

**USING RULES
TO REPRESENT OTHERS:
PUPILS' AGENCY IN THEIR
TALK ABOUT NATIONAL
OUTGROUPS**

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Theoretical background

- Identity and stereotypes formation: involve conceptions of ingroup and outgroups
- Relation between knowledge and affect but also affect despite lack of knowledge
- ‘Ethnic hierarchy’ included since early studies of intergroup relations; not frequent amongst children
- Children’s perspectives are not ‘voiced’
- GreekCypriot children: views of Greeks and Turks (Spyrou, 2002); hierarchy of outgroups (Koutselini *et al.*, 2002)

Research methodology

- Action research + quasi-experimental design (curriculum intervention/5th Grade, 140 10-year-old pupils)
- Pre- and post-evaluation: Questionnaires to all pupils and 6 focus-group interviews with four children each (2 boys, 2 girls, mixed academic ability)
- Items of evaluation (very much-not at all) and hierarchisation of 13 national outgroups (Greeks, English French, Americans, Russians, Israelis, Japanese, Swiss, Germans, Bulgarians, Gypsies, Arabs, Turks)
- Qualitative analysis with Atlas.ti

i) Familiarity-Unfamiliarity

Res: Why did you put the Swiss second from the end?

Leo: We don't know a lot about their lives...

Sofia: We don't know a lot about them...

Gea: We don't know about their lifestyle....

Res: Because you don't know many things...

All: Yes, we haven't learnt something...(Grade 5B)

Pambo: 'Not at all' because we don't have many Japanese in Cyprus, neither in our village...so, 'not at all' (Grade 5A)

ii) Similarities-Dissimilarities

Sofia: ['A little' to the Gypsies] 'cause there is no one who is similar to us, they've got other customs...

Leo: Other language [...] we are very different.

Res: Aha...

Sofia: They've got different habits...

Gea: Different culture...(Grade 5B)

Aki: Because the Russians are Christians, too, we know what they believe in and so I will put 'very much' (Grade 5C)

Joe: No matter what, they [the French] will be different in faith, they may have a different religion.

Tim: When we have Religious Studies, they'll make questions all the time [...]. We will have [different language, religion] different way of life. [...] Well the English will sit next to us, they've got their own religions, lifestyles, different ways, various stuff...they are different! [...] Because we would have a different religion, we would hate each other.

Joe: We would fight (Grade 5F)

iii) Threat & Danger / Benefits & Advantages

Pambo: They are better at basket and won't let us win! (laughs) [...]

Maria: She [Nana] says she doesn't disagree with having a Japanese desk mate because they send Japanese cars to Cyprus [...]

Maria: Me, 'not at all', because various Russians come say to Ayia Napa and go to the clubs and Cypriots learn bad habits from them and so I don't like them (Pambo laughs) (Grade 5A)

Chris: We wouldn't like the English because we fought against them...

Andy: The English helped the Turks, but now we don't have a war between us... in the old times... but with the Turk we still do because they still occupy it [our land]...they haven't let it go like the English. [...]

Andy: Because Hitler took some other people of the country and tortured them miss.

Chris: I say both 'medium' and 'a little'...because he [Hitler] killed the Jews who killed Christ.(Grade 5D)

Soula: Not 'a little' because they helped us in the war with Germany and Italy, and all the countries helped, but Russia, which was big, helped a bit more than the others [...]

Oli: [...] So a 'little' because they conquered us, but we want them because they come from England to Cyprus and give us money. (Grade 5E)

iv) Positive-Negative Characteristics

Maria: Because I would like ‘very much’ to have a French as a desk mate, because I like their language.

Tony: I don’t like them much, because we are going to have lessons in French and I don’t like it.[...] (Grade 5A)

Res: Aha, what do the others think?

Anna: ‘Very much’ because of the way they [Gypsies] dress, they dance [...] And like Pete said it’s nice that...his uncle brings him presents [from USA], they [Americans] may have the same character with us and bring gifts, too! [...] (Grade 5C)

Res: OK, let’s go to the Gypsies...

All: ‘Not at all’!!! [...] (laughing)

Tim: They are those black kind of people.... [...] Meaning that they are not clean, they sleep anywhere they find, they eat from the bin ...

Joe: Our scraps...(Grade 5F)

Discussion

- Children's agency: rules as tools used to construct representations of national others, particularly when faced with lack of information
- Rules as cognitive shortcuts to actively reconstruct a complex world during social interaction
- Same rules mobilised during post-evaluation, but frequency for each national outgroup was different/different rules for same outgroup
- Future research to compare age-groups and national groups