

Part 2

Describing the Present of Multilingual Pedagogies

5 Language Ideologies in Primary School Pupils' Drawings of the Finnish Language

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1 Introduction

This chapter is motivated by the multilingual turn in Finnish society and education.¹ The society has been perceived as monocultural and monolingual, and the aims of the Finnish educational system have traditionally been quite monolingual and uniform (e.g. Paunonen, 2020). The constantly increasing multilingualism challenges the old ways of thinking and highlights education as the sphere in which language ideologies are circulated (e.g. Gal, 2006: 20). Language ideologies influence how different languages, variations, and language use are perceived (e.g. Gal, 2006; Piller, 2015; Rosa & Burdick, 2017), and, circulating from education, they have an effect on all society and the realisation of social justice (see Introduction to this volume).

In this chapter, I focus on the language ideologies on Finnish since it is the *de facto* majority language of the country and the medium of instruction in all Finnish-medium schools.² Finnish is also the mutual language of everyday school life despite the pupils' plurilingualism (individual multilingualism). In this context, the ideologies on Finnish determine who is considered Finnish speaking and perhaps even a Finn and what kind of language is regarded as proper. These are also questions of social justice (for the definitions, see Introduction to this volume): access to Finnish or becoming part of the speaker group depends on the language ideological structures of the Finnish-speaking majority. Social justice sheds light on the linguistic hierarchies and biases which prevail in society at large but also in educational settings (see Introduction to this volume). As Avineri *et al.* (2019) note, education is a process that is basically mediated through language that embeds all the interests of larger social structures, being maintained by ideological assumptions.

The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education by the Finnish National Agency of Education (2014) has promoted a language-aware perspective in all education since 2016. The curriculum takes multilingualism as a basic quality of every individual. Still, research shows that, in the everyday reality of schools, the demand for language awareness often collides with monolingual ideologies (Alisaari *et al.*, 2019). From the point of view of this multilingual objective, it is important to observe how the dominant language of the society and education is represented in schools, in what kind of discourses it is present, and what kind of ideologies around it are circulated. Understanding ideologies on Finnish enables advancing social justice in education and the rest of society. Despite the criticism of the concept of social justice by Pennycook (2021: 53; see also Introduction to this volume), I consider it a valuable companion to the study of language ideology, since the latter aims at understanding language related inequalities in society and the former to highlight group language rights, creating together a natural continuum.

In the study reported in this chapter, I observed the prevailing and circulating language discourses and ideologies on the Finnish language in the context of Finnish primary education. The data for this study consisted of drawings of ‘the Finnish language’ produced by primary school pupils in two different parts of Finland. The following research questions were addressed in this study: (1) what kind of language discourses are constructed in the drawings, and (2) what kind of ideologies materialise in the discourses? The study aimed to broaden the understanding of the reproduction and circulation of language ideologies regarding the Finnish language in Finnish primary education.³ Section 2 provides the social, theoretical and methodological background of the study. Section 3 introduces the participants and explains the data collection and analysis, and Section 4 presents the findings. Section 5 summarises the lessons learnt.

2 Background to the Study

Finland has two national languages, Finnish and Swedish, of which Finnish is the *de facto* language of the majority (Salo, 2012; Saukkonen, 2012; Ihalainen *et al.*, 2019). In addition, the speakers of the official minority languages of Northern, Inari and Skolt Sámi have law-secured rights to maintain their language and culture. The rights of the users of the Finnish and Finland-Swedish sign languages, as well as the Romani language, are decreed by law (Institute for the Languages of Finland, n.d.). The number of speakers of foreign languages has been increasing in Finland since the 1990s due to growing immigration (Paunonen, 2020). At the end of 2021, more than 458,000 inhabitants living in Finland registered a foreign language as their first language,⁴ which is 8.3% of the total population (Statistics Finland, 2021).

However, Finland could be categorised as a country of parallel monolingualism, despite its official bilingualism. Most Finns are quite monolingual, and the official bilingualism in Finland is not straightforward. Bilingualism has a history of a power struggle between Finnish and Swedish since the 19th century because it has been in contradiction with the ideal of a monolingual nation-state (Salo, 2012; Saukkonen, 2012; Ihalainen *et al.*, 2019; Paunonen, 2020). Like many other countries, Finland is also affected by the ideology of one nation and one language, in spite of the bilingual context. The ideologies are alive on both sides: Finnish nationality can be tightly associated with only the Finnish language, or it can be seen as something shared between the two languages. The increase in immigration during the past 30 years has highlighted the connection between language and nationality in a new way. Despite naturalisation or official policies, some people can still be considered more Finnish than others. In general, the Finnish language and minority policies provide a good example of a case where there is a large gap between the legal and symbolic constructions of the nation (Saukkonen, 2012: 9–11).

Language discourse and language ideology are the key terms of this study. The concept of discourse carries many meanings, but in this study, *discourse* is understood as the social actions of language use. Discourses are different ways of constructing knowledge and social practice. Not only do discourses reflect and represent social relations and entities, but they also construct and 'constitute' them (Fairclough, 1992: 3). As meaningful symbolic behaviour (Blommaert, 2005: 2), discourses stem from what people have said, heard, seen and written about languages before (Johnstone, 2018: 2). Discourses are both the source and the knowledge as well as the result of it: generalisations about language are based on the discourses people participate in, and they also apply their knowledge and, in this way, interpret and create new discourses (Johnstone, 2018: 2).

Language ideologies are thoughts, beliefs and feelings about and/or values on language. They are language users' systems of sociocultural values and beliefs (Kalliokoski, 1996), in which language and social structures are also related in a moral and political sense (Irvine, 1989: 255). Due to this, language ideologies are intertwined with power. Among other dimensions, language ideologies are always multiple and might even be contradictory, and the members of a society have varying awareness of the prevailing language ideologies (Kroskrity, 2000).

Language ideologies and language discourses can be considered intertwined. In addition to being ways of describing reality, discourses also shape the way reality is interpreted (Johnstone, 2018), and the power of discourses is based on their ability to produce, renew, naturalise and change the understanding of reality and social practice (Fairclough, 1992: 67). In this way, ideologies materialise in discourses, and discourses renew language ideologies (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998: 26; Blommaert, 2005: 26).

3 Research Methodology

For the analysis of visual data in this study, I combined two types of discourse analysis: *multimodal discourse analysis* (MMDA) and *critical discourse analysis* (CDA). MMDA interprets text broadly as a base for immaterial discourses to appear (Kress, 2012: 35–36). In MMDA, the text and the parts that create coherence can be multiple, e.g. gestures, speech or images. Text is understood as a multimodal semiotic entity that gets its coherence from the social coherence of the environment. MMDA aims to describe and analyse all kinds of texts, semiotic entities, what is going on in the text, and what kind of power is being used.

CDA is also interested in language and power, especially in the inequality caused by the prevailing discourses (Fairclough, 1992, 2012). CDA observes the meanings produced by discourses and how they relate to other social elements, such as social structures, courses of action, and events (Fairclough, 2012: 11). I utilise CDA alongside MMDA since CDA offers a great tool to analyse such layers of power that otherwise might not be reached. CDA is traditionally very interested in the examination of power and ideology (Blommaert, 2005: 27).

Arts-based methodologies offer a medium for expressing one's experiences, emotions and histories through visual art (as noted in Introduction to this volume). Visual and multimodal data offer an excellent premise for studying language discourses and language ideologies. Drawing is a way of describing the world, its structures, and phenomena (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996), and especially drawings produced in different institutions represent the ideologies and prevailing discourses of the institution in question. Different institutions, especially educational institutions, are considered places where social relations, representations and identities are reproduced and circulated (Blommaert, 2005: 26; see also Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Language ideologies also belong to the same sphere of reproduction and circulation (e.g. Silverstein, 1998: 138; Gal, 2006: 20), which makes education one of the key contexts for understanding social justice (and injustice) and for pursuing social change (Avineri *et al.*, 2019; see also Introduction to this volume).

Visual data, especially *drawings*, have previously been used in Finland to study Finnish, mainly in the context of learners of Finnish with an immigrant background (e.g. Scotson, 2018, 2019, 2020). The data of the study reported in this chapter differ from the previous studies in the abstractness of the drawing task: when one studies the language identity or language learning of an individual, the premise of the visual output is the individual. In this study, the premise, however, is an abstract concept – a language.

3.1 Data collection

The participants of this study are primary school pupils from Finnish-medium schools in two different areas in Finland: Oulu is a city of

approximately 200,000 inhabitants in North Ostrobothnia, and Helsinki, the capital, is a city of more than 600,000 inhabitants in southern Finland. The distance between the two areas is approximately 600 km. There are also great differences in urbanity and demography between these two areas: the Oulu region is more rural and less multilingual and multicultural than Helsinki (City of Helsinki, 2021: 11; Statistics Finland, 2018). In the Oulu region, data were gathered from two different places: a school in the city area, which has students from different social backgrounds but mainly from Finnish-speaking homes with a few exceptions (Oulu1 and Oulu2), and a school in a small neighbouring municipality, which is a rural area and has pupils from different social backgrounds and mainly Finnish-speaking homes (Lampela).⁵ In Helsinki, data were gathered from two schools: one in North Helsinki (NH), in which the student body is comparable to the one in the two Oulu groups, and the other in East Helsinki (EH),⁶ which is located in an area that has a lower income and education level than the city on average (Helsinki by District, 2019).⁷

At the time of data collection, the participants were between 11 and 13 years old. Most participants came from Finnish-speaking homes, but the East Helsinki group was a clear exception: in the group, the participants spoke 14 different home languages, including Finnish. In addition, almost all participants reported proficiency in languages other than their home language. The participants were both boys and girls, but gender was not considered a variable for the analysis. The participant groups and their languages are summarised in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 The participant groups and their languages

Oulu region	2 groups from the city (21)	1 group from Lampela (19)	Mostly Finnish speaking + 5 other home languages	Language proficiency in 7 languages other than the reported home languages
Helsinki	2 groups from North Helsinki (41)	1 group from East Helsinki (21)	North: Mostly Finnish speaking + 6 other home languages East: 14 different home languages (including Finnish)	North: Language proficiency in 4 languages other than the reported home languages East: Language proficiency in 10 languages other than the reported home languages

The data were collected in the Oulu region in autumn 2016 and in Helsinki in spring 2017. Each data collection had the same steps. The pupils wrote their background information on paper (first name, age, living abroad, home language, knowledge of other languages).⁸ After the

background information, I asked them to draw ‘the Finnish language’ on the other side of the same sheet of paper. The task was always challenging and abstract for the young participants, and for that reason, I used supporting questions to help them get started with their drawings. The following were the prompt questions: *Where is Finnish spoken? Who speaks Finnish? What kind of language is Finnish, e.g. what does it sound like? What have you learned about the Finnish language in school? Is the Finnish language important to you or not? Any further comments?* The use of the prompt questions was, of course, voluntary. During data collection, I also emphasised that the drawing task is not a test or a drawing competition and that all sorts of images of the Finnish language are welcome. All the groups drew on clean A4 sheets of paper with coloured crayons and marker pens.

The data gathered consisted of different visual and textual elements. They were multiple in expression, but certain shared ways of illustrating and describing Finnish existed (for a more detailed analysis of the drawings, see Niemelä, 2020⁹). In the following section, I move on to the analysis.

3.2 Data analysis

The analysis had two phases. I used MMDA to categorise the drawings as entities. This was based on the dominant elements in each drawing. After this, I applied the typical three-phase way of progressing in CDA (Blommaert, 2005: 29–30; Fairclough, 1992: 73–91):

- (1) *Discourse-as-text*: The visual and textual choices of the drawings are systematically described and analysed.
- (2) *Discourse-as-discursive-practice*: Interpretation of the categories and structures that the participants offer and analysis of the discourses found in the drawings as something that is produced, circulated, distributed, and consumed in society.
- (3) *Discourse-as-social-practice*: The ideological effects and language ideological process behind the discourses are brought forward and explained (Blommaert, 2005: 29–30). For the explanations, the processes of *iconisation*, *erasure* and *axes of differentiation* are used (Irvine & Gal, 2000; Gal, 2016).

The phases of the analysis presented above led to answering the research questions of this study: (1) what kind of language discourses are constructed in the drawings, and (2) what kind of ideologies materialise in the discourses?

Section 3.2.1 describes the process of the visual analysis, which led to the categorisation of the drawings. In the sections that follow, I further examine the visual elements of the different categories and their texts.

3.2.1 Categorisation of the drawings

I analysed a total of 102 drawings applying MMDA. In MMDA, all modes of text and cohesion affect the analysis, which means that a text is analysed as a semiotic entity (Kress, 2012). Therefore, all the elements in the drawings, the synergy and the 'message' influenced the categorisation process.

The drawings were categorised according to the appearing elements and texts. However, since the visual was the actual target of the data collection, the drawn elements had more importance in this process, and the texts later underwent a similar classification of their own. The categorisation process was qualitative and data-driven, and it was implemented several times to find the proper category for each drawing. The categories were not determined in advance (Eskola & Suoranta, 2014; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018), and they are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 The data divided into categories

Category	Oulu1 (10)	Oulu2 (11)	Lampela (19)	NH (41)	EH (21)	Total (102)
Finland and Finns	5	4	12	21	–	42
The Finnish flag and blue-cross figures	5	6	1	15	3	29
Everyday surroundings	–	–	2	–	12	14
Human being	1	–	2	6	–	9
The Finnish flag in nature	–	–	–	1	4	5
Sports	–	–	–	–	2	2

The drawings were divided into six different categories in this phase of the analysis. It is noteworthy that, besides the fact that the categories are different in size, the drawings by the participant groups do not divide evenly between different categories. There was most variation between the East Helsinki and the other groups, in which most participants were Finnish speaking. In these groups, the drawings consisted mainly of elements such as the map of Finland, the Finnish flag, and Finns, whereas the East Helsinki group, the most multilingual participant group, focused on illustrating their everyday surroundings.

In the following sections, I present the three largest categories and the visual and textual elements they consist of.

3.2.2 Finland and Finns

The largest of the categories was *Finland and Finns*, covering almost half of the data with 42 drawings. The category consisted of drawings that focused on the map of Finland, Finnish people, or Finnishness (for details, see Table 5.2). The drawings came from all other participant groups but the East Helsinki group. Figures 5.1–5.3 are examples of this category.

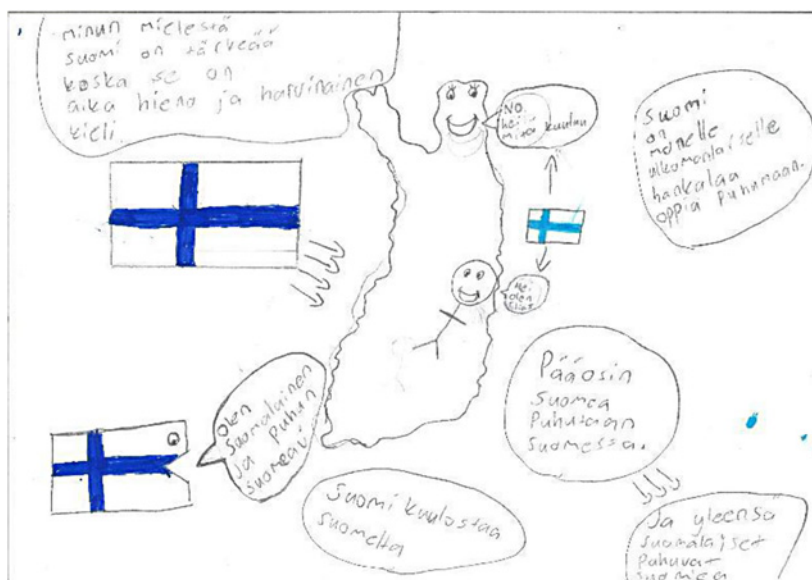


Figure 5.1 Eemeli, Oulu1



Figure 5.2 Henna, Oulu1



Figure 5.3 Elsa, Lampela

In this category, the map of Finland and different descriptions of Finns were often presented together. The texts in the drawings were also quite well in line with the visual representation and complemented it. The texts in this category went through a classification of their own and are reported in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Texts regarding drawings in the category of *Finland and Finns*

Topic	Examples
The Finnish language, the speakers of Finnish, where Finnish is spoken	<i>I am a Finn and I speak Finnish</i> (Minä olen suomalainen ja puhun suomea) – Ilpo, Lampela <i>Finnish is easy for us, but it is difficult for others to learn</i> (suomi on meille helppo kieli mutta muiden on vaikea oppia sitä) – Asmo, Oulu2 <i>The Finnish language is important for Finns but not for foreigners</i> (suomen kieli on suomalaisille tärkeä, mutta ei ulkomaalaisille) – Jemina, Lampela
Descriptions of Finnish	<i>In my opinion, Finnish is important because it is a quite fine and rare language</i> (minun mielestä suomi on tärkeää koska se on aika hieno ja harvinainen kieli) – Eemeli, Oulu1
Mentions of Finland	<i>Finland is in the north and it is cold in Finland</i> (suomi on pohjoisessa ja suomessa on kylmä) – Ville, Oulu 1
The variation in spoken language	<i>Are you from Oulu?</i> (ookkonää oulusta? ¹⁰) – Silja, NH <i>I speak the dialect of Lappeenranta</i> (Puhun Lappeenrannan murretta) – Anton, Lampela
Language and emotions	<i>Finnish is important to me</i> (suomi on minulle tärkeä) – Asmo, Oulu2
School	<i>I learned to pronounce the words</i> (opin lausumaan sanat) – Elmo, NH <i>Mikael Agricola</i> ¹¹ – Hertta, NH
The structures of language	<i>Compound words and sentences</i> (yhdyssanat ja lauseet) – Anton, Lampela
Cultural characteristics	<i>Sauna</i> – Juuso, NH <i>Finland is a country of a thousand lakes</i> (suomi on tuhansien järvien maa) – Mette, Oulu2

Most texts in this category belonged to the first topic, *The Finnish language, the speakers of Finnish, where Finnish is spoken*. The second in size is the topic *Descriptions of Finnish*, and the rest were notably smaller in size.

3.2.3 The Finnish flag and blue-cross figures

This category consisted of 29 drawings in which the Finnish flag or blue-cross figures in some other shapes were dominant in the visual representation (for details, see Table 5.2). In most of the drawings, there was more than just one flag, and the flag appeared together with such figures and elements as hearts, people, maps, speech bubbles, and saunas.¹² Also, blue-cross figures were used to illustrate hearts, speech bubbles, tongues, and body silhouettes. Drawings came from all participant groups. Figures 5.4–5.9 are examples of this category.

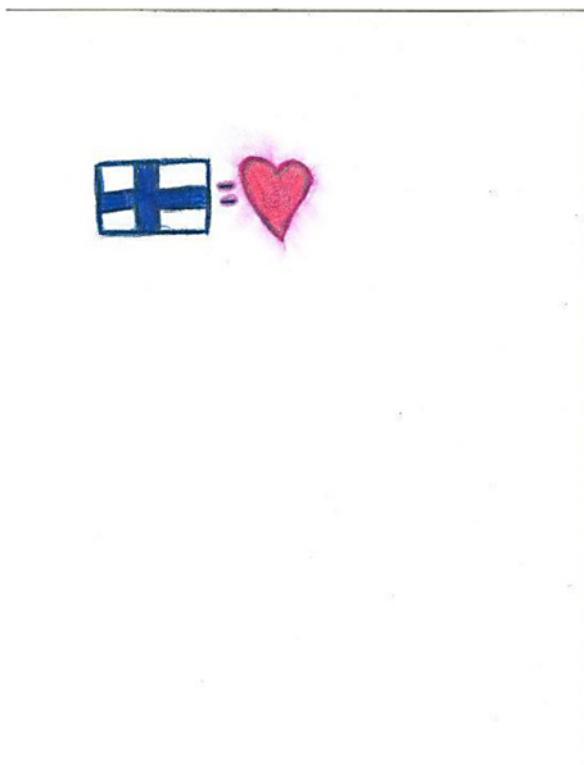


Figure 5.4 Aleksiina, Oulu2

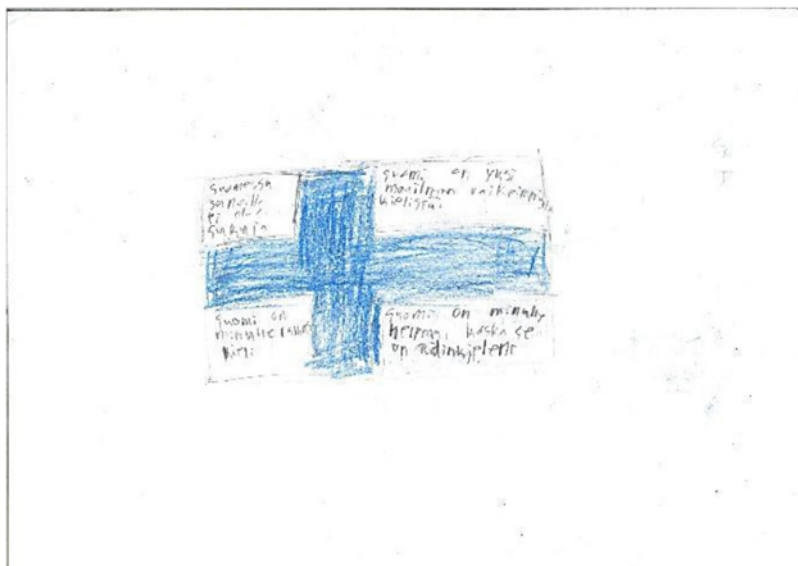


Figure 5.5 Arttu, Oulu2

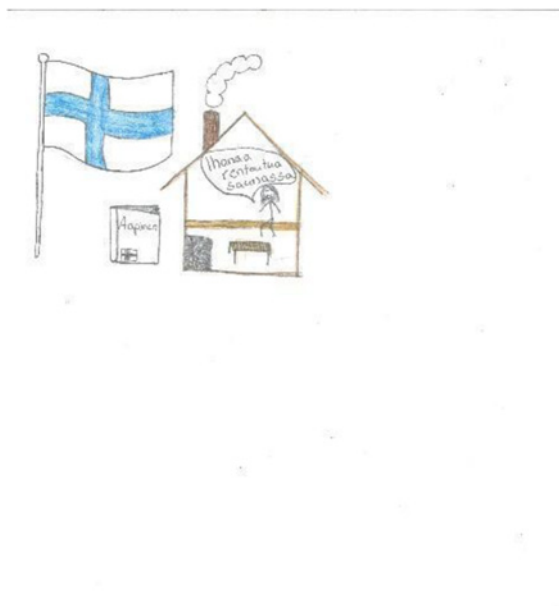


Figure 5.6 Säde, North Helsinki

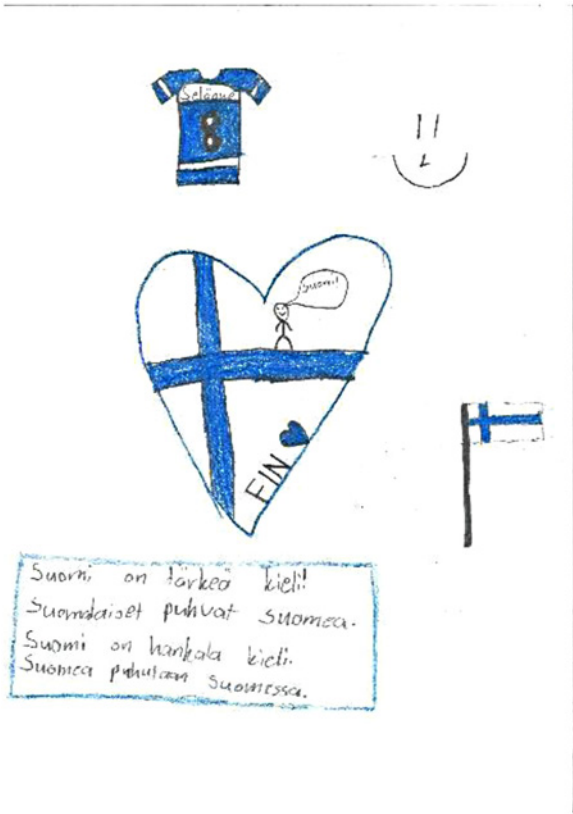


Figure 5.7 Oiva, Oulu2

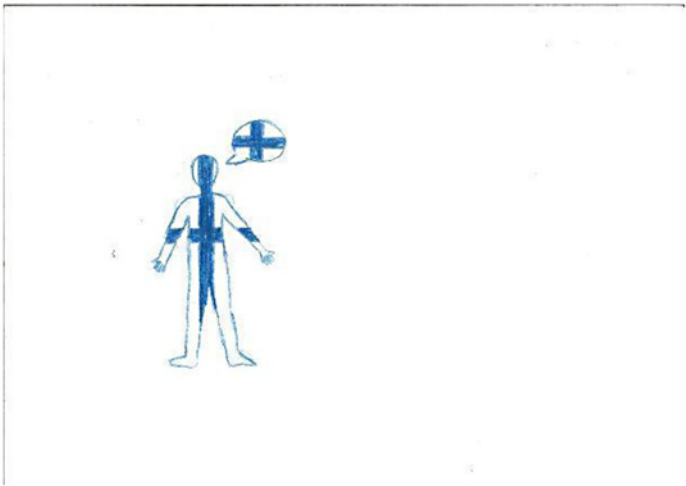


Figure 5.8 Juuli, North Helsinki

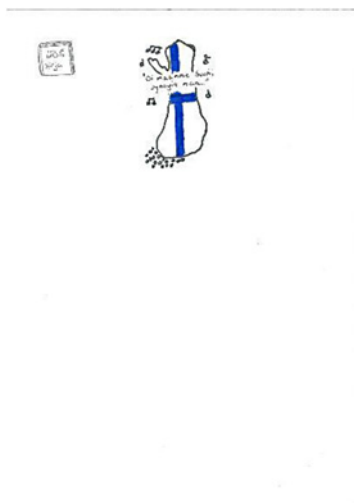


Figure 5.9 Nea, North Helsinki

This category included less text than the previous one. The results of the categorisation are summarised in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Texts regarding drawings in the category of the *Finnish flag and blue-cross figures*

Topic	Examples
The Finnish language, the speakers of Finnish, where Finnish is spoken	<i>Finns speak Finnish</i> (suomalaiset puhuvat suomea) – Henni, Oulu1 <i>People speak Finnish, but there are people in Finland who do not speak Finnish</i> (Ihmiset puhuvat suomea, mutta Suomessa on ihmisiä myös jotka eivät puhu) – Jemina, Oulu2 <i>Finnish is spoken in Finland</i> (Suomea puhutaan Suomessa) – Henni, Oulu1
Descriptions of Finnish	<i>Finnish is one of the most difficult languages in the world</i> (Suomi on yksi maailman vaikeimmista kielistä) – Arttu, Oulu2 <i>Finnish is a good language; the Finnish language is important</i> (Suomi on hyvä kieli; Suomen kieli on tärkeä) – Elvi, Lampela <i>Finnish is nice and easy</i> (suomen kieli on kivaa ja helppoa) – Henni, Oulu1 <i>The Finnish language is difficult!!!!</i> (Suomen kieli on vaikea!!!!) – Hewdem, EH
Language and emotions	<i>Finnish is important to me</i> (Suomi on minulle rakas kieli) – Arttu, Oulu2
Cultural characteristics	<i>Ice hockey</i> (Jääkiekko) – Hasan, EH <i>Independence</i> (Itsenäisyys) – Hatice, EH <i>Sauli Niinistö</i> (the president of Finland) – Hewdem, EH
Places	<i>Finland</i> (Suomi) – Hatice, EH <i>Oh Our Land Finland Fatherland</i> ('Oi maamme Suomi, synnyinmaa...') ¹³ – Nea, NH <i>Amusement parks and grocery stores</i> (Särkänniemi, Lintsi K-market, Prisma, Tokmanni) – Hewdem, EH
School	<i>I have learned many things</i> (Olen oppinut monia asioita) – Matin, Oulu2

Many of the topics in this category were identical to the ones in the category of *Finland and Finns*. In addition to the texts presented in Table 5.4, there were some greetings and texts that were directed to the researcher or texts that were without a clear topic.

3.2.4 Everyday surroundings

The category of *everyday surroundings* consisted of 14 different drawings, where a scenery of everyday surroundings or a collage of elements of everyday surroundings were depicted. The Finnish flag appeared very frequently in the drawings, but since the other elements created another kind of dominance, the flag was not a determining detail in the visual analysis. However, as it often appeared in the centre of the drawing, it seemed to highlight the presence of the language (Niemelä, 2020).

The participants whose drawings were classified into this category came from the East Helsinki and Lampela groups. This was interesting because these two groups were most apart from each other geographically. The participants of the East Helsinki group lived in an urban multicultural and multilingual neighbourhood. In contrast, the participants of the Lampela group lived in the countryside in quite a small municipality and in a mostly monolingual and monocultural environment. Figures 5.10–5.13 are examples of this category.

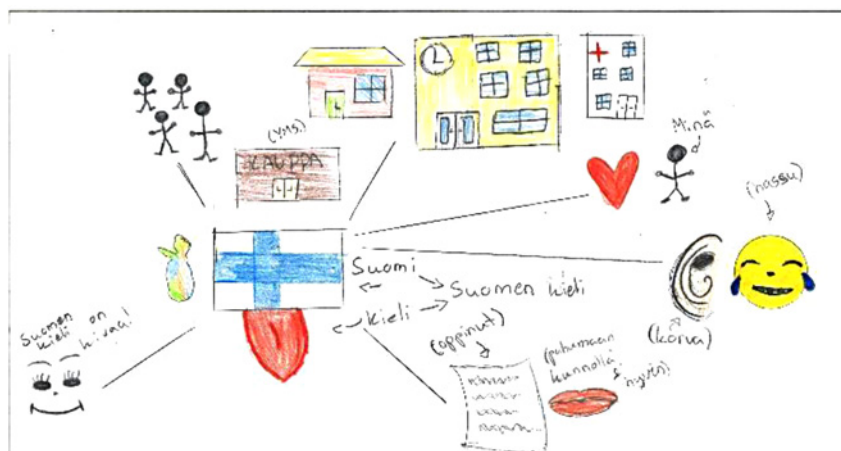


Figure 5.10 Annukka, East Helsinki

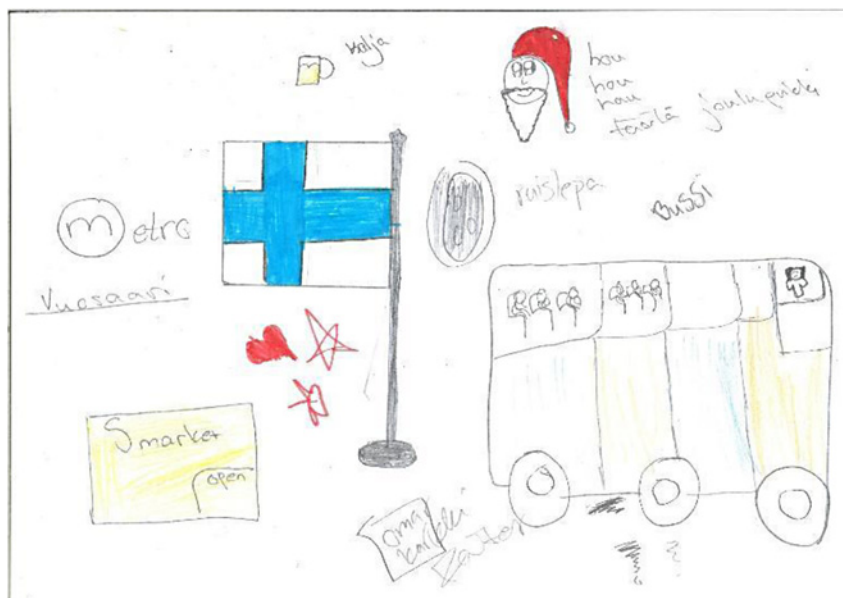


Figure 5.11 Ayaan, East Helsinki

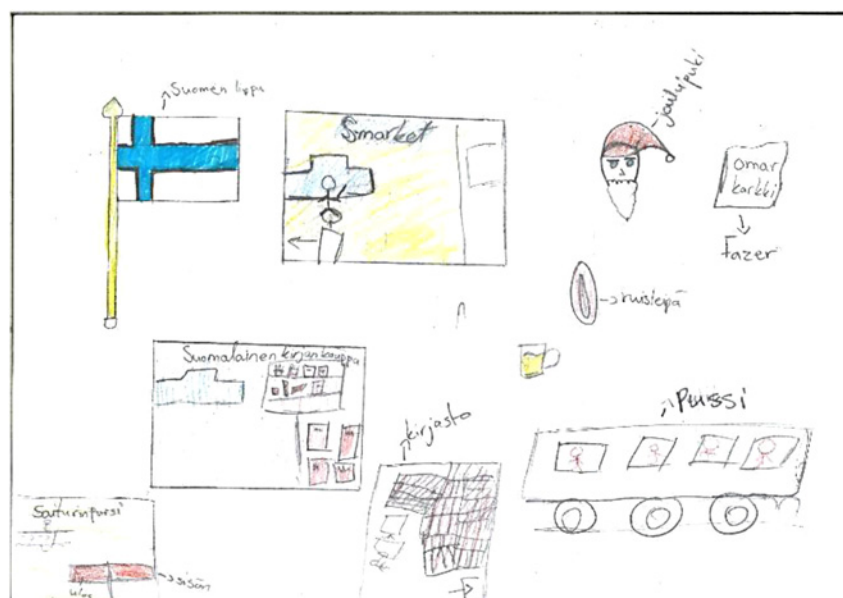


Figure 5.12 Mehra, East Helsinki



Figure 5.13 Olavi, Lampela

The texts in the category of *everyday surroundings* are summarised in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Texts of drawings in the category of *everyday surroundings*

Topic	Example
Places	<i>Finland (Suomi)</i> – Annukka, EH <i>Neighbourhood in East Helsinki (Vuosaari)</i> – Ayaan, EH <i>Shop (kauppa)</i> – Amanda, EH <i>Library (kirjasto)</i> – Mehera, EH <i>Metro</i> – Harita, EH
Food and drinks	<i>Beer (kalja)</i> – Akhmad, EH <i>Rye bread (ruisleipä), Omar karkki (local butterscotch)</i> – Ayaan, EH
Descriptions of Finnish	<i>The Finnish language is nice; the Finnish language sounds nice</i> (suomen kieli on mukavaa; suomen kieli on kivan kuuloista) – Olavi, Lampela
The Finnish language, the speakers of Finnish, where Finnish is spoken	<i>It is good to know Finnish; Finnish is spoken in places where one meets people</i> (suomea on hyvä osata puhua; suomea puhutaan sellaisissa paikoissa joissa tavataan ihmisiä) – Olavi, Lampela
Cultural characteristics	<i>Fazer, sauna</i> – Mehena, EH

Many of the topics were somewhat similar to the ones in the categories of *Finland and Finns* and *the Finnish flag and blue-cross figures*. However, there were also some differences. Specifically, the naming of places other than Finland is worth a closer look. Instead of naming Finland in their drawings, the multilingual participants of multi-ethnic East Helsinki named their neighbourhoods. In addition, they mentioned some Finnish food items and drinks, including a known brand, *Fazer*, which manufactures different food products.

In the following sections, I take a closer look at the similarities and differences in the three categories presented above.

3.3 Similarities and differences

In this section, I will analyse the similar and different ways of describing Finnish in the categories of *Finland and Finns*, *the Finnish flag and blues-cross figures* and *everyday surroundings*. In Section 3.3.1, I will present the similarities in the ways of describing the speakers of the Finnish and where Finnish is spoken, and in Section 3.3.2, I will present the participants' descriptions of Finnish, the language. In Section 3.3.3, I will provide the differences in illustrating and describing Finnish.

3.3.1 The speakers of Finnish and where Finnish is spoken

In this section, I present the similarities in the ways of describing the speakers of Finnish and where Finnish is spoken. In their drawings, the participants described Finnish mainly as a language spoken in Finland by Finns. The structures for expressing this varied. The participants used:

- the passive form (*Finnish is spoken in Finland*) in a declaratory way
- the active form (*Finns speak Finnish*), which presented Finns as a united group
- the first-person singular or first-person plural (*I speak Finnish, we speak Finnish*). These appeared most frequently in speech bubbles, which were the voices of the Finnish-speaking people in the drawings.

Consider the examples in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Participants' descriptions of speakers of Finnish and where Finnish is spoken

Example (originally in Finnish)	Participant and group
<i>Finnish is spoken only in Finland</i>	Hely, Oulu2
<i>Finnish is spoken in the whole country, all around Finland</i>	Jemina, Lampela
<i>People speak Finnish</i>	Jimi, Lampela
<i>People speak Finnish, but there are people in Finland who do not speak Finnish</i>	Elina, Oulu2
<i>We speak Finnish</i>	Ellen, Lampela
<i>I am a Finn and I speak Finnish</i>	Ilpo, Lampela

As the examples in Table 5.6 show, Finnish was largely defined as the language of Finns spoken in Finland. However, some participants brought up the possibility that anyone anywhere could speak Finnish. Consider the examples in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 Participants’ descriptions on Finnish spoken by anyone anywhere

Example (originally in Finnish)	Participant and group
<i>Finnish is spoken around the world always a bit somewhere</i>	Asmo, Oulu2
<i>Finnish is spoken around Finland/the world</i>	Elina, Oulu2
<i>One cannot really define who speaks Finnish. Someone in Africa can speak Finnish at this very moment; Finnish is spoken in Finland and wherever if someone has moved or studied</i>	Noora, Oulu2
<i>Finnish is spoken in places where one meets people</i>	Olavi, Lampela

The examples in Table 5.7 show the different levels of language awareness among the participants: in these kinds of statements, the language is no longer fixed in nationality or a certain place (country), but it is instead constructed as part of an individual’s repertoire and a tool of interaction.

Interestingly, the texts in the *Finland and Finns* category also described Finns and foreigners and their different relations to Finnish. However, being Finnish or being a foreigner was not mentioned in the drawing task assigned to the participants. The fact that being Finnish arises from the data is not surprising in the context of a national language, and Finnishness was very strongly present in the data. However, including foreigners in the representations of Finnish was motivated by something other than the drawing task. The participants might have heard or participated in conversations considering the topic, e.g. in school, home, or media. Consider the examples in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Participants’ descriptions of foreigners and Finnish in the *Finland and Finns* category

Example (originally in Finnish)	Participant and group
<i>It is difficult for many foreigners to learn to speak Finnish</i>	Eemeli, Oulu1
<i>Finnish is an easy language for us but difficult for others to learn</i>	Asmo, Oulu2
<i>Finnish is easy for Finns, but foreigners do not learn it easily because words inflect a lot</i>	Jemina, Lampela
<i>The Finnish language is important for Finns but not for foreigners</i>	Jemina, Lampela
<i>A foreigner???</i>	Juuso, NH
<i>A foreigner does not understand Finnish</i>	Hely, Oulu2
<i>It is important to know Finnish if you live in Finland</i>	Jooa, Lampela

As presented in Table 5.8, the participants highlight the juxtaposition between Finns and foreigners. These representations come up in four different ways:

- (1) The Finnish language is easy for us/Finns, but difficult for foreigners, or it is difficult for foreigners to learn Finnish.
- (2) Finnish is an important language for Finns, but not for foreigners.

- (3) Foreigners do not speak/understand Finnish, and this is expressed through silence and question marks (see Niemelä, 2023).
- (4) It is important to know Finnish or to be able to communicate in Finnish.

In her drawing, Jemina from Lampela provides a possible explanation why it is difficult for foreigners to learn Finnish: words inflect a lot. Also, the emotional tie between the language and its speakers is offered as an explanation, as the participants do not believe that Finnish is important to foreigners.

Above, I have presented how the participants described the speakers and areas of speaking Finnish. In the next section, I concentrate on the similarities in describing the language.

3.3.2 Descriptions of Finnish

In this subsection, I discuss how the participants described Finnish in their drawings. What the Finnish language is like was a topic much commented on, especially in the categories *Finland and Finns* and *the Finnish flag and blue-cross figures*. Only three participants described Finnish in their drawings in the *everyday surroundings* category, and they all came from Finnish-speaking homes.

The participants described Finnish mainly using two different structures: *Finnish is* (*suomi on* ...) and *Finnish sounds* (*suomi kuulostaa* ...). Consider the examples in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 Participants' descriptions on what Finnish is like and what it sounds like

Example (originally in Finnish)	Participant and group
<i>The Finnish language is nice</i>	Mette, Oulu2
<i>In my opinion, Finnish is important because it is a fine and rare language</i>	Eemeli, Oulu1
<i>Finnish is easy for me because it is my mother tongue; Finnish is one of the most difficult languages in the world</i>	Arttu, Oulu2
<i>Finnish is a very difficult language if one hasn't got it as a mother tongue. Still, for some, it might be easier</i>	Noora, Oulu2
<i>The Finnish language is difficult!!!!</i>	Hewdem, EH
<i>It sounds complicated</i>	Otso, Oulu2
<i>It sounds easy</i>	Jukka, Lampela

Regardless of the structure used, the participants' descriptions highlighted four different matters:

- (1) Finnish as a good and nice language
- (2) Finnish as a rare and important language
- (3) Finnish as a difficult language
- (4) Finnish as an easy language for those who have it as their mother tongue

These descriptions relate to the value the language is given, and the value seems to be based at least partly on the exceptionalism of the Finnish language. Finnish is surrounded by Indo-European languages that are quite different from it. Among Finns, Finnish is regarded as a small language despite its official status and over 5 million speakers. Finns are also rather keen on the idea that Finnish is the most difficult language in the world, a myth Finns love to cherish (e.g. Miestamo, 2006; Lehto, 2018). The division between ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speakers also appears relevant, and this is something that only appears in the texts of the category of *the Finnish flag and blue-cross figures*, as the participants base the ease and difficulty of the language on nativeness (e.g. Bonfiglio, 2010). This strengthens the image of Finnish being difficult, especially for foreigners.

3.3.3 Differences

The three categories presented in Sections 3.2.2–3.2.4 had similarities, but there was also a striking difference in the ways of illustrating Finnish. The way of representing places differs between the categories: in the categories of *Finland and Finns* and *the Finnish flag and blue-cross figures*, the participants named almost exclusively Finland as the area where Finnish is spoken or the area that has anything to do with Finnish. However, in the *everyday surroundings* category, the participants who mainly came from the multilingual and multi-ethnic East Helsinki gave more emphasis to illustrating and naming other places. These are summarised in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 Different places in the drawings in the *everyday surroundings* category

Place	Examples	Name and group
1. Different areas	<i>Finland (Suomi)</i>	Annuikka, EH
	<i>Vuosaari (neighbourhood in East Helsinki)</i>	Ayaan, EH Sanaz, EH
2. Commercial places	<i>Shop (kauppa)</i>	Amanda, EH
	<i>Tokmanni, säiturinpörssi, lidl s-market (two general stores and two grocery stores)</i>	Mehena, EH
3. Places of everyday life	<i>Home (koti)</i>	Amanda, RH
	<i>Library (kirjasto)</i>	Mehera, EH
	<i>School (koulu)</i>	Valo, Lampela
4. Hobbies and fun	<i>Field (kenttä), lintsi (an amusement park)</i>	Najiib, EH
5. Means of transportation	<i>Bus (bussi), metro</i>	Ayaan, EH
	<i>Metro</i>	Harita, EH

The named places were divided into five: the participants illustrated and named different geographical areas, commercial places, places of everyday

life, hobbies and fun, and transportation. Finland was also mentioned, but only by pupils who were Finnish speaking. The participants with multilingual backgrounds named their neighbourhood *Vuosaari* instead. Previous studies show that Finns consider Finnishness important to their identity (Pitkänen & Westinen, 2018: 27–28), whereas persons of foreign origin in Finland do not identify Finnishness as strongly as they do with the city and neighbourhood they live in and their country of origin (Pitkänen *et al.*, 2019: 26–38). This might explain why the multilingual and multicultural participants concentrated on illustrating the places where they used and heard Finnish instead of connecting the language with national unity. These places included different grocery stores, schools and libraries, and places where children spend their free time.

Based on this category, the multilingual and multicultural participants of East Helsinki had a different view and experience of the Finnish language compared to the other participants. They seemed more fixed and identified with their neighbourhood than Finland in general, which was in sharp contrast to the Finnish-speaking participants, especially in less multilingual and multicultural areas. The visual task enables one to observe the differences in the participants' experience of the situatedness and emplacement of their linguistic realities (see Introduction to this volume).

Above, I have presented a multimodal analysis of the drawings and observed the construction of discourses on a textual level. Next, I proceed to observe the discourses as discursive practices as well as social practices by analysing the language ideologies that materialise in the drawings and summarising the findings.

4 Findings

The previous phase of the analysis showed that the participants' drawings rested on combinations of different elements, and especially elements that expressed national connections (the map and the flag) were typical (Niemelä, 2020). Also typical were such elements and text combinations that expressed Finnishness and speaking of Finnish. An exception to these were the multilingual participants of East Helsinki, who clearly identified more with their neighbourhood than with Finland as a nation. To them, Finnish also seemed more like a language of everyday life, among many others, instead of a unifying link between the people of a nation. The unifying link was highlighted by the other participants finding Finnish difficult and rare, beliefs that were widely shared, being research results that were already well known (e.g. Miestamo, 2006; Lehto, 2018). In the category of *the Finnish flag and blue-cross figures*, speaking Finnish well and speaking Finnish poorly were connected with the speakers' nativeness: has the speaker acquired the language at birth or not (e.g. Bonfiglio, 2010)? What is interesting is that, despite multimodal categorisation, similar texts recur throughout the whole pool of data, but with certain differences in emphasis.

In the following sections, I report the findings and answer the research questions.

4.1 Discourses

The first research question of this study was: What kind of language discourses are constructed in the drawings? I have interpreted the categories and constructions that the participants offer in their drawings and analysed the discourses found in the data, i.e. examined the discourses as *discursive practice* (Blommaert, 2005: 29). In the drawings, four different discourses on the Finnish language were highlighted:

- (1) *National discourse*: Finnish as a national language and spoken in Finland, as the language of Finns. This is the largely dominant discourse appearing in the data, which encloses the ways of representing Finnish through the lines of a nation and as the language of Finns in Finland.
- (2) *Difficulty discourse*: The Finnish language as a rare and difficult language unless you have it from birth. Finnish is considered nice, important, and easy to Finns, difficult to others, and rare, which is a place of pride.
- (3) *Everyday Finnish discourse*: Finnish as a language that is used in everyday surroundings and encountered in the linguistic landscape. Most of the Finnish-speaking participants do not represent the language as a tool of communication in everyday life, but this is the perspective of the multilingual participants in East Helsinki.
- (4) *Multilingual discourse*: Finnish as part of an individual speaker's repertoire and a tool of interaction. This discourse challenges the national discourse and suggests that anyone could speak Finnish.

Behind the constructed discourses lie language ideologies. In the following section, I analyse the discourses as *social practice* (Blommaert, 2005: 29–30; Fairclough, 1992: 86–91).

4.2 Language ideologies

The second research question of this study was: What kind of ideologies materialise in the discourses? Next, I present three different semiotic processes, *iconisation*,¹⁴ *erasure* and *axes of differentiation*, which play a part in creating linguistic ideologies and ground the bases for these visual representations (Irvine & Gal, 2000; Gal, 2016). These processes are based on the indexical quality of language, meaning that social identities and typical activities of speakers can become indexed by the use of a certain linguistic form (Irvine & Gal, 2000: 37). As indices, linguistic features are considered to reflect and express broader cultural images of people and activities (Irvine & Gal, 2000: 37) – and this relation is maintained by language

ideology, which connects the linguistic features with the images of social classification (Mäntynen *et al.*, 2012). For example, a whole language can index a social group, and people act in relation to these ideologically constructed representations of linguistic differences (Irvine & Gal, 2000).

Based on the data, the Finnish language represented in the drawings indexed Finns as a whole. The drawings represented Finns as a social group – tight and unified. Finns were constructed as a group with an exclusive language, and their main unifying quality was the proficiency of Finnish and nativeness. In contrast, foreigners were portrayed through their lack of proficiency in Finnish. In this way, knowing Finnish was represented as essential for being a Finn, and thus the index became an icon: in the process of *iconisation*, a linguistic feature, or a language, becomes an icon, an image of those who use it or speak it, and the icon is loaded with qualities and expectations, which go together with it (Irvine & Gal, 2000; Gal, 2016; Rosa & Burdick, 2017; Mäntynen *et al.*, 2012: 330). Finnish as an icon of Finnishness emphasises the position that the language acts as a gatekeeper of group membership. It also makes the ownership of Finnish seem very exclusive – are some considered more Finnish than others based on their language?

All the participants chose a certain perspective for their drawing depending on what they found relevant for representing Finnish, something was included, and something was excluded. This can be observed as a process of erasure (Irvine & Gal, 2000; Rosa & Burdick, 2017; Mäntynen *et al.*, 2012), in which ideology ignores some people, qualities or activities. In addition, if some matters are in juxtaposition with the ideological scheme, they might go unnoticed or can be explained away (Irvine & Gal, 2000). Most of the drawings, especially the drawings in the categories of *Finland and Finns* and *the Finnish flag and blue-cross figures*, concentrated on the national symbols and the national connection of the language and, in this way, erased other dimensions of language. Finnish was represented as the unifier of the nation (Anderson, 2007 [1983]). In the East Helsinki group, in contrast, the process of erasure was nearly the opposite: Finland was presented in the form of Finnish flags, but otherwise, the representation was constructed on the illustration of everyday surroundings. The drawings of the East Helsinki group erased Finnishness – the language as a builder of national identity and national unifier.

The drawings revealed a language that was connected to different boundaries: the boundaries between different nationalities, the borders of Finland, which attach Finnish as part of something abstract, and, at the same time, the boundaries of daily life and the boundaries of a certain district, which made Finnish one language among others. Different boundaries and nationalities were constructed in juxtaposition. The line was created by real or imagined differences because the oppositions were mutually exclusive. This can be described with the language ideological process called *axes of differentiation* (Gal, 2016), in which different signs

and the qualities they index have polarised as opposites. First, Finnish was portrayed through the nation and the people. The participants drew the borders to express the lines of similarity since what was left outside was different. Second, Finnish was also portrayed with the outlines of everyday experience, emphasising the practical and ignoring national group identities. The differentiation varied depending on the participant group and their linguistic and cultural reality.

Based on what I have reported above, it seems that the discourses on the Finnish language, as well as the language ideologies, differ in multilingual schools and more monolingual schools. The discourses highlight Finnish either as the national language or as one of the languages in the neighbourhood. Behind these lie the national ideology and understanding of Finns as a unified Finnish-speaking group, i.e. ethnolinguistic assumptions (Blommaert *et al.*, 2012: 2–3), or the lack of it. The different linguistic realities of schools, areas and cities in different parts of the country create different understandings of language-related boundaries and language ownership.

5 Lessons Learnt

In this chapter, I have focused on the power that primary education has as the sphere of ideological circulation. Language awareness is one of the key issues of the latest *National Core Curriculum* (Finnish National Agency of Education, 2014), implemented in primary and lower secondary schools since 2016. Around the same time, the data of this study were collected. The curriculum emphasises the need for language awareness in all teaching, not only in teaching languages, but also in defining all societies and individuals as multilingual (Finnish National Agency of Education, 2014: 28). However, teachers' attitudes towards multilingualism and understanding of the needs of multilingual pupils vary greatly, and the demand for language awareness for the multilingual reality often collides with monolingual ideologies (e.g. Alisaari *et al.*, 2019; Repo, 2020; Suurniemi *et al.*, 2021). The results of this chapter bring forward the presence of the monolingual bias in Finnish primary education. As Piller argues, 'schools have a "hidden curriculum" for social reproduction', which maintains the monolingual habitus of multilingual education (2016: 99). She also states that studies for social justice work toward positive changes, which however cannot take place unless the intersections of linguistic diversity and social justice are recognised (Piller, 2016: 5). This is one of the reasons why understanding ideologies on Finnish is of importance, and, to advance social justice, this is something that should be more emphasised and addressed in, e.g. teacher education (see Introduction to this volume).

Despite possible weaknesses, the study reported interesting results and succeeded in applying the multimodal methodology to study young participants in order to understand the language ideologies regarding the

Finnish language that prevails in education, as well as in the participants' lives. The data show that the ideological constructions of the Finnish-speaking majority define who is considered Finnish speaking and even a Finn. Due to this, people in Finland have very different accessibility to Finnish depending on their linguistic backgrounds. Becoming part of the speaker group, and being recognised as Finnish speaking, might not be easy, which is something the Institute for Languages in Finland (Kotus, 2018) has been concerned about.

A topical discussion in Finland at the time of writing this chapter, in early 2023, concerns the differences in learning results between Finnish-speaking children and Finnish-as-the-second-language (FL2) children (KARVI, 2023). The background of the situation is meandering and a result of many different factors, but one of them is the socio-spatial segregation of different areas and schools and ethnic differences, especially in cities. These, in turn, are partly a result of the decisions families with Finnish backgrounds make when they move from one area to the next (Bernelius & Huilla, 2021), a course of action also familiar from international contexts (e.g. Piller, 2016). The results of this chapter show that differences in multilingualism in different areas and schools (and also possible multiculturalism) influence the prevailing language ideologies. The results of this chapter show that differences in multilingualism in different areas and schools (and also possible multiculturalism) influence the language ideologies prevailing in schools. This is only one perspective that underlines the need to understand how the speakers of Finnish see the language, what they regard as proper language and who as proper speakers, and why and how these affect our educational system and possibly even segregation of schools.

The presented division of the discourses and the underlying language ideologies reveal something about the injustices prevailing in Finnish primary education. The drawings of the more monolingual schools represent an imagined community (see Anderson, 2007 [1983]), in which Finns in Finland are united by the Finnish language. This community is, however, an imagined one, because it ignores the fact that not all Finns know one another, but they are nevertheless represented as one, because of the language. In contrast, the pupils of East Helsinki represent another kind of reality, another kind of imagining of a community. From the perspective of social justice, this could be something that positive changes might require – reimagination of alternative worlds (Avineri *et al.*, 2019; Tuck & Yang, 2018).

Notes

- (1) I would like to express my gratitude to the editors of this volume, especially Paula Kalaja, for her precision in editing this chapter as well as all the support and enthusiasm my work has met with during the process. I also want to thank the anonymous referee of this volume for their suggested improvements. And of course, great thanks are also in place for the supervisors of my doctoral thesis for their guidance: thank you Niina Kunnas, Johanna Vaattovaara and Heini Lehtonen.

- (2) Finland has two national languages; see Section 2 for further details.
- (3) For further details, see Section 2.
- (4) The Finnish statistics only recognise one first language for an individual, which erases the true multilingualism of the population.
- (5) Lampela is a pseudonym.
- (6) The East Helsinki data were collected in cooperation with Heini Lehtonen and the Itä-Helsingin uudet Suomen kielet project.
- (7) One group of pre-service teachers from the University of Oulu also participated in data collection, but, in this chapter, I focus only on the pupils.
- (8) All the names of the participants used in this study are pseudonyms.
- (9) The data pool of this study was previously analysed from the perspective of the usability of the visual method, the structures of the data and representations (Niemelä, 2020), and representing Finns and foreigners in interactional encounters (Niemelä, 2023).
- (10) In a regional dialect.
- (11) Mikael Agricola was a bishop and a reformer. He was the first to translate the Bible into Finnish, and, in this way, he created the basis of standard Finnish. He is considered the Father of the Finnish language.
- (12) *Sauna* is a traditionally and culturally meaningful place in Finland. It is used for bathing as well as for relaxing and socialising.
- (13) From the lyrics of the Finnish national anthem.
- (14) The process of *iconisation* is known by two names in literature: *iconisation* and *rhematisation*. Irvine and Gal have used the former in their earlier work (see, e.g. Irvine & Gal, 2000) and the latter in their more recent writings (see, e.g. Gal, 2016; Irvine, 2004). The reason for this is that *rhematisation* reflects the Percian inspiration of the named processes better than *iconisation*, albeit it being more transparent representing the process from index to an icon (Gal, 2016: 122). For the reasons of transparency, I keep to the use of *iconisation* in this chapter.

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