

The representation of multiculturalism in  
Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks

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HEINI HENTINEN: The representation of multiculturalism in Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks

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Oppikirjalla on merkittävä rooli kielen opetuksessa Suomessa, minkä vuoksi valitsin tutkimukseni aiheeksi vertailevan oppikirja-analyysin. Tutkielmani tavoitteena on selvittää, kuinka monikulttuurisuus tuodaan esille lukion englannin oppikirjoissa. Aineistoni koostuu kolmesta englannin lukiotaon oppikirjasarjasta, jotka ovat *English Update Highlights* (1999–2001), *Blue Planet* (1996–2002) sekä *Culture Café* (2003–2008).

Teoreettisessa viitekehyksessä luon katsauksen oppikirjan vaikutukseen kielen opetuksessa ja esittelen oppikirja-analyysia. Sen lisäksi käsitelen tutkimukselle keskeisiä kulttuuriin liittyviä käsitteitä, kuten *monikulttuurisuus*, *vähemmistökulttuuri*, ja *integraatio*. Ennen analyysia esittelen tutkimusaineiston ja tutkimusmenetelmät.

Aluksi tutkin kvantitatiivisesti kaikki aineistoni 23 oppikirjaa ja pyrin selvittämään, kuinka monessa oppikirjatekstissä etniset ja kansalliset vähemmistökulttuurit ovat keskeisessä asemassa. Tämän jälkeen luokittelen vähemmistökulttuureja käsittelevät kappaleet viiteen kategoriaan ja tuon esimerkkien avulla esille, millaisia vähemmistökulttuurikuvauksia oppikirjateksteissä on.

Kvantitatiivisen osuuden jälkeen tutkin kaksi oppikirjatekstiä ja niihin liittyvät tehtävät sisällönanalyysin keinoin. ”Between two cultures” (*Blue Planet 4*) ja ”My family mosaic” (*Culture Café 1*) kuvaavat molemmat nuoren naispuolisen vähemmistökulttuurin edustajan elämää. Analysoin kappaleet mahdollisimman yksityiskohtaisesti ja tavoitteenani on muun muassa tutkia, millainen suhde näillä yksilöillä on monikulttuuriseen taustaansa sekä selvittää, millaisia näkökulmia monikulttuurisuuteen tekstit avaavat suomalaisnuorelle.

Oppikirja-analyysini osoittaa, että kvantitatiivisesti mitattuna monikulttuurisuutta ja vähemmistökulttuureita käsitteleviä kappaleita löytyy kolmesta tutkimastani oppikirjasarjasta melko vähän: yhteensä tällaisia oppikirjatekstejä on 15. Eniten oppikirjoissa hyödynnetään katkelmia kaunokirjallisista tuotoksista (6 kpl). Muita esille nousevia teemoja ovat henkilökuvaukset (4 kpl), julkisuuden henkilöiden kuvaukset (3 kpl), kansalliset vähemmistökulttuurit (1 kpl) sekä vähemmistökysymys (1 kpl). Kvalitatiivinen sisällönanalyysi osoittaa selvästi sen, kuinka vähemmistökulttuurien edustajien kuvaukset ja oppikirjojen tehtävät voivat vaihdella hyvinkin suuresti eri oppikirjasarjojen välillä.

Asiasanat: oppikirja-analyysi, sisällönanalyysi, vähemmistökulttuuri, monikulttuurisuus

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Language learning has been a solid part of the Finnish school system for a long period of time, but its structure has developed much over time. At present, it is emphasized in the curricula that language learning is more than just learning a language. The purpose of learning another language is not only to acquire a foreign language competence, but also to gain cultural knowledge and awareness of other cultures. This tendency is also highlighted in the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools in Finland:

Instruction in foreign languages will develop students' intercultural communication skills: it will provide them with skills and knowledge related to language and its use and will offer them the opportunity to develop their awareness, understanding and appreciation of the culture within the area or community where the language is spoken. In this respect, special attention will be given to European identity and European multilingualism and multiculturalism. Language instruction will provide students with capabilities for independent study of languages by helping them to understand that achievement of communication skills requires perseverance and diversified practice in communication. As a subject, each foreign language is a practical, theoretical and cultural subject. (Finnish National Board of Education 2003, 100)

Allen & Valette (1977, 325) state that people's culture is not homogeneous, but "a complex and dynamic phenomenon" and therefore teaching a foreign language as a cultural subject cannot be considered entirely straightforward. It is important to acknowledge that there is no *one* target culture, but many different varieties that should all be reflected as a part of the cultural heritage. For instance, there are many fragments that form the cultures of the English-speaking peoples and this should not be forgotten in EFL<sup>1</sup> lessons of the Finnish upper secondary school. In the past few decades globalization has increased rapidly and therefore the amount of people with multicultural background is larger than ever before. This development should be present in EFL books, which should not offer Finnish students only language competence. As the Finnish National Board of Education notes in the extract above, foreign culture knowledge is also a very important field of awareness. Nowadays cultures are mixed and also the life of different minority cultures should warrant attention.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this study the acronym 'EFL' refers to 'English as a foreign language'.

In the future I am going to work as an English teacher and thus I am interested in researching English teaching materials; textbooks, to be more precise. Despite the fast technological development, textbooks are still the most widely used instruments in the process of teaching, which means that their influence on EFL learning is significant. In my experience, language learning comprises largely of cultural acquisition, but my current interest is to study how multiculturalism and cultural integration are portrayed in the textbooks. In my thesis my aim is to discover whether cultural heterogeneity is taken into consideration in EFL textbooks of the Finnish upper secondary school. The reason I chose this as the topic of my thesis is that I want to know what sort of information on multiculturalism students receive from the current EFL textbook series and what should be added by the teacher.

Next I will introduce the specific study questions of this second subject thesis. In the first part of my study three EFL textbook series are researched quantitatively and my goal is to answer the following study question:

How many chapters have either national or ethnic minorities as their thematic centre<sup>2</sup>?

The textbook series studied here are *Blue Planet* (A-Level, 1996–2002), *English Update Highlights* (A-Level, 1999–2001) and *Culture Café* (A-Level, 2003–2008). After this I will categorize the chapters dealing with minority members into five categories and analyse them thematically. In the second part of my study two of the chapters dealing with minority members are studied qualitatively. The two case study chapters are “Between two cultures” (*Blue Planet 4*) and “My family mosaic” (*Culture Café 1*), which both portray the life of a young second-generation female immigrant. The aim of the qualitative case study is to find answers to the following study questions:

- 1) How is the multicultural background portrayed in the textbook sample?
  - The representation of the minority status
  - How well have the female immigrants integrated into the new society?

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<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this study ‘thematic centre’ is used to indicate that the topic is inevitably the central theme of the textbook chapter.

2) What is the goal of the textbook sample?

- The diversity of perspectives on multiculturalism
- What kinds of pedagogical tools are used to support the Finnish students to develop/discuss their own opinions?

This study will comprise of four chapters in addition to the introduction. Chapter two outlines the overall theoretical framework of the study by defining the main terminology. Both the data and the research procedure are introduced in the third chapter, which also provides information on the methods used in the study. Chapter four presents the analysis and, finally, the study findings are discussed in chapter five.

## **2 FRAMEWORK**

The following sections in this chapter outline the theoretical and methodological framework of the study. First I will discuss the role of textbooks in language teaching and introduce the textbook analysis. After this I will define terminology related to multiculturalism.

### **2.1 The role of textbooks in language teaching**

The textbook has always had a self-evident role in the Finnish school system. As a result, schools which do not use textbooks are considered exceptions (Karvonen 1995, 11). Thus, the textbook is also essential in the Finnish EFL teaching.

Paasi (1998, 243) points out that even though people nowadays construct their world view by reflecting on countless different channels, textbooks are still regarded as the ‘official’ picture of us and others, of borders and cultures. He describes textbooks as one of the key means to produce and shape nationalism and national identity.

According to McGrath (2006, 171), textbook has an essential role in the teaching-learning situation and it has the tendency to “dictate what is taught, in what order and, to some extent, how as well as what learners learn”.

However, textbook itself is not the only factor that affects language teaching; McGrath (*ibid.*, 171) also states that teachers’ attitude towards textbooks tends to affect the way they use them as teaching material and this affects both learners’ attitudes and the way they learn. In other words, textbooks are not used the same way by every teacher and this is important to bear in mind when textbooks are analysed.

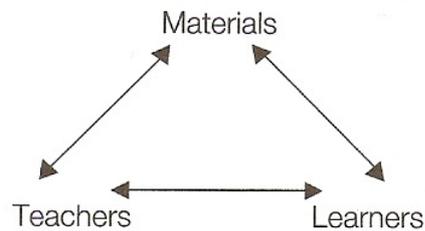


Figure 1: The three major elements of trade-off in language learning. (Maley 2003, 279)

Maley (2003, 279) points out that every teaching situation is unique and there is always a complex trade-off between three levels of interaction. Firstly, the teacher-learner interaction, secondly, the interaction between the teacher and the material and thirdly, the learner-material interaction (see Figure 1 above). This complex system is important to remember when the roles and meanings of textbook are discussed. As Pitkänen-Huhta (2003, 42) states, “[t]he designers of a textbook have had certain meanings and purposes in mind when producing the text but, through its use, the text may acquire completely new meanings”.

## 2.2 Textbook analysis

Lähdesmäki (2004, 271) notes that textbook analysis is often based on the ideology that textbooks have a strong influence on both the teaching process and the learners. She underlines that these

long-lasting effects on skills and attitudes can be either positive or negative. For this reason it is important that textbooks are analysed and taken under critical observation.

Nevertheless, textbooks have not always been regarded as something that should be studied analytically. Systematic textbook analysis has only existed for a few decades. The research of teaching materials became more important in the 1990s and, for this reason, textbook analysis started to receive more attention (Elomaa 2009, 30).

The contemporary Finnish EFL textbooks are known for their textual and discursive heterogeneity. In order to represent the language usage as diversely as possible, textbooks nowadays contain many different kinds of genres and discourse types. This means that there are not only highly informational texts on historical figures, but also ‘real-life’ issues that are taken into account. (Lähdesmäki 2007, 300.)

Maijala (2004, 41-42) argues that it is very difficult for the textbook authors to choose the “correct” themes from all numerous genres accessible. This is true: a textbook has only few texts, in which many aspects should be discussed quite thoroughly. There are, for instance, historic and present, as well as cultural and scientific themes – and one theme is also the multiculturalism. According to Maijala, textbook authors should always be capable of explaining why they have chosen the particular texts. Textbook has an essential role in EFL teaching which is why it is very important to analyse and also to employ critical textbook analysis. The results achieved from different kinds of text book analyses give both authors and publishing houses important knowledge on how the quality of the textbook could be improved.

The three main criteria for an efficient textbook analysis can be outlined as follows:

- 1) *intersubjectivity* = the study findings of a textbook analysis should not be dependent only on one person / the researcher.
- 2) *reliability* = trustworthiness, not arbitrary. It should be possible to repeat the study and get the same findings.

3) *validity* = tenability. A textbook analysis has a good validity, when it covers what it promises.

(cf. Maijala 2004, 48; Hirsijärvi et al. 2005, 216–218).

Littlejohn (2003, 191) states that analysing materials, such as EFL textbooks, ‘as they are’ reveals the materials’ contents and the proposed ways of working. Nevertheless, he underlines that this kind of analysis does not express what really takes place in the classroom situation itself. If that was the goal, an analysis of ‘materials-in-action’ should be conducted. That is because, in addition to textbooks, there are numerous other factors that influence the classroom situation. According to Littlejohn, one of the most important factors is the reinterpretation of materials and tasks practiced by both learners and teachers (ibid. 191).

### **2.3 Multiculturalism**

It is very rare that a society would have only one common language for all of its residents and it is even more exceptional that they would all be part of only one ethnical group (Raulo 1999, 5-6). As an example, in Finland we have two national languages, Finnish and Swedish. In addition there are Sami languages, the Finnish Romani language and the Finnish sign language (Institute for the Languages of Finland). This already shows that Finland is a multicultural society.

Kramsch (2000, 82) notes that the term multicultural can be viewed in two different ways. There is the social sense, which designates “the coexistence of people from many different backgrounds and ethnicities, as in ‘multicultural societies’”. The other aspect is individual, which implies to persons “who belong to various discourse communities, and who therefore have the linguistic resources and social strategies to affiliate and identify with many different cultures and ways of using language”. According to Moodley (1999, 1), multiculturalism is fast changing from being the exception to being the norm. He underlines that there has always been differences and heterogeneity between nationalities. Yet, in the past, the differences were mostly invisible, such as economical,

religious and class differences, whereas nowadays the differences are more visible. Moodley points out that the new forms of visible difference, such as skin colour, phenotypical and religious difference, have made people see the diversity.

Räsänen (1999, 176-177) criticizes the present models that are used at school for educating internationality and multiculturalism: she states that in the modern world of television and computers it is not up-to-date anymore to first learn about your own culture, after that to get acquainted with your neighbours, then Europe and lastly other cultures. She justifies her opinion with the fact that nowadays media has an essential role in providing pictures of different cultures and that these images are long-lasting and difficult to be reconstructed afterwards. She points out that schools should share information on both near-by and remote cultures from fairly early on in order to make pupils understand that people are at the same time very similar and yet diverse. Moreover, Räsänen says: “[...] whether education concentrates on differences, conflicts, and competition, or whether it emphasises diversity with collaboration, responsibility and care, and solving problems peacefully, is also a central issue.”

In other words, it should also be noted that the way education brings out the multiculturalism is very important. Therefore studying how Finnish EFL textbooks represent national and ethnic minority cultures can be considered very interesting.

## **2.4 Minority group**

The aim of my study is to discover how national and ethnic minority cultures are represented in the three EFL textbook series of the Finnish upper secondary school. What can be classified as ‘a minority group’ is not very straightforward, so I find it important to clarify the meaning of the expression.

The sociologist Louis Wirth defined a ‘minority group’ in 1945 in a way that is still suitable today:

We may define a minority group as a group of people, who because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination. (Wirth 1945, 345)

A minority group can be characterized as a group of people who are numerically inferior to the rest of the population and who are therefore in a non-dominant position. The members of a minority culture have ethnic, religious or linguistic features that differ from those of the rest of the population and they often express solidarity towards protecting their culture, traditions, religion or language. (Caportorti 1979, 96.)

When the word ‘minority’ is defined and discussed, the following five criteria listed by Matikainen (2006, 13) are almost always present:

1. A minority group has features that distinguish it from the other groups living within the state. These factors can be ethnic, linguistic or religious.
2. A minority group is numerically inferior to the rest of the population.
3. A minority group is in a non-dominant position in the state.
4. Members of the minority are nationals of the state.
5. Members of the minority group wish to preserve their distinct characteristics, and they have a sense of community.

Nevertheless, Panayi (2000, 9–13) underlines that not all minorities are completely powerless or suffer the same types and level of prejudice. These characteristics vary between minorities, as does the size of a particular minority group. He states that the minority groups of Europe can be grouped into three categories: 1) the indigenous national minorities, who moved into or across Europe before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 2) the post-War immigrants and 3) the refugees. Panayi points out the timeline over which these groups have emerged and the variation from decades to centuries: the Sami people, for instance, belong to group one and they have been living in Scandinavia from the middle Ages, whereas migration from Europe and North Africa is a good example of the post-War European migration. It began from the middle of the 1970s.

On the whole, national and ethnic minority groups are heterogeneous. They vary both from one state to another and from one historical period to another.

## 2.5 Integration

One of the study questions of my qualitative case study is to discover how well the second-generation female immigrants of the textbook chapters “Between two cultures” (*Blue Planet 4*) and “My family mosaic” (*Culture Café 1*) have integrated into their new society. Because of this I find it relevant to present some basic information on the process of integration.

In cultural anthropology there are four different strategies of adjusting to the new culture. These strategies differ from each other in two respects: 1) the importance of maintaining person’s own identity and 2) the value attached to the new culture. The four end states in the process of acculturation are as follows:

- a) *assimilation*: maintaining person’s own cultural identity is not important, the ambition to get attached to the new culture
- b) *separation*: the original culture is hold on to, no interest in contact with the new majority culture
- c) *integration*: both person’s own cultural traditions and contact with the new culture are important
- d) *marginalization*: isolating from both cultural groups

(cf. Berry 1991, 244)

According to Berry (*ibid.*, 245), integration is possible only when the dominant culture is open and accepts the wishes of different kinds of minority cultures. He also points out that the term assimilation is often referred as synonym for integration. Yet, it is important to note that their meanings are not even close to each other: if someone integrates into new society, their goal is to maintain both the old and the new culture, whereas in the case of assimilation the old culture does not have any importance in his life anymore.

Nowadays English is the most frequently used communication language (*lingua franca*) and when integration is discussed, this should not be forgotten. Huntington (1996, 61) states that English empowers intercultural communication – he describes the role of English as follows:

English is the world's way of communicating interculturally just as the Christian calendar is the world's way of tracking time, Arabic numbers are the world's way of counting, and the metric system is, for the most part, the way of measuring.

The essential role of English has a great influence on English-speaking societies: the diffusion of multiculturalism is greatly influenced by the fact that English is a well-known language all around the world. As a result it could be argued that people integrate more easily to countries where English is the native language, because there are no significant language barriers.

### **3 MATERIAL AND METHODS**

This chapter consists of two sections. First, I will present and discuss the data of the analysis. In what follows is I will detail the study procedures and the methods.

#### **3.1 Data**

Because the topics of the Finnish primary school textbooks are not as advanced as they are in the Finnish upper secondary school, I decided that it is more logical to take the textbooks of the Finnish upper secondary school as the data of my study. In upper secondary school textbooks both the length of the chapters and the variety in themes are already more extensive, so thereby it was more likely that cultural subjects also get more attention.

In order to have enough material for the analysis, three EFL textbook series were chosen as the data for a quantitative analysis:

- *Blue Planet* (A-Level, 1996–2002)
- *English Update Highlights* (A-Level, 1999–2001)
- *Culture Café* (A-Level, 2003–2008)

The reason why these three textbook series form the data of my analysis stems from the fact that they are all still used as course material in the Finnish upper secondary school. This means that my aim is not to study how the representation of national and ethnic minority cultures has changed over time, but to concentrate on the present situation.

### **3.2 Research procedure**

This textbook analysis consists of two parts; first there is a quantitative analysis and after that a qualitative analysis will be conducted. The reason for this is that “[a]t the current state of the art, the best approach is probably one that combines a broad picture of a social phenomenon through quantitative content analysis with sporadic and deep incursions into selected texts using more qualitative approaches” (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Futing Liao 2004, 190).

In the quantitative analysis I examine altogether 23 EFL textbooks. The goal of the quantitative analysis is to present the basic analytical data to which the latter part can refer. In other words, the quantitative analysis illustrates the amount of chapters that have either national or ethnic minorities as their thematic centre. The requirement for a chapter to be included in this study is that it contains textual representation of minorities. Thus, the chapters that have only pictorial references to minorities are excluded.

In this part of the study my method is thematic content analysis, which is the most common approach in content analysis. In this approach, the researcher chooses a particular coding scheme and designs categories to find out specific themes in the texts (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Futing Liao 2004, 189). In my thematic content analysis I categorize the chapters dealing with either national or ethnic minorities into five themes: literacy extracts, personal profiles, celebrity profiles, national minorities, minority question. After the categorization my aim is to discuss the types of representations on a general level. I intend to use plenty of examples that illustrate how national and ethnic

minorities are portrayed in the three EFL textbook series. Nevertheless, at present my method is more descriptive than analytical.

In the qualitative part I examine both the textbook chapters and the exercises. “Between two cultures” (*Blue Planet 4*) and “My family mosaic” (*Culture Café 1*) are the objects of my comparative case study, which is analytically more detailed. Yin (1994, 13) defines a case study as follows:

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

Gillham (2010, 13) points out that case studies are used in different study fields, e.g. in analysing interviews, observations and documents. This case study focuses on documents, more precisely on textbook chapters. The aim of my case study is to answer the explicit research questions and to find out, whether there are any differences between the two EFL textbook chapters. The decision to study two textbook chapters may seem small, but it was necessary to limit the amount in order to make this study concise.

## 4 ANALYSIS

In the beginning of this chapter I will present the quantitative analysis of the three EFL textbook series. This will be followed by the thematic analysis of the chapters dealing with either national or ethnic minorities. The third section will present the findings of the two case studies, where the chapters “Between two cultures” (*Blue Planet 4*) and “My family mosaic” (*Culture Café 1*) are analysed qualitatively.

### 4.1 Quantitative analysis of multiculturalism

The three textbook series explored in the quantitative analysis, i.e. *Blue Planet* (A-Level, 1996–2002), *English Update Highlights* (A-Level, 1999–2001) and *Culture Café* (A-Level, 2003–2008), are all published within the last two decades.

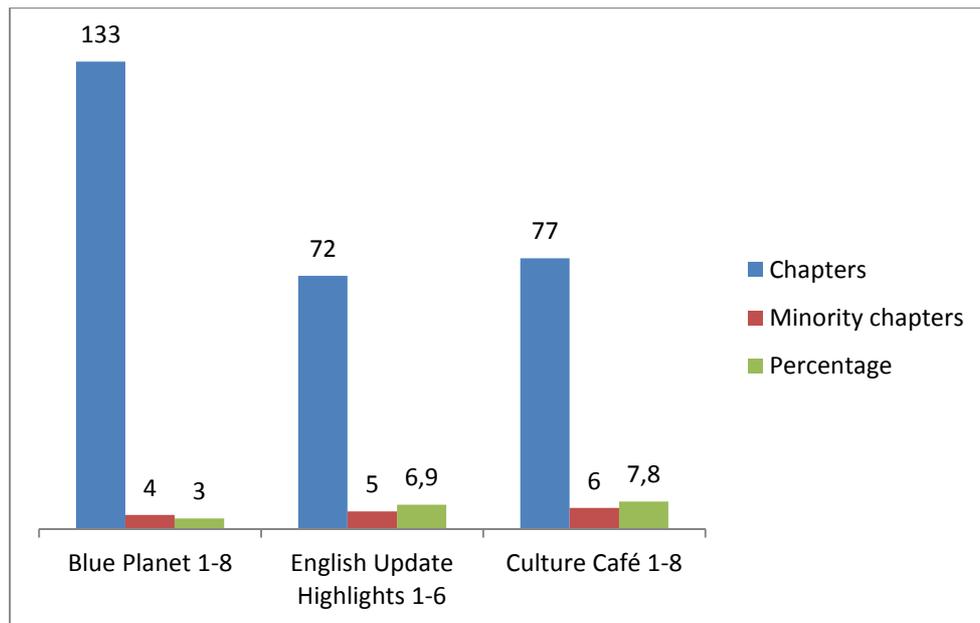


Figure 2: Chapters with national or ethnic minorities as their thematic centre.

As is illustrated in Figure 2 it is interesting to see that all the three textbook series comprise of almost the same amount of chapters where either national or ethnic minorities can be perceived as the thematic centre. There are no big differences between the textbook series: it seems that that they all have quite a small number of these kinds of chapters. Figure 2 also defines the percentages of chapters dealing with national or ethnic minorities. Here we can see some greater variation, but this is because *Blue Planet 1–8* comprises of such a higher number of chapters in comparison to *English Update Highlights 1–6* and *Culture Café 1–8*.

The chapters of the three EFL textbooks with either national or ethnic minorities as their thematic centre are listed in Appendix 1, where also the names of the chapters are given. Appendix 1 shows that *Culture Café 1–3* has the highest number of chapters, of which 10 percent contain a textual reference to a minority. In comparison, less than 2 percent of the chapters in *Blue Planet 1–3* deal with either national or ethnic minorities. One common feature of these chapters in all the textbook series is that they have a tendency to occur in a particular course book. For instance, *English Update Highlights 2*, *Blue Planet 4* and *Culture Café 1* all have two chapters with minority topic each. The Finnish National Curriculum and the course structure of the Finnish upper secondary

school explain this tendency: one thematic topic is obviously discussed thoroughly in one particular course book.

Before discussing the themes of the chapters with national and ethnic minorities as their thematic centre it should be noted that there is no model that would tell how many chapters on ethnic and national minorities each EFL textbook series of the Finnish upper secondary school should contain. This is to say that if that if the minority topic were too prevalent, the Finnish students would acquire a distorted picture of the cultural heritage of the English-speaking countries. Thus, it is important to realize that too many chapters on this topic could also be problematic. Moreover, it should be noted that the amount of chapters addressing minorities does not show how the topic itself is presented in the textbook. This is why I will now give an overview of the thematic areas of the textbook chapters dealing with either national or ethnic minorities.

#### 4.2 Thematic analysis of chapters dealing with minorities

The most common theme of the three analysed EFL textbook series are literacy extracts from various literature sources (see Figure 3).

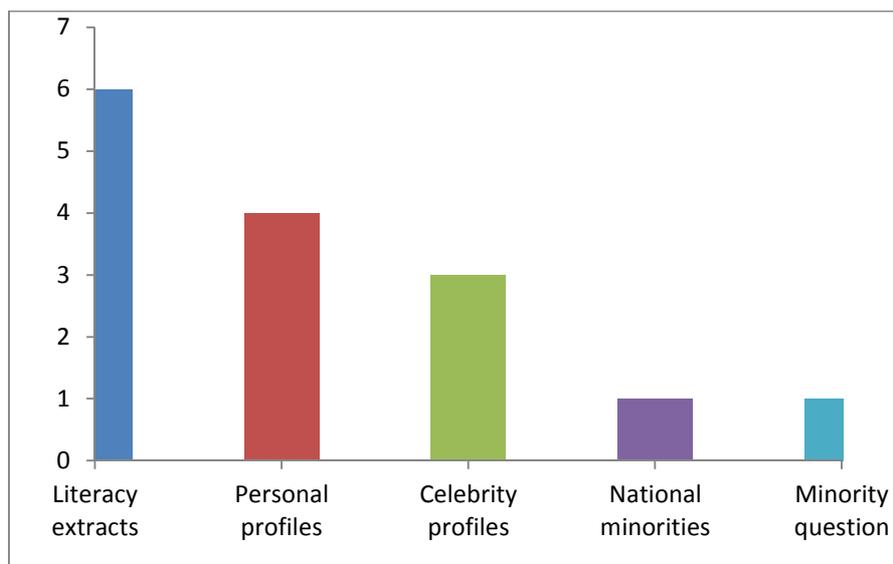


Figure 3: The themes of the minority chapters

There are altogether fifteen chapters that have either national or ethnic minorities as their thematic centre, and six of these chapters are literature extracts. There are three literature texts that focus on presenting the life of a minority individual in the United States a few decades ago. These texts illustrate that integrating into the new culture was not simple back then. In the literature extract taken from “The new girl” (*Culture Café 4*) by American writer Paul Auster a small, dark-coloured girl has moved to a new “white, lower-middle-class neighbourhood” in the United States. In this region she meets two girls with whom she would like to play with. Yet, not all goes according to her plans:

The girl said, „I thought maybe we could play. My name is...”. Allison spat back, „I don’t play with niggers.” [...] „They moved in last week, and Mom says they’re going to ruin our house.” “How are they going to ruin our house?” “I don’t know. I don’t want that black girl anywhere near me, though,” she said. And here’s what I said back: “Niggers are stupid. Maybe they’ll move. (l. 50–74)

In the extract from *’Tis* (*Culture Café 3*) by Frank McCourt, a 23-year-old Irish immigrant talks about his life in New York. In 1953, immigrant students had some serious problems in the university:

Some students raise their hands to ask questions but I could never do that. The whole class would stare at me and wonder who’s the one with the accent. I could try an American accent but that never works. When I try it people always smile and say, Do I detect an Irish brogue? (l. 20–23)

As Figure 2 shows, there are four chapters that are listed as personal profiles. In these chapters people with ethnic minority background tell the reader about their lives personally or there is a narrator who tells the story from another perspective. Two of the ethnic minorities originate from South Africa, one from India and one from Canada. Here is how a Canadian second-generation immigrant describes herself at the beginning of the chapter “My family mosaic” (*Culture Café 1*):

“I’m from Montreal, Canada, and I’m a second-generation Canadian. I have three sisters, Stella is the eldest and my two younger sisters are named Liisa and Laila. My mother is from Eastern Finland and my father is from Morocco.” (l. 1 – 5)

There are also three chapters that introduce the reader to a celebrity who has a minority background. Finnish students are introduced to the world-famous American basketball player Michael Jordan, the Italian photographer Oliviero Toscani from the company of Benetton and the South African musician Freddie Mercury, who all belong to an ethnic minority. As an example, here is how *English Update Highlights 2* presents the basketball player Michael Jordan in the chapter “The man who defied gravity”:

He defied all his opponents, including gravity itself, to slam dunk, precision jump and sky-walk his way into the basketball world hall of fame. Yet, despite all the fame, Jordan also took time out to set a role model for the kids of America by lecturing against drugs and leading what he called the “perfect” life. (l. 4–11)

National minorities are the central theme in only one chapter, “From Native Americans” (*Blue Planet 8*). In the chapter “Is it okay to date someone of another race?” (*Blue Planet 1*) the minority question is presented at a more general level, as the following extract from the chapter shows:

Most big cities of the world are shared by citizens of different racial origins. [...] Often these people are accepted by the host community as enrichment to the predominant way of life. But sometimes, especially in times of social upheaval or economic difficulty, these ‘outsiders’ are blamed for society’s problems. It has happened time and time again – get rid of the foreigners and you get rid of the problems, people say. Apart from the suffering this causes, it seldom works. What do you think? (l. 1–3, 13–29)

All in all, most of the chapters dealing with minorities have integration as their central theme. People with minority background describe their lives in the new country and they express, for instance, which language they speak, whether they have encountered discrimination and where they would like to live in the future. In the following extract from “A white South African returns from exile” (*Blue Planet 4*), a son of a political exile describes his life in a British school:

I never liked England [...] I felt isolated, alone, different, because I was a son of a political exile. I was dyslexic, foreign, Jewish, and at state school. It was a recipe for becoming a scapegoat. I was beaten up and bullied every day for five years. The teachers stood me up in front of the class and said I was fit only to be a road sweeper. They called my parents and told them I was abnormal and slow. (l. 26–35)

On the other hand, not all texts represent the multicultural background as such a heavy burden. For instance, in “Election Day” (*Culture Café 8*) an English woman, Kristian Müller, is returning to her

roots in South Africa. This is how she describes the joyful first free election after the fall of the Apartheid system in Africa:

There are enterprising individuals around, most of them young, moving up and down the queue with tins of Coke and trays of food for sale: hot dogs, samosas, boerewors, ostrich biltong, bananas. Those who have money buy, unasked, for those who don't. We all share. We all talk, and laugh, and speculate together. (l. 83–89)

To conclude, there are not that many chapters dealing with the minority topic in the three analysed EFL textbook series, but the themes are quite diverse.

### **4.3 Case studies on the representation of the minority status**

Having presented and discussed the findings of the quantitative parts of my analysis, I will analyse two of the textbook chapters qualitatively. “Between two cultures” (*Blue Planet 4*) and “My family mosaic” (*Culture Café 1*) serve this purpose very well because they are thematically similar, due to the fact that they are both personal profiles on young, second-generation female immigrants.

#### **4.3.1 Case study 1: “Between two cultures” (*Blue Planet 4*)**

*Blue Planet 4* contains twenty chapters of which two have ethnic minorities as their thematic centre: “Between two cultures” (p. 16–23) and “A white South-African returns from exile” (p. 24–27). In the table of contents the chapter “Between two cultures” is listed under the theme “multi-cultural experiences”. In this chapter a British-Asian woman, Smita Patel, tells about her first independent visit to her parents’ home country, India. In the past, Smita had spent time in India, together with her family, “[b]ut these journeys had always been considered as duty or ‘family visit[s]’” (l. 4-5). Now she is travelling with her white boyfriend, Max, and is for the first time able to explore the country from a totally different perspective.

Smita talks about her trip to India and the feelings she encounters herself, which means that this textbook chapter is a self-description. At the end of the text there is a source “From N.L.

Munn's *Women, Travel and Adventure, Advice and Experience* published by Harrap Publishers Ltd., UK". This could indicate that the text is an extract from a book in which women describe their real travelling experiences. Unfortunately, I was unable to find the book and therefore the authenticity of the story remains unsolved.

#### 4.3.1.1 British-Asian feminist

Both the main figure and the narrative voice of the textbook chapter "Between two cultures" is Smita Patel. In the chapter she is not portrayed as a member of a minority group, but her background becomes clear early in the introduction chapter: she is a British-Asian woman. Her parents are from India. Smita works in a feminist publishing house in the UK, but the introduction tells the reader that she took a five-month leave from her job in order to travel to her Indian roots together with her British boyfriend, Max.

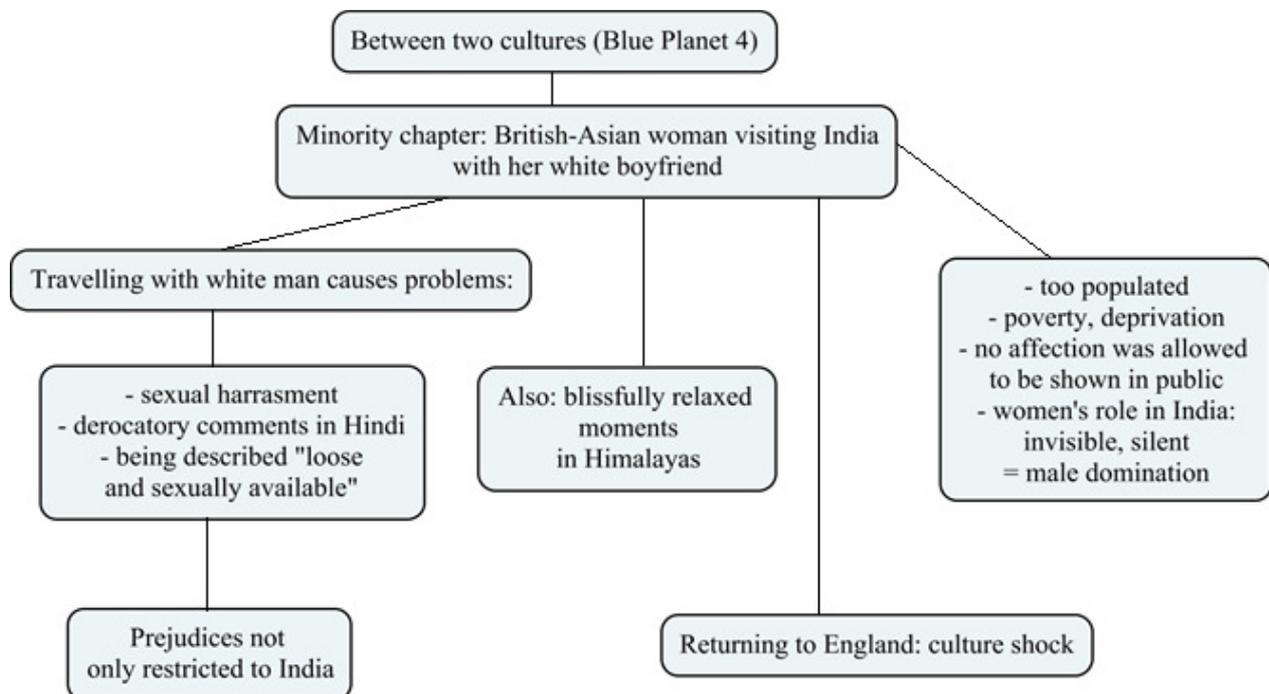


Figure 4: "Between two cultures"

In the chapter there are no negative implications to do with her multicultural background. On the contrary, she is portrayed as a strong, second-generation female immigrant, who expresses rather strong opinions. The fact that she describes herself as “second-generation Indian” means that she was born in the UK, but she has not forgotten her Indian roots. Yet, in the textbook chapter Smita portrays India as a country which has problems in accepting any other cultures and values than their own (see Figure 4). This tendency is shown in many parts of the text. Some good examples of this are, for instance, when she highlights how no affection was allowed to be shown in public and how Indian men described “white women as loose and sexually available” (l. 79). This textbook chapter also depicts how women’s role in India is to be silent and invisible. In the following extract Smita points out how male domination eventually made her feel:

In India I was silent again, superficially accepting men’s behavior towards me simply to get through a hassle-free day of travelling. But this passivity became much harder as time wore on. Things came to a head in Varanasi, where after only three days I had been subjected to so much abuse and harassment that I retreated to my hotel room and wept. (l. 97–105)

In other words, neither multiculturalism nor Smita’s own multicultural background are portrayed in a negative way, but it can be noted that the second-generation female immigrant represents India as a land of poverty and male domination.

#### **4.3.1.2 The degree of integration**

Already the title of the chapter gives the reader quite a clear picture of the feelings Smita encounters when travelling in India: the young woman starts to understand that she has been living “between two cultures”. In this chapter integration plays quite an essential role: her whole life Smita has thought that she is not only British, but also Indian. Both Indian and British culture traditions have been important to her, which has made her believe that she has integrated into the British society. The trip to India together with her British boyfriend makes the woman understand that her connection to India has disappeared:

I was left with the feeling that perhaps the two different sides of me just did not fit into Indian life. My attempts to cover up my feminism and, by taking a passive role, to try and gain the approval of Indian men, soon gave way to overwhelming feelings of resentment. It was mortifying when I realised that I was dismissing part of my own culture in a way that can only be described as racist. (l. 109–117)

As the quote above shows, Smita realizes that she has assimilated into British society: the Indian culture is strange and she does not feel that it could be a part of her cultural identity anymore. In fact, at the end of the chapter the girl even struggles with the idea that she as a second-generation Indian does not belong to either of the cultures:

Travelling around India I learned what it felt like to be an outsider in a culture which I regard as my roots. [...] Returning to England left me in complete culture shock and finding my bearings in British society has again taken time. (l. 138–140, 145–147)

The title of the chapter, “Between two cultures”, gives the reader an impression that someone has problems with her cultural identity. This is real, because during Smita’s trip to India, she starts to discover what her multicultural background is really like.

#### **4.3.1.3 The goal of the textbook chapter**

This minority chapter introduces the Finnish student to quite a daring minority story. Smita Patel has grown up in the UK and this textbook chapter concentrates on portraying how different the British and Indian cultures are. The goal of the textbook chapter is to show that multicultural background can sometimes be difficult to handle. The feeling of shock Smita encounters immediately upon arrival to her parents’ home country and the fact that both she and her boyfriend have to, for instance, experience sexual harassment show the Finnish student that multiculturalism can be puzzling. India is not the way Smita had imagined, and now the young woman faces the reality. At the end of the chapter she even experiences a culture shock in her home country, in the UK, because back there she does not know whether she is Indian or British.

In the textbook chapter “Between two cultures” there are altogether six exercises. Four of them are written exercises, in which students are not supposed to develop their own opinions, but

are rather meant to concentrate more on studying vocabulary and phrases. Next, I will introduce the vocabulary exercises very shortly and then concentrate more on the two spoken exercises.

In exercise “A. Headline hunting” students work with a partner and match the nine given headlines with the nine paragraphs of the chapter. After that the content of each paragraph should be summed up with one sentence. In exercise “D. Partners and pairs” students should find out the other part of a word pair that can be found in the text, for instance “guidance and [...]” or “harassment and [...]”. After that these phrases need to be translated into Finnish. “E. Who speaks what on the Blue Planet?” (see Figure 5) aims at learning language and country names. In exercise “F. Borrowed or stolen?” there are examples of borrowed words that are in common use in English. Here students should try to guess from which language the words are originally from, for instance the German word ‘lager’ and the Persian word ‘caravan’.

### E. Who speaks what on the Blue Planet?

Do you know what the 10 most widely-spoken languages in the world are? The following list shows you the Top Ten but some bits of information are missing. Work together to fill in the gaps.

There are lots of important languages and countries which do not get onto this list.

Figure 5: Exercise E

In the textbook chapter “Between two cultures” there are two exercises that focus on spoken language. In these exercises students are asked to talk about their thoughts and attitudes. In exercise “B. Culture shock” students should discuss the following six questions in small groups:

- 1) What is culture shock? Give some examples.
- 2) Can you experience culture shock in your own country?
- 3) What is re-entry shock?
- 4) Why was the culture shock which Smita Patel experienced particularly painful?
- 5) How would you have felt if you had been in Smita’s position?
- 6) Is there anything that can be done to make culture shock less shocking?

This exercise offers students good grounds for conversation: students are asked to work more on the topic culture shock. Especially in the fifth question students need to change their perspective and

think what it would feel like to be a second-generation immigrant. Exercise “C. The fact of the matter” has also quite a similar structure, but the topic is different. In this exercise students should either write or discuss what ‘plain facts’ of India they find in the text. The following five topic words are offered to help the students in the exercise: *the airport, housing, Kashmir, transport and women’s role*.

Both exercise “B. Culture shock” and “C. The fact of the matter” aim at making the students talk about their own thoughts and opinions. It could be argued that exercise B makes the student approach Smita’s feelings and consider the life of a minority member or from their personal point of view, as in “4) Why was the culture shock Smita Patel experienced particularly painful?”. The important goal of exercise C is to work on the chapter’s representation of India and, for instance, discuss how the women’s role is portrayed in the textbook chapter.

Another important goal of the present EFL teaching is to provide Finnish students with further cultural knowledge and understanding of foreign countries, but in the textbook chapter “Between two cultures” the representation of India can be seen as rather restricted. The textbook chapter offers practically no factual information on India, which means that this aspect could use more attention. In the textbook chapter Smita focuses on expressing her own feelings and she concentrates on stereotypical topics, such as poverty and male domination. At the end of the first chapter analysis it seems necessary to point that this textbook chapter could offer the Finnish student more knowledge on important topics, such as facts and figures on India. It can also be stated that the exercises of the chapter focus more on vocabulary than discussing multiculturalism and cultural heterogeneity.

#### **4.3.2 Case study 2: “My family mosaic” (*Culture Café 1*)**

*Culture Café 1* has ten chapters and in two of them ethnic minorities can be seen as the thematic centre: “My family mosaic” (p. 9–15) and “White Teeth” (p. 26–33). In this study “My family mo-

saic” is taken under more detailed analysis. In the table of contents there are three words that are used to define the nature of the chapter: “family, mother language, roots”.

In “My family mosaic” a second-generation Canadian, Raquel Benmergui, introduces the reader with her multicultural life. This is a self-description, which has no source information. Yet, at this point it is important to mention that one of the authors of the textbook series *Culture Café* is called Raquel Benmergui (see References). Thereby it could be possible that this textbook chapter tells about her personal experiences as a second-generation immigrant and it may be her ‘family mosaic’ the chapter deals with. However, there is no evidence supporting this idea, which means that the authenticity of the chapter cannot be solved.

The chapter is divided into three smaller sections with the following subtitles: “My roots”, “Somewhat like the United Nations” and “Family ties”. “My roots” presents the background of Raquel’s family. In this section Raquel clarifies, for instance, how her Finnish mother and Spanish-speaking Moroccan father fell in love at first sight on a blind date in Canada. “Somewhat like the United Nations” deals with the most complicated part of her family life, which is the language issue. In the last section, “Family ties”, Raquel explains that her family lives all across the world. At the end of the chapter there is a box called “Fortune cookie”, which brings out facts about the multiculturalism in Canadian society.

#### **4.3.2.1 Multicultural mixture**

“My family mosaic” is a very suitable name for this minority chapter. It highlights the main notion: Raquel’s family background is like a mosaic, which consists of both different cultures and languages, but still has a sustainable structure (see Figure 6).

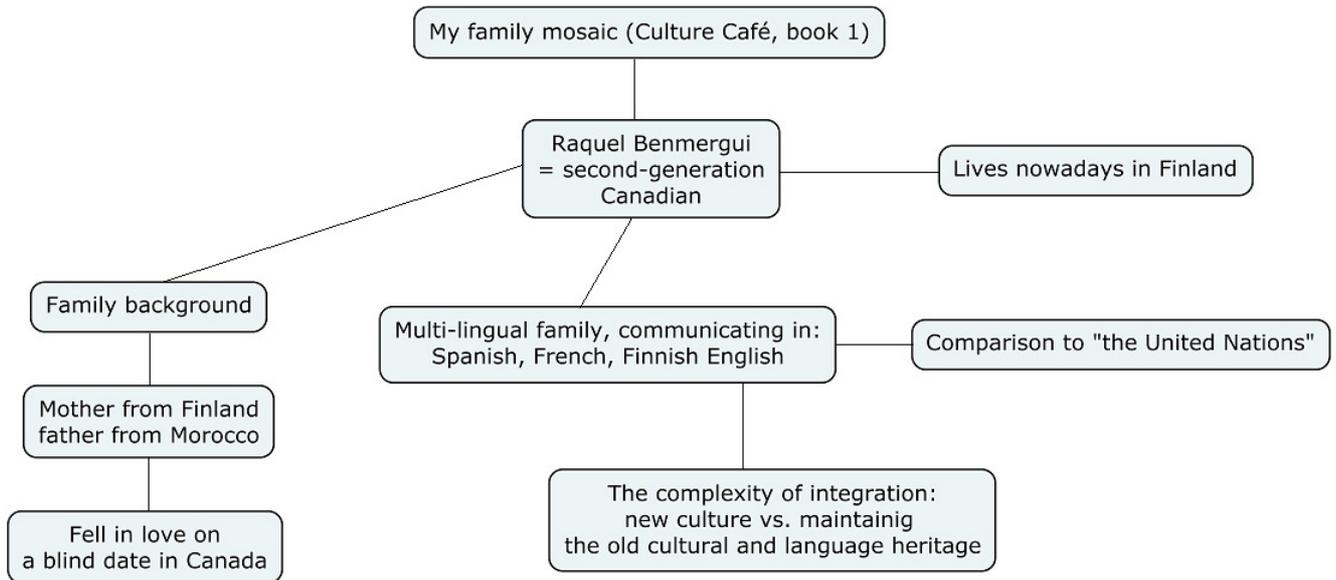


Figure 6: "My family mosaic"

Already in the first paragraph of the chapter Raquel describes her multicultural background very open-mindedly and without any uncertainty or hesitation. She is a second-generation Canadian, and her roots are very multicultural. Raquel's father is a Spanish-speaking Moroccan, whose family comes originally from Spain and South America, and her mother is from Finland.

The introduction of the chapter points out that "[t]hey say the world is getting smaller. But for some people, it's always been like that." Raquel can be considered as such a person, because her life has always been multicultural. Yet, her minority status is not portrayed as any kind of a burden. Raquel is obviously proud to have a colourful family history and to be a second-generation Canadian.

#### 4.3.2.2 The degree of integration

Raquel has integrated into Canadian society, but still the problems that are closely connected with multiculturalism and integration are not left aside. The topic she discusses the most is language. There are altogether four languages that are used when communicating with her family and rela-

tives: English, Finnish, French and Spanish. Here is what she tells the reader about the communication between her parents and sisters:

Amongst my sisters we speak in English, but it is a bit more complicated when we communicate with my parents. My older sister and I speak in English with my parents – but my younger sisters speak to them in French. (l. 46–50)

Raquel explains that the reason for this language barrier is political: when she and her older sister were growing up, English was the most important language. Yet, the language situation in Quebec changed when her younger sisters were born and therefore their father changed the language at home to French. Still, Raquel portrays the diversity of languages as a natural part of Canada and the province of Quebec. As she states: “[...] a dinner at my house with all my extended family sounds somewhat like the United Nations.” (l. 66-67). All in all, she sees that the language question is to some degree problematic, but at the same time interesting:

As you can see, things are always a bit complex when people immigrate to other countries. People want to keep their cultural and linguistic heritage, but they also want their children to integrate into the surrounding culture and “fit in”. (l. 51–55)

Raquel concentrates the entire chapter on telling about her life in Canada, but surprisingly in her postscript she writes that only one of her sisters, Laila, is at present living in Canada anymore. Her parents live in the USA and all the other sisters, including Raquel, live nowadays in Finland. This means that it is not until the postscript when the Finnish student gets to know how multicultural the family Benmergui really is.

#### **4.3.2.3 The goal of the textbook chapter**

This textbook chapter provides the Finnish student with a lot of basic information on life as a minority member and on multiculturalism. Raquel Benmergui depicts her multicultural background and deals with various aspects of it: she explains the history of her multicultural background, she discusses the language question and enlightens how challenging it is to be in contact with relatives who live all across the world. She feels no shame or inferiority because of her multicultural back-



6) They got married and live now in South America.

In exercise “E. Family history – a great adventure” a man called Roland tells about his family history, but some words are missing. The Finnish student needs to fill in gaps that are related with nationalities, country names and century markings. Yet, at the same time the aim is also to make the student see how multicultural the background can be (see Figure 7).

### **E. Family history – a great adventure**

Fill in the missing words. Use your grammar book if necessary.

My name is Roland and I live in Ostrobothnia. One of my ancestors was a Viking. Vikings were **1.** \_\_\_\_\_ warriors, who sailed the northern seas from the **2.** \_\_\_\_\_ onwards. They even discovered America hundreds of years before Columbus.

1. norjalainen

2. 800-luvulta

During his travels, the warrior met a **3.** \_\_\_\_\_ girl, who he took with him to **4.** \_\_\_\_\_. They had many children, but not a lot is known about them. One of them, however, married a **5.** \_\_\_\_\_ who was a servant for King Erik VII the Victorious. He travelled quite a lot with the king, and one of their children was born in **6.** \_\_\_\_\_. The family decided to stay in the country.

3. ranskalainen

4. Norjaan

5. ruotsalainen

6. Saksassa

My family history also has its dark sides. During the rule of the **7.** \_\_\_\_\_ Inquisition, in **8.** \_\_\_\_\_, one of my relatives from my mother’s side was burned to death. The other members of her family had to escape north – this time, they came to **9.** \_\_\_\_\_, which was part of **10.** \_\_\_\_\_ at the time.

7. espanjalainen

8. 1400-luvulla

9. Länsi-Suomeen

10. Ruotsi

And what about my father’s side then? Well, there was this **11.** \_\_\_\_\_ man who met an **12.** \_\_\_\_\_ woman in **13.** \_\_\_\_\_. They moved to **14.** \_\_\_\_\_ together and had three children...

11. juutalainen

12. irakilainen

13. Turkissa

14. Kreikkaan

Figure 7: Exercise E “Family history – a great adventure”

The last exercise of the chapter is also written and it is “G. Quiz on Canada”. Here the Finnish student can check how much knowledge he has on the country. There are altogether ten questions, for instance:

3) Canada has about: a) 100 million, b) 30 million, c) 10 million inhabitants.

[...]

10) In Canada, people who have native origins are referred to as a) Canadian Indians. b) First Nations Peoples. c) Eskimos.

There are three spoken exercises in the chapter and they all have the same function: making the student think and discuss how much multiculturalism there is and how colourful the family background can be. Before reading the chapter “My family mosaic”, students are given the following questions to be discussed:

Why do people generally move from one country to another?

What positive thing does immigration bring?

Where would you move if you had the change? Why?

Do you know any famous Finns who have moved abroad? Why did they move?

Do you have any friends or relatives living outside Finland?

Why did they move to another country?

What languages do they speak?

From a pedagogical point of view these questions are very functional: students can start thinking about the contemporary significance of immigration and multiculturalism before reading Raquel’s own story. Exercise “A. It’s a wide world” consists of two parts. In part one the Finnish student should consider why there are six names on a list and then place the people in correct countries on the map. Part two is a spoken exercise, in which the student tells Raquel’s story to his fellow student using both the list of names and the map. “F. What about your mosaic?” has two options and only one of the options is required to be done. In the first option the Finnish student is asked to interview one of his relatives in order to find out about their family history, make short notes of the interview and then present the findings in class. In the second option the family history can be invented and then told only to the partner. The aim of this exercise is to research and thereby understand the history of one’s own family background.

This textbook chapter gives the Finnish student both a personal story on multicultural background and important facts on multiculturalism in Canada. The contents of the eight exercises are versatile: they aim at teaching vocabulary, which is always very important, but at the same time

they focus also on the cultural heterogeneity. In short, the exercises make the student further discuss the topic introduced in the chapter.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The quantitative analysis of the three current EFL textbook series *Blue Planet* (A-Level, 1996–2002), *English Update Highlights* (A-Level, 1999–2001) and *Culture Café* (2003–2008) showed that chapters with either national or ethnic minority cultures as thematic centre are not very frequent in EFL textbooks of the Finnish upper secondary school. The data consisted of 23 textbooks, and they had altogether 15 chapters that dealt with either national or ethnic minorities. The most common topic of the chapters was to portray how a person with minority status has adjusted into the new culture (the degree of a person's integration). Literary extracts were the most common manner of presenting the topic.

In the qualitative part of this study I analysed two EFL textbook chapters that had young second-generation female immigrants as their thematic centre. The case study of the chapters “Between two cultures” (*Blue Planet 4*) and “My family mosaic” (*Culture Café 1*) was a clear example of how differently multicultural background can be presented. The British-Asian feminist experienced “overwhelming feelings of resentment” (l. 114-115) when visiting her roots in India, whereas the Canadian woman with Moroccan and Finnish parents expressed no bitterness due to her colourful family background.

The exercises followed the same tendency: there was a significant difference between the two textbook chapters. In “Between two cultures” (*Blue Planet 4*) the exercises clearly focused more on the vocabulary. In “My family mosaic” (*Culture Café 1*) the exercises also dealt with the vocabulary, but at the same time they aimed at making the student see the importance of cultural heterogeneity and discuss the topic further.

Although the data of this study was not representative enough to draw any widespread conclusions on how the Finnish EFL textbooks represent national and ethnic minorities, it still provides insight into the topic. This study showed that cultural heterogeneity and multiculturalism have quantitatively quite a small role in the three Finnish EFL textbooks analysed and, moreover, the topics were represented with very different approaches. Nevertheless, national and ethnic minorities are an essential part of English-speaking nations, which means that cultural diversity should receive more attention in the EFL textbooks of the Finnish upper secondary school.

In the framework of the study I listed *intersubjectivity*, *reliability* and *validity* as the three main criteria for a well-organized textbook analysis (see 2.2 Textbook analysis). They were the three guidelines that I tried to follow throughout the whole study process. Still, it would now be very interesting to test, for instance, the reliability of my work and see, whether another researcher would get the same findings as I did.

Finally, I want to point out that there are significant differences between EFL teachers' classroom strategies. Therefore it would be interesting to extend the analysis and devote attention to the question how the EFL chapters dealing with national and ethnic minorities are actually taught in the Finnish upper secondary school. It would also be worthwhile to find out what kind of impact the chapters have on the Finnish students' ideas about multiculturalism, especially in the English-speaking world.

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**APPENDIX**

**Appendix 1:**

	<b>Chapters</b>	<b>The chapters with national or ethnic minorities as their thematic centre</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>The English book series</b>			
<b>A-Level, 1999</b>			
English Update Highlights 1-3	36	<b>2</b> S. 85 The man who defied gravity (book 2) S. 88-89 The show must go on (book 2)	5.56
English Update Highlights 4-6	36	<b>2</b> S. 92-93 Seeing colours (book 4) S. 61-62 "United colours, divided opinions" (book 6)	5.56
<b>A-Level, 2000</b>			
Blue Planet 1-3	60	<b>1</b> S. 94-95 Is it okay to date someone of another race? (book 1)	1.67
Blue Planet 4-6	44	<b>2</b> S. 16-17 Between two cultures (book 4) S. 24-25 A white South African returns from exile (book 4)	4.54
Blue Planet 7-8	29	<b>2</b> S. 19-21 Hotter than a vindaloo (book 8) S. 24-25 From Native Americans (book 8)	6.9
<b>A-Level, 2002</b>			
Culture Café 1-3	30	<b>3</b> S. 10–15 My family mosaic (book 1) S. 26–27 White teeth (book 1) S. 22-23 'Tis (book 3)	10
Culture Café 4-6	30	<b>2</b> S. 12-13 The new girl (book 4) S. 56-57 Twelve Bar Blues (book 5)	6.67
Culture Café 7-8	17	<b>1</b> S. 6-7 Election day (book 8)	5.88

**Altogether: 15**