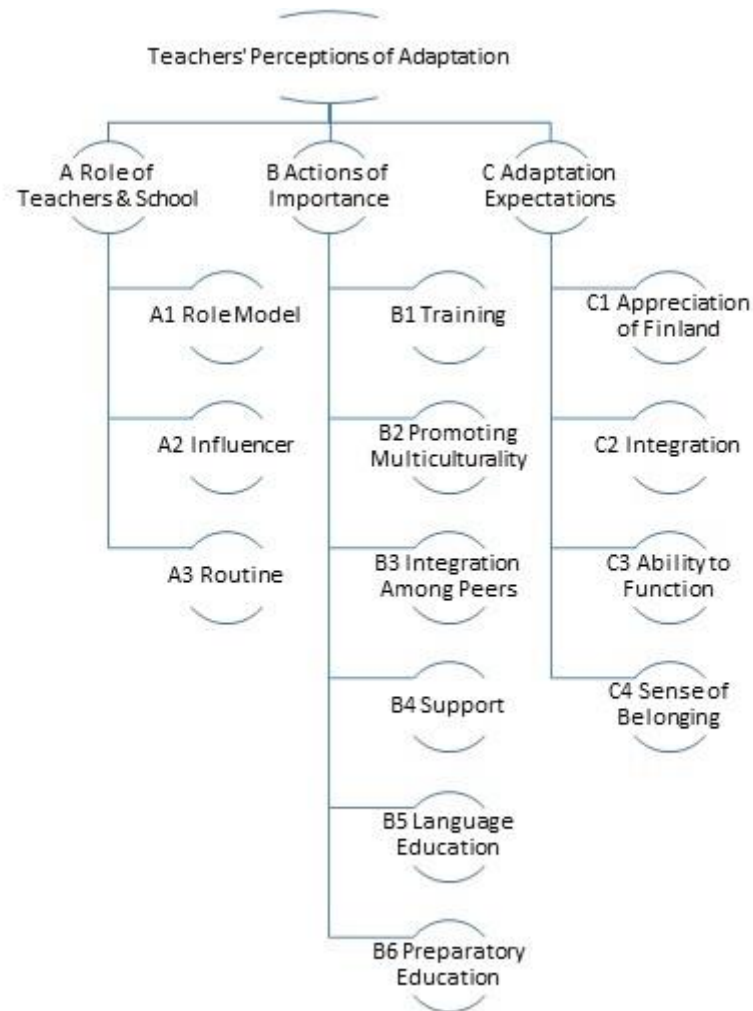


Figure 1

Themes that arose while analyzing interview transcripts have been divided into three categories: **A, The Role of Teachers and School; B, Actions of Importance; and C, Adaptation Expectations.** Category A, The Role of Teachers and School, consists of units of text which are related to the perceived role of teachers and the school in the adaptation process of immigrant students. Category B, Actions of Importance, is made up of units of text which are related to the measures which teachers found to be important to carry out in order to support

immigrant students and their adaptation process. Finally, units related to teachers' perceptions as to the possible cultural adaptation goals of immigrant students were included in category C.

As mentioned, category A, The Role of Teachers and School, has to do with the roles that teachers could be perceived to have in the adaptation process of immigrant students. The different roles that arose from the data could be divided into three subcategories: A1, Role Model; A2, Influencer; and A3, Routine. Subcategory A1, Role Model, consists of units relating to the perceptions of the teachers as role models and reliable, trustworthy adults to their immigrant students, adults who can inspire these students in their lives. Subcategory A2, Influencer, contains units implying that teachers and schools act as influencers of sorts, having power over the attitudes of all their students, the general atmosphere, and the sense of community within classrooms and the school, while also introducing immigrant students to their new environment and community. Subcategory A2, then, does not only have to do with teachers' roles in direct relation to immigrant students, but all of their students. Subcategory A3, Routine, includes units which imply that the role of teachers and schools is to provide routine for immigrant students.

All in all, very similar themes arose from the data in relation to the measures which teachers found to be important in supporting immigrant students in school. These measures could be divided into six subcategories within category B, Actions of Importance: B1, Training; B2, Promoting Multiculturalism; B3, Integration Among Peers; B4, Support; B5, Language Education; and B6, Preparatory Education.

Subcategory B1, Training, is made up of units related to training and information teachers are offered and/or which they seek out regarding the support and teaching of immigrant students. Subcategory B2, Promoting Multiculturalism, includes units related to the promotion of multiculturalism within classes and schools. This category suggests that not all measures which teachers found important were in direct relation to immigrant students

themselves, but instead in relation to educating the teaching staff and the all the students of the school. Subcategory B3, Integration Among Peers, consists of units related to how integration among peers is carried out, as well as the importance of ensuring this.

Subcategory B4, Support, includes various units related to how it was perceived teachers and schools can support immigrant students, such as dialogue between teachers and students, supporting students' positive self-image, and supporting students' adaptation into their new society. Of course, according to teachers' own narratives, these issues could be seen to not differ much from the support teachers offer all their students. However, these issues were brought up in interviews, and were thus included as a category. Subcategory B5 is comprised of units related to the importance of language education of immigrant students, be that Finnish as a second language or heritage language education. Language education was a particularly significant issue which interviewees emphasized in their interviews. Finally, subcategory B6 includes units pointing out the importance of preparatory education, which was also introduced by the interviewees as a highly significant measure within the education system.

Finally, category C, Adaptation Expectations, is divided into four subcategories relating to the adaptation expectations teachers were perceived to hold: C1, Appreciation of Finland; C2, Integration; C3, Ability to Function; and C4, Sense of Belonging. Subcategory C1, Appreciation of Finland, includes units which express a desire for immigrant students to appreciate Finland, the Finnish education system, and the various possibilities that living and going to school in Finland can provide them with. Subcategory C2, Integration, combines units which indicate a desire for students to integrate into Finland and Finnish society. Subcategory C3, Ability to Function, is made up of units which express that teachers hope for immigrant students to be able to function within Finnish society and in the Finnish education system without issue. Finally, subcategory C4, Sense of Belonging, consists of units which have to do with a desire for students to feel they belong in the Finnish society, their communities, and the

Finnish education system. This categorization already tells quite a lot about teachers' perceived attitudes towards the integration of immigrant students. The narratives suggest that teachers in this study embrace a notion of integration over assimilation, and multiculturalism in the education system and the community.

4.1 Perceived Role of the Teachers and School

In general, interviewees seemed to find the role of teachers and schools very important in the lives and adaptation process of immigrant students. Teachers in particular were perceived to have an important role, both in direct reference to immigrant students, but also in impacting the school environment and attitudes of other students.

Starting off with subcategory A1, teachers were perceived to be, in a sense, role models to immigrant students. Interviewees reflected that particularly in preparatory education classrooms, teachers are most likely the most familiar Finnish adults in immigrant students' lives, and thus they can have a great impact on them. According to the interviewees, as so-called role models, teachers also become people in the students' lives who they can trust and who create safety within the school environment.

(1)¹ I: And what do you think is the role of the teachers in the adaptation process of a student with an immigrant background?

T5: I think it is pretty important, after all, because the... the teacher can be a kind of close and in the end the most familiar adult representing native Finns. So they [the students] have a pretty significant example for them, like what the teacher is like. (...) But it is really important, I think that the role of the teacher is very big in that. Hopefully I have been able to be a role model or an example of an adult who strives to go forward in life or have been able to give the kids something they can use to go ahead and build their lives here.

¹ The original Finnish interview extracts are included in Appendix 2

Here, it is interesting to note that in many of the interviews the teachers referred to their roles as “native” Finns. This gives an idea of how teachers perceive culture, how they perceive Finnishness, and how they perceive “others”. Stating that one represents a “native” Finn suggests that they assume that there is a certain way to present Finnishness, and that as an individual they are an example of what all Finns are like. This assumption can put some pressure on teachers, because if they are to act according to this role, it is expected that they must act a certain way and fill a certain stereotype of “Finnishness”. This in itself is a difficult task, because in practice there cannot be one certain path to “doing” culture. No two Finns are truly the same, no matter what the origins of that person. It cannot be said that all members of a society do things the same way, or even hold the same values.

In addition, the statement and the assumption of “native” Finns creates a rift between what interviewees here assume to be “natives” and the “others”, as following this statement, those who do not fit into stereotype are not and can never be Finns. The statement in the extract implies that there is a certain way to represent Finnishness, and a way to not represent Finnishness. It also begs the question, is it possible for immigrant students to be Finnish? And what is the point of a teacher acting as a role model, if this role is impossible for the students to reach? Finally, the interviewee here makes the assumption that all teachers are “native Finns”, while it is not unlikely at all that a teacher might have an immigrant background themselves. The notion ignores the possibility that Finland and Finns may be diverse as well, not only the newcomers and immigrants.

To return to the issue of teachers as role models, one interviewee considered the role of peers to be more significant than that of the teachers.

(2) I: What would you say, what do you think is the role of teachers and the school in the adaptation process of students of immigrant background?

T1: There are many different kinds of students of immigrant background. If we start from immigrant students who live with their own family then in that case it can be that school friends have a bigger role than teachers and the school, and peers of the same age group, the group who they really spend time with.

The interviewee believed that the peer group that students decide to associate with and who they actually spend time with during their free time has a more significant effect on students of immigrant background than their teachers. When I asked other interviewees about their perception of this, they expressed that despite finding the role of peers important, they believed the role of the teacher to still be more significant.

(3) I: And what about, if you had to compare the roles of the teacher and the peers, which do you find to be more important or more significant?

T4: Well during preparatory education it's probably the teacher, because for example in my current class none of the students are going to be staying in this school, so they are all leaving for new schools once they enter mainstream education, so it's as if... I feel like they don't have time to form very deep friendships in those integration classes, but maybe after that the significance of friends strengthens, because it is extremely motivating to learn Finnish so that you can get friends and friends probably teach a lot about life in general.

According to interviewees, students in preparatory education in particular spend very little of their time in mainstream education classrooms with their peers, thus not being able to form very close relationships with students outside of preparatory education. In addition, teachers felt that the responsibility for any issues arising in the classroom eventually falls on the shoulders of the teacher. The implications of this statement are very interesting, and bring us to the next subcategory, A2, Influencer.

Based on the interview data, teachers seem to affect the general atmosphere and attitudes of peers (e.g. by disapproving racism and promoting the acceptance of difference), create a sense of community within their classrooms and within the school, and introduce the new environment to immigrant students. As so-called influencers, teachers perceive themselves as influencing many aspects regarding attitudes, the general atmosphere etc. in their classrooms. In addition, regarding students of immigrant background in particular, teachers can aid students in their adaptation process by introducing students to Finland, what teachers perceive to be Finnish customs, the education system, and customs within the education system etc.

As mentioned above in the previous subcategory regarding teachers as role models, one interviewee highlighted the importance and role of peers in the adaptation process of immigrant students, while other interviewees highlighted the role of teachers. A majority of interviewees found that in the end teachers influence and shape the atmosphere and attitudes of all the students in their classrooms, thus creating a community where students and peers of all backgrounds are accepted. It was expressed that teachers are the ones who must correct e.g. racist attitudes that students may have learned in their homes, and make sure that school is a safe and welcoming place for everyone.

(4) I: Then I would like to ask, when you mentioned that teachers have a big role in adaptation, so... So, what about the role of classmates and peers? If you had to compare which has maybe the bigger role in the end...?

T2: Well of course peers have a very big role and in a way it can be even bigger than the teacher's, but then again the teacher in my opinion is the one who can affect the attitudes of the classmates with their own actions and behavior. So in that way the responsibility and the role returns to the teacher. Like if in the classroom there are kids whose families are very openly racist and they throw around racist comments, then it's

the teacher who announces that this is unacceptable, why this is unacceptable, and it's discussed.

Just as mentioned above in the previous category, many teachers found that in the end the responsibility for any issues, e.g. racism, falls on the shoulders of the teacher. Interviewees express that it is the teachers' role and responsibility to make sure that school is a welcoming and safe place for all students and to correct any racist or intolerant attitudes within the classroom. Based on the narratives of the interviewees presented in these two previous subcategories, teachers can be perceived to act as both role models, both for immigrant and native students, as well as influencers who can shape the attitudes and values of their students.

Finally, in subcategory A3 the perceived role and importance of schools and teachers in creating routine for immigrant students is discussed.

(5) I: So some completely different kind of help should be available then.

T4: Yeah. And there's waiting lines for over there as well and they don't know what to do either when there isn't a mutual language, so sometimes I feel like that no one is able to help the kids who are most unwell. So what the school can offer is routine. Here there is always a familiar and safe adult, who welcomes you every morning regardless of how the previous day went.

It was reflected that migration in itself is a big change for children, and interviewees felt that in the midst of such a change it is important for these children to have a routine in the new and unfamiliar country. In addition, some interviewees found that school and the routine it brings with it can even be therapeutic for some students. It was pointed out that some students may have had to face traumatic events before and during migration, and although teachers and schools cannot offer the necessary counselling for these students, what interviewees believed it can offer is safety, routine, and familiar, trustworthy adults at school.

4.2 Perceived Actions of Importance

Having discussed the perceived roles of teachers in the adaptation process of immigrant students, we move on to category B, Perceived Actions of Importance. Here I will discuss what teachers themselves perceived to be important in supporting immigrant students and their adaptation process in a new country. Narratives revealed that actions interviewees found important in aiding immigrant children were quite similar. To start off with subcategory B1, Training, all interviewees agreed that training for teachers regarding the education of immigrant children is necessary, and they expressed a desire for more training to be provided for them in the future. However, a large portion of the interviewees felt that training is often not as available to the teachers as they would hope.

(6) I: Are you and your teacher colleagues provided with training regarding how to deal with multicultural classes and students, like how to operate now that [multiculturality] is increasing?

T3: Well, not really. I mean there is training, a lot is arranged, and the Finnish National Agency for Education arranges all sorts of it, but it's a matter of resources, we just can't attend. There's no.... Like from here it is, or at least I have found it so, that it's really hard to get into any training with attendance fees, like... Because usually there is a fee. And then there isn't really a lot of city specific training like specifically regarding the education of immigrant students, because well... Is the group kind of small after all? (...) I do wish that I could attend more training, but it has really been really hard. There just isn't any money for it.

The extract implies that although training may be available, teachers do not necessarily have access to this training due to lacking resources. The interviewee suggests that as the training costs money, as does travel, taking part in training can become somewhat infeasible. In this scenario presented by the interviewee, taking part in training provided locally could be

more plausible. However, the interviewee in the example above suggests that there is not much local training for teachers related to multicultural education and immigrant students in particular. Many of the interviewees noted that they themselves have had to do a lot of independent work and study in order to gain the necessary information and skills to be able to deal with multicultural classrooms and immigrant students. Some teachers also noted that some of the skills and knowledge beneficial for dealing with immigrant students are skills they had gained from previous training and professions outside of their teaching jobs.

(7) I: What do you know about existing recommendations relating to what the education system and teachers could do to support students of immigrant background?

T2: Well originally, when I first began receiving immigrant students, there was no training, so back then I found out about it myself and tried to think. (...) So based on my own knowledge I tried to find out about what the basis is, what different starting points can my students come from, what kind of cultures, what does it mean when they come here and how will I start figuring it out, at what stage is their cultural adaptation or what are their Finnish skills, or what do they know about Finnish culture and how do I confront them and so on. Actually, this semester we have for the first time during my time had training regarding the education of immigrant students.

In this quote the teacher interviewed presents themselves as very active in finding out about what issues they needed to take into account when first receiving immigrant students in their class. It is particularly interesting to note that the teacher in question does not only mention issues of culture as matters they educated themselves about. Instead, the teacher states to have tried to find out about various other issues, such as their starting points, background, what knowledge and skills the students have when they come to Finland, and how the teacher should confront them.

One of the interviewees also noted that, according to their own experience, although preparatory education has existed in Finland for quite some time, teachers who have graduated in the early 2000s have not, as a rule, received multicultural education training during their studies. However, the same interviewee noted that training in teaching Finnish as a second language is fairly available nowadays. Yet, it should be considered whether or not simply being prepared to teach Finnish as a second language is enough preparation for teachers who teach immigrant students and diverse classrooms. Not preparing future teachers for diverse classrooms should be considered as a weakness in Finnish teacher training, and it should perhaps be considered that this, as well as training for teachers already in the profession, be invested in. However, it needs to be considered that this is the account of one individual, and thus does not necessarily represent the current reality of multicultural training present in Finnish teacher training.

Although in general the interviewees agreed that training is not as available as they would hope, this notion was not shared by all interviewees. One interviewee in particular found that in general, training is quite available for teachers. However, they deemed that the issue with attending training has more to do with the difficulty of hiring substitute teachers.

(8) I: Are you and your colleagues offered some kind of training?

T5: (...) In my opinion training is offered, but it's just – well, I've heard from class teachers saying that it's a bit difficult to attend training. It's possible to attend, but substitute teachers aren't hired, so they know that it falls on the shoulders of colleagues or then it's only assistants working, so... It maybe doesn't motivate you to go then. You would need competent substitutes so that it would work. (...) But in a city the size of ***** there is a lot of supply, there is all kinds of training, even free.

Here it is reflected that because teachers do not want to burden their colleagues, who would have to do their work for them in their absence, they choose to instead not attend

training. However, it could be that in this circumstance the other interviewees were focusing specifically on training related to multicultural education, while this interviewee was focusing on training in general. Thus, their perception of how available teacher training is could vary from that of the other interviewees.

Another issue which interviewees found important for teachers and schools to address was B2, Promoting Multiculturalism. Based on the narratives of the interviewees, schools and teachers try to actively promote multiculturalism in everyday situations. Teachers seemed to perceive multiculturalism to consist of a variety of customs present around the world differing from “Finnish” customs, different languages, and different habits. Thus, it could be said that the notion of multiculturalism had a lot to do with an essentialist notion of cultures, a division into Finnishness and the others. From the data it can be perceived that interviewees’ intentions came from a well-meaning place and mentioning the variety of ways people live their lives around the world is certainly not a bad thing, but the way in which culture is presented and dealt with here does come off as somewhat essentialist.

However, one interviewee particularly noted that although the promotion of multiculturalism should be embraced, it is important for teachers to avoid making assumptions about immigrant students.

(9) I: Then I have one more that interested me, when I browsed the preparatory education curriculum a little bit, it mentions that the cultural identity of students is supported, and their cultural heritage is taken into account in teaching. So how... That’s quite general of course, but how does that happen in practice?

T3: (...) So there’s that balancing that I said, the supporting of the cultural identity and supporting exoticism, they are like... Balancing with that... And then on the other hand, young adolescents don’t really want to stand out much. (...) And on the other hand to be careful with, if we consider that a group is Muslim, they are not in any way a

homogenous group. All of them think differently. (...) So somehow to not assume, to rather ask or in some way just as if you ask about a dietary restriction or anything, to not assume that someone is like something just because they come from somewhere or if they kind of represent something... (...) So if you ask me how that happens in practice, and if it's possible, then... I think it requires an interest in the other person. And respecting what they want to share, and that you don't assume, and that you are aware of your own stereotypes, which of course apply to us as well.

In this extract it is noted that it is better to not make any assumptions about students' cultures, customs, or religions, or how students may express anything of their or their families' heritage. The interviewee reflects that no group of people are identical, and thus it is advisable to avoid making any assumptions based on stereotypes or generalizations of groups of people. The interviewee notes that the best course of action is to talk with the students and ask about any relevant matters, but to approach the issue as they would with any other student, without pressure, without assumptions and exoticism. It is highlighted that students should be allowed to express themselves in a way they want to without any pressure from teachers and their peers to present themselves in a certain way.

In addition, as the interviewee points out here, young adolescents do not necessarily want to stand out from their peer groups. By "noticing" or "respecting" someone's so-called "cultural heritage" and customs, the education system may in fact be singling out these students and, effectively, othering them in the process. In the process of "appreciating students' cultural heritage", education systems may be limiting immigrant students' freedom to choose how they wish to present or express themselves and are instead placing unwanted labels and stereotypes on students.

This answer alone also sets an example of how it would be beneficial for teachers and education systems to confront their immigrant students. The mistake that individuals and

education systems can easily make is assuming that students coming from certain regions of the world represent some type of typical citizen of that society who follow certain customs and have certain values. Here it is highlighted that assumptions should not be made about immigrant students, no matter where they come from. This form of approach is a clear step away from essentialism and determinism, allowing immigrant students the freedom to be children, instead of representatives of a stereotype or society – just as any other student within the education system.

The interviewees brought up various situations where they found multiculturalism could be brought into play during lessons and in everyday school interactions. Interviewees recalled that they had tried to promote the existence of other cultures and languages whenever plausible during teaching, e.g. by talking about how things are done in different countries. Interviewees also stated that they try to bring up topics from their own lives, e.g. how the teachers do things, what customs they have etc. In general, what interviewees seemed to highlight was the wish to promote that other cultures, languages, habits and norms exist, and that these differences should be respected. Yet, a situation where individuals are asked to share how they do things in their life can easily become an essentialist comparison of customs in different societies and communities.

When asked about how the cultural background and heritage of immigrant students is taken into account – which is specifically mentioned as a goal in the Finnish curriculum for preparatory education – interviewees often mentioned that teachers and the school should take students' backgrounds into consideration e.g. by respecting their religions, holidays etc. However, one of the interviewees highlighted that although, according to them, the aim is to respect each students' values and cultural background, they found that norms and habits which severely conflict with the norms and values they found to be prevalent in Finland should not be encouraged.

(10) I: I have one more thing which interested me when I was reading through the preparatory education curriculum, because it said that the cultural identity of students is supported, and their cultural background is taken into consideration in teaching, so I was wondering how does this happen in practice, or is it even possible?

T5: (...) Of course it needs to be taken into consideration, but also I am, about some things, because there comes a lot of negative things from our – negative from my perspective and the perspective of Finnish culture, for example boys are appreciated, boys are like kings, and girls are kind of nothing (...) And to that I have said stop, that is not acceptable here. Or then some families can be (...) ”we won’t sit in the same table as *****” or something like that. So to things like that I will absolutely not, I will certainly strictly say that here this is not tolerated, here we are equal.

However, it should be considered that it is not possible to pin down what kinds of values exactly are prevalent in Finland and which should be followed. In general, it can be said that just as there are Finnish citizens who value equality and tolerance, there are citizens exhibiting very racist and sexist attitudes as well. Thus, who is to say which of these is the more prevalent value present in Finnish society that should be highlighted within the education system? Just as this particular teacher’s narrative implies they value equality, another teacher might promote opposite values. Therefore, it is more accurate to say that the teacher personally in this quote discourages values and norms conflicting with their values, which they thus perceive to be Finnish values.

It is also interesting to consider the connotation of stating that certain attitudes are not acceptable here, in Finland. Once again, it is quite difficult to make a generalization of what an entire nation values, as individual attitudes can vary to a large degree. In this situation it is more appropriate to say that it is the teacher’s perception that certain values are held in Finland. However, stating that something is not acceptable here creates a sort of moral hierarchy, where

Finland is considered morally better than other countries. Thus, it could be better to make more general statements, e.g. simply “it is not acceptable”, and avoid making statements where the new country is placed on a moral pedestal.

Moving on from matters of multiculturalism to matters of inclusion, interviewees also deemed subcategory B3, Integration Among Peers, to be important in aiding the adaptation of immigrant students. Interviewees recalled different ways to achieve this, which was quite natural, seeing as the interviewees came from a variety of teaching backgrounds. It was interesting to note that the strategies for achieving integration among peers which teachers presented did not always differ from the strategies used to integrate students amongst themselves in general, at least according to their narratives. For example, celebrations aimed for the entire school, where students of all backgrounds participated and came together, were seen to support the integration of students of immigrant background just as much as their peers who were new to the school as well. Teacher reported to have used other strategies not necessarily aimed for immigrant students in particular as well, such as taking actions aimed at all students of the school and modifying them for the immigrant students.

(11) I: What arrangements does your school have to support students of immigrant background? Could you tell me?

T1: Well. Prefects were included in it very strongly (...). The primary goal of prefects has been to kind of integrate seventh graders into the school's culture and come up with all kinds of fun activities. And then we deliberately took this for immigrant students as well, so that prefects arranged different games and other stuff for them, and then tried as much as possible to have language teaching there as well, so that there would be practical vocabulary, idioms, and using Finnish.

According to this narrative the school took practices they already had in place, and only modified them slightly to better suit the needs of students of immigrant background as well. It

is interesting to note that in most of the interviews when methods of support were discussed, interviewees tended to mention the introduction of Finnish culture to immigrant students. However, in this extract the method applied to support immigrant students is stated to be a method intended for integrating all new students into the school's culture. This suggests that, according to this particular interviewee, the goal with immigrant students does not necessarily have to be to integrate immigrant students into an assumed, nationwide culture, but it is enough – and perhaps even more desirable – to help students adapt into a smaller community, in this case that being school and the community that exists within it.

Regarding the same extract, the interviewee recalled that the school did have one accidental advantage in regard to integrating and supporting immigrant students. The interviewee in question mentioned having a prefect of immigrant background during one school year, who spoke the same mother tongue as many of the immigrant students starting school.

(12) I: And how successful have these arrangements been in your opinion, or this approach?

T1: I found that including students and collaboration with prefects gave enormously. Of course, there was bit of a chance of coincidence included. During the first year there happened to be a prefect among the prefects, who spoke **** as a mother tongue (...) and they became a kind of a downright idol or role model to these immigrants, that it's possible to like get into that kind of status, that it is possible to speak Finnish and **** fluently, and gain that kind of acceptance, become a part of the community.

According to the interviewee, by having an immigrant student in a respected position, students of immigrant background and their peers were able to see in practice that someone of a similar, immigrant background can reach a respected position in the community, be accepted and be a part of the community. Based on the experiences of this interviewee, it could be

assumed that being able to see other immigrants, not only adults but peers of their own age, in respected positions in the school community can help immigrant students in their adaptation to the new community. Following this narrative, seeing other immigrants in such positions could thus support the notion that they themselves do not always have to be the “others” in the community but can indeed be accepted as full members of the community.

However, a strategy which interviewees found particularly remarkable in integrating immigrant students among their peers was, roughly translated, so-called “integration classes”. During their year of preparatory education, where immigrant students spend about a year in their own group learning the language of instruction, students also participate in lessons in mainstream education, which focuses on the basic education curriculum, with their peers. Interviewees found this to be particularly beneficial, stating that in their opinion attending the same classes as peers is the best kind of adaptation for students of immigrant background. According to interviewees, during these lessons students both get to experience what it is like to study in a mainstream class and integrate among their peers, which teachers found to be vital.

In addition to the importance of teacher training, promotion of multiculturalism and integration among peers, interviewees found that various kinds of Support, as per subcategory B4, were important as well. This included teachers getting to know their students so as to be able to see if there are any issues that need attention, talking with students, listening to them, and making sure they know that if need ever be, teachers will listen to their problems.

(13) I: What about, since you said that you’ve had students of immigrant background in your class as well, what kind of things do you especially focus on with them? Is there something specific you focus on, that you kind of support them or help them with?

T2: Of course just the same as with all the other students, I try to know the student as well as possible, and try to think about their strengths and try to support them, and what

are their challenges and try to encourage them a lot and help with them. (...) But maybe the most important thing is to just – somehow the question in itself isn't the most important, that it gets an answer, but the experience that if you ever had something to tell, I would listen to you.

As per this extract, interviewees believed once again that offering the same kind of support as teachers do to any student is the kind of help immigrant students may need in their lives. Just as any student, teachers reflected that they want to get to know their immigrant students and be able to help. Many of the interviewees also pointed out that in the beginning they often find it difficult to know what the students need, as the teachers and immigrant students may not speak a common language, but that, according to interviewees' narratives, at this stage the students themselves do not necessarily know what it is that they might need support with. Thus, interviewees deemed it important that students know that if they need to talk, they will be listened to.

Teachers themselves, particularly preparatory education teachers, felt that many of their actions also supported students' adaptation to Finland. During preparatory education interviewees recounted aiming to tell students about the different customs and habits common in Finland, introduce the education system, have students take part in social activities, e.g. skiing, ice-skating etc. Interviewees told that teachers do not only introduce local customs and the education system to students, but also to their parents. One interviewee reflected that, to their knowledge, teachers of mainstream education classrooms do not necessarily have the time to explain issues regarding the everyday life in the education system to immigrant parents as extensively as perhaps required, which they found to thus emphasize the importance of preparatory teachers sharing as much as possible during students' year of preparatory education.

As per subcategory B5, Language Education was brought up by interviewees the most often and was framed as one of the most important goals to reach. Interviewees generally agreed that they found learning Finnish integral for students to succeed, and this was one of the most common measures of support brought up during interviews.

(14) I: And what things do you particularly focus on with students of immigrant background?

T4: Well Finnish language of course, that's our... So we have fairly kind of low but ambitious goals regarding Finnish. A kind of developing rudimentary skills should be reached here, so that they can move on forward.

In this extract the interviewee highlights that during preparatory education the main goal is for students to reach a level of competence in Finnish necessary for moving to a mainstream education class focusing on the basic education curriculum. Thus, at least during the initial stages of immigrant students' time in school, the development of Finnish language skills is highlighted in the data. When asked about what arrangements in general schools had to support their immigrant students, the majority of the interviewees brought up Finnish as a second language education and remedial education in Finnish as a second language. However, one interviewee pointed out that although students in mainstream education do have a chance to be given remedial support in Finnish as a second language, in their experience this does not always happen to the extent it should.

(15) I: How successful are these arrangements, these that you told me about, how successful do you think they are?

T4: (...) I'm not very up to date regarding our basic education, but I do know that there are a lot of schools where for example the Finnish as a second language remedial education resource is not used. Like it's not used completely, so the situation could probably be better.

Even though in general the importance of ensuring Finnish language education for immigrant students is emphasized by the interviewees, here the interviewee reflects that in some cases this goal is not worked toward as effectively as it could or should be. It is interesting that although it is highlighted that mastering the language of instruction is essential for succeeding in school and being able to adapt to the society, according to this narrative in some cases it is possible that schools do not use the resources at hand to ensure immigrant students receive all of the linguistic support they may require. Following this narrative, in such a situation the education system can even be said to be doing a disservice to the students, and possibly even hindering their adaptation process.

During one of the interviews the possibility of attending heritage language education was also brought up as a measure which the interviewee believed to support the adaptation of immigrant students. However, it was reflected that arranging such language education for all students who require it can be tricky, and schools may lack the resources to accomplish this. The interviewee also noted that this possibility is completely voluntary, and that as these lessons take place in the evening outside of regular school hours, they believed that many students may choose to not attend these lessons at all.

Finally, moving on to subcategory B6, a few things should be pointed out. Many of the above themes discussed do fall within the goals and actions of preparatory education, e.g. language education, supporting adaptation etc., and thus this could have been omitted as a subcategory. However, many of the interviewees emphasized the importance of preparatory education and the benefits it reaps. Thus, although preparatory education may include many of the themes and measures deemed important individually, due to the importance placed specifically on preparatory education alone during these interviews, it has thus been included as a subcategory. Although many of the measures taken within preparatory education can be

carried out in mainstream education as well, teachers emphasized that preparatory education in itself is an effective method of ensuring e.g. language education for immigrant students.

Three out of five interviewees, who were preparatory education teachers themselves, felt that during preparatory education teachers are able to place focus on teaching as much Finnish to their students as possible before they must enter mainstream education. As is noted in the literature review, it is often found that mastering the language of instruction is essential for students to succeed academically, and thus the importance of preparatory education is even further highlighted.

(16) I: So what things do you focus on particularly with students of immigrant background?

T5: Well, in my opinion preparatory education is (...) it is an extremely important year. Sometimes it can be longer than a year, because it is a kind of start, a beginning to this coming to Finland and adaptation, it creates a base which the foundation for attending basic education in Finland is built on.

In this extract it is highlighted that the 1000 hours of preparatory education can even predict how immigrant students' school path in general begins in Finland. In one interview it was also reflected that the teacher in question found preparatory education to be a good place to share information about the various customs, norms and habits students will face in Finland and within the Finnish education system.

It was also reflected that preparatory education is a good place to learn about all the new and unfamiliar things students face in Finland, as, according to the interviewee's narrative, it is more acceptable for students to protest unfamiliar customs in the preparatory education setting, where all of the students come from different countries.

(17) I: How would you describe or can you say what kind of goals do you or the school have regarding the adaptation of immigrant students?

T1: Well I somehow think that preparatory education is a really good place for the students learn about how to be in a Finnish school and society as well, that here they can act up about those things and practice, and they don't have to get them right the first time, and the kind of pressure is lifted when all of us come from different places, and they don't have to think in a Finnish environment, like I don't belong here or I don't know this. So in that sense it's a really good place to practice all the new things.

Here the interviewee considers that within preparatory education students do not necessarily have as much pressure as they would in a mainstream education class to succeed and "get things right", and do not have to think within a "Finnish" environment, so to say, or feel like they are outsiders. Going to a new school in itself can be daunting for children, and especially so in a new environment where the education system in itself can be completely different from their old one. However, the statement does give reason to wonder what a Finnish environment actually is. It also suggests that the surrounding society does put at least some pressure on immigrant students to conform the conventions of the society, despite teachers promoting multiculturalism within the education system.

4.3 Adaptation Expectations

Having now discussed categories A, the Role of Teachers and the Education System and B, Actions of Importance, where the various roles of teachers in the adaptation process of immigrant students, and the actions that support adaptation were discussed, we move on to the final category C, Adaptation Expectations. In this category the different expectations that teachers were perceived to have regarding immigrant students' adaptation are discussed. Among the expectations or hopes teachers had for their students, I found that teachers hoped for students to develop an Appreciation of Finland, as per the first subcategory C1. Based on the data, interviewees were not expecting for students to assimilate into what they perceived to be Finnish "culture" and abandon their so-called "cultural heritage", but they did express a

wish for students to develop an appreciation of their new society and the education system. Rather than aim to assimilate the students, interviewees deemed it more worthwhile and desirable for students to respect their new society.

(18) I: Is there something that in your opinion, or that the education system and teachers should particularly focus on with immigrant students? For example, when you're trying to help them adapt into the society and Finland.

T1: (...) And of course this, which in a long run is useful, if in addition to linguistic skills is this attitude, that this... for instance this country, this culture, is worthy of respect.

When asked about how this could be achieved, this particular interviewee seemed to trust that realizing the possibilities that Finland and the Finnish education system can offer could result in the development of such respect.

(19) I: How do you think that teachers and schools could help create that kind of attitude for the students, that this is place and culture is worthy of respect?

T1: (...) And I myself trust that teachers in this country have professional skills and ability to offer skills, offer the best kind of teaching and very inexpensively. When you realize that, that this opens doors in the society and offers possibilities, and that we're not here to bully or torment, but to ensure that they can get skills, knowledge and survival skills, but for that to happen you need to follow the rules of the school.

It was also reflected that in the interviewee's opinion Finnish teachers have the ability to offer immigrant students knowledge and skills they need, seemingly implying that realizing what they can gain from the education system will help develop a respect for Finland in general. It also seems to be implied that realizing the possibilities offered by the education system and society would also lead to following the rules and norms of the school and society.

To continue on to subcategory C2, Integration, it could be perceived from statements made in the interviews that teachers hoped for immigrant students to integrate into Finnish society. This was also at times clearly stated by interviewees. One interviewee in particular stated that they hoped for immigrant students to integrate and become part of Finnish society. They hoped that students of immigrant background could in the future help uphold the society, the culture and the country in general. It was also often pointed out by interviewees that as a goal, immigrant students should be able to hold on to their so-called “heritage culture”, opposite to what a desire for assimilation would express.

(20) I: And what about, I was thinking, and I was interested... This of course, I read this from the curriculum of preparatory education, so since you don't have a preparatory class, but I was interested to hear if you could tell me, since the curriculum says that the cultural identity of students is supported, and cultural background is taken into consideration during education, so how does that happen in practice? Is it possible?

T2: (...) The goal is that an immigrant student can retain their own culture, appreciate it, express it, clearly be a representative of that culture but at the same time experience that they are also a part of Finnish society, part of this Finnish school, and a sense of belonging in the class.

Although it is not stated straightforward that the goal here is integration, it can be deduced from the answer that the interviewee opposes the notion of assimilation, and instead embraces the notion of integration. Opposite to assimilation, it is a goal that students can express what here is deemed to be “their culture” while still remain a part of Finnish society. Here it is also interesting to note that the teacher interviewed acknowledges smaller communities of practice that students can be a part of, going from the society all the way to school and classes. People living within the confines of a nation do not only belong to one group, that here being Finnish society, but smaller groups within it, such as school and a single

classroom. For immigrant children and even adolescents, feeling a sense of belonging in smaller groups, e.g. classrooms and a school, is at that age perhaps more meaningful than feeling a sense of belonging in a large concept such as Finland or Finnish society.

In addition to hoping that students integrate and respect Finland, interviewees expressed an expectation that students gain an Ability to Function in their environment, as per subcategory C3. When asked about the meaning of cultural adaptation in general, interviewees often brought up the importance of learning to function in the new environment. It was pointed out that upon migration the lives of students change profoundly, as their surroundings, familiar people, habits and customs, and perhaps even the climate around them are different. In such a situation it was deemed important for students to learn to function in such profoundly different surroundings.

(21) I: What does cultural adaptation mean to you?

T3: (...) But then cultural adaptation is probably an ability to somehow read the culture so that you get along and feel safety, some kind of sense of belonging, and with the youths probably even more like, that they don't get into situations where they don't know what to do or how they should be or get into embarrassing situations (...)

In this extract it is expressed that by being able to function in the environment, students will be able to avoid situations that are embarrassing for them. The interviewee found that youths in particular do not necessarily want to get into situations where they may embarrass themselves, which emphasizes the importance of individuals being able to function in their surroundings. However, it is also expressed that cultural adaptation entails that immigrants feel a sense of belonging. This brings us to the final subcategory of Adaptation Expectations, C4, sense of belonging.

However important the notion of being able to function in the new society or integrate was deemed by the interviewees, they also found it particularly important for students to feel a

Sense of Belonging in their environment, which is our final subcategory, C5. This notion becomes apparent in the previous extract, as well as the following one:

(22) I: What does cultural adaptation mean to you?

T3: If I think about myself or students, I maybe focus on different things. Like if we talk about students then I think that for them an essential sign of cultural adaptation is that they feel safe and welcome. And I try to focus on that a lot in the school community, that students feel that they belong in the group, even if we are studying in our own group.

Here it is reflected that as a result of adaptation – or perhaps as a condition for adaptation – immigrant students should be able to feel safe and welcome in the new society and feel like they belong in the community along with their peers. Once more, this particular teacher considers the importance of feeling a sense of belonging in the school community, not only Finland as a society. As was reflected above, for young children and adolescents it might be more meaningful to feel a sense of belonging in smaller communities more immediate to them, such as their schools and classrooms. In addition, it could be that by feeling a sense of belonging early on in such significant communities, this paves the way for feeling a sense of belonging in Finnish society as general.

In this chapter we have now considered the significance of three categories and their subcategories: A, the role of teachers in the adaptation process of immigrant students; B, actions of importance which support the adaptation process of immigrant students; and C, the expectations teachers hold regarding the adaptation outcomes of immigrant students. Based on the data, teachers had very similar expectations for their students, and they perceived their roles in immigrant students' adaptation process as well as actions of importance in very similar ways. In the following chapter the significance of this data in regard to the research questions of this study will be discussed.

5 DISCUSSION

To start off, the first research question will be discussed and answered:

RQ1: How can teachers' expectations regarding immigrant students' cultural adaptation be related to adaptation theories?

The data revealed that based on their narratives, interviewees were found to have the following expectations for children of immigrant background regarding their adaptation to Finland: for these students to develop an appreciation of Finland, to be able to function in the new environment, to have a sense of belonging in the society, and to integrate into Finnish society. Some tentative connections to adaptation theories can be seen from the answers of the interviewees, however not quite as strongly or as clearly as one might expect. Rather, connections can be made if one wishes to do so, but none of the interviewees can really be said to clearly or religiously follow the principles of any given adaptation theory discussed in this study. However, it is interesting to discuss in what ways teachers' adaptation expectations relate to or differ from adaptation theories.

Right away it can be said that according to their narratives, teachers' expectations in this study did not align with the principles of Kim's (2001) theory of cross-cultural adaptation. If the teachers who took part in this study were to express a desire for children of immigrant background to follow the guidelines of Kim (2001) on the path to assimilation, their answers in the interviews ought to have been drastically different. Interviewees generally expressed that instead of expecting students to shed their so-called "cultural heritage", students should be free to express themselves and their customs freely in school. In fact, it was expressed in one interview quite straightforward that the interviewee in question, according to their narrative, did not expect that children of immigrant background become stereotypical Finns. This in itself is already at odds with the central feature of Kim's (2001) theory, in which this is a requirement for successful adaptation.

Kim (2001) also speaks of those who do not wish to assimilate as “cultural outsiders” (p. 5), a statement which I find cannot be connected to the sentiments expressed by the interviewees in this study. In fact, teachers aimed to bring up issues of multiculturalism, the variety of different customs, languages, and norms within their teaching in the classroom to highlight the fact that there are many ways for people to live and do things in the world. Although the effectiveness of the methods used can be argued, the data suggest that teachers intended to show students that there are many ways to be a member of Finnish society, and that one does not have to follow a stereotype of Finnishness in order to be accepted in the community. Opposite to what cross-cultural adaptation theory promotes, the interviewees of this study expressed on multiple occasions a wish to promote multiculturalism within the education system in various ways. It seems that it is more and more the goal of the education system to recognize the differences among the students and appreciate those differences instead of attempting to fit each student within a cultural mold, so to say.

However, whether teachers aim to accept students as “diverse Finns” or as “welcome guests” remains somewhat unclear in this study. Many of the interviewees did make a point of introducing “Finnish” customs to their immigrant students while maintaining that immigrant students are encouraged to express and introduce their own customs in school. This can create a rift between immigrant students and what teachers may perceive as “native” Finns, suggesting that there is a certain way to do things and live in Finland, and be a “true Finn”, which immigrants may not be able to achieve. On the other hand, other interviewees did express clearly that they wish for immigrant students to integrate into Finnish society and aid in running the society in the future, suggesting that they accept the notion that “Finnishness” could be something diverse, comprising of range of ways of living life in Finland. Thus, I believe here it is not possible to create a general statement of whether teachers perceive their students as “welcome guests”, or “Finnish”.

Additionally, Kim's (2001) notions of assimilation as well as teachers' notions of "Finnish customs" and "Finnishness" are somewhat problematic in general. Although it is easy to slip into essentialist language and notions of culture and claim that there exists a "national profile" which individuals can assimilate into, in reality Finland, nor any other nation, does not have such a fixed and stable profile to fit into. Societies in general are constantly changing, and "Finnishness" itself has quite likely transformed quite a bit from what it was even a few decades ago. In addition, societies consist of individuals, all who are diverse and do not fit into a single mold or profile. Finns, for example, do not all follow the same customs and do not necessarily have the same values. Thus, introducing a certain "profile" of Finland and "Finnishness" within the education system can be misleading.

As mentioned in the background chapter, Kim (2001) has been criticized for assuming that a unidirectional relationship exists between individuals and the society within the adaptation process, expecting that only individuals change to fit into the new society, while the new society remains unchanged (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 274). The data in this study suggests that such an assumption does not necessarily hold true. In fact, based on the narratives of the interviewees it would seem that the education system at the very least has made changes to accommodate immigrant students. Some examples of this are preparatory education and Finnish as a second language education, as well as teachers' self-reported attempts to take multiculturalism into account during teaching, and the acknowledgement of different customs that students may have, and which may have to be taken into consideration within the education system. Whether or not these changes are quite as fundamental as De la Garza and Ono (2015) mean, take place to the extent as reported, or are as effective as intended, it is still a hint that the Finnish education system may have acknowledged its need to change to accommodate students of various backgrounds.

To continue the discussion onto another theory, based on the issues discussed above, narratives of the interviewees suggest that the theoretical framework of Gibson (1995) does not fit into the principles that teachers in Finland seem to be following nowadays. According to Gibson's (1995) research, teachers often practice subtractive acculturation, according to which schools expect children of immigrant background to replace their cultural customs and norms with those of the new society (p. 10). However, as already becomes apparent from the discussion regarding Kim's (2001) theory, this does not seem to hold true any longer. If we were to keep following Gibson's (1995) framework to express attitudes of Finnish teachers, they would be more likely to be following additive acculturation, where individuals are viewed to be adding new tools and skills to their cultural repertoire (p. 10).

Based on the results of this study, Gibson's (1995) theory seems dated as of now, with at least the Finnish education system seemingly having migrated towards a more positive and inclusive approach to culture and multiculturalism. This is certainly an interesting shift and could be studied more in future research. Yet, it needs to be considered that even though based on the narratives of the interviewees of this study Gibson's (1995) theory seems to be outdated in the Finnish context, it could be that in the education systems of other countries these ideas and practices are still put in use more commonly.

However, even a well-meaning notion of "embracing diversity" which the interviewees of this study expressed can have its issues. "Embracing diversity" can result in the differences between students being unnecessarily emphasized, which can lead to immigrant children being othered. Additionally, such promotion of multiculturalism may in fact be based on inaccurate, an essentialist understanding of culture, which can lead to misrepresentation and even harmful generalizations.

Many of the interviewees often mentioned “integration” in their interviews in reference to children of immigrant background and their adaptation, and in general a desire for these students to integrate into Finnish society could be interpreted based on the narratives of the interviewees. While the notion of integration does not necessarily quite resonate with Kim’s (2001) theory, and only on some parts with Gibson’s (1995) theory, a connection can be drawn to Berry’s (2005) acculturation strategies, specifically integration and multiculturalism. As integration is a strategy from the point of view of the acculturating individual, here it is more accurate to use the term multiculturalism, according to which an integrative approach as well as diversity are embraced by the new society (Berry, 2005, p. 706).

According to Berry (2005), individuals applying the integration strategy want to both preserve their so-called “heritage culture” and also be a part of the larger society in their new country (p. 705). Based on the interviews it is apparent that the teachers taking part in this study support this style of adaptation with their students of immigrant background. As was mentioned above while discussing Kim (2001), interviewees reported a wish for students to be able to express their so-called “cultural heritage” and customs, and it was stated that these students were not expected to assimilate and abandon their values or customs while favoring what the interviewees perceived to be “Finnish culture” and customs. Thus, in this way a connection can be made to Berry’s (2005) acculturation strategies.

However, although interviewees in general claimed to advocate respecting what they perceived to be students’ so-called “cultural heritage” and allowing them to express this, it was still expected that students follow norms and values teachers perceived to be present in the Finnish society. As was mentioned in one interview, customs and values which the interviewee perceived to be clearly at odds with what they perceived as Finnish values (e.g. inequality between genders, racism) were not tolerated. This mindset is quite problematic, as such values as expressed in the interview are not inherently unique to any particular societies. These values

are present in groups all around the world, not only in specific societies, countries or groups. In addition, although the interviewee may find these to generally represent Finnish values, people and groups exist within Finland who quite openly oppose such values. Thus, although some individuals within the education system may aim to promote diversity and integration within the education system, essentialist mindsets where “cultures” or societies are rated, so to say, do still exist.

It should also be noted that similar to all of the theories mentioned above, the interviewees who took part in this study also tended to express quite essentialist ideas of culture. Data showed that interviewees often assumed that members of a society, e.g. Finland, would follow the same customs and norms. As a result, even when promoting multiculturalism and students’ freedom to express themselves, an underlying essentialist notion of culture was present. This is problematic on a number of levels. Although the wish to promote multiculturalism, for example, comes from a well-meaning place, it can easily lead to an assumption that because students come from a certain country, they must all follow similar customs and have similar values, thus essentially placing individuals within stereotypes which are not necessarily true. This then can actually limit immigrant students’ freedom to express themselves, as from the beginning they are assumed to be a representative of a society or “culture”. As was mentioned by the interviewee in interview extract 9, in order to allow immigrant students true freedom to express themselves, their customs and values, it is better to not make any assumptions, but rather to ask when needed – just as with any other student.

Differential adaptation theory as presented by De la Garza and Ono (2015) is generally quite difficult to relate to the expectations and actions of the interviewees in this study. As the theory does not present any clear adaptation outcomes or steps that must be taken to achieve adaptation, there is not much that can be used to connect to teachers’ expectations. What can be said regarding this theory is that based on the narratives of the interviewees, Finnish society,

or at least the education system, is adjusting to having a larger number of immigrant students, and thus it could be said that the society is being somewhat changed by migrants.

Some of the issues teachers brought up in their interviews do of course connect to issues brought up in adaptation theories, e.g. learning the language of instruction or communicative competence and learning to function in the new society. However, I would not necessarily claim that based specifically on these issues, teachers' expectations are somehow connected to any of the theories discussed. Instead, being able to communicate in the new society and being able to function seem more like basic conditions required to adjust to any new country or environment. Especially communicative competence, or learning the language of instruction, was in this study mainly directed towards the need to be able to succeed academically. This was also connected to the ability to make friends in the new society, but academic success was certainly emphasized.

So, to answer the first research question: based on the narratives expressed by the interviewees, it is possible to relate teachers' expectations regarding the adaptation of children of immigrant background to adaptation theories to a certain extent. Based on their narratives, teachers can be seen to favor an integration or multiculturalism strategy as formulated by Berry (2005). Teachers expressed a support of multiculturalism and diversity in the Finnish society, as well as students' right to express their cultural identities and heritage as they wish. Based on their narratives, teachers could be seen to clearly oppose the notion of assimilation which Kim (2001) promotes, finding it more valuable to embrace diversity in the society. It was interesting to see that, based on this study, the theory of adaptation presented by Gibson (1995), where the education system is presented to favor a form of assimilation, no longer seems to hold true.

Some basic issues, such as the ability to function in the society and learning the local language, were also raised by the teachers interviewed, but personally I would not necessarily find this to clearly connect to adaptation theories. These are features of adaptation presented in

some adaptation theories (e.g. Berry, 1997, and Kim, 2001), but they are not necessarily merely connected to cultural adaptation but rather to having to settle down in a new environment in general.

Next, I will discuss my second research question, which is as follows:

RQ2: How do teachers perceive their role in the adaptation process of immigrant students?

To review, based on the interview data, three roles could be identified for teachers in relation to students of immigrant background. Teachers could be seen to act as role models, influencers as well as providers of routine. Most of the teachers interviewed found that their role in the adaptation process of immigrant students is very important.

Interviewees found that particularly preparatory education teachers were the closest Finnish adult that immigrant students are familiar with in Finland, as they spend quite a lot of time with the students during school days. Interviewees believed that students attending preparatory education do not necessarily have the chance to create lasting relationships into integration classes. Students were said to spend less time integrating into mainstream classes than they do attending preparatory education, and in the end, they often change schools after their 1000 hours of preparatory education end. Thus, according to these narratives, teachers can have a big impact on the students and their adaptation, at this stage often even a bigger impact than students' peers.

As such a familiar adult, some teachers also perceived that they act as role models who can inspire students to strive to go forward in their lives. Of course, teachers can inspire all students in such a way, not only immigrant students. So, teachers acting as role models to immigrant students does not necessarily mean that teachers contribute merely to the adaptation process of immigrant students as role models, but to the lives and experience of all their

students. However, following the perceptions of teachers in this study, as significant adults in their lives, teachers can still be assumed to affect the adaptation of immigrant students.

It could be reflected how the adaptation process would be affected if students of immigrant background were taught by adults who themselves are of immigrant background. In fact, it has been shown that teachers of a migrant and minority background can have a positive effect on immigrant students (NESSE, 2008, p. 8). Thus, teachers of minority background could act even more as role models facilitating the adaptation of immigrant students than native teachers. However, as is pointed out by OECD (2015), this should not be the only strategy used to facilitate the adaptation of immigrant students (p. 89).

Interviewees also found that they have a direct effect on students' adaptation by introducing Finland and Finnish customs, e.g. cross-country skiing, ice-skating, certain common foods, to them in school. Once again, preparatory education was seen to be an important place to teach students about Finnish customs, norms, and the Finnish education system. In general, being able to interact with members of the new society face-to-face helps children gain knowledge of the new language, customs, and norms (Kaman Lee, Chen 2000, pp. 765 – 766). Thus, contact with preparatory education teachers and mainstream education teachers can have a great impact on students' adaptation.

However, this does beg the question as to who exactly selects what customs and activities are “Finnish” and what are not? If the examples presented above are considered (cross-country skiing, ice skating, eating certain foods), it needs to be taken into account that just as values are not widely shared by the society, such customs are certainly not followed by all the members of Finnish society, whether or not they have an immigrant background. If we were to entertain the assumption that such Finnish customs were widely shared by all members of Finnish society, the next issue we face is whether or not it is even possible for individual teachers to represent all of Finland and its customs to their immigrant students.

Finally, one last point needs to be made regarding the customs presented in the example. These customs, skiing, ice-skating etc., are commonly introduced to all students within the Finnish education system, regardless of their background. Some children, regardless of background, may ski, skate or eat certain foods in school for the first time. Thus, perhaps instead of making a claim of introducing “Finnish customs” to immigrant children, it would be more apt to say that students are taking part in regular school activities along with their peers, who may or may not be experiencing the same things for the first time.

According to interviewees, teachers do not only introduce Finnish customs and the education system to students, but their parents as well. In addition to helping parents adjust to Finland and their communities, this could aid children in adjusting to Finland as well. According to Kaman Lee & Chen (2000), parents who are more adapted have more knowledge of the new society – and in this case the education system as well – and are thus able to aid their children in their adaptation process as well (p. 768). Thus, Finnish teachers educating parents about Finnish customs or customs of the education system can also help their students adapt to Finland along with their parents. According to one interviewee in particular, the role of preparatory education teachers may be highlighted in this matter as well: it was reflected that, according to their experience, teachers in mainstream education do not necessarily have the time to address such issues and inform immigrant parents of issues relating to features of the education system to the same extent as preparatory education teachers, who deal with such issues daily. Thus, the importance of preparatory education is highlighted once more.

The idea of a teacher’s role in the adaptation process of immigrant children is quite interesting from the point of view of adaptation theories as well. As has been criticized, Kim (2001) assumes that the relationship between individuals and the society in the adaptation process is a one-way street, so to say: individuals change, the society does not (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 274). In general, Kim (2001) gives an image of adaptation where the society is

passive, and individuals are active, with the society not having to do anything in order for individuals to adjust to the new culture. However, based on the interview data of this study, teachers find their role to be quite big, with them making an effort to help their immigrant students adjust to the new society. Teachers and the education system are taking a big role in the adaptation process, not leaving the individual to figure out customs and rules all alone, as Kim (2001) somewhat suggests.

In fact, as De la Garza and Ono (2015) and Berry (2005) recognize in their theories, the society, and teachers as a part of that society, could in fact hinder immigrant children's adaptation with their own actions and attitudes. Which brings us to the next issue. It should also be noted that, based on the interviewees' narratives, teachers' role in immigrant students' adaptation is not only aimed directly at their adaptation, but they also have an important role in influencing the surrounding environment and other students. The data suggests that teachers can influence the attitudes of other students in the classroom and in the school, by promoting multiculturalism and resolving issues that arise within the class. As is discussed by Este & Van Ngo (2011), immigrant children may experience racism within the education system, on the part of both teachers and fellow students (p. 38). Thus, the role of teachers as influencers within their classrooms and schools is especially important. It was pointed out by interviewees that it is important for teachers to intervene if students show racist attitudes, which they may have learnt from their homes.

Based on the narratives of the interviewees, teachers are able to influence the attitudes of those who will in the future form an integral part of Finnish society and the immediate community that immigrant students are a part of. Not only are teachers helping immigrant students adjust to Finnish society, teachers are helping the rest of all the students of their schools, and perhaps even their surrounding community, adjust to a changing society and accept diversity. This is interesting in reference to adaptation theories as well. Researchers such

as Kim (2001) assume that in the adaptation process the new society remains unchanged, racism and all, while migrant individuals are inherently changed by the surrounding society (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 274). However, the data suggests that the opposite seems to be happening here, with teachers embracing the notion that adaptation is not a one-way street.

As De la Garza and Ono (2015) describe it, adaptation is not a one-way process (p. 277) and the Finnish education system and teachers seem to have embraced this. Instead of assuming that immigrant children must assimilate and adapt to the new society without question, teachers, according to their own narratives, are aiming to make changes in the society as well, by influencing the attitudes of their students. In addition, not only are teachers seemingly making efforts to change attitudes of their students, the education system is shifting to better accommodate the backgrounds of their students: dietary restrictions and religious backgrounds are taken into consideration, and students are allowed and even encouraged to introduce their own customs at school. Thus, the education system, and perhaps even the society, is not remaining unchanged, as Kim (2001) suggests, but is gradually becoming more inclusive.

Yet, encouraging students to introduce their customs is not necessarily only a positive notion. Although this this notion may certainly have been well-meaning, it can lead to serious issues. As was discussed earlier, young adolescents, for example, do not necessarily wish to stand out among their peers, and thus singling them out can in fact lead to the education system othering immigrant students. Thus, it is perhaps advisable that teachers and the education system treat their immigrant students just the same as all their other students, and not single them out as “different”.

However, although the teachers interviewed for this study generally had a positive attitude towards diversity and multiculturalism, it needs to be taken into account that teachers as people hold varying values and attitudes regarding migration and multiculturalism. Although in this study the positive influence teachers can have on their students was highlighted, the

opposite effect may very well be true depending on the attitudes individual teachers have. Just as the teachers in this study aimed to promote positive attitudes regarding multiculturalism and speak out against racism, individual teachers may just as well promote racist attitudes and have an adverse effect on the adaptation of immigrant students. Depending on the teacher, the school environment may be intolerant, unwelcoming and unsafe for students of immigrant background. Upon having to face discrimination, the society and education system may in turn affect immigrant children's willingness to adjust to the new society, which De la Garza and Ono (2015) point out is a possible outcome of hostility present in the new society (p. 281).

Teachers' and the education system's role in offering students routine and safety in their everyday life was also connected to the role of teachers in students' adaptation. As mentioned in the background chapter, immigrant children differ from other children in the education system in that they have unique stresses relating to their migration background (Hicks et al., 1993, as cited by Este & Van Ngo, 2011, p. 28). In addition, immigrant children are not a unified mass with identical experiences, but instead have varying backgrounds and migration experiences. As Kurtz-Costes & Pungello (2000) point out, many of these children may have experienced trauma, experienced violence, or been separated from their family members (p. 123 – 124). Some interviewees reflected on the special difficulties this brings with it, as teachers do not have the resources or skills to deal with any trauma that students of immigrant background may have experienced before, during or even after migration. However, it was pointed out that what teachers and the school can offer students is safety and routine. No matter what may have happened in the students' lives, they can go to school every morning where familiar adults greet them every day.

And thus, to sum up and answer the second research question – how teachers perceive their role in the adaptation process of immigrant students – teachers in this study found that their role in the adaptation process of immigrant students is very important. Not only did they

find that they introduce Finland and Finnish customs to students and their parents, they also influence the attitudes of other students, promote diversity and demote racism and intolerance. According to these narratives, teachers can make a change in the attitudes of future members of society regarding diversity, making it a more accepting and welcoming place for people of all backgrounds. They can inspire students to strive for success in their lives, and create safety and routine, which can help students feel at home in their new country. However, it should be kept in mind that depending on the individual values one holds, teachers could just as well have an adverse effect on the adaptation process of immigrant students.

Finally, I will discuss the following research question:

RQ3: Based on teachers' narratives, how are they and the education system supporting immigrant students' adaptation?

When beginning this study, I was interested in finding out what teachers themselves found to be important for them and the education system to do to support the adaptation of immigrant students, as well as how their narratives related to the recommendations presented by non-governmental organizations such as Eurydice (2004) and OECD (2015). As mentioned earlier, Eurydice (2004) recommends that actions regarding "the integration of immigrant children into education systems should be taken in three areas: adapting the system to their special educational needs; including lessons on the language and culture of the country of origin in mainstream school curricula; and promoting intercultural education for all" (p. 15). A decade later, OECD (2015) formulated their own list of guidelines for education systems to ensure the integration of immigrant students. To reiterate, OECD (2015) recommends language instruction, high-quality early childhood education, avoiding the concentration of disadvantage, reaching out to immigrant parents, and encouraging all teachers to prepare for diverse classrooms (p. 9 – 10).

Based on the interviews, there were a number of things that teachers found important for them and the education system to do in order to support immigrant students' adaptation into Finland and Finnish society, and to a certain extent the narratives of teachers indeed did compare with the recommendations of Eurydice (2004) and OECD (2015). Among the things brought up by interviewees were the need to offer and attend teacher training, assure immigrant students' integration among their peers, support students' language education, offer preparatory education and promote multiculturalism in schools. Preparatory education teachers also reflected that they educate parents regarding the customs and education system of Finland, but not quite regarding the measures that support the adaptation of immigrant children. Thus, the narratives of teachers were similar with the recommendations of non-governmental organizations on these parts: offering language instruction, encouraging teachers to prepare for diverse classrooms, adapting the system to the needs of immigrant students, promoting intercultural education for all, reaching out to immigrant parents, and including lessons on the language of origin of students.

It needs to be pointed out, that Finland does indeed offer early childhood education for all children, but this topic did not come up in the interviews, as the focus was mainly on Finnish comprehensive school. The need to avoid the concentration of disadvantage was not quite discussed either, although some interviewees did reflect on the nature of how students are spread into schools depending on where they happen to live. One interviewee did also highlight at the end of the interview that work needs to be done to prevent the creation of disadvantaged neighborhoods in Finland, however this was not a focus of any of the interviews. Thus, it can be said that the narratives of teachers are quite similar with the recommendations of non-governmental organizations to quite a large degree, even though most interviewees did reflect that they have not heard of such recommendations before.

As discussed earlier, teachers found it particularly important to offer students language instruction early on. This is also recommended by OECD (2015). In addition, teachers mentioned that students are offered Finnish as a second language education throughout their years in the Finnish education system. It was reflected that it is important to invest in proper Finnish as a second language education, as well as remedial instruction when needed. Preparatory education in particular was found to be key in ensuring students learn the language of instruction, as it offers students the chance to focus on developing their language skills for one year, after which they can join their peers in mainstream education.

Many adaptation theorists (e.g. Kim, 2001 and Berry, 2005) also highlight the importance of migrants gaining communicative competence in order to adapt successfully into a new culture. Although, Kim (2001) once again tends to assume that individuals need to replace the old with the new: one must learn new communicative practices while letting go of old ones (p. 15). Luckily, in the case of this study interviewees did not seem to express similar stances. In general, interviewees seemed to have the goal of having students succeed with their education in mind when ensuring linguistic competence, but it was mentioned in some interviews that it is also motivating to learn the language in order to make friends in the new country. Being able to operate in the local language and knowing even the slightest amount of Finnish was also seen as a key that could open many doors for immigrant students in the society and was thus ensuring language education can be seen as an integral part of supporting students' adaptation.

In addition, heritage language education is indeed offered by Finnish schools, once again colliding with Kim's (2001) assumption that the old must be replaced with the new and the majority. However, although heritage language education is an option in Finland and is indeed recommended by OECD (2015), this opportunity was only brought up once during the data gathering process. Even then, although it was mentioned in the interview that heritage

language education does support adaptation into the new society, it was highlighted that this opportunity is voluntary for the students. It was reflected that due to the fact that such instruction is offered after official school hours, students themselves may choose to not attend such instruction.

If heritage language education does indeed help immigrant children adapt to the new country, it should perhaps be examined how it would be possible to offer such instruction in a manner that will encourage immigrant children to attend heritage language education. Then again, it needs to be considered that students themselves may not want to attend heritage language education for multiple reasons and that it may not support all immigrant students as intended.

Thus, based on the narratives expressed in this study, teachers and the Finnish education system seem to be on the same page with organizations such as OECD (2015) and Eurydice (2004), as well as adaptation theorists such as Kim (2001), that learning the language of instruction – or communicative practices of the new society – in the new society as soon as possible is a key factor in helping immigrant children adjust to the new society. Of course, from the point of view of the education system, language education is particularly important for students to enter mainstream education and succeed academically. However, teachers also reflected that learning the local language is also motivating in creating relationships with locals and other children who speak Finnish.

This brings us to another issue interviewees found important in helping students adapt to Finland: integrating immigrant children with their peers. Integration among peers is not mentioned in the recommendations of OECD (2015) or Eurydice (2004), although OECD (2015) does offer a short passage to reflect on immigrant children's sense of belonging in school (p. 6). Teachers found there were multiple ways to accomplish this. Events aimed at all students of the school were seen to help immigrant students integrate with their peers quite

well, as well as modifying actions aimed at all students of the school and modifying them to suit the needs of immigrant students. By attending events for all students, immigrant students can feel to be a part of the community in school, and these events do not necessarily require any special arrangements on the part of the school. It was reflected that other events, e.g. tutoring for new students, can be tailored so that they answer to the needs of immigrant students. Thus, it can be seen that actions aimed for adaptation of immigrant students do not always need to be tailormade for these students in particular: taking part in school activities with peers is quite useful in accomplishing integration and a sense of belonging.

In this study I have expressed a need for policy and research taking into account ignore students' sense of belonging when it comes to discussing their adaptation within the education system and in a new society. However, based on the narratives expressed in this study, Finnish teachers seem to find it important to ensure that immigrant children integrate among their peers and, indeed, feel they belong in the school community. As OECD (2015) points out, students' sense of belonging in school is a big indicator of whether or not they are integrated into the surrounding environment (p. 6). Finnish teachers seem to have been able to take this into account while reflecting on what actions they need to take to aid their immigrant students.

Within preparatory education it was also deemed important for immigrant students to attend mainstream education once in a while, as a form of integrating students into mainstream education. This was also deemed effective, as it would allow students to spend time with their peers and experience what mainstream education in Finland is like in practice. Interviewees did bring up that other methods of integrating and teaching many immigrant students have been tested in other schools around Finland. According to these narratives, some schools have opted out of the preparatory education method, instead choosing to have immigrant students enter mainstream education straight away, while some schools have decided to test out mainstream education classes consisting only of immigrant students.

Preparatory education teachers particularly expressed that although they cannot say much about the success of such trials, they themselves find that preparatory education is very effective and beneficial for the reasons mentioned above: in their opinion they offer the students the chance to dedicate time to learning the language of instruction, learn about local customs and the education system, and not have pressure to know things right away put on them.

Kim (2001), however, might disagree with such a notion. From the point of view of cross-cultural adaptation theory, it ought to be the goal to place immigrant students into mainstream education straight away, as Kim (2001) does tend to frown upon so-called “ethnic enclaves”, which De la Garza and Ono (2015), on the other hand, do not at all reproach.

De la Garza and Ono (2015), on the other hand, recognize that within what they and Kim (2001) term so-called “ethnic enclaves” – which, granted, preparatory education probably cannot be fully described as – allows for migrants to live in relative peace from the new society, and access to such spaces allows migrants to accept minimal assimilation pressures from the new culture (De la Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 277). Thus, in preparatory education immigrant students can in relative peace adjust to the Finnish education system and unfamiliar customs, without any outside pressure.

Moving on to the importance of multicultural education, Eurydice (2004) recommends that intercultural education should be promoted for all students, not just immigrant children within education systems (p. 15). Teachers who took part in this study seemed to have a consensus that this is a step that teachers and schools should take and found it important to promote multiculturalism in their classrooms to all students. Teachers had different strategies to accomplish this, though in general many reflected bringing up different cultures and languages during regular teaching. Whether or not this is exactly the method Eurydice (2004) intended is unclear, but the teachers interviewed seemed quite satisfied that bringing up other

cultures in teaching was effective. In addition, it was mentioned in one interview that a new topic was being discussed in their class called, roughly translated “our common world”, which allows for students to look at their origins more deeply. Thus, steps have been taken to ensure the success of intercultural education in the education system.

However, the Finnish education system has been criticized for the nature of the multicultural education it offers in the past. For one, it has been criticized that the Finnish education system lacks a consistent approach to multicultural education (Dervin et al., 2012, p. 1). This perhaps is reflected in how teachers expressed most of their endeavors into multicultural education to have to do with bringing up other cultures and languages in the midst of other basic education. Although in general it is a positive feature of Finnish education that teachers are fairly free to choose how they teach their classes, in this particular case it does leave room for mistakes.

In addition, multicultural education in Finland has been criticized for being mainly concerned with learning about “the others”, equaling white Finnishness with being the norm (Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2014, p. 168 – 169). Although the data suggests the teachers taking part in this study did seem to wish to promote multiculturalism in a positive way within the education system, in some statements it could be detected that, consciously or unconsciously, a comparison was created between local culture and other cultures. This could be detected in situations such as where local and “other” norms and values were compared (e.g. as per extract 10 in this thesis).

To reiterate, based on the data it seems that up until now multicultural education has depended quite a lot on the willingness and interest of teachers. As according to some of the interviewees multicultural education for teachers has been lacking in the past, it can be said that the basis for this may have been quite weak. It needs to be taken into account, that although the teachers taking part in this study did report to have been very active in looking for

information, educating themselves, and bringing up multiculturalism in their teaching, not every teacher in Finland will necessarily be willing to go through the required trouble

Relating to the issue of multicultural education for students, interviewees indeed found it important to attend training regarding the education of immigrant students. OECD (2015) particularly suggests for all teachers to prepare themselves for diverse classes (p. 9), and the teachers interviewed for this study seem to agree with that sentiment. However, as mentioned in the findings, teachers often found it hard or not possible to attend education regarding multicultural education. It was reflected that resources to attend such education were lacking, and locally such education is rarely offered. Teachers found that often they had to rely on skills and knowledge they had accumulated from earlier experiences and jobs, as well as search for information independently. Thus, here some improvements could certainly be made. Efforts should be made to offer multicultural training for teachers locally, and schools should aim to support their teachers when they hope to attend such training. In addition, universities should perhaps invest in arranging education for upcoming teachers regarding the education for multicultural classes. Once again, the education system should not rely solely on the efforts and interest of individuals when it comes to ensuring teachers are prepared to teach multicultural classes.

Finally, issues discussed in the background did not seem to bring up issues of support which teachers brought up in their interviews, these including matters such as talking and listening to their students, getting to know the students in order to know if any issues were arising, and building general trust. However, as was often mentioned in the interviews, it could simply be that these are issues that are not particular to immigrant students. Teachers want to know all of their students and want all of their students to be heard, not only those with an immigrant background. Although it is important to take into account the issues that affect immigrant students in particular and offer assistance in the areas that are crucial for these

students to thrive in the education system and in their communities, ultimately immigrant children are also just children. Based on the narratives of the interviewees taking part in this study, when supporting immigrant students and their adaptation in their new societies, it may not be necessary to focus simply on these students' immigrant status: instead, the data suggests that supporting immigrant students as children and as students is quite beneficial. This could suggest that focusing on immigrant children simply as new students could help them adjust better to the new society and environment and help avoid othering them.

To sum up, and answer research question 3, Finnish teachers seem to find it important to use methods and take action on points similar to those that the OECD and Eurydice (2004) bring up in their reports. Interviewees found it important to offer and attend teacher training, assure immigrant students' integration among their peers, support students' language education, offer preparatory education, and promote multiculturalism in schools. However, as De la Garza and Ono (2015) argue, cultural adaptation and migration experiences are all very unique, and according to them it is impossible to create a universal theory based on such a variety of experiences (p. 270). Similarly, although interviewees in this study have brought up a variety of actions that can be taken to support the adaptation of immigrant children into Finland, the migration and adaptation experiences of these children vary. It needs to be taken into account that no one action is necessarily going to be helpful to each individual. Instead, when the need arises, the education system should aim to offer individual help to their immigrant students to help them adjust to their new society.

6 CONCLUSIONS

One aim of this study was to examine how the expectations teachers may have regarding the adaptation process of immigrant students can be related to some adaptation theories in the field of intercultural communication research, e.g. Kim (2001), Berry (1997), Gibson (1995) and De la Garza and Ono (2015). Based on the data some connections to popular adaptation theories could be made, while in some cases it was clear based on teachers' narratives that the notions of some theories, particularly Kim (2001), were not embraced at all. However, possibly unbeknownst to the teachers themselves, teachers did have some determinist and essentialist notions about culture, similar to most adaptation theories discussed in this study. Although connections to adaptation theories could be made, I would not say these connections are obvious or very meaningful, particularly considering the variety of reasons for criticism all of these theories have. Thus, all connections to adaptation theories that have been made in this study are purely out of curiosity.

The data revealed that teachers' expectation regarding the adaptation of immigrant students did not align with the assimilationist notions of Kim (2001). However, some connections could be made to Berry's (2005) theory, as teachers could be seen to embrace a notion of multiculturalism, which Berry (2005) names as a strategy carried out by the new society. Teachers found it preferable that students integrate into Finnish society, by combining features of Finnish society and culture, and their heritage society and culture. The data also revealed that Gibson's (1995) theory of additive acculturation is somewhat dated as well. According to this theory teachers and the education system should be aiming to assimilate immigrant students, which the data of this study reveals teachers were not aiming for. It was quite difficult to try and make any connections to De la Garza and Ono's (2015) theory of differential adaptation, as this theory does not provide a clear framework of adaptation which could be applied to this study.

Another aim I had for this study was to examine how teachers perceive the role that they and the education system in Finland play in the adaptation process of immigrant children. The data revealed that teachers for the most part found that their role in the adaptation process of immigrant children is significant. Not only did teachers perceive that they could affect the adaptation process of immigrant students directly by introducing the education system as well as local customs to the students or by acting as role models, they found that they could affect the attitudes of the rest of the students of the school and the community in the school.

According to narratives, teachers found that they could, and should, correct racist attitudes other students may hold, as well as promote multiculturalism in their schools. By doing this it was perceived that they could create a safe, welcoming space for immigrant students, where they could feel they belong and are a part of the community. This was a discovery I had not quite considered at the beginning of this study, but which I found quite interesting.

The final aim of this thesis was to find out how teachers and the education system are, according to the narratives of teachers, supporting the adaptation process of immigrant children. The data showed that the interviewees found very similar methods important in supporting the adaptation of immigrant students. Teachers found it important to offer language education to students, for teachers to attend training regarding multicultural education, help students integrate among their peers, offer preparatory education to immigrant students, and promote multiculturalism in the education system. I found that many of the issues that teachers found important in fact coincided with recommendations made by non-governmental organizations such as OECD (2015) and Eurydice (2004).

6.1 Limitations of the Study

Because of the small sample size of this study, it is not possible to make any encompassing assumptions about the role teachers play in the adaptation process of immigrant children, nor the expectations teachers may hold regarding the adaptation outcomes of

immigrant children. In addition, it needs to be considered that this study has to do with the point of view of teachers without an immigrant background, and it is completely lacking the point of view of immigrant children themselves. To be able to better consider the role that teachers and the education system plays in the adaptation of immigrant children, it would be more beneficial to study the point of view of immigrant children specifically. However, the findings of this study hopefully prompt for more encompassing future research regarding the adaptation of immigrant children, as well as the role that education systems play in this process.

In addition, although I intended to carry out semi-structured interviews which would not follow the pre-prepared interview questions too strictly, the interviews did turn out to be very similar. Most of the time the interviews tended to follow the foundations of the pre-prepared interview questions, with little variation to what was asked and discussed in the interviews. This was most likely due to my inexperience as an interviewer. The replies of the interviewees did turn out to be very extensive, leaving little need for further questions at the time. However, the lack of variety in the interviews does limit the extent of data that could be collected, and this most likely has affected the themes that came up in the analysis. Had there been more variety to the interviews, other themes could have come up alongside the ones discussed in this study. A different method of data gathering could also result in very different themes and data regarding the same topic.

Finally, according to the principles of QCA, several coders are recommended to code the text that is used in a study, and in the case that only one person is coding a text, it is recommended that after 10 – 14 days the text and coding frame be recoded (Schreier, 2012, p. 146). However, due to time constraints, in this study the text has been coded only once by myself, without recoding after a period of time. The coding frame was approved by the thesis supervisor to make up for this, but it is nonetheless a shortcoming of this study. Due to having

only one coder and no recoding after a period of time, it should be considered that the reliability and validity of the results of this study have been affected.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

I would suggest that further research be carried out regarding the adaptation of immigrant students, particularly concerning social aspects of their adaptation (e.g. sense of belonging). Granted, the main goal of the education system is to ensure academic support and success for students. However, based on the results of this study, the role education systems play in helping immigrant students adjust to a new community and society, as well as in affecting the attitudes of peers and promoting diversity is quite significant, and the extent of this effect should be studied further.

It would be highly beneficial to study the perspective of immigrant students themselves in particular. Studying the point of view of immigrant children themselves would allow more reliable conclusions to be made regarding their adaptation in a new society. By studying only the point of view of teachers regarding the adaptation of immigrant children, the most crucial element, immigrant children and their experiences, has been left out. More extensive and thorough studies could also reveal interesting and significant information about the role of the education system and teachers in the adaptation process of immigrant students, which in turn could aid education systems in adjusting their practices to better accommodate and support immigrant students.

6.3 Practical Implications

The findings of this study imply that the Finnish education system has worked to accommodate immigrant students by adapting to better suit their needs, to some extent. However, efforts can still be made to improve the education system in this sense. For one, the data of this study suggests that training in multicultural education should perhaps be invested in more, and such training should be more available to teachers already in working life. More

importantly, however, the quality of such training should be invested in. Multicultural training and the education system should steer away from an essentialist understanding of culture in order to better accommodate students of all backgrounds. The current, fairly essentialist understanding of culture apparent in the data and literature review of this study is limiting as well as harmful for immigrant students. Focusing on cultural differences and “embracing diversity” can in fact result in immigrant students being othered. Even though the education system claims to embrace diversity by proclaiming cultural diversity and students’ freedom to express their cultural heritage within the education system is well-meaning, it can be limiting and stereotyping, and even put pressure on students.

Thus, efforts should be made to shift the focus away from essentialist notions of culture and perhaps focus more on tackling the individual issues immigrant students face upon entering the Finnish education system. In general, the narratives of the interviewees in this study suggest that it might be beneficial for the education system to focus less on the immigrant status of their students. The findings of this study suggest that in many cases much of the support offered to immigrant students does not necessarily need to be concerned with their immigrant background. Aiming to offer immigrant students the same support that is offered to all students in the education system could help avoid othering immigrant children within the education system, as well as aid them in feeling a sense of belonging in their new communities. In addition, as one interviewee appropriately expressed it in their interview (see extract 9), it would be beneficial for the education system and teachers to not assume anything of immigrant students simply because of where they come from, but rather to ask and approach their students with genuine interest in the other person, just as they would with any other student.

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APPENDIX 1: Original Finnish interview questions.

Kauanko olet ollut opettaja?

Kuinka paljon kokemusta sinulla on maahanmuuttajaoppilaiden kanssa työskentelystä?

Mitä sopeutuminen tai kulttuurinen sopeutuminen tarkoittaa sinulle?

Mitä tiedät olemassa olevista suosituksista liittyen siihen, miten opetusjärjestelmä ja opettajat voivat tukea maahanmuuttajataustaisia opiskelijoita?

Minkälainen oppilas kaipaa tukea?

Mitä järjestelyitä koulullanne on maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden tukemiseksi?

Miten onnistuneita nämä järjestelyt / tämä lähestymistapa mielestänne on?

Mihin asioihin sinä erityisesti keskityt maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden kanssa?

Onko jotain, mihin opettajien / koulujärjestelmän pitäisi mielestäsi erityisesti keskittyä?

Miten oppilaiden näkökulma heihin liittyvissä toimissa otetaan huomioon? Miten tiedätte mitä he tarvitsevat?

Miten kuvaisit sinun tai koulun tavoitteita liittyen maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden sopeutumiseen?

Mikä opettajien rooli maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden sopeutumisprosessissa mielestäsi on?

Onko Suomen koulujärjestelmä sopeutunut mielestäsi tarpeeksi vastaamaan maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden tarpeisiin?

Tarjotaanko sinulle ja kollegoillesi valmennusta liittyen monikulttuuristen luokkien ja oppilaiden käsittelyyn?

Miten koulu / opettajat tukevat maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden yhteenkuuluvuuden tunnetta koulu yhteisössä?

Opetussuunnitelmassa mainitaan, että oppilaiden kulttuuri-identiteettiä tuetaan ja kulttuurinen tausta otetaan huomioon opetuksessa. Miten tämä tapahtuu käytännössä? Onko se mahdollista?

APPENDIX 2: Original Finnish extracts from interviews

(1) I: No entä sitten mikä sun mielestä on tää opettajien rooli tämmöisen maahanmuuttajataustaisen oppilaan sopeutumisprosessissa?

O5: Mä luulen että se on aika tärkeä kuitenkin, että se... opettaja voi olla semmoinen läheinen ja kuitenkin semmoinen tutuin kantasuomalaisia edustava aikuinen. Että sillä on aika merkittävä malli sille että minkälainen se opettaja on. (...) . Mutta tosi tärkeä, mä oon sitä mieltä että opettajan rooli on hyvin suuri siinä. Toivottavasti on että on itse osannut olla sellaisena esikuvana tai mallina aikuisesta joka pyrkii elämässä eteenpäin tai on antaa semmoisia eväitä joitten varassa sitten nuoret voi lähteä elämäänsä rakentamaan täällä.

(2) I: Mitä sä sanoisit, että mikä sun mielestä on opettajien ja sen koulun rooli maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden sopeutumisprosessissa sitten?

O1: Maahanmuuttajataustaisia oppilaita on tosi erilaisia. Jos lähdetään ihan sellaisista maahanmuuttajaoppilaista, jotka elää oman perheensä kanssa niin silloin se saattaa olla, että opettajia ja koulua suurempi rooli on niillä koulukavereilla, ja niillä saman ikäisillä viiteryhmillä, sillä porukalla, joitten kanssa oikeasti sitä aikaa viettää.

(3) I: Entä sitten, jos sun pitäis verrata tyyliin sitten opettajan ja ikätovereiden roolia, että kumpi sun mielestä on ehkä sitten se tärkeämpi tai merkittävämpi?

O4: No varmaan valmistavan aikana se on se opettaja koska niinku mullakin tulee nyt mun ryhmästä yksikään oppilas ei ole jäämässä tähän kouluun, eli he kaikki lähtee sitten niinku uusiin kouluihin kun siirtyvät yleisopetuksen puolelle, niin ikään kuin se...musta tuntuu että ne ei tän vuoden aikana ehdi muodostaa niin syviä ystävyysuhteita tuonne integraatioluokkiin että niillä ikään kuin olis mutta siis ehkä sen jälkeen niin se kavereiden merkitys voimistuu

koska tuota se on ihan äärimmäisen motivoivaa myös opetella sitä suomen kieltä sen takia että saat kavereita ja kaverit varmaan opettaa aika paljon tästä elämästä ylipäättään.

(4) I: Sitten mä semmoista kysyisin vielä, että kun sä mainitsit sen, että opettajilla on iso rooli siinä sopeutumisessa, niin niin... entä sitten niiden luokkakavereiden ja omien ikätovereiden rooli. Jos sun pitäisi niinku verrata sitten, että kummalla ois vaikka se isompi rooli siinä sopeutumisessa kuitenkin niin...?

O2: No totta kai niillä luokkakavereilla on tosi iso rooli ja tavallaan voi olla jopa isompi kuin sillä opettajalla, mutta sitten taas opettaja on minun mielestä se, joka voi vaikuttaa siihen luokkakavereiden suhtautumiseen sillä omalla toiminnallaan ja tekemisellään. Eli siinä mielessä se vastuu ja se rooli palaa siihen opettajaan. Että jos luokassa on sellaisia joiden perheet on esimerkiksi hyvin rasistisia avoimesti ja he heittää rasistisia kommentteja, niin sittenhän se on se opettaja joka niinku ilmoittaa että tätä ei hyväksytä, ja miksi tätä ei hyväksytä, ja siitä asiasta keskustellaan (...)

(5) I: Että pitäis pystyä tarjoamaan jotain ihan muuta apua sitten.

O4: Niin. Et sitten taas sinnekin on jonot ja hekään ei oikein tiedä mitä pitäisi tehdä ja kun ei oo yhteistä kieltä, että mä välillä mulla on semmonen olo, että ei niitä kaikista huonoiten voivia lapsia niin ei oikein oo mitään tahoja kuka niitä pystyisi auttamaan. Että se on tavallaan se mitä koulu pystyy tarjoamaan, on se rutiini. Täällä on joku tuttu ja turvallinen aikuinen, joka ottaa joka aamu vastaan siitä huolimatta, miten se edellinen päivä on mennyt.

(6) I: Tarjotaanko sulle ja muille sun opettajakollegoille valmennusta tai jotain koulutusta liittyen monikulttuuristen luokkien ja oppilaiden käsittelyyn, että miten toimia nyt kun [monikulttuurisuus] lisääntyy aina vaan?

O3: No, ei oikein. Siis onhan koulutusta, on, tosi paljon järjestetään ja Opetushallituksen on hirmu niinku järjestää kaikenlaista, mutta kyllä se on vaan resurssikysymys, että ei me vaan päästä. Ei oo... Et kyllä täältä on niinku, tai mä ainakin oon kokenut, että on tosi vaikea päästä mihinkään maksullisiin koulutuksiin, että... Koska ne yleensä ovat maksullisia. Ja sitten taas sellaista kaupunkikohtaista koulutusta ei hirveästi oo sellaista niinku nimenomaan, vaikka maahanmuuttajaopetukseen liittyen, koska tuota... onko se porukka sitten kuitenkin aika pieni. (...) Mä kyllä toivoisin, että pääsisi vähän enemmän johonkin koulutuksiin osallistumaan, mutta se on oikeasti ollut tosi hankalaa. Ei vain oo mitään rahaa millä lähteä. (...)

(7) I: Mitä sä tiät semmoisista olemassa olevista suosituksista, jotka liittyvät siihen, että miten koulujärjestelmä ja opettajat voivat tukea maahanmuuttajataustaisia oppilaita?

O2: No silloin alun perin, kun mulle maahanmuuttajaoppilaita tuli ensimmäisiä kertoja niin silloin ei ollut mitään koulutusta, että silloin ihan itse otin selvää ja yritin miettiä. (...) Eli ihan sen oman tietämyksen kautta ja sitten yritin ottaa selvää juurikin siitä, että mikä se on se lähtökohta, että minkälaisista erilaisista lähtökohdista mun oppilaat voi olla, että ne tulee ja minkälaisista kulttuureista ja mitä se tarkoittaa, kun ne tulee tänne ja miten mä lähden selvittämään sitä, että missä vaiheessa se niitten kulttuuriin sopeutuminen on tai mitkä ovat niiden suomen kielen taidot, tai mitä ne osaa suomalaisesta kulttuurista ja miten mä lähden kohtaamaan niitä ja näin. Että itse asiassa vasta tänä lukuvuonna meillä on nyt ollut ensimmäisen kerran ainakaan minun aikana niin koulutusta maahanmuuttajaoppilaiden opetuksesta.

(8) I: No entä tarjotaanko sulle ja näille sun opettajakollegoille sitten jotakin valmennusta tai koulutusta?

O5: (...) Kyllä mun mielestä tuota koulutusta tarjotaan, mutta siinä on vaan tietysti se – no luokanopettajien mä oon kuullut sanottavan että niihin on vähän vaikea päästä niihin koulutuksiin. Sitten pääsee kyllä, mutta sitten sijaisia ei palkata, niin sitten tietää että se kaatuu ehkä kollegoiden niskaan tai sitten siellä on ohjaajat vaan tekemässä töitä, niin... Ei se ehkä motivoi sitten lähtemään, että. Että sitten pitäisi olla ihan pätevät sijaiset niin homma sujuisi. Siinä säästetään. (...) Mutta kyllähän ***** kokoisessa kaupungissa on tosi paljon tarjontaa, kaikenlaista koulutusta, ja ihan ilmaistakin.

(9) I: Sitten mulla oli yks vielä mikä mua kiinnosti, kun mä selasin vähän sitä valmistavan opetuksen opetussuunnitelmaa, niin siinä mainitaan, että oppilaiden kulttuuri-identiteettiä tuetaan, ja kulttuurinen tausta otetaan huomioon opetuksessa. Niin miten... Tuohan on aika yleisesti sanottu toki, mutta miten sellainen tapahtuu käytännössä? Onko se mahdollista?

O3: (...) Että siinä on just se tasapainoilu mitä mä sanoin, että se kulttuuri-identiteetin tukeminen ja sitten eksotiikan tukeminen, ne ovat niinku... sen kanssa tasapainoilu, että... ja sitten toisaalta myöskin se, että nuoret teini-ikäiset ei halua hirveästi erottua. Että jos niinku... ja toisaalta ollaan myös varovainen suhteen, että jos nyt ajatellaan vaikka että joku ryhmä on muslimeja, niin nehän ei oo millään tavalla homogeeninen joukko. Vaan jokainen ajattelee ihan eri tavalla. (...) Että jotenkin olla olettamatta, että ennemmin sitten vaikka kysyä tai jotenkin ihan samalla tavalla kuin että onko erikoisruokavaliota tai mitään, olla olematta, että joku ihminen on jonkunlainen koska se on jostain tai ikään kuin jotain edustaa... (...) Että jos sä nyt kysyit, että miten se käytännössä tapahtuu, niin, ja onko mahdollista, niin... musta se vaatii vaan semmoista jotenkin kiinnostumista siitä toisesta ihmisestä. Ja sen kunnioittamista, että mitä hän haluaa tuoda jotenkin jaettavaksi, ja just semmoista että ei oletettaisi, ja oltaisiin tietoisia omista stereotyyppioista, jotka koskevat toki meitäkin.

(10) I: Niinpä. No mutta tuota mulla oli vielä yksi tämmöinen että mikä mua vaan kiinnosti kun mä luin sitä OPSia vähän, sitä valmistavan opetuksen OPSia, kun siellä sanottiin että tää oppilaiden kulttuuri-identiteettiä tuetaan ja kulttuurinen tausta otetaan huomioon opetuksessa, että miten tää tämmöinen niinku tapahtuu käytännössä ja onko se ylipäätään mahdollista?

O5: (...) Tietysti sitä täytyy ottaa huomioon, mutta myöskin mä oon niinku joistakin asioista mä koska sieltä tulee aika paljon semmoista niinku meidän – minun näkökulmasta ja suomalaisen kulttuurin näkökulmasta kielteistäkin, niinku esimerkiksi poikia arvostetaan, pojat on niinku kingejä ja tytöt ei oo paljon mitään, ja tulee sisaruksia niin sitten poika istuu kuin prinssi ja sisko kantaa sille ruuat ja vie astiat ja... niin siihen mä oon niinku sanonut että stop, että täällä ei käy tämmöinen. Tai sitten jotkut perheet saattaa olla niinku... on afrikkalaisia ja vaikka noita arabeja niin ”me ei istuta samassa ruokapöydässä ***** kanssa” tai jotain tämmöistä näin. Niinku semmoiseen mä en missään nimessä, mä sanon kyllä tosi tiukasti että täällä ei käy tämmöinen, täällä ollaan tasa-arvoisia ja täällä tehdään tasapuolisesti tätä hommaa.

(11) I: Mitä järjestelyitä teidän koululla on tällaisten maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden tukemiseksi? Voitko sää kertoo?

O1: Tota. Tukioppilaat sidostettiin hyvin vahvasti siihen mukaan. (...) Tukioppilaiden ensisijainen tavoite on tavallaan ollut integroida seiskaluokkalaiset mukaan koulun kulttuuriin ja tuottaa heille kaikenlaista hauskaa toimintaa. Ja sitten me otettiin ihan tarkoituksellisesti myös maahanmuuttajaoppilaille, että heille tukioppilaat järjestävät erilaisia leikkejä ja muita, ja siihen koitettiin vielä mahdollisimman paljon saada sellaista että se olisi samalla kielen piilo-opettamista et siinä tulisi käytännöllistä sanastoa, sanontoja ja sitä suomen kielen käyttämistä mukaan.

(12) I: Entä miten onnistunutta sun mielestä tämmöiset järjestelyt on ollut tai tää lähestymistapa?

O1: Koin että nimenomaan se oppilaiden sidostaminen ja se tukioppilastoimintayhteistyö antoi ihan valtavasti. Tietysti siinä oli niinku pikkasen tämmöstä niinku sattuman mahdollisuuksia mukana. Ensimmäisenä vuonna sattui olemaan tukioppilaisissa tällainen tukari, joka itse oli äidinkieleltään daria puhui (...) ja siitä muodostui tällainen niinku suorastaan idoli tai esikuva näille maahanmuuttajille että on mahdollista niinku päästä tollaseen asemaan, on mahdollista puhua sujuvasti sekä suomea että daria, ja saavuttaa sellainen hyväksyntä, tulla osaksi yhteisöä.

(13) I: Entä sitten, kun sä sanoit, että sunkin luokalla on näitä maahanmuuttajataustaisia oppilaita ollut, niin mihin asioihin sä erityisesti keskityt heidän kanssa sitten? Onko jotakin semmoista erityistä mihin sä keskityt, että sä tavallaan tuet niitä tai autat niitä sitten siellä?

O2: Tottakai samalla tavalla kuin kaikkiin oppilaisiin, niin mä yritän tuntea sen oppilaan mahdollisimman hyvin, ja yritän miettiä etkä mitkä on niitä hänen vahvuuksia ja yritän vahvistaa niitä, ja mitkä on sitten niitä haasteita ja hirveästi tsempata ja kannustaa niissä ja auttaa niissä. Ja tietenkin se kieli on sellainen ensimmäinen asia mitä nyt mietti, että sitä täytyy varmistaa aina, että oppilas on ymmärtänyt (...) Mutta ehkä siinä on se tärkein vaan – jotenkin se kysymyshän ei oo tärkein, että siihen tulee vastaus vaan se kokemus siitä, että jos sulla ois jotain asiaa, niin mä kuuntelisin mitä sä sanot.

(14) I: Entä mihin asioihin sä sitten erityisesti keskityt näiden maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden kanssa?

O4: No suomen kieleen tietysti, se on se meidän... eli meillä on aika niinku tavallaan matalat mutta kovat tavoitteet sen suomen kielen suhteen. Semmonen kehittyvä alkeiskielitaito tässä pitäisi saavuttaa, että pääsee sitten siirtymään eteenpäin.

(15) I: Miten onnistuneita nää järjestelyt, nää mitä sä tässä kerroit, miten onnistuneita ne sun mielestä on?

O4: (...) mä oon aika huonosti kärryillä tuosta meidän yleisopetuksen puolesta, mutta tuota tiedän, että on paljon kouluja, joilla esimerkiksi se S2-tukiopetus resurssi jää käyttämättä. Että sitä ei käytetä kokonaan, että paremminkin varmaan tilanne voisi olla.

(16) I: No entä sitten, mihin asioihin sä erityisesti keskityt noiden maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden kanssa?

O5: No, valmistava opetus on mun mielestä... No tietysti jokaisen pitää ajatella omasta työstä, mutta ainakin minun mielestä se on äärimmäisen tärkeä vuosi. Joskus se voi olla vähän pitempikin kuin vuosi, koska se on tavallaan semmoinen lähtöstartti, alku tälle Suomeen tulemiselle ja tälle kotoutumiselle, siinä luodaan se perusta minkä varaan sitten se kivijalka minkä varaan se rakentuu se peruskoulun käyminen täällä Suomessa.

(17) I: Miten sä kuvaisit tai osaatko sä sanoa, että millaisia tavoitteita sulla tai koululla on liittyen tämmöisten maahanmuuttajataustaisten oppilaiden sopeutumiseen sitten?

O4: No mä jotenkin ajattelen siitä, että valmistava opetus on hirveän hyvä paikka tavallaan niille oppilaille myöskin opetella sitä olemista täällä suomalaisessa koulussa ja yhteiskunnassa, että täällä voi vähän kiukutella niistä asioista ja harjoitella ja niitten ei oo pakko mennä heti oikein, että tavallaan semmonen paine tavallaan poistuu, kun ollaan kaikki sieltä täältä tulleita eikä tarvii ikään kuin ajatella siinä suomalaisessa ympäristössä, että mä en kuulu tänne tai mä en osaa tätä. Et sinälläänhän tää on hirveän hyvä paikka harjoitella ja opetella kaikkia uusia asioita.

(18) I: Onko jotain mitä sun mielestä, tai mihin koulujärjestelmän ja opettajien pitäisi erityisesti keskittyä näiden maahanmuuttajaoppilaiden kanssa? Esimerkiksi kun yritetään sopeuttaa sinne yhteisöön ja tänne Suomeen.

O1: (...) Ja tietysti sitten et tämä, mikä pitkällä tähtäimellä on hyödyllistä, jos kielitaidon lisäksi tulee se asenne, että tämä... vaikka tämä maa, tämä kulttuuri on kunnioituksen arvoinen.

(19) I: Miten sää luulet, että opettajat ja koulut pystyisi edesauttamaan, että saadaan tavallaan luotua tommoinen niille oppilaille, tommoinen asenne just, että tämä on kunnioituksen arvoinen tämä paikka ja tämä kulttuuri?

O1: (...) Mä luotan puolestaan siihen, että tuota opettajilla kuitenkin on tässä maassa ammattitaitoa ja kykyä tarjota sellaista osaamista, tarjota sellaisia taitoja, tarjota sellaista niin kuin parasta mahdollista opetusta ja todella edullisesti. Sitten kun tajuaa sen, että tämä avaa yhteiskunnassa ovia ja tarjoaa mahdollisuuksia ja sitten just se, että me ei olla täällä kiusaamassa eikä räähkäämässä vaan varmistamassa se, että he pystyvät saamaan taitoja, tietoja ja selviytymiskykyjä, mutta jotta se onnistuu sitten noudatetaan näitä koulun sääntöjä.

(20) I: Entä sitten mä tämmöistä kans mietin ja mua kiinnosti... Tää on toki sitten, että tämän mä luin tuolta valmistavan opetuksen opetussuunnitelmasta, että tää on toki, kun teillä ei oo sitä valmistavaa luokkaa, mutta mua kuitenkin kiinnosti, että osaatko sä sanoa, että kun siinä opetussuunnitelmassa mainitaan, että näiden oppilaiden kulttuuri-identiteettiä tuetaan ja kulttuurinen tausta huomioon opetuksessa, niin miten tuollainen tapahtuu käytännössä? Onko se mahdollista?

O2: (...) Tavoitehan olisi se, että maahanmuuttajaoppilas voi säilyttää sen oman kulttuurinsa, arvostaa sitä, tuoda sitä esiin, olla selkeästi sen kulttuurin edustaja mutta kokea samalla, että

hän on myös osa suomalaista yhteiskuntaa, osa tätä suomalaista koulua, sitä ja yhteenkuuluvuutta siihen luokkaan.

(21) I: Mitä sulle tarkoittaa sopeutuminen tai kulttuurinen sopeutuminen?

O3: (...) Mutta sitten kulttuurinen sopeutuminen on varmaan sellaista kykyä jotenkin lukea sitä kulttuuria niin, että pärjää ja kokee tosiaan sitä turvallisuutta, jonkinlaista kuulumisen tunnetta, ja ehkä näillä nuorilla vielä enemmän sellaista, että ei joudu sellaisiin tilanteisiin missä ei tiedä mitä tekee tai ei tiedä miten pitäisi olla tai tulee noloja tilanteita (...)

(22) I: Mitä sulle tarkoittaa sopeutuminen tai kulttuurinen sopeutuminen?

O3: Jos mä ajattelen itseä tai jos mä ajattelen oppilaita, niin ehkä mä vähän eri asioihin kiinnitän huomiota. Että jos puhutaan nyt sitten oppilaista niin mä ajattelen, että heille sellainen olennainen kulttuurisen sopeutumisen merkki on et on semmonen turvallinen ja jotenkin tervetullut olo. Ja siihen aika paljon koetan kiinnittää siellä kouluyhteisössäkin huomiota, että oppilaille ois sellainen olo, että he kuuluvat sinne porukkaan siitä huolimatta, että opiskellaan omassa ryhmässä.