Silence and Question Marks in Drawings of Interactional Encounters

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8.1   Introduction

Finland has been regarded as a mainly monolingual and monocultural country, especially after the Second World War (see, e.g., Nuolijärvi, 2005; Tervonen, 2014, pp. 154–155). However, this has not been the case, and especially during the past thirty years Finland has experienced a new kind of growth in inhabitants with a foreign background and a foreign language (Nuolijärvi, 2005; Paunonen, 2020; Statistics Finland, 2020). Due to this, multilingualism has become more acknowledged in Finnish society and education, and for example language awareness has become one of the key elements in the national core curriculum for basic education since 2016 (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2014). However, national and monolingual language ideologies have deep roots in education, and they still prevail (e.g., Alisaari et al., 2019; Niemelä, 2020). The school's role as lingual agent and the place where language ideologies are circulated cannot be overestimated (Silverstein,

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1998, p. 138): Finnish schools have a history of equalising linguistic variation and emphasising the standard languages as well as prohibiting the use of minority languages (Paunonen, 2001, pp. 235–236, 2020, p. 85). It is important to explore how inclusively or exclusively the Finnish language is represented in primary education nowadays, and in this study, the analysed representations are produced by the pupils.

This chapter is a narrow case study zooming into a piece of larger data. The six drawings under exploration are part of the original data of 102 drawings on the Finnish language. The zooming is of interest because the representations of interactional encounters are surprising and arise from the participants' experiences and the discourses in education, not straight from the data-gathering assignment.[1]

In this chapter, I concentrate on the discourses, language ideologies, and visual representations of the Finnish language visualised by Finnish primary school pupils in northern and southern areas of Finland. The participants have visualised the Finnish language in a drawing assignment, and these visual representations consist of many elements and different texts, in which the flag of Finland, the map of Finland, people, and hearts appear frequently. Most of the people represented in the context of the Finnish language are named as *suomalainen* (a Finn) (Niemelä, 2020). The Finnish language is also considered a language spoken by *Finns* mostly or only in Finland (Niemelä, 2020, submitted). However, Finns are not the only people the participants represent in the data. They also include *ulkomaalainen* (a foreigner) in some of the drawings and bring up the different relations Finns and foreigners have towards Finnish. Alongside these, some interactional encounters between speakers of Finnish and foreigners are also represented, and this chapter focuses on exploring these representations.

The representations of foreigners in the data are interesting in the respect that foreigners or immigrants were not mentioned in the drawing

assignments arranged for the data gathering. The interactional encounters in the drawings consist mostly of multiple question marks and silence on the foreigners' part, meaning that the foreigners are represented as speaking no language at all. On the other hand, there are some drawings where the language of a foreigner is English, which highlights the lingua franca status of English in Finland. This raises a question on the assumed connection between one's nationality and language (see, e.g., Ruuska, 2020): Are foreigners not considered possible speakers of Finnish, or is the language considered too difficult for them?

The focus questions of the chapter are:

1. How are interactional encounters between Finns and foreigners represented in pupils' drawings and how are both parties represented in these encounters?
2. What kinds of lingual differences and positions of power are represented in visualised encounters and speaker descriptions?

Next, I will present the theoretical and methodological framework of this study (Sect. 8.2) and the contexts of the study (Sect. 8.3).

8.2 Theoretical and Methodological Framework

The theoretical and methodological framework of this chapter is in the study of *language discourse and ideologies*. In the context of this study, I consider language ideologies to be socially structured, shared views and values on language that hold power (Gal & Woolard, 1995, p. 130; Irvine, 1989, p. 255; Rosa & Burdick, 2017), in this case institutional and societal power. Language ideologies are structures that have developed during time and interaction and are often collectively shared but also unconscious or invisible (Kroskrity, 2000; Mäntynen et al., 2012; Woolard, 1998). Language ideologies are ideas about what language is and how it works, and often these are believed to be something natural (Johnstone, 2018, p. 67). The nature of language ideologies as shared views and ways of thinking highlights the fact that they often represent the interest of certain people and groups (Kroskrity, 2000).

Representation and *discourse* are important concepts in understanding and analysing language ideologies. In this study, I take representations to be descriptions, portrayals, and ways of representing which are chosen for

a certain context; in other words, I study the way in which the Finnish language, its speakers, and the people not speaking Finnish as well as contexts of speaking have been portrayed. In this way, representation can be seen as a sum of choices that arise from the social and cultural history of the representer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, pp. 6, 11). In this process of choices, language represents the world, and the representing nature of language concerns the ways the world is presented and portrayed through language (Hall, 2013, pp. 2–15; Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2019, pp. 78–80).

Representation is a way to produce meanings and to share them between members of culture through language. Here, language is understood in a broad sense, covering also different visual images of different means. Visual images express meaning in a corresponding way to sounds and images of spoken and written languages—when they carry meaning, they are considered as signs. In the process of representation, different concepts are being classified and organised, and complex relations become established between them. The system of representation can be seen as twofold: Firstly, we are able to associate the objects of our world with certain mental representations. This could be called the conceptual map of our minds. Secondly, the process of constructing meaning relies completely on language: 'The relation between "things", concepts and signs lies at the heart of the production of meaning in language. The process which links these three elements together is what we call "representation"' (Hall, 2013, pp. 2–15). The meaning between signs and their referents is not arbitrary. The system of representation is cultural, and both learnt and fixed socially. Hall (2013) writes that 'culture' can be considered to be shared conceptual maps and shared language and codes that enable one to interpret the relations between them. He adds that meanings do not appear out of thin air but are instead the product of signifying practice, and if representations are a product of meaning-making, they are material for discourses as they try to produce knowledge of the world.

The relation between ideology and discourse is not unambiguous (see, e.g., Määttä & Pietikäinen, 2014). However, in this study I consider discourse and ideology to be intertwined: Discourses are a way of representing and organising the world, its events, and people, which means that discourses organise ideologies (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2019, pp. 83–86). Language ideologies materialise in (language) discourses,

and the discourses on the other hand shape ideologies (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998, p. 26; Mäntynen et al., 2012, p. 328).

In this chapter, I concentrate mainly on language discourses but also take into account other possible discourses that manifest in contact with language discourses. I approach discourse as meaningful symbolic behaviour (Blommaert, 2005, p. 2), stemming from the knowledge people have about language based on their memories of things they have said, heard, seen, or written before (Johnstone, 2018, p. 2). Johnstone further describes discourse as 'both the source of this knowledge (peoples' generalisations about language are made on the basis of the discourse they participate in) and the result of it (people apply what they already know in creating and interpreting new discourses)' (2018, p. 2). As expressed above, I consider discourse and ideology to be closely intertwined, since discourses can be seen both as ideas and ways of talking that influence and are influenced by ideas (see also Halonen & Vaattovaara, 2017). The circles between discourse and all the aspects that influence and shape it are multi-layered, and obviously discourse—what is known, what is said, and what is considered meaningful—shapes the world, linguistic structure, participants, and their possible purposes and future discourse in return (Johnstone, 2018, p. 8).

I use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA from here onwards) (see Fairclough, 1992; Jones, 2012; Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2019) to analyse the textual structures as well as the power structures and social practices produced in the drawings. CDA considers discourse to be a means through which ideologies are reproduced, and ideology is regarded as an important topic in the tradition (Blommaert, 2005, p. 26). The nature of my data incorporates visuality in the analysis (Kress & van Leeuven, 1996) and offers a multimodal conception of semiosis that is broader than the traditional text-based CDA (Blommaert, 2005, pp. 28–29). The analysis utilises 'the controlling theoretical idea behind the CDA that texts, embedded in recurring "discursive practices" for their production, circulation and reception which are themselves embedded in "social practice", are among the principal ways in which discourse and ideology are intertwined' (Johnstone, 2018, p. 53). That is, the analysis of the drawings advances in three phases:

1. *Discourse-as-text*, where the visual and textual choices of the drawings are systematically described and analysed. For this I combine the

socio-semiotic model on visual analysis by Kress and van Leeuven (1996) explained below.

2. *Discourse-as-discursive-practice*, where I interpret the categories and structures offered by the participants and analyse the discourses found in the drawings as something that is produced, circulated, distributed, and consumed in society.

3. *Discourse-as-social-practice* is the last phase, where the ideological effects and language ideological process behind the discourses are brought forward and explained (Blommaert, 2005, pp. 29–30). To understand the ideological level of the drawings, processes of *iconisation*, *fractal recursivity*, *erasure*, and *axes of differentiation* are used (Irvine & Gal, 2000; Gal, 2016).

Based on the social semiotics of M.A.K Halliday and the systemic-functional theory, Kress and van Leeuven (1996) have developed a socio-semiotic model to analyse visual grammar. This allows one to examine different actions and interactions between different elements in a picture. In the analysis, different narrative and analytical processes are explored to gain a deeper understanding of the connections and actions of the represented encounters in the drawings.

Narrative processes consist of action, events, processes of change, and transitory spatial arrangements. The drawings under examination in this chapter are personal in the sense that there are represented participants in the pictures, and the drawings are dynamic because something is going on. In these kinds of settings, there are actors and goals: Actors are the ones who do the deed and goals are the ones to whom the deed is done. The semantic relations in the pictures are expressed by vectors, diagonal lines of action, which are somewhat of an equivalent to action verbs. A vector connects two participants to each other and represents them doing something, which creates a narrative process (Kress & van Leeuven, 1996, pp. 44, 46, 56–57).

Three to four different narrative processes can be detected from the drawings: reactional processes, speech processes, and mental processes as well as action processes, though the three first processes are predominant. Different processes can be present simultaneously, and vectors appear in different forms in different processes. In *an action process,* there is at least one participant, who is usually the actor. If there are many represented participants, the other one is usually the actor and the other one is the goal. The vector emanates from the actor towards the goal, or the actor

itself forms the vector in whole or in part. A vector can be an element or a line which shows that the presented participants of the image are doing something to or for each other (Kress & van Leeuven, 1996, pp. 56–63). A vector could be, for example, a finger of an actor pointing to the goal.

In *a reactional process*, the vector is formed by the direction of a glance of one or more participants, and in these processes the participants are not actors and goals but *reactors* and *phenomena*. The reactors of a reactional process must be humans or human-like animals, and the phenomena can be another participant or a whole visual proposition. The glance can be either transactional or non-transactional: The eyeline of the reactor can be directed at something in or outside the picture (Kress & van Leeuven, 1996, pp. 64–67).

In *speech processes* and *mental processes*, the vectors are formed by speech and thought bubbles that connect *the speaker* and *the senser* to either their content of speech or their inner mental processes (Kress & van Leeuven, 1996, p. 67).

On the other hand, some of the drawings are also partly structured by *analytical processes*. Analytical processes are about a part-whole structure, *the carrier* and *the possessive attributes* (Kress & van Leeuven, 1996, p. 89). An analytical image is not about what is going on but about how the participants fit together. The carrier is the 'whole' and attributes the parts that make up the whole (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 48). In the drawings of this chapter, the analytical processes are constructed by the represented participants as carriers, and the different attributes such as nationality, language proficiency, and so forth are connected to them.

8.3   Research Contexts and Data

Officially bilingual Finland has two national languages, several minority and indigenous languages, and many foreign languages are also spoken (see Introduction for details). Despite this, Finland is not free of the ideology of one nation and one language typical of nation states. Different views and ideologies live on both the Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking sides: The Finnish nationality can either be tightly entwined with only the Finnish language, or it can be seen as something shareable between two languages. The connection between language and nationality has accumulated new layers with the increase in multiculturalism and multilingualism during the past 30 years, and 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, pp. 9–11).

The data of this study is gathered from four Finnish medium primary schools from two areas: two from the Oulu region and two from Helsinki. Oulu is a city of approximately 200,000 inhabitants on the coast of Northern Ostrobothnia, and Helsinki, the capital of Finland, is a city of more than 600,000 inhabitants in Southern Finland. In addition to their size, these two cities differ in urbanism and bilingualism and multi-lingualism. Even though there is also a lot of geographical variety in Helsinki, it can be considered a more urban city environment compared to Oulu with its large rural areas. Some of the data has been gathered in a small neighbouring commune which goes by the pseudonym Lampela and can be classified as the countryside. Also, in terms of multilingualism these areas differ: Even though both cities are traditionally Swedish-speaking, Finnish has become the majority language already in the early twentieth century. In Oulu, the Swedish-speaking community is very small, with only some 400 people, whereas in Helsinki there are some 36,000 Swedish speakers. The number of foreign language speakers in Helsinki in 2020 was more than 100,000, and in Oulu in 2016 it was slightly more than 7,600 (City of Helsinki, 2021, p. 11; Statistics Finland, 2018b).

The data was gathered in autumn 2016 and spring 2017, and participants from ages 11 to 13 were asked to 'draw the Finnish language'.[2] The data was gathered during a school day in classrooms, in situations that resembled educational situations. The task was always received with some bewilderment—how can one draw *a language*? To enable the participants to get started, some supporting questions were offered, for example: *Where is Finnish spoken? Who speaks Finnish? What is the language like in your opinion?*, and so forth. All the participant groups had the same equipment: white paper, coloured pencils, and markers. The participant groups are presented in Table 8.1.[3]

The primary school data consists of 102 drawings of the Finnish language.[4] In this data, there are 29 drawings where speakers of the

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[2] Teacher trainees from the University of Oulu also participated in the study (see Niemelä, 2020), but at this point, I have left their drawings out of the analysis.

[3] Lampela is a pseudonym for a small neighbouring commune of Oulu.

[4] I thank all the participants for allowing me to use their drawings as part of this study.

Table 8.1 The participant groups and background data

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

Finnish language are commented on in writing and six drawings where an interactional encounter between a Finn and a foreigner or a lack of understanding is visualised. In the analysis that follows, I concentrate solely on the six drawings mentioned above. These drawings come from the groups in the Oulu region and North Helsinki. The names of the pupils presented are pseudonyms.

Previously, the whole data has been analysed from the perspective of different representations of the Finnish language (Niemelä, 2020). The results show that even though the drawing task has been open for different implementations, widely shared representations occur in the data. These are mostly based on symbolic elements such as the flag and map of Finland as well as people named as Finns or Finnish-speaking. The connections between the language, nation, and nationality are strongly present.

The focus data of this chapter—the six drawings where an interactional encounter between a Finn and a foreigner or a lack of understanding is visualised—presents parts of the data that include aspects which were never mentioned in the data gathering, such as immigrants or other languages. For this reason, they form an interesting piece of the data that requires an inquiry of its own.

8.4   ANALYSIS

In this section, I analyse six drawings in which an interactional encounter between a Finn and a foreigner or a lack of understanding is visualised in different ways. These visualisations can be divided into two different types

where a) an interactional encounter is presented (three drawings) and b) foreigners speak English or Finnish (three drawings).

The analysis is divided into four parts: In Sect. 8.4.1, I will provide a text-level analysis of the drawings where an interactional encounter is presented, and in Sect. 8.4.2, I will provide a comparable analysis of the drawings where foreigners speak English or Finnish. I will analyse the discourses occurring in the drawings in Sect. 8.4.3 and the language ideological processes behind the discourses in Sect. 8.4.4.

8.4.1   Interactional Encounters

In this section, I describe the drawings that represent an encounter between two people and where question marks appear. I will analyse both the textual and visual elements, their relation to each other, and the different narrative processes present in the drawings.

The first drawing, Fig. 8.1, is a drawing by Hely from the Oulu2 group, and there is much going on in it: There is an encounter between two people, of which the person on the left wearing a beanie is marked as *suomalainen* (a Finn), and the one on the right wearing a top hat is marked as *ulkomaalainen* (a foreigner). The drawing contains a lot of writing and other symbols explaining the context. The background or qualities of the people are explained: The Finn *puhuu suomea* (speaks Finnish) and says '*Hei, olen kotoisin Suomesta! Entä sinä?*' (Hello, I'm from Finland! How about you?). The foreigner answers the question with a question mark because, as it is explained, he *ei ymmärrä suomea* (doesn't understand Finnish). The Finnish flag and map in the background together with the phrase *Suomea puhutaan **vain** Suomessa* (Finnish is spoken **only** in Finland) underline the lingual division represented. They also highlight the linguistic and cultural context in which these two people's encounter is represented.

The physical appearance of the two people is in many ways identical: They are both matchstick figures, tall and lean, with different accessories. Nevertheless, if differences are taken into consideration, one can notice that although the figures are the same height, the Finn is positioned slightly higher than the foreigner. In this way, to some degree the foreigner needs to look up to the Finn. Also, the facial expressions of the figures portray different positions and emotions in the situation: The Finn has a tender smile on their face whereas the mouth of the foreigner is only a straight line.
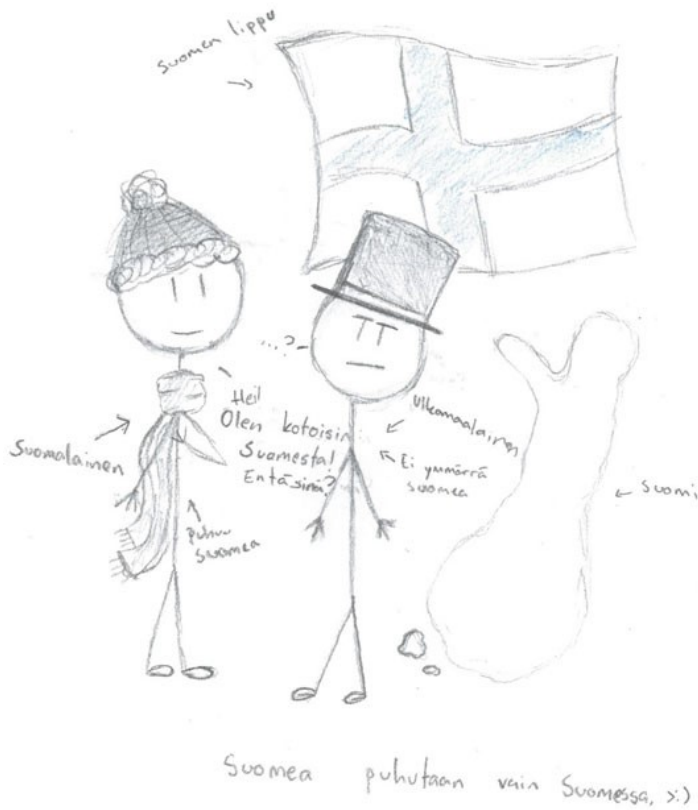
Fig. 8.1   Hely's drawing, Oulu2 group

There are both narrative and analytical processes going on in Fig. 8.1. With regard to narrative processes, there are reactional processes going on in the characters' glances, and the speech process is present in the speech bubble of the Finn, though instead of a physical bubble there is a line that connects the speaker and their content of speech. On the one hand, the question mark of the foreigner can be interpreted as a speech process since it is structured in a similar way to the Finn's speech process. On the other hand, there is no clear speech content, only an indication of not understanding which could be interpreted as a mental process as well (Kress & van Leeuven, 1996, pp. 56–67). In addition to these, an

action process can be interpreted, as the Finn is leaning or taking a step towards the foreigner. The analytical process in the image is formed by the two carriers, the Finn and the foreigner, and the attributes given to them: nationality and proficiency in Finnish or not. In the same way, the flag and map of Finland are conceptualised in the background.

As in Fig. 8.1, there are many elements in Fig. 8.2, but the one presenting an encounter is found at the top of the paper. This arrangement is a simplified version of Fig. 8.1, and here as well one can see a Finnish-speaking person on the left side and *ulkomaalainen* (a foreigner) on the right side. The Finnish-speaking person says: '*Moi minä puhun suomea*' (Hi I speak Finnish), but apparently the foreigner does not understand, because there are only question marks above him.

In this arrangement the two figures are quite alike: They are both matchstick figures and they are the same size. Unlike in the first drawing, they are placed quite far away from each other. What is quite similar to the first drawing, though, are the facial expressions: The Finnish-speaking figure seems like the active party with a wide mouth, but the foreigner's expression is as confused as in the first drawing, and the mouth is only a straight line.

The Finnish context is well pictured in this drawing through analytical processes: In addition to the encounter, in Fig. 8.2 Juuso has drawn the Finnish map and a sauna by a lake, which can be considered one of the most characteristic examples of the Finnish national landscape. The text completes and explains the visual elements. Besides the map it says '*Täällä sitä puhutaan*' (It's spoken here) and an arrow points to Finland. Inside the map is another text that says '*Tämä ei ole sukka*' (This is not a sock), which explains the form of the artefact and ensures that the viewer does not mistake the map for a sock. The map has also been given a blue cross design, which is the same as in the Finnish flag. The writing by the sauna tells the viewer that '*Täältä löydät suomalaisia*' (Here you can find Finns). In this way, Juuso clearly places the Finnish language and Finns in certain places and cultural contexts. The blue-and-white colour choice further highlights the national perspective Juuso has chosen for the drawing (see Niemelä, 2020).

There are three different narrative processes in Fig. 8.2: Two reactional processes are formed by the eyelines of the Finn and the foreigner as they look at each other. A speech process occurs as the Finn directs their comment (*Moi! Minä puhun suomea! Hi! I speak Finnish!*) to the foreigner. The question marks above the foreigner indicate a mental
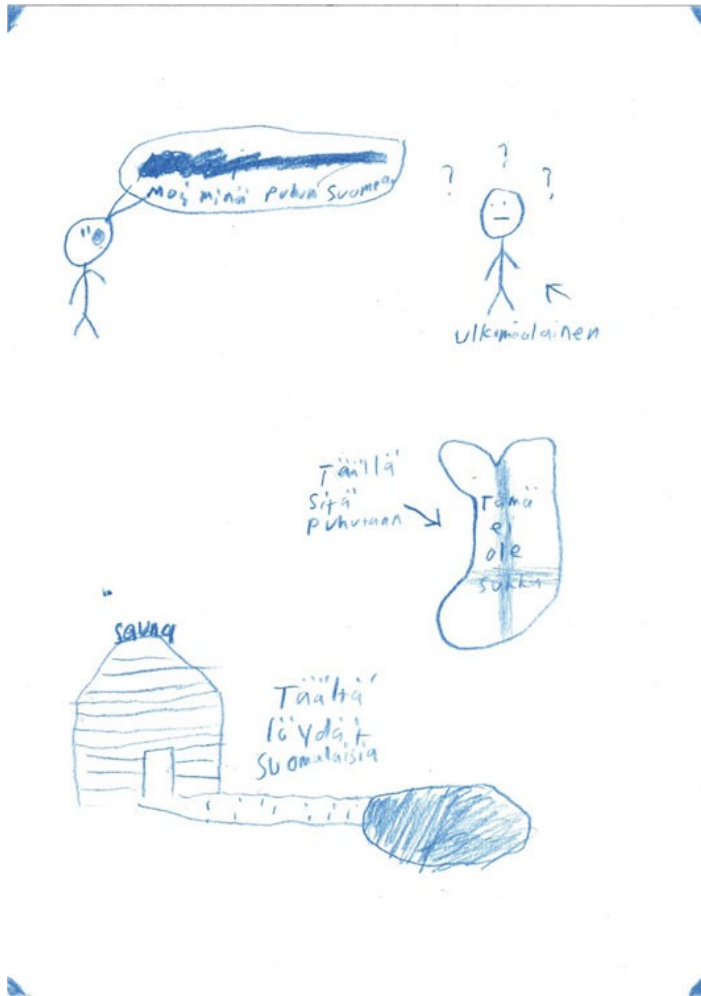
Fig. 8.2 Juuso's drawing, North Helsinki group

process, the difficulty of understanding the phrase (Kress & van Leeuven, 1996, pp. 56–67).

The third case is Fig. 8.3, which is the most simplified presentation of these encounters: The person on the right says: '*mitä äijä*', which is the spoken language, an informal and masculine way of asking *how are you*. It

could be compared to English's *What's up dude?* The person on the left does not understand, which is depicted with a question mark.

In this encounter there are no clear clues about the background of the two people, except that one of them is Finnish-speaking. No contextual cues are given either. The figures are quite alike except for the fact that the non-Finnish-speaking figure with a question mark is sporting a beard. This might describe his ethnicity, since at least among Muslim men growing a beard is a habit (Helsingin muslimit, 2021), and a beard can be seen (at least stereotypically) as an external marker that can be interpreted as a lack of integration or an expression of one's own culture (Toukolehti, 2020). On the other hand, beards have also been part of Western fashion for the past decade (YLE, 2019), so there is no way of telling. And as is clear, one's ethnicity does not tell anything about one's language skills. Apart from the beard, these two figures are almost the same. There might be some difference in facial expression, and again the Finnish-speaking figure would seem to have a more positive expression than the other figure, but the difference is so slight that it is very difficult to know for sure.

There are three narrative processes in Fig. 8.3: First, there is a reactional process formed by the glance of the Finnish-speaking character to

Fig. 8.3 Manu's drawing, North Helsinki group

the other character. Unlike in the previous two images, in this drawing the characters' glances do not meet; instead, it would seem that the Finnish-speaking figure is looking at the non-Finnish-speaking figure, whereas the non-Finnish-speaking figure's glance is directed outside of the image. In addition, there is a speech process formed by the question of the Finnish-speaking character and a mental process marked by the question mark indicating the trouble of understanding (Kress & van Leeuven, 1996, pp. 64–67).

These three images presented above portray interactional encounters that share many same elements, both analytical and narrative: A person who is identified as a Finn or who speaks Finnish, and another person who does not understand Finnish. The lack of understanding is coded with question marks. In the case of Fig. 8.1 and 8.2, the non-Finnish-speaking person is also identified as a foreigner.

In all three drawings the figures are very similar in appearance, and the main difference between the two in each drawing is the language difference and facial expressions. The encounters are interesting in their one-sidedness: The question or comment placed in Finnish is not replied to in any way, but the foreigner is left in total silence. None of the foreigners reply in some other language, even English, but the silence and question marks are the mediums the participants have chosen to express the lack of proficiency in Finnish. Johnstone (2018, pp. 71–72) writes that struggles over whose words get used and whose do not and also who gets to speak and who does not are often struggles over power and control. In all three drawings, the Finnish-speaking characters have the power and control over the situations. However, it must be taken into consideration that the participants' own language repertoires are also a limiting factor in the representation of these encounters: The participants come from Finnish-speaking homes, and they have studied English for a few years and might have some knowledge in Swedish or some other European language. This means that the possible languages of foreigners in Finland are not part of their linguistic repertoires. The absence of other languages might also be due to the task, since the pupils were asked to draw the Finnish language.

The facial expressions, clearly different in the first and second drawing and possibly different in the third, are a way of portraying the possibly confusing, uncertain, and unjust feelings that come together with the difficulty of understanding a certain language (see, e.g., Scotson, 2020,

p. 71). The young participants have understood and represented the possible awkwardness of such a situation well.

8.4.2   Foreigners Speak English or Finnish

In this section, I describe the drawings in which English is spoken or a foreigner speaks Finnish. I will analyse both the textual and visual elements, their relation to each other, and the different narrative processes present in the drawings.

The first drawing, Fig. 8.4, is a drawing by Noora from the Oulu2 group, and it consists of emojis and speech bubbles. In the speech bubbles, information about the Finnish language is distributed: Noora writes that Finnish is spoken in Finland but basically anyone anywhere can learn and speak Finnish. She also writes that Finnish is a very difficult language for those who do not have it as their first language. In this way, she circulates the popular idea of Finnish as an exceptionally difficult language (see, e.g., Miestamo, 2006; Lehto, 2018), but at the same time she continues by adding that despite this, someone might find Finnish easy. She also finds it difficult to determine who speaks Finnish because whoever can speak Finnish anywhere. At the bottom of the drawing, Noora writes that many new things about the Finnish language are taught in school, and if a pupil is not Finnish-speaking, they might study Finnish as a second language.

The texts in the speech bubble show that Fig. 8.4 expresses an exceptional level of language awareness among the drawings. In the context of the data of this chapter as well as the larger data these drawings are part of (Niemelä, 2020, submitted), Noora's views on Finnish show an understanding of language as knowledge that can be learnt and something that is connected to people in general instead of nationality or state boundaries. On the other hand, the national language status and the context of the drawing is portrayed with the Finnish flags in the drawing. The flags are placed next to different elements: a note, the ABC for alphabets, and a building that could be interpreted as a school. These are the analytical processes in the drawing, as Noora connects Finnish with certain qualities and institutions.

In addition to describing Finnish in many words, Fig. 8.4's emojis and speech bubbles are accompanied by a head (possibly another emoji) wearing a bowler hat that says, '*How did you say that?*'. In this way, English is brought into the arrangement. The use of English and
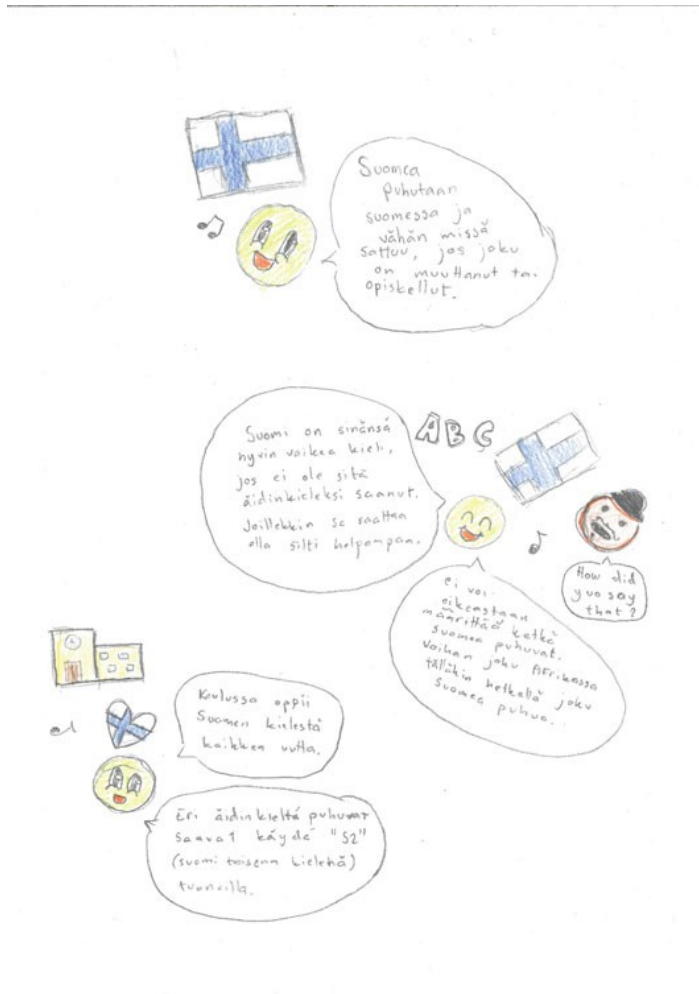
Fig. 8.4   Noora's drawing, Oulu2 group

especially the chosen question emphasises the difficulty of the Finnish language to non-Finnish speakers and also brings up the status of English as a lingua franca in Finland. The emojis with their glances and speech bubbles form the narrative processes of the image: reactional processes, as the emojis' glances are directed outside the image and towards the viewer,

and speech processes are formed by the many speech bubbles (Kress & van Leeuven, 1996, pp. 64–67).

A somewhat similar arrangement is found in Fig. 8.5, which is Martti's drawing from the North Helsinki group: There are six matchstick figures in the drawing, of which one says '*plaa plaa*' (bla bla), three speak Finnish and say '*Mitä äijä!?*' (What's up dude!?), '*Moi!*' (Hi!), and '*Mä puhun suomea*' (I speak Finnish), and two speak English and say '*What*' and '*It's too hard*'. The context of the drawing is given by the Finnish map placed on the left. The glances between the characters in the drawing and towards the viewer outside the image form the reactional processes of the image, and the speech bubbles are the vectors of the many speech processes going on (Kress & van Leeuven, 1996, p. 64–66, 67).

The leftmost character speaks an unidentified language, which creates a possibility that Martti has chosen this way of describing a foreigner who is neither a Finnish nor an English speaker. The character in the centre directs their question to the character on the left. It is difficult to say to whom the rest of the Finnish-speaking characters are speaking. Are the greetings and statements directed at the viewer or the characters in the drawing? The English-speaking characters on the right are talking to the Finnish-speaking characters.

Why have Noora and Martti chosen questions and phrases like *How did you say that?*, *What*, and *It's too hard*? They all highlight the speakers' lack of proficiency in Finnish and the perspective where the Finnish language is represented as very difficult to learn by non-Finnish speakers (see, e.g., Miestamo, 2006; Lehto, 2018; Niemelä, 2019). In this way, a

Fig. 8.5 Martti's drawing, North Helsinki group

boundary is created between the Finnish speakers and the rest: Finnish seems out of their reach. This boundary is comparable to the one created in Sect. 8.4.1, with the difference that in these two drawings the non-Finnish speakers have a voice, albeit a very limited one because it focuses only on commenting on the difficulty of the Finnish language and also at the same time on idealising proficiency in Finnish.

The choice of using English in the drawings brings forward the high status the English language has in Finnish society (see Leppänen & Nikula, 2008, pp. 16–21): In the Finnish context, English is the most studied foreign language and so commonly used that it is often called the third domestic language (Leppänen & Nikula, 2008; Pyykkö, 2017, pp. 24–46; Vaarala et al., 2021, pp. 30–34). The status of and need for English in Finland is widely discussed in the public and media, and there is at least one city in Finland which has made English the official third language of communal services (Institute for the Languages of Finland, 2017; City of Espoo, 2017; YLE, 2021a, 2021b). This is in some contradiction to the linguistic reality of Finland, since Russian, Estonian, and the Arabic languages for example have more native speakers in Finland than English (Statistics Finland, 2020). Studies show that the linguistic status of English-speaking immigrants is different from that of those with other first languages: If English is one's first language, both the demand and need to learn Finnish are lower (Niemelä, 2019; Pitkänen et al., 2019, p. 21), a phenomenon that is familiar from other contexts as well (see, e.g., Yelenevskaya & Fialkova, 2003). Also, compared to other large minority language groups in Finland (speakers of Russian, Estonian, Somali, and Arabic), the English-speaking often speak Finnish on a beginner's level instead of on higher levels (Pitkänen et al., 2019, p. 21).

Figure 8.6 is Jooa's drawing from the Lampela group, and it is slightly different from the previous ones. In this drawing, two people are placed on the Finnish map and they tell the viewer different things. The analytical aspect of the drawing shows the viewer two characters who are coded differently: The one above is *suomalainen, joka puhuu suomea* (a Finn who speaks Finnish) and the one below is *ulkomaalainen, joka puhuu suomea* (a foreigner who speaks Finnish). The narrative part of the image appears through speech processes. The first speech bubble says '*Hei olen suomalainen*' (Hello I'm Finnish), and the second says '*Minä en ole suomalainen mutta puhun suomea*' (I'm not a Finn but I speak Finnish) and '*Mielestäni suomi on mukava kieli*' (I think Finnish is a nice language).
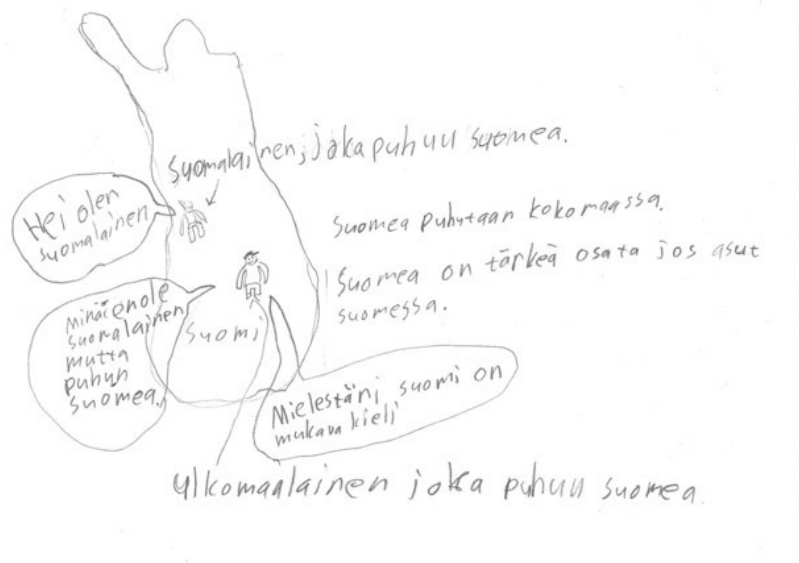
Fig. 8.6 Jooa's drawing, Lampela group

Figure 8.6 is interesting for many reasons: It raises a person's background above language proficiency, because foreignness is mentioned even though the person speaks Finnish, but on the other hand it shows the possibility of knowing Finnish even if the speaker is not a Finn. Saukkonen (2012, p. 10) writes about the conflict between the official Finland and the symbolic Finland, where people who immigrated to the country can apply for citizenship and officially become Finns, but 'some people are still generally considered more genuine Finns than others. According to a not insignificant part of the population, these people constitute the true national community'. Ruuska (2020, p. 147) describes how, in her data, Finnishness is ideologically structured from a cluster of features, including accent-free speech, a Finnish name, and even stereotypical looks. In the drawing, the participants are placed in Finland, in a region where one's background seems to make a difference when it comes to defining nationality and language skills, and where therefore Finnishness and foreignness are worth mentioning.

8.4.3   *The Discourses*

The drawings presented above offer a unique peephole to the ways in which primary school pupils describe linguistic differences in the context of the Finnish language. Especially interesting are the different clusters of qualities the participants offer and the different boundaries between them. In what follows, I will examine the different categories and criteria the participants offer in their drawings and interpret the different discourses the participants structure. At this phase of the analysis, I observe the discourses as discursive practice, that is, as discourses that are socially produced, circulated, shared, and produced (Blommaert, 2005, pp. 28–30).

The drawings presented above offer their interpreter four different discourses that structure differences and boundaries between the different people represented. The premise of the drawings has been in representing the Finnish language, which has been closely connected with *nationality, difficulty, and difference*. The discourses observed are:

- Only Finns speak Finnish (foreigners don't).
- Finns and foreigners are different (given different essential qualities).
- Finnish is a difficult language (which is out of reach for non-Finns).
- English is multilingualism.

Next, I will give an overview on the discourses in each drawing. The drawings are structured with a strong division between understanding and not understanding Finnish, which is almost exclusively presented as a quality and skill Finns have and foreigners do not.

The *only Finns speak Finnish* discourse is present in Fig. 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, and 8.5, where the Finnish-speaking Finns are placed in contrast with foreigners speaking no language at all or speaking only English. However, the discourse is partly broken in Fig. 8.4, since Noora brings up the fact that anyone anywhere can learn and speak Finnish. Two opposite discourses are present in her drawing at the same time.

The *Finns and foreigners are different* discourse is also present in these images, since both counterparts gather around them a cluster of different qualities which are tightly entwined and present directly or indirectly the different essential qualities Finns and foreigners supposedly have: *Finn vs. foreigner, fluent in Finnish vs. ignorant of any language, active vs. passive, able to express oneself vs. silent*. In Fig. 8.1 and 8.2, the expressions of

comfortability vs. discomfort are also visualised through facial expressions. The first qualities are more positive and always given to Finns, whereas the latter are more negative and always given to foreigners. Finnishness and foreignness are structured by presenting oppositions and creating differentiation, and this creates an immense imbalance of power between the presented groups of people in the drawings. Interestingly, the participants have represented foreigners as a group of narrow agencies by using means that learners of Finnish have themselves used when describing their use of Finnish in communication situations: silence, discomfort, and so forth (see Scotson, 2018). Figure 8.1 and 8.2 also combine foreignness with a lack of language skills overall and in this way ignore any possible language proficiency foreigners might have (Irvine & Gal, 2000). This discourse is also present in Fig. 8.6, where knowing Finnish does not erase the foreigner's background.

The *Finnish is a difficult language* discourse is present in Fig. 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3 as Finnish is represented as something that is non-understandable. The discourse expands in Fig. 8.4 and 8.5, where the difficulty of the Finnish language is clearly highlighted using English in contrast to Finnish, showing how Finnish is out of reach for non-Finns. This discourse is widely shared in Finnish society, where Finnish is considered to be different from many of its Indo-European language neighbours and therefore also difficult and special (see, e.g., Lehto, 2018, pp. 111–115; Miestamo, 2006; Niemelä, 2019, pp. 399–400; Pajunen, 2002, pp. 563–564; Paunonen, 1996, p. 551).

The *English is multilingualism* discourse is present especially in Fig. 8.4 and 8.5, where English and Finnish are presented side by side, but also in all images to a lesser extent since English is the only foreign language named in these drawings. In this way, English is the only indication of any multilingualism in the drawings. As in many other Western European countries, also in Finland the use and status of English has grown fairly high during the twentieth century and increased further in the beginning of the twenty-first century (Leppänen & Nikula, 2008, pp. 16–21). As Pennycook (2021, p. 75) points out, the spread and power of English has a lot to do with *desire*—and in Finland the desire to be able to communicate in English has, for example, led to the situation where English is the most studied foreign language of primary school pupils from the first grade onwards and more widely known and used by the Finnish-speaking population than the country's other official language Swedish (Pyykkö, 2017; Statistics Finland, 2018a).

Unlike in Fig. 8.1–8.3, in Fig. 8.4 and 8.5 the English-speaking participants are active, and they have a voice. They are not so much participants in the conversation as they are commentators: In Fig. 8.4 the recipient of the information in the drawing lies outside the drawing, and the English-speaking character's role is to marvel at the difficulty of the Finnish language. The same kind of arrangement is found in Fig. 8.5, where all six characters say something. There is a character who speaks an unidentified language, and there are characters who speak Finnish and English. The English-speaking characters are given the role of marvelling at the difficulty of Finnish. The English language in the drawings would seem to highlight the difficulty of Finnish for foreigners (see, e.g., Niemelä, 2019) instead of emphasising the status of English in Finland—although this happens anyway, since it is the very linguistic resource the participants have chosen to use in addition to Finnish.

8.4.4 The Ideological Processes of Differentiation

Ideologies on language are socially structured and shaped, and they materialise for example in the ways we represent and organise the world—in discourses (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2019, pp. 83–86). Ideologies do not appear out of thin air but are strongly rooted in history (Blommaert, 1999, pp. 6–7), and they can be described as cultural knowledge and stereotypes which lay the groundwork for different hypotheses on difference or on the combinations of different qualities. These need to pre-exist before one can connect certain qualities to certain objects (Agha, 2003; Gal, 2016). At this last phase of the analysis, I examine the discourses as social practice and aim to explain the ideological and power-related backgrounds of the representations (cf. Blommaert, 2005, pp. 29–30).

First, I will focus on exploring how the processes of iconisation, fractal recursivity, and erasure are present in the drawings (cf. Irvine & Gal, 2000). These are based on the indexical quality of language, where 'the use of a linguistic form can become a pointer to (index of) the social identities and the typical activities of speakers' (Irvine & Gal, 2000, p. 37). As indices, linguistic features are considered to reflect and express broader cultural images of people and activities (Irvine & Gal, 2000, p. 37)— and this relation is maintained by language ideology, which connects the linguistic features with the images of social classification (Mäntynen et al., 2012). Certain features or a whole language can index a social group,

and people act in relation to these ideologically constructed representa-
tions of linguistic difference (Irvine & Gal, 2000). This happens through
the process of *enregisterment*, in which 'a linguistic repertoire becomes
differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms'
(Agha, 2003, p. 231).

In the drawings, the signs representing Finnish are multiple. The
map of Finland, the flag of Finland, and the hearts signify Finnish on
a symbolic level, but the drawn participants and their conversations (or
lack thereof) use a different signification process. In cases where a whole
language can be seen as a linguistic repertoire that can index a social
group, as in the drawings presented here where the drawn Finns and
Finnish speakers use the language, the Finnish language indexes Finns
as a whole. Finns appear as quite an exclusive group of certain people,
one of whose main qualities is the Finnish language. Foreignness appears
in contrast to Finnishness and indexes the lack of proficiency in Finnish.
In Fig. 8.1 and 8.2 and Fig. 8.4 and 8.5, these indices seem to go one
step further and become *icons*: In this process of iconisation (Irvine &
Gal, 2000; Gal, 2016; Mäntynen et al., 2012, p. 330; Rosa & Burdik,
2017), knowing Finnish becomes an essential quality for Finns, whereas
not knowing Finnish similarly becomes a quality of those who are not
Finns or who speak other languages.

In addition to iconisation, the process of fractal recursivity (Irvine &
Gal, 2000; Mäntynen et al., 2012, p. 330; Rosa & Burdick, 2017) can
be found in the background. 'This process involves the projection of an
opposition, salient at some level to the relationship, onto some other
level' (Irvine & Gal, 2000). In this process, a certain relation is taken
as it is and projected to describe some other relation (Mäntynen et al.,
2012, p. 330), and usually these are relations and oppositions 'between
activities or roles associated with prototypical social personas' (Irvine &
Gal, 2000, p. 38). In Fig. 8.1–8.3, the opposition of knowing Finnish
and not knowing Finnish seems to be refracted to other quality opposi-
tions of Finns and foreigners, where Finns are described as active and able
to express themselves and foreigners are described as passive and silent.
Because foreigners are perceived as non-speakers of Finnish, they are also
perceived as inherently different people.

In both of the language ideological processes presented above, the
ideology of essentialism is strong. It leans on the assumption that socially
defined groups can be clearly delimited and that their members are more
or less alike, based on the cultural (or biological) characteristics believed

to be inherent to the group. These kinds of characteristics are usually believed to be 'authentic' (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 400). In the drawings, Finns are differentiated from foreigners by their authenticity and different qualities, the primary one being the knowledge of the Finnish language.

The qualities or roles of passiveness and astonishment given to the foreigners are also a result of the process of erasure (Irvine & Gal, 2000; Mäntynen et al., 2012; Rosa & Burdick, 2017). Erasure is a process in which ideology renders some persons, qualities, or activities invisible, or matters in juxtaposition with the ideological scheme go unnoticed or get explained away (Irvine & Gal, 2000). In most of the drawings, the participants have completely erased the foreigners' possibility of being multilingual and knowing other languages than Finnish and/or English. In Fig. 8.1–8.3, the foreigners are represented as if they spoke no language at all—which unfortunately is quite often the perspective taken in Finland with foreigners or immigrants who speak anything other than well-known European languages (Pöyhönen et al., 2019, pp. 263–264). Of course, this is also affected by the fact that the participants might not know any of the languages they might think foreigners speak and are thus unable to demonstrate them in writing. However, this leads to ignoring the possible language skills of foreigners. In Fig. 8.4 and 8.5, the English-speaking characters' marvelling at the difficulty of Finnish also erases the possibility of foreigners learning Finnish. In the drawings, the ideology that only Finns speak Finnish is a totalising vision, and possible elements that are not seen to fit in the picture are ignored (see Irvine & Gal, 2000).

However, two of the drawings leave space for different interpretations. Figure 8.6 differs from the rest as it represents a foreigner who speaks Finnish. In this drawing, the knowledge of Finnish is not represented as the inherent character of the group members in the same way as in other drawings, but the opposition is structured between different nationalities: a Finn and a foreigner. Together with Fig. 8.4, these representations shed light on the understanding that anyone can learn and speak Finnish and that language is not bound to nationality. Figure 8.4 does nevertheless bring forward the fact that parallel and contradictory language ideologies can and do prevail in society (Kroskrity, 2000).

The drawings and the language ideological processes prevailing behind them present us with different *axes of differentiation* (Gal, 2016), where different signs and the qualities they index have polarised as opposites. In the process of representing the Finnish language, certain differences have been construed in the context of similarity, because similarity and

difference are mutually defining (Gal, 2016, p. 121; see also Irvine & Gal, 2000). That is, the Finnish language and everything that in the minds of the participants goes together with it have also been represented through difference and contrast, as described above.

These axes of differentiation are construed according to different qualities that are considered to be shared by the expressive features that make up the register (in this case, the Finnish language) and by the persona it indexes (Finnishness and related activities), and these are in contrast with another such pairing (non-Finnish-speaking, foreignness, and related activities) (Gal, 2016, p. 121). The axes of differentiation in the drawings reproduce and circulate the ethnolinguistic assumptions and prejudices very familiar with national states and national languages (Bonfiglio, 2010, p. 1; Blommaert et al., 2012, pp. 2–3).

8.5   CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I have presented six different drawings where an interactional encounter between a Finn and a foreigner or a lack of understanding is visualised. The drawings have been analysed from the perspectives of visual analysis as well as of discourses and the language ideologies prevailing behind them.

The visual analysis exposes that the visualised encounters are structured in analytical and narrative means. The analytical processes in the drawings highlight the fundamental qualities of the represented participants such as nationality and language proficiency. The narrative processes on the other hand present different levels and ways of activity. In these drawings, the activity takes place mainly in reactions (gazes), speech, and thoughts. Speech is almost exclusively reserved for the Finnish-speaking, whereas thoughts and question marks are for the immigrants.

I have sought to answer how the interactional encounters of Finns and foreigners are represented in pupils' drawings and how the parties are represented in these encounters. The analysis shows that in the drawings, Finns and foreigners comprise counterparts which are presented as different from each other, almost as opposites. The knowledge of Finnish or Finnishness is represented as something that enables activity and involvement, whereas not knowing Finnish inevitably places one in a passive role.

Another focus question of this chapter was what kinds of lingual differences and positions of power are represented in visualised encounters and

speaker descriptions. The lingual differences are represented as absolute and black-and-white: One either speaks Finnish or does not. This is due to the idea of Finnish being a difficult or almost unattainable language. When it comes to positions of power, in these representations the source of the power is in the language: If one's language is neither Finnish nor English, one is silent. English is not equivalent to Finnish, but it ensures that one has a voice. Nevertheless, knowing the language does not make one pass as a Finn, since one's national background seems to remain relevant.

In the light of these results, to be able to define what the Finnish language or Finnishness is, one also needs to define what these are not. In these drawings, pupils aged 11 to 13 represent the Finnish language through its opposites: Finnish is the language of Finns, and foreigners do not have proficiency in it. Finnishness is constructed from unifying qualities, of which the most powerful is the language. In the context of national states, this is nothing surprising (see, e.g., Anderson, 2007 [1983]; Bonfiglio, 2010).

The different oppositions presented in the drawings as well as the imbalance of power were not something specifically looked for during the data-gathering task, and thus most of the drawings in the entirety of the data concentrate on multiple representations of Finnish. However, something in the frame and context of the data gathering makes the concepts of Finnishness, nativeness, and nation worth mentioning, along with the main qualities with which the Finnish language is represented (see also Niemelä, 2020). Pennycook (2021, p. 86) writes that lines of difference only take on significance insofar as they are combined in particular ways. In the case of this study and data, the frame is produced by the contexts of the data gathering, which are school and a data-gathering task in the middle of the school day. Everything the participants know, have heard, and have talked about the Finnish language, especially in school, forms the cultural value through which the drawings and presentations of the language are produced.

As stated above, language ideologies do not appear out of thin air but are instead products of history, circulated discourses, and reproduced representations. Since the data was gathered in school, it very much describes the prevailing discursive and ideological dimensions on the knowledge and cultural value of Finnish in this very context. The data gathered in 2016 and 2017 represents Finnish through a strong ethnolinguistic assumption. The year of the data gathering was also when the new

national core curriculum for basic education (POPS, 2014) was taken into implementation. This curriculum highlights the value of language awareness in all teaching as well as the multilingualism of all individuals. However, in the light of this study's results, the language ideologies of primary education seem to highlight the 'one language, one nation' ideal—thus setting them quite far apart from the new ideals towards which the national curriculum strives.

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