

**Multiculturalism in the Reading Texts and Tasks  
of Finnish Upper Secondary School EFL Textbooks**

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Tämä pro gradu-tutkielma käsittelee monikulttuurisuutta lukion englannin kielen oppikirjasarjojen lukuteksteissä ja -tehtävissä. Tutkielma keskittyy teksteihin, jotka kuvaavat englanninkielisten maiden 'rodullista' ja etnistä moninaisuutta. Tutkielman tavoitteena on tarkastella, mitä vähemmistöryhmiä ja teemoja lukutekstit käsittelevät, sekä millaisia lukutehtäviä oppikirjat sisältävät. Tutkielmassa tarkastellaan myös ohjaavatko lukutehtävät englanninkielisten maiden ja kulttuurien, sekä opiskelijan oman kulttuurin ja yhteiskunnan kriittiseen tarkasteluun ja reflektointiin.

Tutkielman teoreettinen viitekehys pohjaa näkemykseen siitä, että vieraan kielen opetuksessa monikulttuurisuutta tulisi lähestyä kriittisen monikulttuurisuuden näkökulmasta, jonka keskiössä ovat kulttuurisen essentialismin välttäminen, yhteiskunnan voimasuhteiden näkyväksi tekeminen ja sosiaalisen oikeudenmukaisuuden lisääminen. Tutkielma perustuu myös tutkimuskirjallisuudessa esitettyyn ajatukseen siitä, että lukemalla ja käsittelemällä vieraskielisiä tekstejä ja kirjallisuutta monikulttuurisuuden teemoista voidaan kehittää kielten opiskelijoiden kriittistä kulttuuritietoisuutta ja ymmärrystä kulttuurisesta moninaisuudesta, sekä haastaa uskomuksia ja asenteita.

Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin viidestä lukion englannin kielen oppikirjasarjasta, jotka olivat laajasti käytössä edellisten lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteiden aikana ennen uuden opetussuunnitelman voimaantuloa vuonna 2016. Aineiston analyysissä käytettiin sekä määrällisiä että laadullisia menetelmiä. Lukutekstien käsittelemiä teemoja tarkasteltiin teemoittelemalla aineistoa aineistolähtöisesti. Tehtävätyyppien määrittely pohjasi osittain aiempaan tutkimukseen ja PISA-tutkimuksessa käytettyihin luokituksiin.

Tutkimustulosten perusteella voidaan todeta, että oppikirjojen lukutekstit kuvaavat usein vain tiettyjä vähemmistöryhmiä ja -kysymyksiä tietyn englanninkielisen maan kohdalla. Kuitenkin lukutekstien representaatiot pääosin vastaavat kriittisen monikulttuurisuuden lähtökohtia, sillä tekstit käsittelevät muun muassa kulttuuriseen ja kielelliseen identiteettiin, sosiaaliseen epäoikeudenmukaisuuteen ja rasismiin, sekä rasisminvastaisiin kamppailuihin liittyviä teemoja. Oppikirjat eivät kuitenkaan tehtävillään täysin hyödynnä lukutekstien potentiaalia opetuksessa kriittisen kulttuuritietoisuuden ja kulttuurisen moninaisuuden ymmärtämisen näkökulmasta, sillä tekstin kriittisen reflektoinnin, ja englanninkielisten kulttuurien sekä opiskelijoiden oman identiteetin, kulttuurin ja yhteiskunnan kriittisen tarkastelun sijaan oppikirjat painottavat lukutehtävissä lähinnä tekstinymmärrystä ja -tulkintaa.

Avainsanat: kieltenopetus, oppikirja, lukuteksti, tehtävätyyppi, kriittinen monikulttuurisuus, kriittinen kulttuuritietoisuus

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## **1. Introduction**

Multiculturalism is not a new phenomenon in Finland by any means, but it is increasingly recognized as a relevant issue in education. Finland has always been a multicultural country, and its minorities include for instance the Finnish Rom, Samis, Karelians, Jewish and Tatar minorities, and the Finland-Swedes. However, schools and teaching materials have historically played an important role in the creation of national unity and national identity in Finland, and many forms of diversity and difference have remained invisible, or in the margins as a result (Räsänen 2005, 91; Paasi 1998). Over the past decades, immigration and globalization have increasingly drawn attention to issues of diversity and education. In fact, Räsänen (2005, 87) argues that one of the biggest challenges facing Finnish education today is the growing need for pedagogical approaches and teaching practices that embrace and accommodate diversity within the classroom and the Finnish society, and prepare children and young people for the multilingual and multicultural realities of the globalized world.

By including different cultural perspectives in the teaching content, and educating about diversities, such as gender, 'race', ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation, as well as their intersection, it is possible to challenge stereotypes, decrease ignorance and prejudice, and perhaps ultimately achieve social change. Foreign language education is often considered inherently suitable for such an endeavor since foreign language learning entails immersing oneself in a foreign cultural world, and encountering and examining different cultural practices, perspectives and values. Foreign language learning can also be regarded as a reflexive process, which can offer insight into the learner's own culture and society. Therefore, foreign language education not only allows learners to explore the cultures and the societies where the target language is spoken, but also to draw on their experiences, reflect on their own cultural values, and critically examine the societies they live in.

The growing interest in issues of multiculturalism and diversity in language education research, and in education research in general, has also meant that attention is increasingly paid to the content of teaching materials and the representations of diversity in textbooks. School textbooks are cultural and pedagogical artefacts which are ideological in nature, and often classroom teaching is centered around textbooks and their content. Sometimes textbooks can circulate, reproduce or even create stereotypes with their representations. In foreign language education, the cultural representations in textbooks provide students with information about the target culture, and the users of the target language and their societies, and often the textbook is the primary source of cultural representations in the classroom. Therefore, the question of which cultures, groups and identities are represented in foreign language textbooks, and how they are represented becomes essential if foreign language teaching aims to promote multicultural values and reduce stereotypes.

One way to engage foreign language learners with issues of multiculturalism and diversity in the foreign language classroom is through the reading of foreign language texts and literature. Usually Finnish foreign language textbooks include a variety of different types of texts about cultural matters, and through the texts they incorporate, textbooks also provide representations of the cultural diversity of the societies where the target language is spoken. Though generally, foreign language texts tend to serve a linguistic purpose in the classroom. Students read foreign language texts for practicing reading comprehension in the foreign language, or the texts are used as sources for developing linguistic competence, or as models for learners' own written production. Nevertheless, it has been suggested that the reading of foreign language texts, especially literary texts, about multicultural or minority issues can enable intercultural learning in the foreign language classroom since the process of interpreting, reflecting on and interacting with the texts can foster the development of critical awareness of the target culture and the learner's own culture, and help students understand cultural diversity.

The main aim of my thesis is to examine how multiculturalism features in the reading texts and tasks of Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks. I have chosen to focus on upper secondary school EFL reading because the advanced English language and literacy skills of upper secondary school students enable the reading and processing of longer and more complex texts on cultural matters and diversity issues in English. The term multiculturalism can refer to several types of diversity, for instance ‘race’, ethnicity, gender, class, language, sexual orientation and religion, but in my thesis, I will focus on reading texts about ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity in predominantly English-speaking countries, or countries where English has an official status.

First, my aim is to explore the representations of ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity in the reading texts by examining which English-speaking countries, and minority ‘racial’ and ethnic groups the texts discuss, and by analyzing the sociocultural and sociopolitical content of the texts by using a thematic approach. The thematic analysis will provide a review of the range of themes relating to the ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity of English-speaking countries in Finnish EFL textbook reading texts. Second, I aim to examine the pedagogic use of the reading texts in the textbooks. Do textbooks emphasize reading comprehension in their tasks? Or do the reading tasks encourage students to critically reflect on the multicultural themes in the texts, or the English-speaking countries and cultures they portray? Are students encouraged to draw on their own experiences, and examine their own culture and cultural values? To answer these questions, I will examine the reading tasks both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The specific research questions for my thesis are the following:

1. What types of texts deal with ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity in the EFL textbooks?
2. In which EFL courses are the reading texts intended to be read? What is the thematic course context of the texts?

3. Which English-speaking countries, and minority 'racial' and ethnic groups are represented in the reading texts? How are issues of 'racial' and ethnic diversity represented in the texts? What sociocultural and sociopolitical themes do the texts discuss or portray?
4. How are students directed to process and interact with the texts? What types of reading tasks are included in the textbooks? Do the reading tasks encourage critical reflection of the target cultures and students' own culture?

My thesis is organized as follows. First, I will discuss the key concepts and provide background information on the research topic. In Section 3, I will present the research design; I will describe the methods used in my thesis, and present the data and its selection process. In Sections 4 and 5, I will present the analysis, discuss the findings and evaluate the study. I will conclude my thesis in Section 6 with a discussion on the implications of the study, and provide suggestions for further research.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

Since the focus in my thesis is on diversity in terms of ‘race’ and ethnicity, I will first present a brief discussion on the definitions of the concepts, and the debate and controversy around them. I will then move on to discuss multicultural education and critical approaches to multiculturalism in the context of foreign language education, and the concept of critical cultural awareness. In the light of the literature review, I will then examine the content and objectives of foreign language teaching in the national core curriculum for upper secondary schools. After the discussion on multiculturalism in foreign language education and the Finnish curriculum, I will review research on cultural representation in language textbooks. Finally, I will discuss the use of foreign language texts and literature about multicultural and minority issues in foreign language teaching.

### **2.1 ‘Race’ and ethnicity**

Many of us have been conditioned by the modernist/colonialist understanding that there is a one-on-one relationship between a group of people identified with a certain phenotype and a racialized category, as seen in commonly used racial/ethnic labels such as Asian, Black, Latino, and Middle Eastern. While the scientific community’s consensus is that race does not exist as a biological category, it is a very real socially constructed marker used for classifying people. (Kubota 2010, 106)

As the quote from Kubota clearly articulates, the concept of ‘race’ has no scientific validity as a biological category, and it must be understood as a political and social construct. In my thesis, I will adopt a common practice in European research of placing the concept in inverted commas to emphasize the fact that the concept is socially constructed.

‘Race’ is a specific organizing category around which a system of subordination, exploitation and exclusion, also known as racism, has been constructed (Hall 2003b, 253). ‘Race-thinking’ and racism have historically been based on notions of genetic and biological difference, and collective and intrinsic inequalities between groups of people (Rattcliffe 2004,



15). However, today the earlier, now scientifically discredited concept of biological 'race' is increasingly replaced by "the seemingly more acceptable discourse of 'cultural differences'" in the form of "new 'cultural racisms'" (May 1999, 13). Although, Hall (2003b, 255) argues that in most situations the discourses of biological and cultural difference are simultaneously employed, and thus the two systems can be regarded as different registers of racism instead of separate and opposite systems. On the other hand, the concept of 'race' can also be mobilized as a resource for resistance, and as a source for positive identification, as it has been for instance "in conceptions of Afrocentrism and in other projects which rely on a notion of an African 'race' and nation, particularly in the populations of the African diaspora in the United States" (Rattansi 1999, 89-90).

Despite recognizing that 'racial' categories continue to exist within public discourse, and as a lived experience, some social scientists argue that 'race' should not be used as an analytical category (McLaren and Torres 1999, 51-52). However, as Ratcliffe (2004, 24) points out, replacing the term 'race' is problematic because "there are no ideologically, or methodologically, neutral ways of expressing differences between peoples of differing heritages". Sometimes the more neutral-sounding term 'ethnic group' is proposed as an alternative, but the concept of ethnicity is itself problematic, and the term 'ethnic group' can be used to perform the same function as 'race', in other words, it may be used to essentialize and naturalize difference (ibid. 24-25, 27). As Ratcliffe (2004, 25) has noted, the term 'ethnic group' "already acts as a euphemism for 'race' in cases where the latter's use is deemed likely to offend".

As with 'race', the concept of ethnicity is subject to controversy, but generally the term ethnicity is used to refer to "a collectivity sharing certain common attributes" (Rattansi 1999, 86). In practice, ethnicity tends "to be deployed extremely loosely, to imply commonalities of language, religion, identity, national origins and/or even skin colour" (Ratcliffe 2004, 28). What

is essential is a conception of a shared origin, and a collective memory of a shared past (Rattansi 1999, 86; Ratcliffe 2004, 28). Because of this idea of a common culture being based on a shared history, kinship, place and a common origin, ethnicity is a form of cultural identity that is often perceived to be 'natural', part of Nature, even if the concept itself does not imply a biological or a genetic connection (Hall 2003a, 92-93). However, as with the concept of 'race', ethnicity and ethnic identities are socially constructed, and constantly recreated and contested in institutional categorizations, and in the representations produced by, for instance, 'popular' and 'high' culture (Rattansi 1999, 90). As socially constructed in various types of social interactions, ethnicity can also be interpreted to be highly situational. As Ratcliffe (2004, 28) says, "different aspects of our identity (not necessarily rooted in heritage) emerge in different social contexts", and this includes our ethnic identity. Ethnicity can also be regarded as being in a process of constant change in new transnational contexts, "not permanently anchored in history, either 'real' or imagined" (ibid., 29). This sense of change is "the essence of cultural hybridity and of diasporic identities", which draw from global, national and local contexts (ibid., 29).

Ethnicity is both ascribed, and a form of self-identification (Rattansi 1999, 90). However, the process of ethnic ascription is affected by power relations; ethnic categories and their relative status are socially and politically defined, and generally they are generated by members of superordinate groups, which may consequently "weaken further the position of subordinate groups" (Ratcliffe 2004, 34-35). Because of the unequal power relations, May (1999, 29) argues that there are different ethnic choices available to majority and minority group members, meaning that the range of available identity choices vary depending on the individuals and groups. May (ibid.) illustrates his argument with the following example:

A white American may have a wide range of ethnic options from which to choose, both hyphenated and/or hybrid. An African-American, in contrast, is confronted with essentially one ethnic choice — black; irrespective of any preferred ethnic (or other) alternatives they might wish to employ.

In my thesis, I will focus on texts about minority ‘racial’ and ethnic groups, and minority cultures, though I acknowledge that applying the concepts of ‘race’ and ethnicity exclusively to minorities risks reinforcing the false notion that only minorities have an ethnicity. With the term ‘minority culture’, I refer to the culture of “marginalized or vulnerable groups who live in the shadow of majority populations with a different and dominant cultural ideology” (UNESCO 2006, 16). The non-dominant, or subordinate position of a minority culture is not always the result of “numerical weakness” (ibid.), but instead derives from unequal power relations and political dominance in the society. According to UNESCO (ibid.), the term ‘minority’ refers to four categories of groups: “(1) autochthonous or indigenous peoples, whose line of descent can be traced to the aboriginal inhabitants of the country... (2) territorial minorities, groups with a long cultural tradition... (3) non-territorial minorities or nomads, groups with no particular attachment to a territory... (4) immigrants...”.

## **2.2 Multiculturalism and foreign language education**

Multicultural education, which has its roots in the social and ‘racial’ struggles in the United States (Holm and Zilliacus 2012, 12-13), is one way to approach diversity and social equality issues in education. The term multicultural education has been widely adopted in Finnish education research as well. Multicultural education has often been emphasized in multicultural and multiethnic environments, and in the context of minorities and immigrants. However, it has been argued that multiculturalism and multicultural education should rather be considered a philosophy that encompasses all teaching and concerns all students (Räsänen 2005, 98). According to Räsänen (2005, 102-103), especially members of the majority culture, and students in monocultural communities would benefit from teaching that incorporates multicultural issues since they may not have experienced what it is like to be different, or know what life as a member of a minority is like. Räsänen (2005, 98) views it as teachers’

responsibility as educators to introduce different perspectives in their teaching, and to examine phenomena from different points of view, and from the perspective of different cultural groups. This agenda should be incorporated in teachers' implementation of practical solutions, including the choices about teaching content and material (ibid., 102).

When learning a new language, students encounter difference and cultural diversity as they explore new cultural perspectives. Therefore, language education is often considered “inherently compatible with multiculturalism” (Kubota 2010, 99), and a suitable context for developing awareness and respect for diversity, reducing stereotypes and prejudice, or even inducing social change. Yet, perceptions of the role of language education as mainly developing language skills still persist, as Kubota et al. (2003, 16-21) found in their study on the beliefs of university students of foreign languages, who considered the discussions about ‘race’, gender, class, and social justice issues in foreign language teaching both irrelevant and unwanted. Often these kinds of perceptions can be reinforced by foreign language teaching materials and teaching practices that focus mainly on the acquisition of linguistic competence. Nevertheless, a growing body of literature on critical language pedagogy emphasizes learners' critical engagement with issues of culture and society as an important objective for language teaching.

Particularly EFL teaching is often considered a suitable context for reflecting on issues of multiculturalism and diversity, and such views are explained and justified by the global scope of English, its role in intercultural communication, and its importance in various economic and cultural arenas worldwide (see, e.g., Yamada 2010, 502; Marlina 2011, 7-8; Forsman 2010, 503). Forsman (2010, 503) notes that “such a view implies that using English is essentially about encountering otherness”. She (ibid.) further argues that EFL teaching is “particularly suitable in many contexts because of its great importance on all levels within different educational systems, with the possibility of having a considerable educational impact”.

However, cultural diversity in foreign language teaching is often viewed in terms of national cultures, and the similarities and differences between them. The teaching of cultural diversity in language education that adopts such a superficial and essentialized view of culture, and focuses merely on the differences between national cultures has been criticized for promoting “the binary opposition of ‘us’ and ‘them’” rather than affirming cultural and linguistic pluralism (Marlina 2011, 9-10). Whereas an approach to multiculturalism that increases critical awareness of diversity and heterogeneity within cultures, and engages students critically with issues of identity and culture could help break down stereotypes, and reduce prejudice, or even help avoid what Osler and Starkey (2000, 208) call “historically determined crude nationalist reflexes”.

In this section, I will first discuss critical multiculturalist and anti-racist approaches in foreign language education, which emphasize the role of language learning in “challenging and transforming the power hierarchies through learning multiple perspectives and plural ways of human communication” (Kubota 2005, 49), instead of merely in celebrating cultural diversity. Second, I will discuss the concept of critical cultural awareness, and the role of critical reflection in foreign language learning. Finally, I will examine the content and objectives of upper secondary school foreign language studies in the national core curriculum.

### **2.2.1 Critical multiculturalism**

Multicultural education can take different directions, and it includes various approaches, which all take a different stance on the issue of difference and diversity (Holm and Zilliacus 2012, 13-14). According to Thompson (2013, 949), a conservative approach treats multiculturalism “as a source of societal discord”, and limits itself to an imagined monoculture, whereas a more liberal approach “celebrates cultural diversity, emphasizing humanity and equality across differences”. However, instead of exoticizing and essentializing cultures by emphasizing

superficial aspects of culture, and reinforcing color- or difference-blindness, for which liberal approaches to multiculturalism are sometimes criticized (Kubota 2005, 33), scholars like Kubota (2005; 2010) suggest adopting a more critical approach to multiculturalism in foreign language education, one that aims to further democracy, and strives for social change.

The critical examination of social justice and social inequality issues in their specific ideological and political contexts is at the core of critical approaches to multiculturalism (Kubota 2005, 34). For May (1999, 36), the overall goal of critical multiculturalism is students' ability to engage critically with their own and other ethnic and cultural backgrounds. According to May (*ibid.*), a critical approach "would allow both minority and majority students to recognize and explore the complex interconnections, gaps and dissonances that occur between their own and other ethnic and cultural identities", while also highlighting "how ethnic and cultural identities differ in salience among individuals and across given historical and social contexts, and how these identities are situated in the wider framework of power relations". To achieve this, May (*ibid.*, 33-36) suggests that critical multicultural education should examine the public sphere of nation-states as representing particular cultural values and practices of the dominant group, recognize the differing cultural knowledges, and situate these cultural differences within wider power relations in the society, and most importantly, reflect critically on cultural practices, and recognize the constant change of cultures.

According to Thompson (2013, 960), teaching multiculturalism from a critical perspective in language education means "making visible the effects of cultural difference and language ideologies", as opposed to merely "offering the perspectives of language users from multiple communities". As Thompson (*ibid.*, 962) notes, adopting such an approach would develop students' understanding of multiculturalism without essentializing culture and the users of the target language:

Critical questioning of culture, linked with multiple perspectives of diverse language users, will allow students a deep understanding of multiculturalism that is not dependent on essentialist definitions of identity or on an imagined and idealized group of L1 users or standard speakers.

A critical approach to multiculturalism in the foreign language classroom would entail “discussions about cultural products, practices, and perspectives, but also about how sociopolitical issues of race, gender, class, domination, and power influence the organization of a particular culture” (Kubota et al. 2003, 13). Marlina (2011,12) suggest that students could also be introduced to “a sociolinguistic concept of ‘language variety’, and encouraged to explore how and why languages vary at national, regional, social, and individual level” to better understand the complexities of all the social variables that influence people’s language use. On the other hand, Holm and Zilliacus (2012, 24) claim that emphasizing, for instance, only ethnicity, religion or language runs the risk of solidifying “the division between ‘we’ and ‘them’”. Instead, they (ibid.) argue that teaching which aims for the inclusion of diversity should focus more on hybrid identities, and how different social variables and identities intersect:

There is a fine line between recognizing students as being different in some way and ‘othering’ them at the same time. Focusing more on the hybrid identifications and the intersections of ethnicity, race, class, gender, religion, language, disability, and sexual orientation makes multicultural and intercultural education more inclusive.

Incorporating cultural themes from a critical multiculturalist perspective into the foreign language teaching materials is also important. Kubota (2010, 107) notes that when certain cultural topics appear in the teaching material, it enables foreign language teachers to address issues of social injustice and ideology, and engage students in critical discussions about culture and society.

### **2.2.2 Anti-racist approaches**

Kubota (2010, 104; Kubota et al. 2003, 14) claims that foreign language teaching does not pay enough attention to the issues of ‘race’, ethnicity and racism. Her (ibid.) findings from an earlier study that show foreign language learners of Spanish displaying prejudiced attitudes towards Latino immigrants despite of their extensive language studies indicate that language teaching can have a limited effect in reducing prejudice. Kubota (ibid.) relates these findings to a lack of critical discussion about ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity and racism in the foreign language classroom. According to Osler and Starkey (2000, 208), even when ethnic diversity is discussed in foreign language teaching, it is “frequently presented as problematic”, whereas regional diversity, for example, appears more “normal”, and is presented in more neutral terms. Ethnic identities are more likely to be examined in the context of minorities than majority groups, and “the presence of minority ethnic communities is often associated with disadvantage, problems and tensions” and “causal links may be made between their existence and the presence of racism within a community” (ibid.).

Given the fact that foreign language learning might not automatically reduce racial, cultural and linguistic prejudice and stereotyping, Kubota (2010, 105-106) argues that foreign language education should incorporate “explicit antiracist critically engaged pedagogies”. Similar arguments have been presented by Osler and Starkey (2000; Starkey and Osler 2001), who have studied the contents and teaching materials of an open university French language and culture course which aims to provide a positive view of France as a multicultural and multiethnic society. In their analysis of the representation of minorities, the perspectives on questions of identity, and the treatment of racism in the course, Osler and Starkey (2000, 221) found that positive representations of multiculturalism without considerations of the barriers to democratic participation that minority groups are faced with will not adequately allow students to identify racism in its complexity, empathize with marginalized individuals, or to gain insight



and deepen their understanding of their own society and its diversity. They (2000, 208) thus argue that foreign language teaching that aims to promote democratic and multicultural values “needs to address racism as a barrier to full participation, to consider the position of minority and majority populations within society, and allow students to explore issues of identity”, since the teaching of foreign language skills and intercultural competence alone is not sufficient to promote students’ active involvement in “the development of a pluralist democratic society”.

An anti-racist approach in foreign language teaching would help students challenge stereotypes, examine issues of discrimination and marginalization, and recognize discriminating practices and uses of power, as well as all forms of racism including more subtle and institutional forms (Starkey and Osler 2001, 319). Starkey and Osler (2001, 319) argue that an anti-racist approach should engage students particularly with “issues of power in relation to cultures and groups and to portray successful anti-racist struggles”. They (ibid., 328) suggest that language courses which incorporate issues of ‘race’ equality should “include ethnic minority voices, not just to demonstrate their successful integration, but also to describe conflicts and struggles, including successes”. Starkey and Osler (ibid., 328) further add that “where characters from an ethnic minority are introduced”, they should be represented “in a context that shows them as complex, dignified and genuinely equal”.

### **2.2.3 Critical cultural awareness and critical reflection**

Learning a new language not only enables students to explore and critically examine other cultures and societies, but it is also increasingly viewed as “a reflexive process which aims to help students to gain new perspectives on their own society” (Osler and Starkey 2000, 207). With the help of the “mirror” other cultures and perspectives provide, students can gain a deeper understanding of their own cultural background and identities, and critically examine their own cultures and societies (Räsänen 2005, 89). This political and critical dimension of language

education is reflected and acknowledged in one of the key components of Byram's intercultural communicative competence, in the concept of critical cultural awareness (Byram 1997). Byram's fifth *savoir*, *savoir s'engager*, i.e. critical cultural awareness, is defined as "an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram 1997, 53). The concept of critical cultural awareness involves students acquiring a critical awareness of themselves and their own values, and how these values affect the way they view other people and their values.

Likewise, Kumaravadivelu (2003, 271) emphasizes the importance of developing students' ability to critically examine and understand both their own and other cultures on a deeper level, which he calls students' critical cultural consciousness. Kumaravadivelu (*ibid.*, 273) argues that critical self-reflection that is guided by students' own value systems and cultural heritage "helps one to identify and understand what is good and bad about one's own culture, and what is good and bad about other cultures". Kumaravadivelu (*ibid.*, 273) notes that this type of critical reflection "eventually leads to a deeper cultural understanding, not just superficial cultural knowledge".

Through the process of critically reflecting on, and even questioning the student's own culture and cultural values, and the student's own contemporary and historical realities, the student's worldview and knowledge of cultural diversity can change (Matos 2012, 122, 127). Starkey and Osler (2001, 314) argue that through this reflexive nature of language learning, language teaching has "the capacity to influence the attitudes and the behaviour of learners, not only towards the target cultures but also in their own cultural contexts".

Another important aspect that deserves attention is "the recognition of individual uniqueness, individual life values, and individual life choices" (Marlina 2011, 10). An approach to language teaching that fosters critical reflection, and increases awareness of diversity and heterogeneity within cultures can also help students to recognize that their cultural identities

are not determined only by their national and linguistic backgrounds, but instead see themselves as complex individuals whose cultural practices, behavior, values, and worldviews are also affected by other aspects of their identity such as ethnicity, religion, class, age, gender and sexual orientation (Marlina 2011, 11-12). Marlina (2011, 10-12) emphasizes that in addition to students recognizing and accepting their uniqueness, and their similarities and differences to others, they also need to develop the skills to reflect on them and practice communication strategies to express and explain them in the foreign language context:

If one aims to genuinely promote multiculturalism through English, then one also needs to be able to talk about or employ communicative strategies in English to explain *how* and *why* one is different from their interlocutors, be they from the same or different cultural contexts. Only stating '*I am different because I'm from [this country]*' can be argued as a statement to promote monoculturalism as opposed to genuine multiculturalism. (Marlina 2011, 11)

This would be greatly assisted by teaching materials that provide students with opportunities to reflect on their own identities.

#### **2.2.4 The national core curriculum for upper secondary schools**

The general objectives and the core contents of foreign language teaching and learning in Finnish upper secondary schools are defined in the national core curriculum, which is adopted and locally developed further by municipalities and schools. The national core curriculum also provides the institutional and political frame for foreign language textbooks. As the analyzed EFL textbooks in my thesis have been written and published before the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2015 came into effect in the fall of 2016, I will present here the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2003, which provides the frame for the analyzed textbooks.

The National Core Curriculum 2003 (2003, 102) states that foreign language teaching should develop “students’ intercultural communication skills” and “their awareness, understanding and appreciation of the culture within the area or community where the language

is spoken”. It is also stated that “in order to develop their cultural sensitivity, students must be made aware of the culturally bound nature of their own actions and evaluations” (ibid., 103).

Each upper secondary school foreign language course centers around specific themes, which should be dealt with “from the perspectives of Finland, the cultural area of the language being studied and, depending on the language and theme, also from a broader perspective, so as to provide students with opportunities to make comparisons” (ibid., 102-103). For advanced level language studies, i.e. foreign language syllabus started in grades 1–6 of basic education, the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2003 (ibid., 103-105) describes the thematic content of the six compulsory courses and two specialization courses (courses 7 and 8) as presented in Table 1. below. Foreign language textbooks series are generally designed to follow the same thematic structure.

<b>Foreign language course</b>	<b>Themes and situations</b>
Course 1 ‘Young people and their world’	Everyday life, personal interaction and human relations
Course 2 ‘Communication and leisure’	Leisure time and interests, and services used in connection with these
Course 3 ‘Study and work’	Studies and working life
Course 4 ‘Society and the surrounding world’	Societies in Finland and the target countries
Course 5 ‘Culture’	Culture in a broad sense
Course 6 ‘Science, economy and technology’	Different branches of science, technological achievements, different forms of communication and economic life
Course 7 ‘Nature and sustainable development’	Nature, the natural sciences and sustainable development
Course 8 ‘Globalization and internationalization’	Global development trends, current affairs and different world views

Table 1. Themes in the upper secondary school foreign language courses

The National Core Curriculum 2003 (2003, 26-31) also outlines several cross-curricular themes that are intended to integrate teaching cross subject boundaries, and to be taken into consideration in the operational culture of the school. They are defined as “educational challenges with social significance” and “current statements on values” (ibid., 26). From the

perspective of the present study, particularly one cross-curricular theme has relevance, namely '*cultural identity and knowledge of cultures*'. The cross-curricular theme 'cultural identity and knowledge of cultures' involves objectives such as the awareness of human values and rights and their manifestations in everyday life and society, the reinforcement of positive cultural identity and knowledge of other cultures as the basis of intercultural competence, the understanding of different interpretations of the concept of culture, the development of awareness and understanding of students' own cultural identity, as well as the appreciation of cultural diversity as "part of the richness of life and as a source of creativity", and the active involvement in "the construction of a multicultural society based on mutual respect" (ibid., 29-30). Some of these objectives seem to largely correspond to the goals of foreign language teaching discussed in Sections 2.2.1-2.2.3 above, especially in terms of developing critical awareness and understanding of both the target and the student's own culture, as well as students' own cultural identity, and promoting cultural pluralism and students' active involvement in achieving social equality.

### **2.3 Cultural representation in foreign language textbooks**

Textbooks embody "particular constructions of reality, particular ways of selecting and organizing that vast universe of possible knowledge" (Apple 1992, 5). As sociocultural materials, textbooks are "the products of complex selective processes reflecting political decisions, educational beliefs and priorities, cultural realities and language policies" (Curdt-Christiansen and Weninger 2015, 1). As textbooks represent the "official" texts in education, they legitimize specific types of knowledge and values, and play a role "in defining whose culture is taught" in the classroom (Apple 1992, 4-5). Given the ideological nature of textbooks, it is no surprise that researchers have shown a growing interest in the analysis of diversities in textbooks of various subjects and disciplines. Recent research in the 2010's on the

presence of diversities in textbooks has focused primarily on the representation of diversities, diversity and citizenship in textbooks, language and culture in English textbooks, and the use of textbooks to develop intercultural competence/empathy (Dervin et al. 2015, 7-8).

In the field of foreign language education, research on cultural representation in language textbooks is rich. Cultural representations are formed discursively, and “they convey images of or narratives of culture and society in particular contexts” (Risager 2006, 167). As Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004, 28) note, foreign language textbooks “possess a unique authority to construct and mediate alternative cultural and linguistic worlds, in fact, “imagining” them for the students”. The question of who can present the foreign culture, or whose culture is represented in textbooks is important considering that classroom representations provide students with information about who are the users of the target language, and often a primary source of those representations is the textbook (Azimova & Johnston 2012, 337).

Most textbook analyses examining cultural representation in foreign language textbooks concern the representations of the culture(s) and the users of the target language, the textual construction of the learners’ own culture and identities, or the incorporation of content that promotes cultural awareness. Most of this research takes a critical stance, and aims to examine the values and ideologies textbooks promote by analyzing the representations of cultural groups (Weninger & Kiss 2015, 53-54). However, studies on cultural representation are sometimes criticized for viewing culture as national culture, and “in terms of mutually exclusive binaries such as Asian-Western” without really recognizing “the existence of hybrid, subcultural, or global cultural representations” (Weninger and Kiss 2013, 700).

According to Canale (2016, 239), who has examined recent studies on the representation of culture in second, foreign and heritage language textbooks and analyzed how politics of inclusion and exclusion of diversity operate in language textbooks, the representation of culture in textbooks generally tends to be homogenizing and this is achieved “by means of adopting

politics of exclusion or inclusion of cultural diversity and heterogeneity”. The homogenization of culture in language textbooks simplifies or hides the “complex sociocultural and sociopolitical realities of the culture in question” (ibid., 240).

In his study, Canale (2016, 232-239) identifies three recurrent strategies of cultural representation that language textbooks employ. First, some textbooks do not seem to recognize cultural diversity, or even acknowledge ethnic and other sociopolitical groups within a community. They exclude different gender, religious, linguistic or ethnic identities, perspectives and practices within the culture, and the exclusion occurs with both everyday and more controversial topics (ibid., 232). This seems to correspond to a conservative approach to multiculturalism discussed in Section 2.2.1. The exclusion of diversity within the foreign culture might mis- or underrepresent the culture, and “fail to favour students’ critical awareness by not showing the complexities underlying any cultural group” (Canale 2016, 232). Canale (ibid., 235) notes that textbooks written for students with a lower level of proficiency are more likely to adopt the strategy of excluding diversity.

Second, some textbooks include cultural diversity and heterogeneity in terms of groups, practices and products – though often in a stereotypical way – but discussions of diversity do not include perspectives and ideologies (Canale 2016, 235). This corresponds to a more liberal approach to multiculturalism (see Section 2.2.1), and is likely to result in the association of cultural diversity with superficial cultural matters, such as “material objects, historical facts and static artefacts” (ibid., 236). Canale (ibid., 235) also notes that in these types of textbooks, diversity is usually discussed between national cultures as they are compared and contrasted, but the diversity within a culture remains unproblematized. This leads to a homogenized representation of both the culture(s) of the target language and the learners’ native culture, and to the association of culture with place “within the scheme of a nationalist ideology” (ibid.,

236). Both native and foreign cultural identities are thus essentialized in these types of language textbooks (ibid.).

Finally, sometimes textbooks acknowledge cultural diversity at a local scale in order to “meta-homogenize” such diversity at a global scale, and this is found especially in the context of textbooks of global languages such as English (Canale 2016, 236-238). Such EFL textbooks may attempt to connect learners with the language and “the homogeneous (global) meta-culture that unites all English users” by constructing a notion of English as a global language and revising the concept of “ownership” of English by means of representations of local and regional cultural diversity (ibid., 236-237). According to Canale (ibid., 237-238), “this meta-culture serves the purpose of wiping off potential tensions or conflicts in perspectives among communities of English users around the world”. However, by focusing on the so-called global meta-culture, “textbooks do not favour students’ reflection upon diversity as intrinsic to human nature and social life” (ibid., 238).

Many textbook analyses addressing the representation of minorities in language textbooks reveal a tendency towards stereotyping and avoiding discussions about sociopolitical issues. For instance, Herman (2007, 131-132), who has studied the representations of Spanish-speaking countries and thematic topics in Spanish-as-a-foreign-language textbooks, found that intergroup relations or conflicts, and ethnic or indigenous issues are generally absent, and indigenous peoples are largely portrayed in connection with festivals, instead of being represented as contributing to the local culture and society. Similarly, in his study on the portrayal of minorities in Chinese-as-a-second-language textbooks, White (2008, 84, 86, 91) found that the few minorities in China that are included in the textbooks are represented as ‘traditional’ with images of singing and dancing, depicted in rural settings, and portrayed as having unique customs, habits and traditional festivals.



Considering the discussion on critical approaches to multiculturalism in foreign language education in Section 2.2, and the criticism on cultural representations in language textbooks in recent research, it appears that a more critical approach to cultural representation is required. Herman (2007, 119) argues that the politics of the foreign language textbook should be “viewed in the context of the growing literature on critical language teaching and learning”, as there is a growing awareness among researchers and professionals of “the need to teach culture in a more complex and sophisticated way”. However, a more critical approach to cultural representation in foreign language textbooks requires more than the acknowledgement and celebration of the existence of diversity within a culture. Textbooks – through their textual and visual content and activities – not only need to examine cultural practices, perspectives and ideologies from the point of view of multiple cultural groups, but also address the struggles, conflicts and tensions around cultural and linguistic diversity, and address issues of language ideology and cultural identity (see, e.g., Yamada 2010, 503; Thompson 2013, 960-961).

Though it should be noted that despite the significance of cultural representations in language textbooks, it cannot be presumed that what is in the textbooks is taught in classrooms, or that what is taught is learned by students (Apple 1992, 10). Textbook readers, i.e. teachers and students, are not “passive receptors” (Canale 2016, 226). Instead, “they may become agents in the process of reinforcing, appropriating or contesting the representations textbooks (re)produce” (ibid.). Teachers discursively mediate and transform the representations of the teaching material in the classroom, and as such, we cannot predict the diverse ways teachers will treat the material based on the material itself (Sunderland et al., 281). Even unbiased textbooks can be treated in ways that sustain stereotypes instead of reducing them (ibid.), and anti-racist material can turn counterproductive without an appropriate pedagogical approach (Starkey and Osler 2001, 328). Students themselves, too, bring their own class, race, gender

and religious backgrounds to their readings of textbooks, as they “accept, reinterpret, and reject what counts as legitimate knowledge selectively” (Apple 1992, 10).

#### **2.4 Multiculturalism and foreign language texts and literature**

Foreign language texts have generally been regarded as resources for practicing reading comprehension, teaching linguistic structures, and familiarizing students with text genres, and as springboards for students’ own written production. Often texts about the target culture have also been considered important sources of cultural information; texts are expected to reveal something about the culture. Even literary texts have generally been reduced to linguistic sources for learning, and served as “an informative representation of cultural traits” (Matos 2012, 72). However, instead of focusing on the linguistic and informative aspects of foreign language texts, texts about cultural practices and perspectives could be approached as “resources for intercultural discussion” (Weninger and Kiss 2013, 711).

Particularly the use of multicultural and minority literature in foreign language teaching has been suggested as a useful tool for intercultural learning, and for addressing issues of diversity in the classroom. First, the reading of literature involves the reader at the cognitive and the affective level, the latter one being “particularly relevant in intercultural experience” (Matos 2012, 20). Literature also develops readers’ “empathetic abilities, which are essential in understanding diversity” (Chick 2009, 172). Secondly, multicultural literature “mediates between the cultures and initiates a process of reception in which readers can learn something about the complexity of the foreign culture as well as of their own” (Bredella 1997, 15). Although, Bredella (1997, 8) emphasizes that literary texts should not be interpreted as representatives of entire groups, or read as “sociological reports”. Such a reading of texts treats culture and ethnicity as “static and monolithic by generalizing from a single text that’s read as ethnography” (Chick 2009, 175-176).

According to Chick (2009, 174-175), it is important for students to consider the literary and the historical context of multicultural texts. Instead of reading texts as mere “illustrations of a cultural perspective”, Chick (*ibid.*, 174) suggest that by identifying and examining literary elements such as themes (love, family, etc.), students can situate the texts “within the larger literary tradition and students’ realm of the familiar”, and thus personally connect with the texts. However, for students to be able to read and reflect on the text from a critical multiculturalist perspective, students should also examine how the text revises these universal themes in its specific cultural and historical context (*ibid.*, 175):

Examining how they [texts] reflect specific cultural histories, cultures, ideologies, or ways of knowing leads to acknowledging the texts on their own terms and within their own contexts. Students shouldn’t miss how these authors work both inside and outside of tradition and their complex relationships to power and voice. Such literary analyses support a critical multiculturalist stance that these writings must be read as products of specific people within specific groups at specific times in specific places, facilitating students’ empathy and personal connections with the literature while also honoring the differences of another perspective.

It is essential for students to recognize the historical and cultural contexts of the texts for understanding the texts, and the textual elements that emerge from their context (Chick 2009, 175), as well as for understanding the historical and cultural background of the complexities of diversity (*ibid.*, 177).

Multicultural literature can also encourage students to engage in critical self-reflection and thereby develop intercultural understanding, which Bredella (1997, 3, 10) defines as becoming sensitive to the cultural nature of our own values, and to the concepts we use in understanding others and other cultures. The reading and reflecting on multicultural literary texts can help students develop intercultural understanding, because the texts explore “the misrecognition of others and because the discussion of the students’ responses to these texts can make them aware of their own concepts and values which they bring to these texts” (*ibid.*, 3). Liddicoat and Scarino (2013, 97) emphasize that the literary text itself will not develop

intercultural understanding, but when students engage with the cultural worlds of the text and interpret the cultural in the text, it becomes a resource for intercultural learning.

Matos (2012, 128) suggests that the objective of developing students' critical cultural awareness, i.e. their ability to critically examine and evaluate the target culture and their own culture, could be consciously integrated into the reading of literary texts in the foreign language classroom. The classroom tasks would then need to move beyond the study of the text itself and harness the text's potential for becoming "the vehicle for deeper reflection and for understanding of self and others" (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013, 95-96). Developing a critical reading of a text on both cognitive and affective levels would require students to analyze, evaluate, hypothesize, compare, question, and comment on the text (Matos 2012, 125). According to Burwitz-Melzer (2001, 29-30), students should also be offered creative tasks in addition to the more analytical tasks, because creative tasks can provide students the opportunity and the freedom to explore and experiment with cultural perspectives in a safe space:

Often creative tasks lend themselves to a blend of literary and intercultural objectives, leaving enough space and an 'anxiety free' zone for the learners in which they can experiment with different perspectives and culturally different points of view as well as compare their own culture to the culture in the text.

Gómez Rodríguez (2013; 2015), who has studied the incorporation of multicultural short stories on sociocultural and sociopolitical issues (e.g. discrimination and marginalization) in EFL teaching as a means to foster the development of EFL learners' critical intercultural competence, found that the critical reading of and discussions on the literary texts developed EFL learners' critical thinking skills, critical intercultural awareness, positive attitudes and respect for diversity, and their ability to critically reflect on their own life experiences and native cultures as well as the target culture. Similarly, in her study on multiculturalism in EFL reading, Wang (2012, 270) concluded that the reading of multicultural texts in the classroom, and

students' reflections on their own cultural backgrounds in connection with the texts increased students' positive attitudes towards diversity.

Teachers' own beliefs and attitudes also play an important role in the success of pedagogical approaches that aim to promote intercultural learning through multicultural texts and literature. As previously discussed in Section 2.3, teachers mediate texts in the classroom in diverse ways, and the way they treat texts influences the meanings created in the learning situation. In her study on EFL reading, Wang (2012, 270, 272) found that teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards diversity which influence classroom practices might even have a stronger impact on students' openness to diversity than the texts themselves. Foreign language teachers' own perceptions about and attitudes towards multiculturalism and diversity could thus either enable or hinder the development of students' critical cultural awareness and positive attitudes and respect for diversity.

### **3. Research design**

In this section, I will first discuss the methods used in the present study, and describe how the analysis is conducted. I will then present the data and describe its selection process.

#### **3.1 Methods**

The aim of my thesis is to examine how ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity of English-speaking countries features in Finnish EFL textbook reading texts and tasks. Following Weninger and Kiss’s (2015, 63) ideas of combining an analysis of textbook representations with a more pedagogically oriented analysis of textbook content and tasks for their “ability to foster cultural reflexivity”, I will examine the representations of ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity in Finnish EFL textbook reading texts, and explore how textbooks approach the texts and their themes by analyzing the accompanying reading tasks. Weninger and Kiss (ibid.) argue that a critical textbook analysis that explores textbooks as both cultural and pedagogical artifacts could “offer insight into the interplay of representations along with the pedagogic use to which they are put”.

I will analyze the reading texts and tasks in Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks. For a more detailed discussion on data selection, see Section 3.2. In the analysis, I will use both quantitative and qualitative methods. First, I will conduct a quantitative analysis of the types of texts in the data, and the EFL courses in which the texts are read. This will provide an overview of the types of reading texts textbooks include, and the course context of the texts in upper secondary school EFL teaching. Second, I will examine the representations in the EFL textbook reading texts. I will first survey which English-speaking countries, and minority ‘racial’ and ethnic groups are represented in the texts. I will then examine how ‘racial’ and ethnic minority, indigenous and migration issues are represented in the texts by using a thematic approach. This will provide a review of the range of sociocultural and sociopolitical themes in the reading texts.

Gibson and Brown (2009, 127) describe thematic analysis as “a process of analyzing data according to commonalities, relationships and differences across a data set”. By creating thematic categories, the researcher can link ideas in the data together, and to juxtapose and interrelate them (ibid., 129). “Theming” the data involves coding the apparent or underlying meanings in extended passages in the data, and categorizing and subordinating the identified themes (Saldaña 2011, 108-109). In my analysis, I will follow the guidelines for a thematic qualitative text analysis presented by Kuckartz (2014, 69-88). Following a careful reading of the texts, I will determine initial main categories, and code the material. After having assigned all relevant passages to the main categories, I will then create sub-categories inductively based on the texts, and code the material again. However, since text passages may include several topics, the coded passages can overlap and be assigned to more than one category. After completing the coding process, I will conduct and present a category-based analysis of the main categories.

In the final part of the analysis, I will examine the types of reading tasks textbooks include, and whether the tasks encourage students’ critical reflection of the target and students’ own cultures by analyzing the accompanying reading tasks both quantitatively and qualitatively. I will use Kynkäänniemi’s (2006) categorization of reading tasks as a frame for my analysis. In her analysis of the type of literacy the tasks in Finnish and Russian Mother tongue and literature textbooks aim at, Kynkäänniemi (2006, 149-152) employs a framework which she partly bases on OECD’s classifications used in the PISA study 2000. Based on OECD’s classifications, she divides the textbook tasks into *Retrieving information* tasks (*Tiedonhakutehtävät*), *Forming a broad understanding and developing an interpretation* tasks (*Luetun ymmärtämisen ja tulkinnan tehtävät*), and *Reflecting on and evaluating the content or form of a text* tasks (*Luetun pohdinnan ja arvioinnin tehtävät*).<sup>1</sup>

1. I have based my translations of the Finnish terms on OECD’s original report on the results from PISA 2000 (OECD 2002, 30-36, 40).

*Retrieving information* tasks instruct learners to locate information in the text, select or connect pieces of information, or to apply the information in another context. In *Forming a broad understanding and developing an interpretation* tasks, learners need to be able identify and process the main content and ideas of the text. Learners should also be able to understand the function of the text, and the different connections and links in the text, for example causality. Often the tasks can require learners to read between the lines, come to conclusions and make comparisons. In *Reflecting on and evaluating the content or form of a text* tasks learners are required to draw on other sources of information, for instance their prior knowledge, experiences or beliefs in their reflections on the text. In short, the first two types of textbook tasks direct learners to consider and process the information in the text, and in the latter type of task, learners are required to reflect on the text by drawing on information beyond the text. (Kynkäänniemi 2006, 149-152; OECD 2002, 30-36, 40). In my thesis, I will only analyze the tasks that instruct learners to retrieve content-related information, or direct learners to form an understanding of, develop an interpretation of, reflect on or evaluate the content of the text.

To this categorization, Kynkäänniemi (2006, 150-152) adds a fourth category which she calls *Personal experiences*<sup>1</sup> (*Omaehtaiset kokemukset*). Kynkäänniemi (ibid.) classifies these textbook tasks in their own category, because even though they involve drawing on and processing information beyond the text, they are often only loosely linked with the text and its themes. According to Kynkäänniemi (ibid., 151), this type of task “acts mainly as a stimulus, or implicitly as small talk between the writer and the reader”<sup>2</sup>. In my analysis, I will include the tasks that link the text with learners’ knowledge and experiences of Finnish culture and society in this category since they connect learners’ experiences with the themes of the text in a similarly broad way.

1. The English term is my own translation.

2. The direct quote is my own translation.



To the frame outlined above, I will incorporate an additional fifth category which I will call *Creative tasks*. These types of tasks can often involve elements of reflecting on the text or learners' personal experiences, but they encourage learners to apply the text in a more creative way, for example by producing a piece of creative writing or acting out a role-play scene. In conclusion, the following task type categorization will form the frame for the analysis of the reading tasks:

1. *Retrieving information,*
2. *Forming a broad understanding and developing an interpretation,*
3. *Reflecting on and evaluating the content of a text,*
4. *Reflecting on personal experiences and the Finnish context,*
5. *Creative tasks.*

I will first quantitatively analyze how many reading texts are accompanied by the types of reading tasks outlined above. I will then present a closer analysis of each task type category, and discuss the themes relating to 'racial' and ethnic diversity, indigenous issues and migration for the tasks that move beyond information retrieval, and the understanding and interpretation of the text itself.

It should be noted that some tasks involve elements of several task categories. Therefore, I will break the tasks down into relevant segments and treat them as separate tasks for the purposes of the analysis. This will not, however, affect the reliability of the analysis since my aim is not to count the total frequency of tasks in the data, but rather the number of texts that are accompanied by a certain type of task. An example of a reading task which incorporates elements of several task types is presented below:

Tell your partner the overall idea of your text. What kind of picture do you get of Britain after reading the text? Do you agree or disagree with this picture? Why?  
(English UNITED 2, *Oh England, my... / English*)

The first two parts of the example, where students should first identify the main contents of the text and summarize it to their partner, and then interpret and reflect on the picture of Britain the text conveys, fall under the ‘forming a broad understanding and developing an interpretation’ task category. The third part of the task, where students are directed to reflect on how that picture relates to their own perceptions about Britain, can be classified as a ‘reflecting on and evaluating the content of a text’ task. In the analysis, the three parts of the task will be treated as separate tasks. In the case that a task example in the analysis section involves elements of several task types, the relevant parts of the task instructions will be bolded.

### **3.2 Data**

I have gathered the data from five Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbook series designed for advanced level learners, namely *Culture Café*, *English UNITED*, *In Touch*, *Open Road* and *Profiles*. These textbook series were one of the most commonly used EFL textbook series in Finnish upper secondary schools between the early 2000s and the fall of 2016, when the new national core curriculum for upper secondary schools came into effect, at which point publishers gradually began to release new or updated EFL textbook series to replace the above-mentioned textbooks. Since I will not conduct a comparative analysis of the textbook series, and more importantly, since the reading texts are rarely changed in later editions, I have not opted for any particular edition of the textbooks in my analysis.

From the textbook series, I have gathered reading texts that involve ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity and discuss minority, indigenous and migration issues. I have selected the texts in which ‘racial’ and/or ethnic diversity of English-speaking countries is a key theme, and narrative texts in which a key character is identified as a member of a minority ‘racial’ or ethnic group, or where the narrative concerns issues of ‘race’ and ethnicity. Given my research focus

on the pedagogic use of the texts, I have selected only the texts which are accompanied by at least one content-related reading task.

From the 45 textbooks, I have gathered the data based on the selection criteria described above. The selected data for analysis is presented in more detail in Table 2 below.

Culture Café (CC)	6 textbooks	11 texts
English UNITED (EU)	5 textbooks	21 texts
In Touch (IT)	4 textbooks	7 texts
Open Road (OR)	3 textbooks	3 texts
Profiles (P)	3 textbooks	6 texts
<b>Total</b>	<b>21 textbooks</b>	<b>48 texts</b>

Table 2. The data for analysis

The data was gathered from 21 textbooks altogether: from 6 textbooks from the *Culture Café* textbook series, 5 from *English UNITED*, 4 from *In Touch*, 3 from *Open Road*, and 3 textbooks from *Profiles*. The data includes a total of 48 reading texts and the accompanying reading tasks. From the 48 reading texts, 21 texts appear in *English UNITED*, 11 in *Culture Café*, 7 in *In Touch*, 6 in *Profiles*, and 3 in *Open Road*.<sup>1</sup>

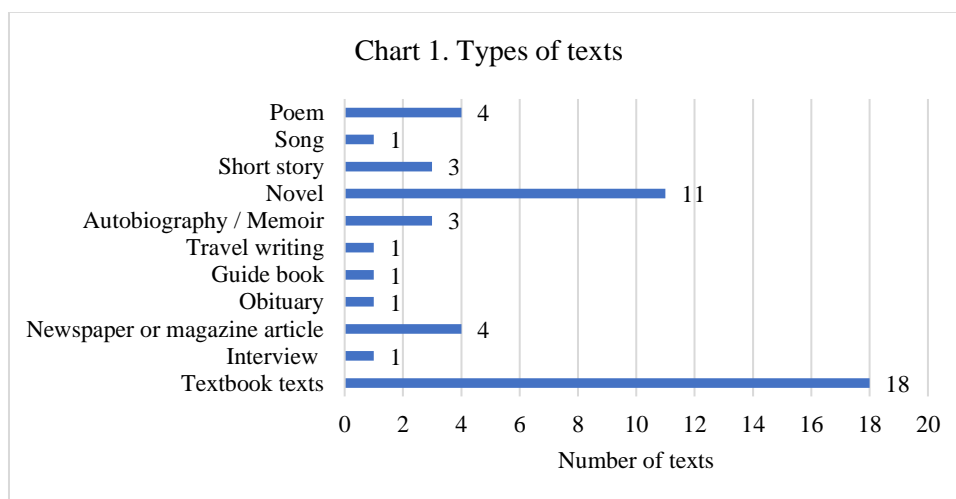
From the reading tasks, I have selected the ones that explicitly refer to the texts, either in the task content or in the task instructions, and discarded the tasks that deal solely with linguistic structures or vocabulary, or the style or genre of the text. However, I will examine tasks that draw learners' attention to the sociolinguistic or ethnolinguistic aspects in the reading texts, because these tasks have relevance in terms of my research topic and research questions.

1. For a complete list of the reading texts, see Appendix.

## 4. Analysis

In this section, I will present the analysis of the reading texts and tasks. First, I will quantitatively analyze the types of text in the data, and in which upper secondary school EFL courses the texts appear. Second, I will survey which English-speaking countries, and minority ‘racial’ and ethnic groups are represented in the reading texts, and analyze the representations of ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity by using a thematic analysis. In the final part of the analysis, I will quantitatively and qualitatively analyze the types of reading tasks in the data.

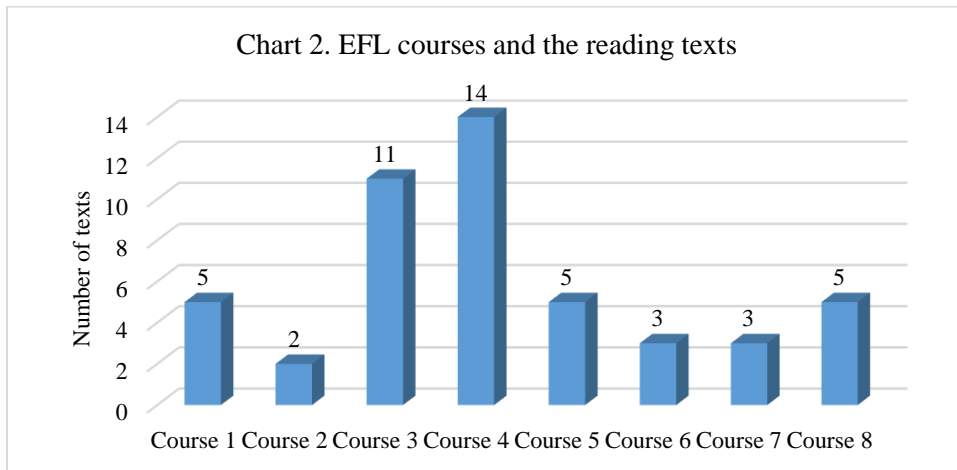
### 4.1 Types of texts



From the total of 48 texts, 30 (62,5%) texts are authentic, published texts or extracts from longer texts. They include 23 (47,9%) literary, or other narrative or poetic texts: 11 extracts from a novel, 4 poems, 3 extracts from a short story, 3 extracts from an autobiography/memoir (one of which is slightly adapted for the textbook), 1 travelogue and 1 song. These texts form approximately half of the data. The authentic texts also include 6 (12,5%) media texts: 4 newspaper or magazine articles, 1 interview and 1 obituary. The authentic material also contains an extract from a country guide book (2,1%). The remaining 18 (37,5%) texts are written for textbook use. Two of these texts are written in interview form, and one text is a letter to the

editor. The rest of the textbook texts involve or combine descriptive, informative or argumentative elements.

#### 4.2 Upper secondary school EFL courses

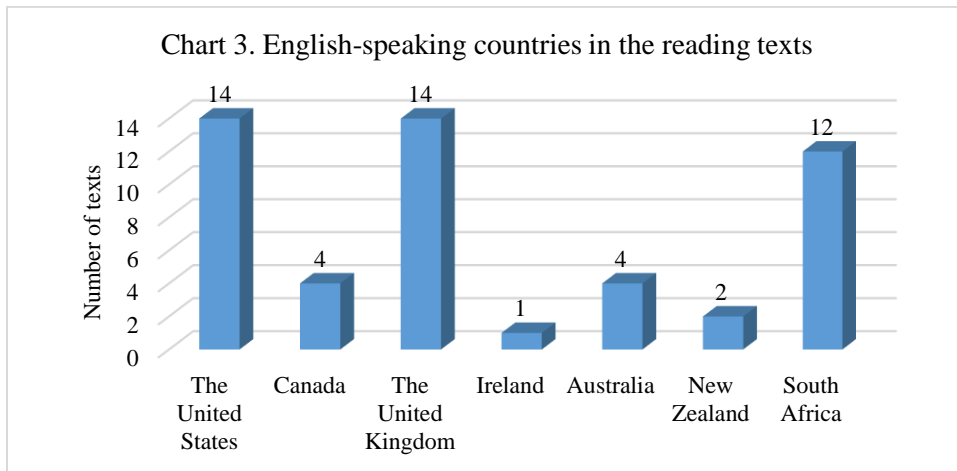


Approximately half of the texts (25 texts / 52,1%) are from textbooks for EFL courses 3 and 4, with 11 (22,9%) and 14 (29,2%) texts respectively. As presented in Section 2.2.4, EFL course 3 centers around themes of studies and working life, and course 4 around society and the surrounding world. Therefore, based on the EFL course context of the reading texts, it appears that many of the topics and themes in the reading texts are linked with questions of citizenship, and involvement in society, and other questions in society. However, the rest of the texts are spread out fairly evenly between the other EFL courses, which seems to indicate that questions of multiculturalism and diversity are present throughout upper secondary school EFL studies to some extent, at least in the EFL textbooks under analysis.

#### 4.3 English-speaking countries and minority ‘racial’ and ethnic groups

The reading texts represent the ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity of seven predominantly English-speaking countries, or countries where the English language has an official status, namely the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

The number of texts referring to each country are shown in Chart 3. below. It should be noted that two reading texts discuss the ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity of more than one English-speaking country.



As could be expected, in more than half of the reading texts the national context is the United States (14 texts / 29,2%) or the United Kingdom (14 texts / 29,2%). South Africa is also frequently discussed in the reading texts (12 texts / 25%). The ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity of Canada (4 texts / 8,3%), Australia (4 texts / 8,3%), New Zealand (2 texts / 4,2%) and Ireland (1 text / 2,1%) is featured in significantly fewer reading texts.

The reading texts refer to various minority ‘racial’ and ethnic groups. The main minorities in the texts, and the number of texts representing them are presented in Table 3. below.

**Minority ‘racial’ and ethnic groups in the texts**

<b>The United States</b>	African Americans (10)
	Immigrants from Latin America, and Hispanic and Latino Americans (4)
	Immigrants from Asia, and Asian Americans (2)
	Native Americans (2)
	Irish Immigrants (1)
<b>Canada</b>	First Nations people (1)
	Immigrants and second-generation Canadians, from e.g. Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, etc. (3)
<b>The United Kingdom</b>	Immigrants and British people with migrant backgrounds, from e.g. India, Pakistan, the Caribbean, Bangladesh, etc. (12)
	Asylum seekers (2)
<b>Ireland</b>	Migrant workers, especially from Eastern Europe (1)
<b>Australia</b>	The Aborigines (4)
<b>New Zealand</b>	The Maori (2)
<b>South Africa</b>	Black South Africans / Black African communities, e.g., Xhosa, Zulu, etc. (10)
	The Coloureds (2)

Table 3. The main minority ‘racial’ and ethnic groups in the reading texts

Most of the reading texts discussing the United States represent African-Americans. Hispanic and Latino Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans are represented in significantly fewer texts. One text deals with immigration from Ireland in the 1950’s. The native peoples of North America come up in one text about Canada, too, where they are referred to as First Nations people. However, a majority of the texts about ethnic diversity in Canada discusses immigration from countries such as Poland, Portugal, Vietnam, China, India, the Caribbean islands, Brazil and Morocco, to name a few. Most of the texts about the United Kingdom discuss immigration from former colonized countries from the 1950s onwards, ‘newer’ migrant groups from Asia and Europe, and native born British people with migrant backgrounds. Two reading

texts also represent asylum seekers. The one reading text about ethnic diversity in Ireland discusses migrant workers from Eastern Europe. The texts which deal with 'racial' and ethnic diversity in Australia and New Zealand concern the native peoples, the Aborigines in Australia and the Maori in New Zealand. The reading texts discussing South Africa mostly represent black South Africans during and after the Apartheid era, and refer to African communities such as the Xhosa and Zulu. Two texts also discuss the Coloureds, i.e. a multiracial ethnic group in South Africa.

#### **4.4 Thematic analysis of the reading texts**

In this section, I will present the thematic analysis of the reading texts where I will examine the sociocultural and sociopolitical themes in the texts. The analysis is structured around the main thematic categories, which are *Minorities, minority culture and cultural identity, Social injustice issues and racism and Anti-racism, activism and community action*.



#### 4.4.1 Minorities, minority culture and cultural identity

##### Minorities, minority culture and cultural identity

<b>Multicultural cities</b>	City areas divided along ethnic lines
	Food cultures from around the world
	Gaining multicultural competence
<b>Intergroup relations</b>	Ethnic groups living and socializing within their own communities
	Communities living happily side-by-side
	Racial tension and conflict
<b>“Between two worlds” – Hybrid cultural identities</b>	Second-generation immigrants and questions of identity
	Modern-day native people and questions of identity
	Questions of ethnic or ‘racial’ identity in interracial or interethnic families and in interracial adoptions
<b>Multilingualism, language and identity</b>	Language use and language choices in multilingual families and in multilingual areas
	The increasing role of English in education and media in multilingual South Africa: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents choosing schools with English as the language of instruction for political and practical reasons</li> <li>• The growing importance of English as a lingua franca in the media due to economic reasons</li> </ul>
	Immigrants and standard English: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigrants striving for standard language competence</li> <li>• Negative feelings towards one’s own accent</li> <li>• Losing one’s native variety of English</li> </ul>
<b>Native cultures and cultural change</b>	The traditional customs of tattooing of the Maoris with religious and tribal meanings now merely “skin art”
	Traditional African customs related to marriage and the mixing of traditional and western customs today
	Non-native participants in Native American cultural festivals
<b>Music and arts</b>	Preserving local languages and cultures through music and arts
	Music as a source of empowerment and hope, and as an escape from poverty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• African Americans and music in the early 20th century</li> <li>• Black South Africans and choir singing during and after apartheid</li> </ul>
	Minorities and the culture of the majority group: Black South Africans and South Africa’s first multi-ethnic opera company
	National literature about racial oppression in South Africa
<b>Immigration, families and cultural practices</b>	Transnational connections
	Immigrants sending money for their families back home
	Arranged marriages
	Differences between generations in terms of balancing with cultural traditions and the new culture
	Women’s traditional roles and their roles in the new culture

Table 4. Themes relating to minorities, minority culture and cultural identity in the reading texts

In the reading texts, especially cosmopolitan cities are represented as being multicultural, and as places where the exposure to diversity develops multicultural competence. The cultural diversity of cities is visible in the food cultures from around the world. In the texts, cities are divided into areas along ethnic lines. The texts represent ethnic and ‘racial’ groups as living and socializing mainly within their own communities, and intergroup relations are described as either peaceful co-existence, or as racial tension and conflict between groups.

The texts deal with issues of cultural and linguistic identity. The themes of hybrid cultural identities and living between two cultural worlds come up in texts about second-generation immigrants and people with immigrant backgrounds, modern-day native people, and interracial or interethnic families, and interracial adoptions. Students also read about issues of multilingualism and standard language in the texts. The texts discuss language use and language choices in multilingual families and in multilingual areas, the increasing role of English in South African education and media with the expense of other languages, and the question of standard English in the context of immigrants who strive to speak standard language instead of speaking another English variety, or with an accent because of negative associations.

Cultural change and the changing meanings of traditional cultural customs and practices are themes that come up in texts discussing native cultures and native communities of today. For example, a text about the Maori describes how the traditional customs of tattooing with their religious and tribal meanings are now merely “skin art” for today’s Maoris. The reading texts also deal with music and arts. They are represented as a way to preserve local languages and cultures. Music is portrayed as a source of empowerment and hope for African Americans in the early 20th century, and for black South Africans during apartheid, and as an escape from poverty after the fall of the Apartheid system. Students also read about black South Africans accepted in the cultural arena of opera, which has traditionally been an art form for the white

people in South Africa, and about how the history of racial oppression in South Africa has generated successful national literature.

The texts also represent immigration from the point of view of immigrant families. Families in the texts maintain close connections to family members back home, or in other countries. Retaining the custom of arranged marriages in families with immigrant backgrounds is also discussed. The texts also describe the generation gap that may exist in families where parents and children might have different ideas how to balance between cultural traditions and the culture of the surrounding environment. A similar theme of conflict and difference between the immigrant's culture and the culture of the surrounding society is described in relation to women's traditional roles and their roles in the new culture.

## 4.4.2 Social injustice issues and racism

### Social injustice issues and racism

<b>Institutionalized racial segregation, discrimination and oppression</b>	African Americans and racial segregation in the United States
	The Apartheid system in South Africa
	The Stolen Generations in Australia: Aboriginal children forcefully removed from their families and indigenous heritage between 1910-1970
<b>The rights of native people</b>	The issue of land ownership in Australia
	Ownership of cultural symbols: debate over Europeans getting the traditional Maori tattoos
	Native culture and tourism: tourists disrespecting a sacred site of the Aborigines
<b>Discrimination and exploitation in labor market and housing</b>	Discrimination when applying for a job
	Exploitation of migrant workers who have poor language skills and knowledge of their rights
	Housing discrimination
<b>Inequality in education</b>	Certain cultural knowledge recognized and valued in education
	Immigrants lacking the cultural background needed for education
	School textbooks not including minority cultures and their histories
	The limited opportunities to be educated in one's own native language in multilingual South Africa
<b>Social problems</b>	Poverty and poor living conditions in ethnic residential areas
	Substance abuse and crime
	The living conditions of asylum seekers
<b>Minorities and the media</b>	Media portraying minorities in a negative light by focusing on social problems and violence, instead of successful members of minorities and community action projects
	Freedom of press in South Africa during Apartheid: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence in black townships not shown in media</li> <li>• Biased portrayal of events and propaganda</li> </ul>
<b>Abuse and violence</b>	Racist verbal abuse and insults
	Riots: racial tension between 'racial' or ethnic groups
	Skinheads and violence
<b>Stereotyping and prejudice</b>	Stereotyping based on ethnicity and appearances
	Prejudice against immigrants and minority ethnic groups
	Children learning attitudes from adults
	Distrust in the police among minority 'racial' and ethnic groups
<b>Cultural heritage in adoptions</b>	Concerns whether interracial adoption leads to poor racial identity and loss of contact with cultural and linguistic heritage and roots

Table 5. Themes relating to social injustice issues and racism in the reading texts

The texts discuss various social injustice issues and forms of racism. The reading texts discuss institutionalized racial segregation, discrimination and oppression in the history of United States and South Africa. The texts also refer to the Australian policy of removing Aboriginal children from their families and indigenous heritage between 1910-1970, which could be considered to have nearly resulted in a “cultural genocide”. The texts also deal with the rights of native people today, and these indigenous issues are discussed in terms of land ownership disputes, ownership of cultural symbols such as the Maori tattoos, and how the native culture and its beliefs should be taken into account in tourism.

The texts also refer to the discrimination in working life and housing that minority ethnic and ‘racial’ groups may face. Migrant workers are represented as being easily exploited because of poor language skills and knowledge of their rights. In the texts, inequality is an issue in education as well. The texts describe how only certain cultural knowledge is recognized and valued in education, and how immigrants can lack the cultural background for succeeding in their studies. School textbooks are described as ignoring minority cultures and their histories. In the context of multilingual South Africa, a text discusses how there are limited opportunities for children to be educated in their own native language for economic and political reasons.

The texts portray social problems some minority ethnic and ‘racial’ group members deal with, such as poverty and poor living conditions in “ethnic residential areas” or in immigration detention centers. In the texts, the media is also described as portraying minorities in a negative light by focusing on social problems and violence instead of providing positive images. In the context of South Africa, the texts also refer to the problems with freedom of press during apartheid, which affected the way black South Africans and the violence against them were represented and reported in the media.

Racism in the texts takes also the form of verbal abuse and violence. One text describes how ‘racial’ tension between ‘racial’ or ethnic groups exploded into violent rioting.

Stereotyping based on ethnicity and appearances, and prejudice against immigrants and minority ethnic groups are themes that take many forms in the texts. The texts also portray children learning racist attitudes from adults, most often from their parents. One text also presents a debate whether interracial adoption leads to poor racial identity, and loss of contact with cultural and linguistic heritage and roots, and the question whether it is in the best interest of the child.

#### 4.4.3 Anti-racism, activism and community action

##### Anti-racism, activism and community action

<b>African Americans and the civil rights movement</b>	African Americans challenging segregation in the United States: passive resistance and non-violent protests
	The first African American president elected in the United States
<b>Activism against the Apartheid in South Africa</b>	The struggles of black and white activists in South Africa during Apartheid
	Alternative press reporting on the violence in South Africa during Apartheid
	Activists in the United States speaking against the apartheid in South Africa
	The first free election after the fall of the Apartheid system
<b>Individuals demanding rights and equal treatment</b>	Fighting against racism and discrimination in everyday life
<b>Communities and community action</b>	Getting an education and using it to help the community
	Successful minority group members acting as role models for the community
	Ethnic communities providing support for its members and newcomers
	Organizations, associations and clubs
	Indigenous cultures revitalized in local schools and community events
	Multicultural community festivals and events organized for celebrating cultural diversity

Table 6. Themes relating to anti-racism, activism and community action in the reading texts

The texts give examples of successful anti-racist movements and activism, and portray anti-racist struggles in the United States and South Africa in connection with the civil rights movement and the resistance movements against apartheid. The texts also show the successes of anti-racist efforts, such as Barack Obama being elected as the first African American

president, and the first free election after the fall of the Apartheid system. In other texts, students also read about members of minority ethnic or ‘racial’ groups speaking up for their rights, and demanding equality and recognition in their everyday life as they face racism and discrimination.

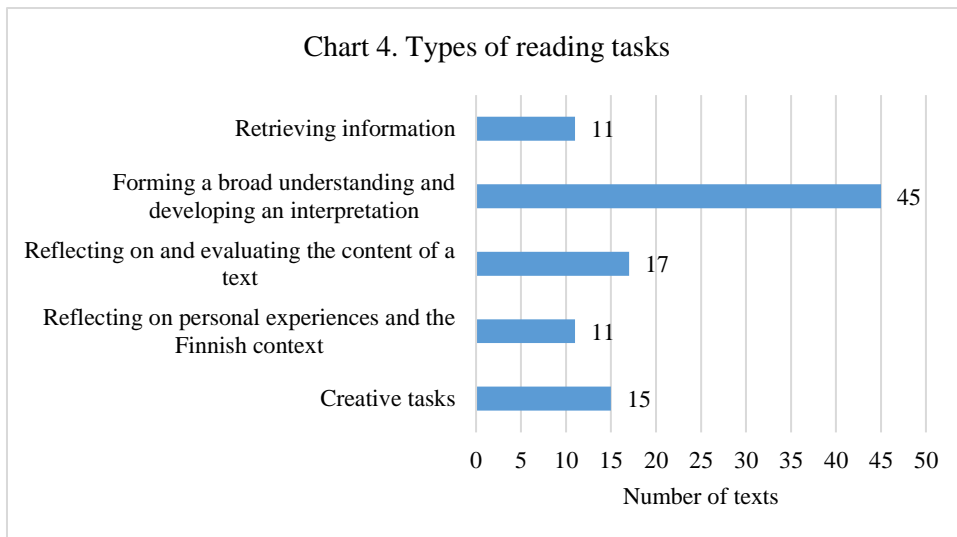
The texts represent various ways how minority ‘racial’ and ethnic communities contribute to the social well-being of the community and attempt to improve intergroup relations. In the texts, getting a good education is not only a way to get ahead in life, it is also described as a way to help the whole community. Successful minority group members also act as role models for young people in the community. Ethnic communities also provide support for their members and for newcomers who might struggle with the local language and culture. The texts also show native cultures being revitalized in local schools and community events. In an attempt to improve communication and interaction between different cultural groups, the texts describe how communities organize multicultural community festivals and events for celebrating cultural diversity in the area.

#### **4.5 Reading tasks**

The textbook reading tasks in the data are assigned to the following task type categories:

1. Retrieving information,
2. Forming a broad understanding and developing an interpretation,
3. Reflecting on and evaluating the content of a text,
4. Reflecting on personal experiences and the Finnish context,
5. Creative tasks.

The number of reading texts that are accompanied by the reading task types described above is presented in Chart 4 below.



From the total of 48 texts, the tasks of 11 texts (22,9%) require students to retrieve information from the text. Nearly all reading texts are accompanied by tasks checking comprehension and facilitating the interpretation of the text; a total of 45 texts (93,8%) are accompanied by reading tasks that fall under the category ‘forming a broad understanding and developing an interpretation’. 17 texts (35,4%) direct students to reflect on and evaluate the content of the text, and 11 texts (22,9%) encourage students to reflect on their personal experiences, or the themes of the text in the Finnish context. The reading tasks of 15 texts (31,3%) include creative tasks where students are required to process and apply the text and its themes in a creative way.

In the following sub-sections, I will analyze the types of reading tasks found in the data in more detail and provide examples of each task type category. For the tasks that move beyond information retrieval, and the understanding and interpretation of the text itself, I will also examine the themes relating to ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity, minorities, indigenous issues and migration the tasks deal with.

#### **4.5.1 Retrieving information**

The simplest ‘retrieving information’ tasks are questions which students answer by scanning the text and locating the required information, as in example (1) below:



(1) Scan the text about transracial adoption to find out

- What the term means
- What kind of children are adopted
- Who adopts them

(EU 4, *Multicoloured families*)

Students can also be required to search for and organize relevant information in the text by creating a mind map, filling in a table, or completing a graphic presentation, as in the following example:

(2) Who are these people listed below? Where are they from? How are they related to Raquel's family history? Place the correct numbers on the map.

1. Moïse
2. great-grandmother Raquel
3. Estrella
4. Salomon
5. Maarit
6. Liisa

(CC 1, *My family mosaic*)

#### 4.5.2 Forming a broad understanding and developing an interpretation

Tasks that help students to form a broad understanding of and process the main content and ideas of the text by directing students to summarize texts are common in the data. Students are instructed to arrange jumbled summary sentences or pictures of plot events in a logical or time sequence, match headings or short summaries with text segments, or summarize the main content or narrative with the help of graphic or verbal prompts. In the following example, students are directed to match headings with paragraphs and sum up each paragraph:

(3) Sum it up

- Part 1. Match the headings

There are six paragraphs in the text with missing headings. [...]

[Different immigrants; The truth about Britain; How the upper class lived; A contradiction; Learning about "real life"; The dream and the outcome]

Go back to the text on pages 22-24 and match each heading with the paragraph that it best sums up. Write each heading in the space provided.

- Part 2. Sum it up

Now go on and sum up the main ideas of each paragraph (one or two sentences only) in English using the titles as your starting point. Share the work with a partner.

(CC 4, *From riches to rags*)

For checking students' understanding of the arguments, connections, plot, or terms in the text, and for guiding students in forming an interpretation of the text, the textbooks include questions or multiple-choice tasks (4), or tasks where students are required to mark statements as 'true' or 'false' based on the text (5), complete charts or sentences according to the text (6), or to write about their interpretations (7). Some tasks also require students to provide evidence to support their own interpretations, or an interpretation that is given in the textbook (8).

(4) What does the narrator mean by saying: "To be white in apartheid days was to be – everything. Everything!"

(EU 4, *Karma*)

(5) Mark the following statements true (T) or false (F) according to the text.

1. It's easier for a European migrant to blend into Canadian society than it is for an Asian.  
(IT 8, *It's cool up north*)

(6) However, a Hugh is more likely to be invited for a job interview than an Eduardo because...

(P 3, *On first-name terms*)

(7) Write five sentences of your own where you describe the relationships between the characters in 'The Whale Rider'.

(EU 4, *The Whale Rider*)

(8) Some of the issues raised are

- Stereotyping of the Asian community,
- Judging people by their appearance,
- Respecting people because of their education or status.

**Discuss how these questions came up in the text** and whether you have had any similar experiences of misjudging others or being misjudged.

(IT 8, *Fight for your rights*)

In the tasks of three texts, students are also explicitly directed to consider and make broader interpretations about the historical or cultural context of the text based on what they have read, as in the following example where students should consider 'race' relations in the United States at the time of the publication of the text:

(9) 'It was, so they say, the only community in America where whites and Negroes lived together voluntarily'. What does the above statement tell you about the relationship in general between the two races in America in 1957, when the novel was first published?

(EU 3, *On the Road by Jack Kerouac*)

### 4.5.3 Reflecting on and evaluating the content of a text

In tasks where students are required to reflect on or evaluate the content of a text, students answer questions, discuss in pairs or groups, or compare and contrast several texts. In most tasks, students are encouraged to reflect on their reactions to or feelings about the text, and their own opinions on the topic. Students are also instructed to discuss their prior knowledge of the topic, what kind of new information the text provided, and whether they are familiar with similar examples or stories. The tasks direct students to reflect especially on the themes of *racism and discrimination, immigration, cultural marriage traditions, the connection between language and culture, multilingualism in a society and traditional lifestyles of indigenous people* in the texts.

Six texts dealing with ‘race’ relations and racism – either African Americans and racism in the United States in the 1950s, or ‘racial’ issues in South Africa during and after the Apartheid era – are accompanied by tasks that invite students to reflect on their own feelings after reading the text (10), or their views on the effects of the racism described in the text (11):

(10) What feelings did the article arouse in you?  
(P 6, *Obituary: Hamilton Naki*)

(11) What long-term effects do you think the experience had on all three of them?  
(CC 4, *The new girl*)

In a task of one of these texts, students are also instructed to pay attention to the racist language in the text. Students need to recognize a particular racist term, reflect on the historical connotations of the term, and discuss non-racist language use today:

(12) Which word in the sentence above [‘It was, so they say, the only community in America where whites and Negroes lived together voluntary.’] is not often used nowadays? Why not? Give some examples of words which are used instead.  
(EU 3, *On the Road by Jack Kerouac*)

In connection with the texts about ‘racial’ issues in South Africa, students are also directed to discuss what they already know about the Apartheid and the situation in South Africa today, and whether they are aware of similar examples where music has played an important role for

an oppressed minority, when media coverage has been biased or one-sided, or where the collective suffering of a group of people has contributed to the success of national literature.

In the tasks of three texts discussing multicultural issues in the United Kingdom, the United States and Ireland, students are instructed to discuss their reactions to, prior knowledge of and opinions on the texts, as in examples (13) and (14) below. Since all three texts touch on issues of racism and discrimination, in these tasks too, it is very likely that the focus of students' discussions would move from a discussion about the text to reflecting on racism and discrimination in these countries.

(13) What thoughts and feelings did the text evoke in you?

Use the following sentence starters to express your own ideas about the points raised in the text.

I was surprised to find out that...

From previous experience I already knew that...

I never realized that...

The text confirmed my suspicions that...

I didn't like the fact that...

(IT 2, *The glorious salad bowl*)

(14) Tell your partner the overall idea of your text. What kind of picture do you get of Britain after reading the text? **Do you agree or disagree with this picture? Why?**

(EU 2, *Oh England, my... / English*)

In connection with three texts, the tasks encourage students to reflect on themes of immigration in the texts. Students are asked to reflect on and compare the views on immigration and identity in several texts in the textbook chapter (15), consider the struggles immigrants face in their new countries, or reflect on their own feelings and opinions about immigrants, or people in general, socializing exclusively within their own cultural or ethnic communities (16):

(15) The following poems have been inspired by *Walt Whitman's* poem 'I Hear America Singing' (see p. 63). Compare the poems with each other. Also, compare the poems with the text 'Who are real Americans?' Are the views on immigration the same in the poems as in the text?

(EU 3, *I, Too, Sing America & I, Too, Sing América*)

(16) How do you feel about "people sticking to their own kind"?

(CC 3, *'Tis*)

In the tasks of two texts students are encouraged to reflect on themes of marriage and wedding traditions, such as arranged marriages, and the mixing of traditions and customs of various cultures. In the following example, students should reflect on their views of the success of the marriages described in the text, one of them being an arranged marriage of a second-generation British couple whose parents have immigrated to the United Kingdom from India:

(17) How successful do you think these relationships are going to be?  
Do you think any will end in separation/divorce?  
(IT 4, *Happily ever after?*)

In the tasks of a text which discusses multiculturalism in South Africa, students are asked to reflect on the link between language and culture on a general level (18), and multilingualism in a society as they consider the practical reasons for the increasing role of English in the context of multilingual South Africa (19). The latter task could potentially open a discussion on the relationship between power and language in a society.

(18) Do you think that language and culture are linked? Give a reason for your answer.  
(EU 5, *Lara goes cultural*)

(19) Coloured and African people are sending their children to English-speaking schools for both political and practical reasons. What do you think the practical reasons might be? Give three reasons.  
(EU 5, *Lara goes cultural*)

Lastly, a text about the native peoples in Canada is accompanied by a task which instructs students to compare the traditional lives of Native Americans and the Inuit based on the text and other sources in the textbook chapter. This task does not, however, invite students to critically reflect on the modern-day life of Native Americans which the reading text deals with.

Other tasks classified under this task type category focus on more universal themes such as love and attraction. As pointed out in Section 2.4, these types of tasks can help students to personally connect with the texts and therefore facilitate the process of intercultural learning. Some tasks could potentially encourage students to reflect on issues of ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity in the texts, but such reflections would depend on students’ own backgrounds,

interests or ideas, as in the following example where students are instructed to choose statements from the text that interest them personally and explain their choices:

(20) Read through the interview with Benjamin Zephaniah which appeared in *The Independent*. Pick five statements that he makes which interest you or which ‘speak’ to you personally and write them in the speech bubbles. – Compare your choices with your partner’s, saying why you chose them.

(P 3, *Benjamin Zephaniah – Poetry’s King of Cool*)

#### 4.5.4 Reflecting on personal experiences and the Finnish context

In most of the tasks where students are explicitly asked to reflect on their personal experiences, or the themes of the text in the context of Finnish culture and society, students answer questions or discuss in pairs or groups. In connection with eight texts, the reading tasks encourage students to reflect on their own lives, experiences and backgrounds. However, only one task is explicitly linked to the themes of ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity in the texts. A text which describes discrimination at a hospital where a pregnant Indian woman receives unequal treatment because of her ethnicity is accompanied by a task where students are instructed to discuss their own experiences of stereotyping or being stereotyped:

(21) Some of the issues raised are

- Stereotyping of the Asian community,
- Judging people by their appearance,
- Respecting people because of their education or status.

Discuss how these questions came up in the text and **whether you have had any similar experiences of misjudging others or being misjudged.**

(IT 8, *Fight for your rights*)

Other tasks in which students are asked to reflect on their own experiences could potentially spark discussions about ‘race’, ethnicity or diversity, but it would depend on the students and their experiences, as in the following example where, after reading a text about the different roles of music in people’s lives, part of which discusses the role of music for the oppressed black South Africans during Apartheid, students are instructed to consider the music they listen to and whether it has a deeper role in their lives:

(22) Does the music you listen to fulfil any of the roles mentioned in the text?  
(EU 5, *Short cuts*)

Given that most upper secondary students can be assumed to have relatively limited experience in life due to their young age, the tasks of three texts do not direct students to consider their past experiences as such, but rather to imagine how they would feel, how their lives would be, or what they would experience if they emigrated to a foreign country, as in the following examples:

(23) She mentions three very specific kinds of food that she misses. Name the kinds of food that you would miss if you left Finland.  
(EU 1, *No place like home / Like a Beacon*)

(24) What kinds of problems would you face if you went to study in the states?  
(CC 3, *'Tis*)

In connection with five texts, textbooks include tasks where students are instructed to reflect on the themes of the text in the context of Finland. In the tasks of two texts students should compare other countries with Finland and the Finnish culture, as in the following example:

(25) Based on what you've learned about Canada, write a paragraph or two about the similarities between Canada and Finland.  
(IT 8, *It's cool up north*)

Even though these tasks risk homogenizing both the target and the students' own culture, they have the potential of leading students to consider diversity issues and heterogeneity within the Finnish culture since immigration is a major theme in both reading texts.

In one of the accompanying reading tasks of a text which explicitly addresses the dynamic nature of culture, students are instructed to reflect on cultural change in Finland over the last 50 years. The reading text discusses 'racial', cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity in South Africa, which would probably steer students to also consider diversity issues in their reflections on cultural change in Finland. A task of another text about South Africa invites students to

reflect on discrimination of minorities in Finland, and it is the only task in the data that explicitly directs students to discuss multiculturalism and diversity in the context of Finland:

(26) Black people have faced a lot of discrimination in South Africa. Which groups of people are, or have been, discriminated against in Finland?

(P 6, *Obituary: Hamilton Naki*)

Students are also asked to reflect on cultural perceptions of politeness and cultural norms of behavior in Finland in a task accompanying a literary text where the main characters interpret each other's behavior based on their own cultural backgrounds:

(27) Shadia considers Bryan to be very rude, but this might be because of a difference in their cultures. Complete the following grid, ticking whether you think a particular behavior of Bryan would be seen as rude in Finnish culture.

(EU 1, *The Museum*)

Although this task draws attention to the cultural bound nature of what is considered acceptable behavior, it does not leave room for considerations of other social variables than national culture.

#### 4.5.5 Creative tasks

The creative tasks in the data include creative writing tasks, e.g. creating an ending for the story or rewriting the text from another point of view, story prediction tasks, project work on a cultural topic relating to the text, role play, acting out semi-structured dialogues or reading dialogues. The major themes that the creative tasks deal with are *racism and oppression, life as a second-generation migrant / immigrant / refugee, intercultural relationships and cultural notions of love, language variation, students' own cultural backgrounds and identities, and successful indigenous people and indigenous art.*

In the creative tasks of five texts the overarching theme is racism, oppression and social inequality. Students are asked to research topics related to Apartheid history, reflect on life in black townships in South Africa or the segregated United States in the 1950s in creative writing tasks, or to reflect on the meaning and significance of music for oppressed minorities in a role



play task. In the following example accompanying a short story, which depicts a racist encounter between two white children and a black girl in a white middle-class suburb in the United States, students are instructed to either rewrite the encounter in the text, or to consider the events of the story from the perspective of another character in the story:

- (28) Now it is your turn to make any changes you like to the story. Choose either 1 or 2.
1. Rewrite the incident between Marc, Allison, and the new girl. How could it have been different?
  2. Write the story from Allison's or the new girl's point of view. How would they have seen things?
- (CC 4, *The new girl*)

The creative tasks of three literary texts concerning second-generation migrants, immigrants or asylum seekers encourage students to put themselves in the shoes of the key characters in the text, and imagine life from their perspective. In the following semi-structured role play example, students are encouraged to imagine life as a refugee after reading a text about the feelings and experiences of a Nigerian girl after being granted permission to leave the detention center after years of waiting:

- (29) You read about Little Bee's and Yvette's first steps into freedom. Now work with a partner and act out the following encounter between Yvette and Amina, a Somali refugee.
- It's been a month since Yvette came out of the detention centre. At a multicultural café she runs into her friend Amina, a Somali girl from the detention centre.
- Amina: You notice Yvette at the café and tell her how delighted you are to meet.  
Yvette: You greet Amina enthusiastically.
- ...
- Amina: Tell Yvette about some negative experience you have encountered.  
Yvette: Sympathise with her and tell her about some minor drawbacks in your life.  
Amina: Explain that you are, all in all, very happy. Give an example of something nice in your life.  
Yvette: You are happy for Amina and you express it. Ask about Amina's future plans.
- ...
- (OR 8, *Welcome to My World*)

In connection with three texts that deal with love, relationships and marriage, textbooks include tasks where students are encouraged to consider intercultural relationships, and cultural notions and beliefs about love and marriage. In the following example from a short story about

a female Sudanese student in Scotland who is engaged back home but starts to have feelings for a Scottish man, students are encouraged to participate in a role play that centers around the issues of intercultural relationships, and the cultural beliefs about love, marriage and tradition, and the clash between the different cultural expectations, traditions and values:

(30) Speaking activity: Role-play

- a) You are Shadia's mother. Shadia is coming home to tell you that she has met another man in Scotland. What are your thoughts and feelings about this news? What do you say to Shadia?
- b) You are Shadia. You have fallen in love with Bryan and cannot imagine marrying Fareed. You have come home to try and tell your mother that you care for somebody else. Remember that your mother depends on you for a secure future.
- c) You are Fareed. You are a wealthy man – you cannot imagine that any woman in Khartoum would possibly refuse you. Your honour is at stake.
- d) You are Fareed's mother. You have warned him against a girl who is living abroad. You knew all along that it would come to no good – she will learn strange new customs and will not be a good wife to your only son.
- e) You are Bryan. You have flown to Khartoum with Shadia to talk to her family, as you want to support her. You cannot understand what the problem is: in Scotland, if you fall in love with somebody else, you simply cancel the wedding.

(EU 1, *The Museum*)

For three literary texts where the text dialogue includes other varieties of English that students are less familiar with, non-standard English or foreign accents, the textbooks include tasks where students are directed to pay attention to the variety of English, or the non-standard forms and accents in the text. Students are instructed either to reformulate text dialogue into standard English, or to read out the dialogue, as in the following example:

(31) Clara speaks Caribbean English. Make sure you understand what she says. Act out the dialogue.

Clara: Cheer up, bwoy. It might never happen.

Archie: I think it already has.

Clara: Man...dey get knock out. But I tink to myself: come de end of de world, d'Lord won't mind if I have no toofs.

Archie: Archie Jones.

Clara: Clara. Archie Jones, you look justabout exackly how I feel. Have dem people been talking foolishness at you? You bin playing wid dis poor man?

...

(CC 1, *White Teeth*)

Even though these tasks draw students' attention to the sociolinguistic concept of 'language variety', and introduce non-standard varieties of English, they focus solely on the linguistic

form and students' understanding of the dialogue, instead of encouraging students to reflect on issues of language variation and language ideologies in a society.

In a task accompanying a poem, which addresses the issue of hybrid cultural identities, cultural roots, and the feelings of longing, students are encouraged to reflect on their own cultural backgrounds and identities, or imagine themselves in a situation where they are living in a foreign culture, and to write their own version of the poem:

(32) Now write your own version of *Grace Nichols*' poem by filling in the gaps with your own choice of words:

In \_\_\_\_\_  
 every now and then  
 I get this craving  
 for \_\_\_\_\_  
 I leave \_\_\_\_\_  
 in search of \_\_\_\_\_  
 I need this link  
 I need this touch of \_\_\_\_\_  
 swinging \_\_\_\_\_  
 like a beacon  
 against the \_\_\_\_\_

(EU 1, *No place like home / Like a Beacon*)

One project work task allows students to familiarize themselves with the successful indigenous people and indigenous art that a reading text introduces. The task instructs students to research successful Aborigines and Aboriginal art forms which come up in the text, and prepare a presentation of their findings:

(33) Find out more about one of the following topics on the Internet or in your school library and present your findings in class as an oral or written report.

[A range of topics provided for the student, e.g. John Moriarty, Cathy Freeman, Aboriginal art, Bangarra Dance Theatre, and Yothu Yindi]

(EU 4, *Letters to the editor*)

## 5. Discussion

In this section, I will first consider the findings of the analysis in relation to the research questions and the theoretical background. I will then move on to evaluate the present study, including the research methods adopted and the data selection criteria. As previously presented in Section 1, my thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What types of texts deal with 'racial' and ethnic diversity in the EFL textbooks?
2. In which EFL courses are the reading texts intended to be read? What is the thematic course context of the texts?
3. Which English-speaking countries, and minority 'racial' and ethnic groups are represented in the reading texts? How are issues of 'racial' and ethnic diversity represented in the texts? What sociocultural and sociopolitical themes do the texts discuss or portray?
4. How are students directed to process and interact with the texts? What types of reading tasks are included in the textbooks? Do the reading tasks encourage critical reflection of the target cultures and students' own culture?

The analysis of the types of texts in the data shows that from the 48 reading texts dealing with 'racial' and ethnic diversity of English-speaking countries, 18 texts (37,5%) are written for textbook use, and involve or combine descriptive, informative or argumentative elements. 30 texts (62,5%) are authentic, published texts, which mainly consist of literary and media texts. In fact, nearly half of the reading texts in the data are literary, or other narrative or poetic texts. As noted in Section 2.4, it has been suggested that particularly the reading of multicultural literature develops students' empathetic abilities, and their abilities to critically examine their own culture and cultural values, as well as the complexities of the target culture as they interact with the literary text.

The National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2003 describes the specific thematic content of each EFL course (see Table 1 on pp. 17). The data includes reading texts from all upper secondary school EFL courses, and therefore it could be assumed that questions of multiculturalism and diversity are present throughout upper secondary school EFL studies. However, approximately half of the texts (25 texts / 52,1%) are meant to be read in EFL courses 3 and 4, which center around the themes of studies and working life, and society and the surrounding world. The analysis of the EFL course context thus seems to suggest that many of the reading texts, and their topics and themes are linked to questions of society and citizenship.

The reading texts discussing or portraying the 'racial' and ethnic diversity of English-speaking countries concern the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Most frequently the national context of the texts and their topics is the United States, the United Kingdom or South Africa. Even though the reading texts represent various minority 'racial' and ethnic groups and identities, the textbooks show a tendency to emphasize certain minority 'racial' or ethnic groups in connection with a particular English-speaking country in their reading texts. In the case of the United States, most of the reading texts represent and discuss African-Americans. In the context of Canada and the United Kingdom, most texts deal with immigration from various countries and native-born people with migrant ancestry. The one text that discusses Ireland concerns immigration as well, but from the point of view of migrant workers, especially from Eastern Europe. Texts about Australia and New Zealand discuss solely the native peoples, namely the Aborigines and the Maori. In the context of South Africa, the texts generally represent black South Africans.

As discussed in Section 2.2.1, according to Kubota et al. (2003, 13), a critical approach in the foreign language classroom would entail discussions about "how sociopolitical issues of race, gender, class, domination, and power influence the organization of a particular culture", and as Kubota (2010, 107) further notes, when certain cultural topics appear in teaching

materials, it enables foreign language teachers to address these issues in the classroom. Contrary to the tendency to avoid discussing sociopolitical issues in foreign language textbooks (see Section 2.3), Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks include reading texts about ‘racial’, ethnic and indigenous issues that are not limited to descriptions of traditional festivals, and other superficial or stereotypical cultural practices. The thematic analysis of the reading texts reveals that the texts deal with themes relating to minority culture and cultural identity, social injustice and racism, as well as anti-racism, activism and community action. As discussed in Section 2.2, the recognition of cultural change and the differing cultural knowledges in society, questions of identity, the power relations in society, social justice issues, racism and anti-racism are at the core of critical approaches to multiculturalism.

In the reading texts which include themes relating to minorities, minority culture and cultural identity, minority ‘racial’ and ethnic groups are represented as living in fairly closed communities, which either peacefully co-exist or are in conflict with other cultural groups. The texts deal with questions of ‘racial’, ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity of minority ‘racial’ and ethnic group members, and of people who identify with more than one culture and its cultural practices. The texts also discuss the politics of multilingualism in a society, and the status of standard language and its effects in the context of immigrants. As Thompson (2013, 960) has argued, teaching multiculturalism from a critical perspective in language education means also addressing the effects of language ideologies in a society. The texts also explicitly address cultural change in the context of native cultures. The role and meanings of music and arts in minority cultures are discussed especially in connection with texts representing African Americans and black South Africans. The texts discuss immigration also from the point of view of immigrant families, especially in terms of cultural practices like arranged marriages, and the potential conflict between the values and practices of the immigrants’ culture and the culture of

the surrounding society from the perspective of different generations, or from women's perspective.

As discussed in Section 2.2.2, Osler and Starkey (2000, 221) have argued that positive representations of multiculturalism without considerations of social inequality and racism as barriers to full participation in a society will not adequately allow students to identify the complexities of racism, empathize with marginalized individuals, or to gain insight into their own society and its diversity. The reading texts of Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks discuss various social injustice issues and forms of racism. The reading texts describe institutionalized racial segregation, discrimination and oppression in the history of the United States and South Africa, and the mistreatment of Aboriginal people in the history of Australia. The texts also discuss the rights of native peoples in terms of land ownership, ownership of cultural symbols and cultural sensitivity in tourism. The text deal with themes of discrimination and exploitation in the labor market and housing. Inequality in education is discussed in terms of how only certain cultural knowledges are recognized and valued in education and teaching material, how immigrants can lack the cultural background for succeeding in education, and how there are limited opportunities for children to be educated in their own native language in multilingual South Africa for economic and political reasons. The texts also describe social problems, such as poverty and poor living conditions in "ethnic residential areas". The media is described as portraying minorities in a negative light by focusing on social problems and violence instead of providing positive images. In the context of South Africa, the texts also discuss the portrayal of minority 'racial' and ethnic groups in the media from the point of view of freedom of press during apartheid. Racism in the texts is represented also in the form of verbal abuse and violence. One text makes a causal link between racial tension between minority groups and rioting. Stereotyping based on ethnicity and appearances, and prejudice against immigrants and minority ethnic groups are themes that take many forms in the texts.

The texts also portray anti-racist struggles, movements and activism in history of the United States and South Africa, and show successful anti-racist efforts. As Starkey and Osler (see Section 2.2.2) have argued, an anti-racist approach should engage students not only with issues of racism and power relations in a society, but also portray successful anti-racist struggles. They have also suggested that language courses which incorporate issues of ‘race’ equality should not only portray successfully integrated minority ethnic group members, but also describe the conflicts and struggles they face. A few reading texts in Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks show minority ethnic or ‘racial’ group members speaking up for their rights, and demanding equality and recognition in their everyday life as they face racism and discrimination, but the texts also include portrayals where minority ethnic or ‘racial’ group members do not resist or protest against mistreatment and racism. The reading texts also represent minority ethnic and ‘racial’ communities as sources of support and community improvement, and as agents in the revitalization of cultural values and practices, and in the creation of positive cultural identity.

The analysis of the reading tasks reveals that for only 11 texts (22,9%) from the overall 48 texts, textbooks include tasks where students are asked to retrieve information from the text. This could be due to the fact that students are reading in a foreign language, and a large number of the texts in the data are literary or other narrative texts, and therefore textbooks might be more inclined to emphasize the understanding and interpretation of the texts rather than reading for information. In fact, ‘forming a broad understanding and developing an interpretation’ tasks are by far the most frequent in the data. Nearly all reading texts are accompanied by these types of tasks. However, as discussed in Section 2.4, Chick (2009, 175, 177) has suggested that from a critical multiculturalist perspective, students should also recognize and examine the specific historical and cultural context of a text for understanding its textual elements, and the historical and cultural background of the text and the diversity it portrays. Although these kinds of



considerations might be implicitly present in the types of tasks that require broader understanding and interpretation of the text, the analysis reveals that the tasks of only three texts in the data explicitly direct students to analyze the historical or cultural context of the text based on what they have read in the text.

In the tasks of approximately third of the texts (35,4%) students are asked to reflect on and evaluate the content of the text. In most tasks, students are encouraged to reflect on their reactions to or feelings about the text, and their own opinions on the topic, or they are instructed to discuss their prior knowledge of the topic, what kind of new information the text provided, and whether they are familiar with similar examples or stories. However, the data includes few tasks that require students to critically reflect on or evaluate the texts, or the cultural practices and perspectives they describe. In the tasks of nine texts students will most likely reflect on themes of racism and discrimination in the texts; students reflect on their own feelings after reading about racism, their views on the effects of the racism in the text, the racist language in the text and its historical context, and their prior knowledge of the discrimination, social injustice and racism they read about in the texts, or similar examples they are familiar with. In connection with three texts, the tasks encourage students to reflect on the views on immigration and identity in the texts, consider the struggles immigrants face in their new countries, or their own views on closed cultural or ethnic communities in a society. In the tasks of two texts students reflect on themes of marriage and wedding traditions, such as arranged marriages of second-generation migrants, and the mixing of traditions and customs of various cultures. One text includes tasks about the role of language; students reflect on the link between language and culture on a general level, and multilingualism in a society as they consider the role of English in the context of multilingual South Africa, and potentially even discuss the power relations in the society in connection with language. With one reading text which discusses the modern-day lives of young First Nations people in Canada, instead of reflecting on the lives of native peoples

of North America today, students are asked to compare the traditional lives of the Native Americans and the Inuit based on what they have read in several texts. Other tasks classified under this task type category focus on more universal themes such as love, which can help students to personally connect with the texts, and therefore facilitate the process of intercultural learning (see Section 2.4).

As noted in Section 2.2.3, foreign language learning is increasingly recognized as a reflexive process, in which language learners can examine and critically reflect on not only the target culture but also their own culture and society, and explore their own identities. In the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2003, it is also stated that the themes of the upper secondary school foreign language courses should be dealt with from the perspectives of Finland, and that in order for students to develop cultural sensitivity, they need to become aware of the cultural nature of their own values and ideas. Interestingly, although the reading of foreign language texts about cultural practices and perspectives, especially literary texts about multicultural and minority issues, is considered a process which allows language learners to reflect on their own cultures and societies, and develop critical cultural awareness and intercultural understanding (see Section 2.4), only 11 texts (22,9%) of the overall 48 texts in the data are accompanied by reading tasks that encourage students to reflect on their own experiences and identities, and the themes of the text in the context of Finland.

From the 11 reading texts which are accompanied by ‘reflecting on personal experiences and the Finnish context’ tasks, the tasks of eight texts encourage students to reflect on their own lives and experiences. However, only one task, in which students are instructed to discuss their experiences of stereotyping people or being stereotyped, is explicitly linked to the themes of ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity in the texts. The tasks of three texts do not direct students to consider their past experiences as such, but rather to imagine how they would feel, how their lives would be, or what they would experience if they were to emigrate to a foreign country. As

discussed in Section 2.2.3, Marlina (2011, 10-12) emphasizes that multicultural approaches in language teaching need to provide students with the tools and communication strategies to express and explain their own identities in the foreign language, not just in terms of their national and linguistic backgrounds but also other aspects of their identities. The reading tasks in the data do not generally appear to encourage this type of communication practice where students could reflect on their own identities on a deeper level.

The tasks of only five reading texts encourage students to reflect on the themes of the text in the context of Finland and the Finnish culture. However, in only one task students are explicitly asked to reflect on themes of multiculturalism and diversity as they discuss discrimination of minorities in Finland. In other tasks, students are expected to compare different national cultures and countries with Finland, and discuss cultural change or cultural norms of politeness in Finland. In most of these tasks, although the task instructions risk homogenizing Finnish culture as well as the target culture, the fact that the reading texts emphasize multicultural and diversity issues would probably direct students to reflect on questions of diversity and heterogeneity in the context of Finland as well.

Over thirty per cent of the reading texts are accompanied by creative tasks. As noted in Section 2.4, according to Burwitz-Melzer (2001, 29-30), creative tasks can allow students to “experiment with different perspectives and culturally different points of view as well as compare their own culture to the culture in the text” in a safe and ‘anxiety free’ environment. In the creative tasks of five texts, students are dealing with themes of racism, oppression and social inequality. With three texts, students are encouraged to imagine themselves in the position of a key character in the text, and consider the lives of second-generation migrants, immigrants or refugees. The themes of intercultural relationships and cultural notions of love feature in the creative tasks of three texts. Students are also encouraged to consider their own cultural backgrounds and identities in connection with one text, and research successful

indigenous people and indigenous art in connection with another text. Three literary texts which include dialogue in other varieties of English that students are less familiar with, or in non-standard English are accompanied by tasks which draw students' attention to the non-standard language and accents in the text, but the tasks focus mainly on linguistic form instead of encouraging students to reflect on issues of standard language, language variation, the connections of power and language, and language ideologies in a society. As Marlina has suggested (2011, 12), EFL teaching that aims to promote cultural and linguistic pluralism should not only introduce non-standard language in the classroom, but also allow students to explore the different ways language varies at national, regional, social, and individual level, and the reasons behind it. Similarly, Thompson (see Sections 2.2.1 and 2.3) has noted that it is not enough to present target language users from different communities; from a critical multiculturalist perspective, language teaching needs to address the power relations concerning linguistic diversity in a society.

A few issues should be noted with respect to data selection and research methods when considering and evaluating the findings of the present study. First, due to the large number of EFL textbooks under examination, the scope of the analysis was limited to reading texts and tasks selected based on specific criteria as described in Section 3.2. This has meant that the analysis does not take into account all the possible reading texts in the textbooks which refer to minority 'racial' or ethnic groups, but rather its focus is on texts where multiculturalism and diversity are central themes. The data also excludes the pictures and images, the related 'info boxes' about the cultural or historical context of the text and the author portraits, all of which could have an influence on, or even direct students' understanding and interpretation of the texts and reading tasks. In my thesis, I have also not taken into account teacher's manuals, which publishers provide for teachers, although they offer extra tasks, which teachers could introduce in the classroom.

Secondly, nearly half of the analyzed reading texts are from one textbook series, namely *English UNITED*, and for this reason any generalizations about Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks are at best tentative, since the findings of the analysis may partly be attributed to the text selection and pedagogical choices of the said EFL textbook series. A more comparative analysis of the EFL textbook series would have revealed the common and differing features of the textbook series more clearly and reliably. Nevertheless, the analysis provides an overview of the representations of ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity in Finnish EFL textbook reading texts, and of the types of reading tasks Finnish upper secondary school textbooks include.

Regarding the research methods used in my thesis, a thematic approach was particularly suited for the more descriptive, informative and argumentative textbook and media texts, but in the case of literary and narrative texts, which rely more on the interpretation of the reader, a thematic analysis is more subject to the interpretation of the researcher. Furthermore, the thematic analysis cannot address all the possible meanings in the literary texts that readers will construct. As such, the thematic analysis in my thesis tries to address the broader themes and topics in the literary texts without going into an in-depth, subjective analysis of the texts. In addition, the fact that the reading texts were analyzed and coded by only one coder reduces the reliability of the analysis. Even though I have carefully analyzed the data, having several coders examining the data would be preferable. All in all, thematic analysis was a suitable method for examining the thematic topics in the EFL textbook reading texts, but combining it with a discourse analytic method would have provided a more in-depth analysis of how these representations are discursively constructed in the texts.

The frame for task type categorization used in the analysis of the reading tasks proved applicable, but in future studies it might be advisable to include reading tasks which focus on the linguistic aspects or form of the text in the analysis, so as to enable comparisons between the frequency of content-related reading tasks and activities focusing on language and form. It

could also be argued that the tasks focusing on the language in the texts could either support or undermine the text and its content, and therefore they should be examined critically as well. Furthermore, the analysis takes into account only the reading tasks that are explicitly linked to the text, which leaves the tasks that are connected to the reading texts indirectly outside the scope of the analysis. In these tasks students could potentially reflect on or apply what they have read in a text even if the task instructions do not explicitly direct them to do so.

Finally, it should be noted that my thesis has aimed to explore the potential of textbook reading texts and tasks in encouraging critical reflection, and in developing critical cultural awareness and an understanding of cultural diversity. By analyzing task instructions and task contents alone without examining the actual classroom interaction and students' responses to the tasks, it is impossible to assess the learning outcomes in the actual classroom teaching.

## 6. Conclusion

The main aim of my thesis was to explore how ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity of English-speaking countries is represented in Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbook reading texts by examining the minority ‘racial’ and ethnic groups, and the sociocultural and sociopolitical themes in the texts. In addition, my thesis aimed to examine how students are directed to process and interact with the texts and their themes through textbook reading tasks by analyzing what types of reading tasks textbooks include.

The analysis reveals that Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks include both textbook and authentic, published literary and media texts about topics concerning multiculturalism, and ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity. Nearly half of the reading texts are literary, or other narrative or poetic texts. It has been argued that particularly the reading of literary texts develops students’ abilities to empathize, and critically reflect on both the target and their own culture, both of which are essential in developing an understanding of and positive attitudes towards diversity in the foreign culture context and the learner’s own society.

Most often the reading texts discuss and portray the ‘racial’ and ethnic diversity of the United States, the United Kingdom and South Africa, but the textbooks also include texts about Canada, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. Even though the reading texts represent various minority ‘racial’ and ethnic groups and identities, the textbooks show a tendency to emphasize certain ‘racial’ or ethnic groups and minority issues in connection with a particular English-speaking country in their reading texts. However, contrary to the tendency to avoid sociopolitical issues in foreign language textbooks, the thematic analysis of the reading texts reveals that the texts discuss and portray sociocultural and sociopolitical themes relating to questions of cultural and linguistic identity, cultural change, language ideologies, the effects of cultural difference, various social injustice issues, different forms of racism and discrimination, as well as anti-racist struggles, and successful anti-racist and community efforts, while also

addressing the specific historical and cultural context of the 'racial' and ethnic diversity and multicultural issues they portray. These issues and themes are at the core of critical approaches to multiculturalism, and go beyond the acknowledgement and celebration of the existence of diversity within a culture.

The analysis of the reading tasks indicates that the textbooks include tasks of all task type categories, but the textbooks tend to emphasize the understanding and interpretation of texts as nearly all texts are accompanied by 'forming a broad understanding and developing an interpretation' tasks. In the tasks where students reflect on and evaluate the content of the text, their personal experiences, or the themes of the text in the Finnish context or in creative tasks, students examine and reflect on themes such as racism and discrimination, immigration, cultural notions of love and marriage and intercultural relationships, and language variation, as well as more universal themes in the texts. However, the textbooks include few tasks where students are encouraged to critically examine and reflect on the target cultures, or their own culture and society. Similarly, textbooks include few tasks where students analyze and reflect on the historical or cultural context of the text and the diversity it describes, or explore questions of language ideology and power relations in a society. In addition, the tasks rarely connect the texts with students' own experiences and lives, or provide the opportunity for students to reflect on their own identities and practice expressing them in the foreign language.

The findings of the present study suggest that Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbook reading texts have the potential of being useful resources for addressing issues of multiculturalism and diversity in the EFL classroom from a critical multiculturalist and an anti-racist education perspective. However, the textbooks do not systematically encourage students to critically examine and reflect on the texts and their themes, and therefore the textbooks do not seem to fully employ the potential of the texts in developing students' critical cultural awareness and intercultural understanding. If EFL textbooks do not generally include reading



tasks requiring critical reflection, the potential of the reading texts in developing critical cultural awareness and a deeper understanding of diversity will be reliant on the teacher; teachers wishing to apply a critical approach to multicultural education in their teaching, and to use foreign language texts and literature for intercultural learning in the classroom would need to supplement the teaching material. This would require that teachers themselves have developed critical cultural awareness, and have the skills to use texts and literature as resources for intercultural learning.

My thesis has examined EFL textbooks that have been commonly used in Finnish upper secondary schools in the 2000's and 2010's till the new national core curriculum came into effect in the fall of 2016. For examining how multiculturalism features in current upper secondary school EFL reading material, research into newer textbook series would be required. However, considering the emphasis on multimodal texts and multiliteracies in foreign language teaching today, and in education in general, further research on this topic could extend its focus to include multimodal teaching materials. My thesis focuses mainly on 'racial' and ethnic diversity, but as it has been suggested, teaching that aims to promote cultural and linguistic pluralism should also address the intersectionality of various social variables and identities. Therefore, a study examining various forms of diversity and their intersectionality in textbooks would provide insight into how textbooks represent complex social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, and discrimination in society.

My thesis has explored the potential of textbook reading texts and tasks in encouraging critical reflection, and in developing critical awareness of the target and the learner's own culture. However, as previously noted, teachers mediate and modify teaching material in the classroom, and learners themselves are active agents in the learning process. Furthermore, teachers' own attitudes and beliefs have been argued to affect the classroom treatment of the teaching material, and thus influence also learners' attitudes and views. Therefore, further

research is needed on actual classroom practices, and the use of textbooks in the classroom, as well as on the interaction between learners and textbooks.

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## Appendix

The analyzed EFL textbook reading texts:

### **Culture Café (CC):**

“My family mosaic.” *Culture Café, Course 1*, 9-11.

“White Teeth by Zadie Smith.” *Culture Café, Course 1*, 26-27.

“’Tis.” *Culture Café, Course 3*, 22-23.

“The new girl.” *Culture Café, Course 4*, 12-13.

“From riches to rags.” *Culture Café, Course 4*, 22-24.

“The Color of Water.” *Culture Café, Course 4*, 54-55.

“Highlights of the Civil Rights Movement.” *Culture Café, Course 4*, 16-17.

“Twelve Bar Blues.” *Culture Café, Course 5*, 56-57.

“The rock down under.” *Culture Café, Course 7*, 21-22.

“A tale of two cities. / Alexandra, Johannesburg, South Africa.” *Culture Café, Course 7*, 30-32.

“Election day.” *Culture Café, Course 8*, 6-7.

### **English UNITED (EU):**

“The Museum.” *English UNITED, Course 1*, 96-98.

“No place like home. / Like a Beacon.” *English UNITED, Course 1*, 94.

“What on earth is Ta Moko?” *English UNITED, Course 1*, 59-60.

“Oh England, my... / English.” *English UNITED, Course 2*, 9.

“Who are real Americans?” *English UNITED, Course 3*, 108-109.

“The many faces of the Big TO.” *English UNITED, Course 3*, 121-123.

“I, Too, Sing America.” *English UNITED, Course 3*, 116.

“I, Too, Sing América.” *English UNITED, Course 3*, 117.

“Sure You Can Ask Me a Personal Question.” *English UNITED, Course 3*, 127.

“Buffalo burgers on Turtle Island.” *English UNITED, Course 3*, 128-129.

“On the Road by Jack Kerouac.” *English UNITED, Course 3*, 104-105.

“Press freedom: A South African case study.” *English UNITED, Course 4*, 109-111.

“Karma.” *English UNITED, Course 4*, 89-90.

“It belongs to them. / Beds Are Burning.” *English UNITED, Course 4*, 56.

“I do.” *English UNITED, Course 4*, 93-95.

“Multicoloured families.” *English UNITED, Course 4*, 81-83.



“Letters to the Editor. / Why such a black picture.” *English UNITED, Course 4, 57-59.*

“The Whale Rider.” *English UNITED, Course 4, 31-33.*

“Lara goes cultural.” *English UNITED, Course 5, 7-9.*

“Short cuts.” *English UNITED, Course 5, 109-111.*

“Carmen of Khayelitsha.” *English UNITED, Course 5, 122-124.*

### **In Touch (IT):**

“The glorious salad bowl.” *In Touch, Course 2, 34-36.*

“Summer of discontent.” *In Touch, Course 4, 86-87.*

“Happily ever after?” *In Touch, Course 4, 58-59.*

“A matter of life and death.” *In Touch, Course 7, 21-22.*

“The grass is always greener. / UK, the hard way.” *In Touch, Course 8, 66.*

“Fight for your rights.” *In Touch, Course 8, 46-47.*

“It’s cool up north.” *In Touch, Course 8, 22-24.*

### **Open Road (OR):**

“A Change Is Gonna Come.” *Open Road, Course 4, 29-30.*

“A British Pound Coin.” *Open Road, Course 6, 9-10.*

“Welcome to My World.” *Open Road, Course 8, 94-95.*

### **Profiles (P):**

“Benjamin Zephaniah – Poetry’s King of Cool.” *Profiles, Course 3, 16-17.*

“On first-name terms.” *Profiles, Course 3, 24-25.*

“Ireland & Co.” *Profiles, Course 3, 58-59.*

“Brick Lane.” *Profiles, Course 5, 54-55.*

“Obituary: Hamilton Naki.” *Profiles, Course 6, 72-73.*

“SA editor’s escape from apartheid 30 years on.” *Profiles, Course 6, 82-83.*