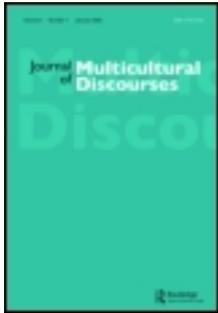


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A guide to interculturality for international and exchange students: an example of *Hostipitality*?

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As in many countries, internationalization and interculturality have become two key concepts in Finnish higher education. As such, several documents (often called 'survival guides') have been published by universities in this context to help international and exchange students to adapt to Finland and Finnish 'ways.' This article examines such a document dedicated to intercultural communication on Finnish campuses. We demonstrate by analyzing two different versions of the document that the constructed discourses contain rather culturalist, judgmental, and ethnocentric discourses about self and other. We argue that it represents a 'defeat of hospitality' or *hostipitality*. As such, interculturality and hospitality are reduced to 'educating' the students to adjust to certain stereotypical Finnish manners rather than teaching them to negotiate and co-construct new ways of being together. Our approach to interculturality is critical, constructivist, and relies on a pragmatic discursive analysis of two versions of the document.

Keywords: interculturality; international students; hospitality; internationalization; culturalism

1. Introduction

Finland joined the European Union in 1995 and was one of the first European countries to implement the 1999 Bologna Process, which contributed to the creation of the European Higher Education Area. The Process has transformed Higher Education in Finland, resulting, among other things, in a new degree structure for universities similar to those in other European countries. It has also triggered further internationalization of Finnish higher education by multiplying academic mobility plans. As such, the latest *Strategy for Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions* (2009) proposed by the Finnish Ministry of Education suggests increasing the number of international students to 20,000 by 2015, whereas today the number is approximately 17,000. The attractiveness of Finland as a business, work, and living environment is placed as the core area of improvement in the strategy.

Yet internationalization strategies alone are not enough. We believe, like many other scholars (Byram and Dervin 2008; Deardorff 2011; Jackson 2011), that a systematic inclusion of intercultural education is needed in higher education to improve relations between the 'locals' and the 'guests.' In order to do just that

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there is an urgent need to critically delineate the meaning of the ‘intercultural,’ a notion that seems to be taken for granted without being always clearly defined (Dervin 2011). Intercultural education still continues to be culturalist: some common cultural characteristics, values, and attitudes of a national community are presented as being the keys to interculturality for the guest (Hoskins and Sallah 2011). In this article, we aim to present a renewed idea of interculturality, which takes place between multifaceted individuals in relation to historicity, intersubjectivity, and interactional contexts (Holliday 2010; Shi-Xu 2001; Dervin 2012). Considering the historical and interactional context of intercultural education, Boaventura de Souza Santo’s metaphor of abyssal lines (2007) can help to move away from the dichotomies ‘us vs. them’ and ‘Europe vs. the rest of the world’ in intercultural education. Abyssal thinking is a system consisting of visible distinctions, based on invisible distinctions that are established through a logic that defines social reality as either on this side of the abyssal line or on the other side of the line.

In order to tackle these essential issues in relation to internationalization, we also find the concepts of hospitality and Derrida’s (2000) hostipitality meaningful as they describe the contradiction that hosts encounter when welcoming the Other (Hospitality+hostility). Each Finnish university and university of applied sciences has produced ‘intercultural’ guides for international and exchange students coming to Finland. We have examined all the current documents available at Finnish universities, most of which are entitled ‘survival guides.’ While the vast majority of guides are ‘objective’ and present basic information about Finnish society and life at a Finnish campus (state regulations, housing, taxation, etc.), very few of these guides say much about the ‘intercultural’ and adaptation to Finnish ‘culture’.

One exception is a document produced by Tampere University of Technology. Two versions of the 50-page document were published with two different titles: *OH BEHAVE!* (2011) and *THEM FINNS!* (2012) (Lyly-Yrjänäinen et al. 2011, 2012). The main aim is to help international and exchange students to ‘integrate’ and to learn how to get ‘things done’ during their stay in the Finnish institution. The booklet blurb reads as follows (2012): ‘This booklet will open up some of the peculiarities explaining our culture, hopefully helping you understand and work together with us Finns at least a little better.’

We examine the construction of discourses and images of the international students, Finland, Finns, and Finnish universities – and thus hospitality – in the booklet. As the central issue of the document is ‘intercultural communication,’ we discuss a renewed understanding of the ‘intercultural’ in order to analyze it. Our goal is to show how such discourses inform international students about ‘Finnishness/Finns,’ intercultural communication, and hospitality and at the same time what images of the Other are revealed. By this we mean that we are analyzing the ideology of positioning certain types of knowledge and behavior as superior, making invisible (power) distinctions of ‘abyssal lines’ visible. We do not consider this document to represent all institutional discourses on these issues in Finnish higher education, though it probably shares many characteristics with societal and educational discourses on immigration, the Other, and interculturality (Dervin and Keihäs 2013).

2. Hos(ti)pitality: conceptualizing relations with the other

Woe is me! To the land of what mortals am I now come? Are they cruel, and wild, and unjust? Or do they love strangers and fear the gods in their thoughts? Homer (1919), *The Odyssey*, Book 6, lines 119–21

As universities worldwide are welcoming more and more people from abroad, the idea of hospitality has become more central than ever in global higher education. Yet what the notion means needs to be discussed as the term is contested. We propose to discuss it in relation to interculturality in what follows.

Hospitality is often presented as an unconditional ‘universal’ concept, which has crossed history and has been present in all civilizations (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2008). It appears to be a fundamental law of humanity, especially in relation to mobility and migration. Hospitality has always been personal or institutional or both. It has also always represented a protection of the self and the other; hospitality is often contractual and it can be ritualized and codified. The quote above taken from ‘the book of hospitality’ *par excellence* (Shérer 2005, 159), *The Odyssey* by Homer, shows how fundamental it has been in reflecting on the Other and intercultural encounters in the past. But what does hospitality mean today and how is it constructed, especially in relation to the internationalization of higher education?

Let us start by saying that hospitality has taken on different forms throughout history. Z. Bauman (1993, 164), who has written extensively on strangers, asserts that they can arouse ‘confused, ambivalent sentiments’ as they ‘stubbornly defy clarity-addicted knowledge, elide assignment, and sap the familiar classificatory grids.’ The birth of ‘modernity’ in the eighteenth century in Europe suggested order, fixed identity, and the closing down of national boundaries and created a world system based on a set of social relations (such as *white, European, Christian*) and sets of knowledge that emerged during the sixteenth century creating a sense of Eurocentrism. The ensuing dichotomies (modern/colonial, Europe versus other world systems; Barker and Peters 2012; Maffesoli 1997), which governed the world, must be taken into account in intercultural education. For Bauman (2004, 23), ‘national identity was never like other identities. Unlike other identities that did not demand unequivocal allegiance and exclusive fidelity, national identity would not recognize competition, let alone an opposition.’ Hospitality, or receiving and welcoming the Other, has been dependent on this way of understanding the world for many centuries.

Postmodernity has been described as having brought about changes in the way national identity influenced people’s lives, as the differences between ‘the normal and the abnormal, the expectable and the unexpected, the ordinary and the bizarre, domesticated and wild’ are increasingly blurred, as are those between ‘the familiar and the strange, ‘us’ and the strangers’ (Bauman 2003, 38). However, solid identities such as representations of national and ‘cultural’ identities are still very much present today and are reflected in, for example, the increase in far-right and populist parties in Europe and elsewhere, especially in times of repeated economic crises.

In philosophy and research, the notion of hospitality has always been a central issue (see Kant 1795; Kristeva 1989; Todorov 1989). In order to deal with hospitality and the treatment of the Other today, the concept of hostipitality, as proposed by Jacques Derrida (2000) to deconstruct hospitality, appears to be very fruitful

especially to underscore its ambiguity (Sh erer 2005). The philosopher argues that the idea of hospitality (genuine hospitality) means that the host has to give up security and authority and become ‘the hostage’ (Derrida 2000, 16) – which is, in a sense, an impossibility for Derrida as it leads to ‘welcoming the infinite’ (Derrida 2000, 14). Hospitality is always thus accompanied with feelings of contradiction from both sides, the guest and the host: who should adapt to whom? Can the guest prevail over the host’s requirements?

For the philosopher, hospitality cannot thus be conceived without hostility and vice versa: there is no hospitality without the idea of power as it is based on rights, duties, and obligations (Derrida 2000, 4). This is why the guest is always ‘under control’ (e.g. limits upon where she/he can go) and, though her/his status of guest, relinquished to the identity of the ‘Other.’ The host can decide who enters, what the guest is entitled to do and say. So there is a power imbalance and symbolic violence in hospitality: the guest is at the mercy of the host and should she/he not wish to do or speak as she/he is told, hostility can easily emerge (Derrida 2000, 4). Hospitality can thus become inhospitable and prone to hostility.

By discussing the notions of hosts, guests, foreigners, and differences in a Finnish university context, we critically relate these to Derrida’s hostipitality. In this article, we argue that the notion is central in reflecting on how international and exchange students are hosted in institutions of higher education through the example of a survival guide, whose aim is to welcome the Other but at the same time clearly set rules to be respected. How is hospitality translated in a document devised to help students to be ‘good guests?’ But also how is the notion of the ‘intercultural’ instrumentalized to create a certain image of hospitality and deal with the contradictions noted above (hospitality–hostility)? We argue that by imposing certain rules as to how to behave and act in a Finnish institution, the authors find themselves – but also the students who will be reading the document – in the contradictory position of hosting/hostage.

3. A Critical, reflexive, and co-constructivist approach to interculturality: beyond hostipitality?

3.1. Renewing the intercultural

The ‘intercultural’ is a highly polysemic and problematic notion (Aikman 2012; Dervin 2012) that often serves the purpose of ‘boosting’ hospitality in higher education. Often used as an empty signifier not only in politics but also in education and research (Abdallah-Preteceille 2003), the notion tends to be rid of any political substance, especially in education (Andreotti 2011) and to be based mostly on knowledge and skills in a particular language and culture (Shi-Xu 2001, 279), which often orientates hospitality towards holding people hostage to certain (imagined) cultural characteristics and on many occasions towards hostility.

In Finland, intercultural education is often viewed from the perspective of otherness, rarely from ‘within’ (Dervin et al. 2012), and is very much related to the problematic idea of tolerance, and only those who are tolerated need to be educated towards intercultural competence. According to Hage (2000), discourses on the latter in a specific context allow us to identify the ‘local’ level of understanding towards difference. He argues that people who have the power are ‘leading the conversation,’

and the ones who are ‘tolerated’ represent the topic of the conversation and therefore are viewed as mere strangers (Hage 2000, 90–1).

Hoskins and Sallah (2011, 114) suggest moving away from a focus on culture as it ‘hides unequal power relations,’ especially as the ‘old and tired’ concept has become so unstable and practically unworkable (Wikan 2002). For Holliday, culture leads ‘easily and sometimes innocently to the reduction of the foreign Other as culturally deficient’ (2010, ix). Anne Phillips (2007) raises a very interesting question when she claims that we can have ‘multiculturalism without culture’ if culture is such a misnomer or if the boundaries between cultures are so difficult to define. The way culture should then be used in research and teaching is to allow practitioners and researchers to delineate the ‘politics of difference’ (Pieterse 2004, 12) that it triggers between people. For Andreotti (2011, 144), intercultural education should thus avoid ‘ahistorical, depoliticized, and uncritical ethnocentric benevolence.’ This is the approach that we support in this article when analyzing the document: how do the authors of the document present Finnish culture and intercultural encounters between Finns and others? Are the examples used contextualized and ‘politicized?’ Is the idea of interculturality from within (Finland as a heterogeneous country) supported? What image of hospitality is thus transmitted?

3.2. From individual competences to competences relying on ‘self-in-the-other and the other-in-the-self’ (Gallagher 2011)?

Many studies on interculturality have presented intercultural competence as a moral imperative, especially in relation to how the Other should become or act. Yet ‘the obligation of mainstream organizations and public bodies to address discrimination and oppression is often overlooked’ (Hoskins and Sallah 2011, 121).

Shi-Xu (2001, 280–1) sees several problems with intercultural education. One of the most significant ones lies in the fact that ‘intercultural’ problems are often attributed to one individual (usually the Other, the ‘guest’), who is labeled as ‘incompetent’ or ‘more charitably, the languages and cultures that they carry with them’ (Shi-Xu (2001, 280–1). ‘Mistakes’ thus derive from ‘their’ lack of knowledge, knowledge of ‘our’ culture. In order to counter such problems, intercultural education represents an attempt to provide individuals (the Other) with knowledge about how ‘we’ function. Yet Shi-Xu (2001, 280) reminds us that ‘an individual knowledge-minded approach would fail to take account of the joint, social nature of communication, the social-action aspect (e.g. speech act) of communication and the consequences of the action; jointly constructed (inter)action.’ The problems identified with the notion of hospitality in the previous section are recognizable in these criticisms. In other words, should hospitality be imposed on others from the host’s perspective or should it be negotiated? If interculturality is at the center of hospitality, how should it be constructed? As a range of solid cultural differences or as differences and similarities that need to be co-constructed and negotiated by interlocutors?

In terms of methodology, this has major consequences for both the teaching of and researching interculturality. Shi-Xu notes three: (1) knowledge is always embedded in social practice; (2) language must be regarded as meaning making and world making – not just descriptive; and (3) methodology must be politically motivated (2001, 282). The notion of power, inequality, and ‘symbolic violence’ (Bourdieu 1991), which was mentioned when we dealt with hospitality (1.), is also

central. We argue that the use, overuse, and abuse of the concept of culture contribute to unbalanced power relations in the way we treat the Other and in the way hospitality is constructed in student mobility.

To summarize, it seems that in order to problematize the notion of hospitality and interculturality, a move from a ‘cultural’ individualist knowledge-based approach to a ‘self-in-the-other and the other-in-the-self’ (Gallagher 2011) perspective on hospitality in higher education is now necessary, i.e. the need to take into account self and other and their enmeshment, in any aspect of interculturality. This approach can give more space to negotiations and co-constructions of relations and encounters in the intercultural space and thus renew hospitality by rebalancing the power unbalance between the host and the guest. In this article, we are interested in these questions: Which of these approaches are constructed in the document produced by a Finnish university? How much does the chosen perspective on intercultural communication reveal of the hospitality politics preferred by the institution?

4. Data and research method

In order to test the notions of hospitality and interculturality in the context of Finnish Higher Education, we are analyzing two versions of a document that was published on paper for international students by a Finnish university in 2011–2012. Such booklets have been published for years by Finnish institutions under different names. The booklet under scrutiny was published by Tampere University of Technology and distributed to exchange and international students in this institution. In the preface to the 2012 edition, the authors also mention that ‘(. . .) staff of other Finnish universities (. . .) are either using or planning to use this booklet with their own international students’ (p. ii). There are five authors, amongst whom some are international officers and others scholars. None of them seem to specialize in intercultural communication.

The first edition of the booklet was entitled ‘*OH BEHAVE*’ and later, due to criticisms of the name by practitioners, was changed to ‘*THEM FINNS! Towards understanding communication in Finnish Universities.*’ The document devotes 50 pages specifically to intercultural communication. To our knowledge, this is the first guide to be published solely on the theme by an international office in Finland. Though it may sound too local to the reader, the title indicates that it is not just aimed at the students at the institution in question but well beyond (in Finnish universities). We can also hypothesize that the booklet will be used beyond Finnish national boundaries as the country is becoming a popular destination, thanks to its successful education export strategies (CIMO 2012).

The analytical section of this article is devoted to the 2011 version of the booklet and is followed by a comparison of the 2011 and 2012 versions. The new version was published when this article was completed and could not thus be fully taken into account.

The 2011 booklet contains four sections: an Introduction, ‘Understanding Finland and Finns,’ ‘Studying in a Finnish university,’ ‘Starting Career in Finland,’ and ‘Well-mannered cosmopolitans’ that serves as a conclusion. In this study, we concentrate on the introduction, studying in the Finnish university, and conclusions. The section on career planning was not deemed relevant for this paper because we wanted to focus on intercultural communication in the University context.

In terms of analysis, this chapter represents an attempt to put into practice the critical, constructivist, and renewed way of researching the ‘intercultural’, which was presented in the previous sections. We also problematize hospitality through Derrida’s hostipitality (cf. section 1). The concept of culture is central in our work as it appears constantly in the booklet (with the words *Finnish*, *foreign*, and *other*). In order to delineate how it was used in the booklet – and thus how the ‘intercultural’ is constructed – we took into account Barker and Galasinski’s (2001) question: ‘how do (the authors) talk about culture and for what purposes?’ A discourse analysis inspired by discursive pragmatics, an interdisciplinary and intertheoretical approach to discourse, and consisting of *énonciation* and dialogism (Zienkowski 2011) was applied to the data. The name of the method is derived from a proposal by Zienkowski, Östman, and Verschueren (2011) to describe the many and varied pragmatic features of certain perspectives and approaches to discourse. This ‘method’ allows researchers to examine marks of (inter)subjectivity in the construction of objects of discourse and thus to highlight some of the ideologies, hierarchies, and power relations engrained in the discourses (Dervin 2011). French *énonciation* (often called French pragmatics) proposes different approaches to pragmatic issues in language use. Johansson and Suomela-Salmi (2011, 71) explain ‘*énonciation* deals with utterance-level meaning from the perspective of different linguistic elements. In other words, the activity of the speaker is the focus: on the one hand there are traces and indices left by the speaker in the utterance; on the other hand there is the relationship the speaker maintains with her/his interlocutor.’ In short, *énonciation* approaches are interested in (1) how a person constructs her/his discourse and (2) how she/he negotiates the discourse with others (intersubjectivity). One central aspect of *énonciation* is to consider a speaker as a heterogeneous subject, meaning an individual who positions her/himself in interaction with others and who thus uses and manages various discursive and pragmatic strategies to construct the self, the other, surroundings, experiences, etc. This also takes place in often unplanned, unsystematic, and changing manners. Many and varied linguistic elements have been examined to analyze enunciation. Deictics (markers of person, time, and space such as personal pronouns, adverbs, and verbs) are such elements that allow speakers to ‘stage themselves or make themselves manifest in utterances, or on the other hand may decide to distance themselves from it, leaving no explicit signs of their presence or manifesting their attitude in utterances’ (Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011, 94). The same goes for utterance modalities, which can give us a clue about the attitude of the speaker towards what she/he is saying (adverbs, shifters, etc.). For example deontic modalities mark an obligation and relate to moral and social norms (e.g. You must do this) (Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011, 97). Nouns may also express the attitude of a speaker towards a person, a phenomenon, an object, etc. (Paul is a *lazybone*). It is easy to see how enunciative markers can help the researcher to analyze how people co-construct specific discourses and reveal the sentiments they attach to these images. By working on pragmatic changes in discourse, *Énonciation* can also help us to identify instability: shifts, contradictions, corrections, potential manipulation, etc. Before we move on to the analysis, a few words about dialogism: the writings of Bakhtin (1895–1975) (and Vološinov) have had a lot of influence on research in the humanities and the social sciences today. Having created the idea of *dialogism*, Bakhtin’s theory places the concept of *voice* at the center of discourse. For Grossen (2010, 7), ‘One key element of a dialogical approach is that language is fundamentally polysemic and that its meaning is not predetermined by the linguistic

code but constructed within a certain discursive situation.’ Linguistically speaking, dialogism is marked by the apparition of certain linguistic markers or forms (pronouns such as *we*, reported discourses, passive voice, etc.). Dialogists call reported discourse (direct or indirect), discourse representation (Roulet 2011, 210) as, being reported from another context, it *represents* discourses and actions. Certain phenomena such as irony, negation, and the use of certain discourse markets, such as ‘but,’ all signal dialogism.

Following a preliminary analysis of the data based on both enunciative and dialogical elements, three categories related to the image of the ‘intercultural’ in the booklet emerged: (1) deresponsibilization: culture as an excuse?; (2) imagined Finnishness; and (3) distrust of the Other and infantilization.

5. ‘Oh Behave!’: interculturality and hospitality in Finnish higher education?

5.1. Deresponsibilization: culture as an excuse?

The first aspect that we examine is the authors’ tendency to use and present culture as an explanation for all, as an ‘alibi’ (Abdallah-Preteuille 1986) in the document, without problematizing the concept. In other words, as Wikan (2002) has showed, culture becomes the agent and individuals mere ‘robots’ who act upon its orders. This is what we mean by ‘deresponsibilization,’ in what follows, Finns are not responsible for their behaviors but their culture. Furthermore *methodological individualism* (Gallagher 2011) is rehearsed by the authors as they present intercultural communication as a one-way phenomenon, governed by culture, not negotiated and co-constructed by individuals. It is also deresponsibilizing as it tells the international students that it is them who have to do all the work to ‘grasp’ Finnish culture and copy it – and not a common task between the ‘Finns’ and them. In terms of hospitality, the hosts do not become the hostage, only the guest has to adapt and adopt these described behaviors.

Tellingly, the authors’ discourses contain many categorical formulations that express ‘Truths’ (Le Querler 1996) and leave no space for contradictions or exceptions in their descriptions of the notion of interculturality. In this sense, they use a solid understanding not only of the concept of ‘culture’ but also of the ‘intercultural’ (which becomes solely cultural rather than *intercultural*). The following generic meta-discourses on the ‘intercultural’ construct these truths:

People in different cultures are accustomed to doing things in their own way. (3)

Most cultures will have things foreigners will not like and they are entitled not to like them either. (3).

Different cultures have different means of delivering the message. (3)

Interaction between people from different cultures is not always easy and misunderstandings will happen. (20)

These sentences share in common an objectivizing formulation, which seems not to allow any other possibilities or alternatives: ‘misunderstandings will happen’ (use of *will*), ‘people in different cultures are accustomed’ (use of the present tense, which gives a truth-like tone to the sentence). Interestingly, in the two middle excerpts it is culture that plays the agent, not people (Wikan 2002). It appears thus to be difficult for the

reader to disagree with how these elements are constructed. For the authors these general statements allow them to justify their general approach to the ‘intercultural’ and especially what they are putting forward as ‘truths’ about Finns in the rest of the booklet:

The authors also use these discursive strategies to promote the importance of intercultural awareness to the students (and thus the usefulness of the booklet) in general and then in relation to ‘Finnish culture’:

However, one of the main outcomes of the time spent abroad is precisely the understanding of the importance of cultural differences in communication. (4)

Understanding us Finns and our culture will help you understand also how to get things done in Finland. (2)

Again, the way sentences are formulated (‘is precisely,’ ‘will help you to develop’) seems to imply automatic learning and awareness of both intercultural communication and Finnish culture during the students’ time in Finland – without explaining what these elements represent. The authors’ approach to ‘cultural differences’ is typically solid, acontextual, and unaware of power relations as they present them as realities rather than constructs (see section 3). In fact these differences can serve certain purposes such as manipulating the other, pleasing someone, getting one’s way out of a situation, and expressing one’s superiority. Abdallah-Preteille (1986) calls this the ‘ontological feature of culture,’ which leads people to ‘imagine’ or ‘invent’ cultural characteristics in interaction with people from other countries for different purposes. She also argues (Abdallah-Preteille 1986) that it is not just ‘sensitivity to cultural differences’ that matters in education but how they are used, (co-)constructed and misused when people interact (cf. section 3). By overlooking this aspect in their discourses on culture, the authors of the booklet seem to adopt an uncritical and solely knowledge-based approach to the other, which deresponsibilizes the actors during intercultural encounters and put indirectly the blame on ‘culture.’ By not suggesting that these can be negotiated, the authors present a vision of hospitality that is bound to lead the guest to lose in the power-ridden relations with the host.

In terms of scientific literature used to support these claims, the booklet does not refer to any authors. However, a dialogical analysis shows that, for instance, ‘Finnish culture’ is justified by means of the opposition between ‘low-’ and ‘high-’ contexts borrowed from G. Hofstede:

Low-context culture means that there are less social rules defining how to behave in certain situation. In practise it means that people are allowed more freedom to ‘define their own rules’ in different social situations. (12)

Yet no direct reference to Hofstede is made by the authors. It is important to note here that Hofstede, a consultant in international business, has been increasingly criticized for his functionalist, culturalist, and acontextual/ahistorical approach to the ‘intercultural’ (Holliday 2010; McSweeney 2002). As such, this could confirm that the authors are opting for an approach to hospitality based on a ‘hostage’ understanding (do as we do to be welcomed).

5.2. *Imagined Finnishness*

Now we move on to some of the aspects of Finnishness that are described in the booklet and thus presented as elements that will lead to hospitality. First these aspects appear as if they applied to an entire population, with no distinction of class, 'origins,' gender, sexuality, religion, etc., and more importantly without any indication of interaction and context. The following excerpt is also related to one aspect of intercultural communication, which has also been discussed since the 'father' of the field (E.T. Hall) tried to problematize it in the 1950s to help diplomats to deal with each other: the use of time and punctuality. Again no mention of this reference is found in the document:

Punctuality also displays the equality amongst the people; everyone is supposed to be on time regardless of their social status. (8)

Handling issues with Finns, however is usually very easy; when a Finn promises to take care of something, consider it done. According to our values, people are expected to deliver what they have promised and this also applies to all the professors, teachers and other staff members. (22)

The lines of argumentation are constructed in similar ways in these two excerpts to support the idea of punctuality: the reader is first presented with a general assertion (*punctuality also displays the equality amongst the people; handling issues with Finns is usually very easy*), followed by an explanation-illustration (*everyone is supposed to be on time; when a Finn promises to take care of something, consider it done*). The use of 'our values' in the second excerpt makes use of the strategy of deresponsibilization mentioned in the previous section and of a 'natural-cultural gift' – 'our' referring to the imaged Finnish community (Anderson 1983). Many postmodern researchers of intercultural communication have showed how biased these elements can be because they imply that other peoples are not always punctual or do not hold punctuality as a 'value' (Holliday 2010). In establishing this *us versus them* dichotomy, the authors contribute to create ideological ethnocentrism, which can give an impression of superiority (Holliday 2010). Indirectly Finnishness is compared to *other-nesses*, which are represented by the readers of the booklet (the students). This also applies to the fact that the authors mention that Finns are honest and hard working several times. These claims are always acontextualized in the booklet. Yet honesty and hard work are always constructed and enacted in interaction. Such assertions have thus no value without mentioning intersubjectivity (Piller 2011) and can give a wrong impression about Finns and 'Finnish culture' and the hospitality to be expected. At the same time, they can be read as symbolically violent for the student reader, even though his/her culture-country is not compared to Finnish culture directly.

The following excerpts illustrate some of the ethnocentric ideologies that were identified in such comparisons. Each of the excerpts contains (in)directly criticisms towards the Other and can appear as extremely patronizing and moralizing. These criticisms are identifiable through dialogical strategies hidden behind certain subjective terms such as words, adjectives, and verbs (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2002). As such, some values, which are presented as quintessentially Finnish, are omnipresent in '*OH BEHAVE!*'. Equality is one of them: it is presented as a given 'value' in Finland, dismissing privileges and class division that are clearly present in Finnish society (Kuortti, Lehtonen, and Löytty 2007):

In addition to the equality between men and women, the gap between the rich and the poor is not as huge as in some other parts of the world: most Finns can be seen as middle class people and there are no slums and ghettos in Finland. (9)

As a matter of fact, our public school system is well respected by all social classes and as a result, people with very different family backgrounds often go to the same schools. (10)

Two strategies seem to be used by the authors to emphasize the exceptionality of Finland and to mark differences with other places. The first strategy is extreme case formulations (Edwards 2010; Pomerantz 1986). For Edwards (2010, 347–8), such formulations are ‘descriptions or assessments that deploy extreme expressions such as every, all, none, best, least, as good as it gets, always (. . .).’ In the excerpts, we found most (Finns), (well respected by) all (social classes). Furthermore, the use of words that are subjectively marked such as ‘slums,’ ‘ghettos’ adds to this phenomenon. Yet even though the authors keep repeating that inequality is not a fact in Finland, in her study on race, gender, and ethnicity in the Nordic countries (Finland is officially a Nordic country), Mulinary (2008) points out that over the last 10 years, because of cuts in the welfare system, an increase in visible unequal and racist articulations, and a mobilization of radicalized citizens, the credo of ‘gender equality’ has become a central ethnic signifier of national belonging and the most important boundary between us and them (Mulinary 2008, 180). Gender equity and equality are not often considered as a matter of opinion, but as a lack of knowledge in this context. The Swedish social anthropologist Annika Rabo points out that ‘Swedes believe that immigrants need to be educated into the Swedish ideals of gender equality’ (Rabo 1997, 109). This could also be the case in the Finnish booklet. Scholars such as Amartya Sen (2011) have demonstrated convincingly that the ideas of democracy and gender equality are well rehearsed and problematized in countries such as India and that in some cases, these phenomena have been dealt with for a longer time in the ‘East’ compared to the ‘West.’

On top of equality, the ideas of autonomy and independence are central when the authors describe the ‘study culture’ in Finnish Universities. Nevertheless the two words fail to be defined in the booklet and are viewed from an ethnocentric perspective comparing the international students to Finns: the latter are independent while the former need help; Finns are hard working, the Others not so persistent:

Whereas in many cultures people are supposed to follow instructions of teachers and supervisors, Finns are encouraged to solve problems independently and take initiative when needed. Thus while young people in many cultures live in a very protected and supervised life, students in Finland are very independent and take responsibility for their studies. This is another area where foreign students also get easily confused. (23–4)

Responsibility, independency, and hard work are described again as uniform ‘good values.’ Again the word choice is telling: when the authors compare ‘people in many cultures’ and ‘Finns,’ the former are ‘supposed to’ while the latter ‘are encouraged to.’ The use of the passive voice also seems to indicate a ‘natural,’ deresponsibilizing way of doing things, as if some hidden power was ‘governing’ them. In this type of discourse, international students are constantly constructed as something different in opposition to Finns (‘us’ vs. ‘them,’ Gillespie 2006), always in a negative way.

Many Scholars of the post-racial era, where race has been ‘banned’ from scientific discourses in some parts of the world, seem to agree that racism

increasingly finds its articulation through the notion of culture. ‘*Cultural racism*,’ defined by Anna Bredström (2008) ‘as a process of racialization through the application of notions of immutable cultural differences,’ has become very common in Finnish society (Talib et al. 2009). Hate speech and racist crimes are increasing in the current neo-liberal era where racist talk has become, to some extent, ‘racism without races’ (Bredström 2008, 85; Lentin and Titley 2011), and Finland is no exception to the rule as has been witnessed in recent years with the growth of extreme right movements such as The Finns and *Suomen Sisu* (Andersson et al. 2012). Not only cultural racism but also hidden ethnocentrism could be found in, for example, discussions of work ethics in the booklet:

Being active alone will not make any student considered smart by teachers here in Finland. As a matter of fact, very few university teachers grade class participation; the final grade is primarily based on the performance on the exam. (26)

This excerpt follows a discussion about the fact that many foreign students are very talkative during lectures and that their interventions are often a waste of time. As mentioned earlier (2.) the notion of the intercultural in university pedagogy is critical. In fact, class participation (unlike what is claimed here) is often taken into account by the lecturers in Finnish universities and appreciated. The old serious times of behaviorism and belief of stimulus-oriented learning have proved not to be the most efficient ways. Finnish learning theorists, like many international scholars, have suggested that learning opportunities and experiences where students can socially construct the knowledge can be more beneficial (Lindblom-Ylänne and Nevgi 2003).

A similar and ‘racist without races’ rhetoric applies to the following excerpt. As we saw earlier all Finnish students in general are ‘naturalized’ and constructed as superior and privileged honest citizens. This is how the ‘very rare’ exceptions amongst Finns are talked about in the booklet:

By now you most likely have noticed that Finns are very rule-obedient people. That is why examinations are relatively relaxed events; the basic assumption is that people will not cheat. (28)

The themes contained in the excerpts hitherto seem to correspond precisely to autorepresentations that Finns have built up about themselves (Lehtonen 2006). Hofstede’s aforementioned cultural dimensions have commonly been used as theoretical foundation for explaining Finnish honesty in the Finnish context.

All the excerpts above contain ‘fuzzy’ references to other cultures, countries, habits, attitudes, etc. Rarely do the authors mention which countries, but in many cases, and based on our very own subjectivity, we can hear biases such as the North vs. the South, individualist vs. collectivist countries, etc. (cf. Holliday 2010). In the booklet we have identified very few concrete comparisons between Finland and other cultures (or *countries*, the words tend to be used interchangeably in the booklet). These tend to be also introduced by comparatives such as ‘in contrast to’ or ‘whereas’ or ‘not as (+ adjective)...as.’ One ‘place’ (a whole continent in fact) is compared directly with Finland in the booklet to make some ‘intercultural’ points: Asia. The authors of the booklet use acontextualized examples from Asia, and compare them to acontextualized anecdotes from Finland. The points they are making through these concern the ideas of hierarchy and harmony:

In Asian context, the manager's order alone does not mean much. Only if the manager keeps asking the progress of the report, the assistant will know whether the assignment really is an important one or not. However, he will not mind the manager asking. On the contrary, these check-ups are an important part of the communication itself. These constant check-ups – not the manager's order – tell the assistant whether that report really is an important one or not.

A Finnish manager, however, expects the assistant to follow her first order and would be very mad if she does not find the report in her desk the following morning, without any further discussions or check-ups. As a matter of fact, the assistant would consider it as a sign of mistrust if the boss kept asking for the progress of the report.

The construction of this excerpt works in parallel: several actors are called onto the scene (two 'imagined' managers, two 'imagined' employees from 'Asia' and Finland) to illustrate the comparative point made by the authors. While the 'Asians' are made to act in a habit/routine-oriented and passive way (use of *will* in 'the assistant will . . .', 'he will not . . .', Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2002), the Finns are presented as people reacting against something, as being active agents (use of the conditional *would* in '(he) would be very mad,' 'the assistant would'). Also interesting is the fact that the 'Asian' actors represent about four billion inhabitants (depending on the authors' definition of Asia: is it similar to the political one of the United Nation's Population Division or more of a geographical and or 'cultural' definition?) while the Finnish actors represent 5.4 million. The acontextualized, heavily essentialized, and ideological assertions found in this short 'narrative' could confirm what Holliday (2010, ix) calls the innocent 'reduction of the foreign Other as culturally deficient.' Even though they are not, at first sight, presented as such in the booklet, we can recognize behind these discourses, the familiar themes of individualism and collectivism, which for Holliday (2010, ix) represent 'basic icons of an idealized self and a demonized Other.' Disguised behind them are also representations of effective, autonomous, and trustworthy Finns.

5.3. *Distrust of the other and infantilization?*

In many of the excerpts aforementioned rested the important theme of trust/distrust, which often leads to discourses of infantilization of the international students, in other words, the students are often condescended to as if still children, who need to learn how to behave in Finnish universities (and society) so as to experience hospitality. There is, behind these assertions, the strong idea that the students will be different and that, in their 'culture,' things are automatically done differently. Dervin has named this claim 'the differentialist bias of the 'intercultural' (Dervin et al. 2012). This bias is dangerous for two reasons: it provides us with a very homogenous image of different groups and leads to problematic comparisons.

In the *us versus them* dichotomy that is created in the booklet, a typical postmodern phenomenon is taking place: uncertainty and insecurity in front of the Other. Bauman (2003) explains this by arguing that the other can trigger 'confused, ambivalent sentiments'. In the booklet, the readers are often reminded about the importance of trust and honesty in Finland. Trust and distrust are discussed, amongst others, in relation to plagiarism, which is rehearsed many times in the booklet. The authors even go as far as writing:

(...) written assignments are supposed to be written completely by the students themselves, not copy pasted from the internet. (27)

Behind the passive voice 'are supposed to be written,' hides a representation (a voice) that is often talked about when dealing with international and exchange students in Finland: many are dishonest and plagiarize.

In the booklet, the students are also told repeatedly not to 'misuse Finnish trust/friendliness.' On several occasions, the authors seem to treat 'trust in Finland' as an important heritage, as one would be careful with, for example, a work of art. Teachers become central in describing this (use of the present tense without modalities to emphasize the point):

However, Finnish teachers, despite the low visible hierarchy, do not bargain or negotiate with students on their grades and can to some extent consider such attempts insulting. (14)

Finnish teachers are usually very easy-going, yet they appreciate good manners. (15)

In a similar vein, many of the pieces of advice that are given to the students seem to correspond to very infantilizing and patronizing discourses. The authors share their assumptions about foreigners in the excerpt below and pretend, to help the students to adapt. In terms of hospitality, what they are saying here is: If you do not behave as 'we' do, you will have some problems (hostipitality).

As such, the students are told/taught how to talk on the phone and write e-mails to faculty members:

So far you have been accustomed to rather informal way of using the phone. However, sometimes you may be calling some faculty members and faculty members may also call you, for example, to reschedule a meeting in a short notice. So, there are perhaps two things for you to consider. First, in Finland it is common to answer to an unknown number with a full name instead of answering just 'hello.' This way the caller always knows if he has reached the right person or not. (18)

We note in this excerpt that the authors introduce this first piece of advice with a generic and biased statement (general present tense).

To conclude this section, we would like to hypothesize the idea that the fear of the Other, who can potentially 'spoil' Finnish culture and Finns, could be palpable in the booklet. This type of discourse can also give a negative picture of Finns and not necessarily provide as good a marketing tool for Finnish universities. This is very much in line with descriptions of the fear of hybridity and the conservation of pure and idealized forms of culture that for instance the anthropologist Laplantine has described (1997). Hospitality clearly depends on the other becoming like self. No room seems to be given again to adaptation, negotiation, and co-construction.

6. Comparing two versions of the booklet (2011–2012)

As mentioned in the introduction to this article, as we were writing this, a new version of the booklet was published. Based on discussions with one of the authors, it has been revealed that they decided to change some of the aspects of the booklet after obtaining feedback from practitioners and colleagues in Finland. Let us look at the titles of the two versions first: the 2011 version was entitled '*OH BEHAVE!*

Towards understanding communication in Finnish universities' while the most recent version was entitled '*THEM FINNS! Survival guide for interaction in Finnish universities.*' The new title seems to promote a less passive attitude from the reader's perspective (e.g. understanding communication vs. interaction). The first part of the title in capital letters changes locutors too: while OH BEHAVE seems to emerge from the voice of the host, THEM FINNS is that of the guests.

Let us now compare the table of content. Some changes have also been made. Both versions are composed of six sections. The 2011 booklet was structured as follows: preface, introduction (studying abroad – make the best of it; understanding different cultures – cultural competence; culture impacts communication); Understanding Finland and Finns (Finland – a West-European country located in the East, Finland today – telecommunication and melancholic hard rock, understanding Finnish lifestyle and Finnish education system); Studying in a Finnish university (Responsibility of studies – Both planning and execution!, interaction in the University; Handling Study-Related Matters and Lectures, Assignments and Exams); tips for career planning (Finnish students – working on holidays, getting a job in Finland – application letter and CV; the job interview); well-mannered cosmopolitans; and attachments.

In the 2012 version, a subsection of the introduction, Finnish culture in a Nutshell, was added but the entire section entitled 'Understanding Finland and Finns' was removed. Both versions contain a similar section: studying in a Finnish university. The most recent version is more Finnish-oriented as is demonstrated by the subsections titles. In a sense, the titles appear to be less 'objectivizing' and in a sense more ethnocentric: challenges in interaction are mainly misunderstandings; Finnish education system; a friendly attitude is the key to good service; students in Finland are expected to be independent (compare with: Responsibility of studies – Both planning and execution!, interaction in the University; Handling Study-Related Matters and Lectures, Assignments, and Exams). The last section, which deals with cosmopolitanism in both booklets, also changed titles: (2011) well-mannered cosmopolitans vs. (2012) culturally competent cosmopolitans. In short, what can be noticed from the changes between the two versions is that the word *culture* is used more in 2012 in the section titles and that the emphasis on Finnish culture is more marked.

In the sections some changes have been made in terms of contents, sometimes in relation to language, and sometimes some elements were removed. Due to limited space in this article, we are only presenting the changes in the introduction. The main change is the addition of the section 'Finnish culture in a nutshell' in 2012, which points out a short history of the country, religion, and summarizes the 'three important elements of our value system' (6), which we have identified in the article. We note that the way these 'rules' are formulated is less strong as the subjective markers contained in the verbs used are more uncertain (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2002): 'people are . . . *supposed* to be punctual and deliver what they promised . . . *considered* equal with the same rights and responsibilities . . . *expected* (to) take responsibility for their own work and show initiative' (6, italics are ours). In the second subsection, Understanding different cultures – cultural competence, the argument of gender equality has been inserted systematically to explain what cultural competence is about: 'In other words, what is considered normal and polite depends on the culture. For example, there are cultures in which it is not typical to shake hands with a female. (. . .) Not shaking hands with women may simply have a long tradition with the intention to show respect to women (. . .) For example, a culturally competent

Finn would be able to tell that in Finland men and women are considered equal and, hence, if you shake hands with the men, you are expected to shake hands with women, too' (p. 2). The authors do not voice the 'cultures' that they are referring to here, but for most readers a geographical representation of such habits will be obvious (probably some representatives of the Muslim faith). Also interestingly, the authors are not as political as they appeared to be in the previous version as they do not seem to be judging anyone but simply give some advice in these excerpts.

A final noteworthy change in the introduction and especially in the section called Culture impacts communication!: the example of the Asian employer and employee interacting in comparison to the Finns has been removed. Only the paragraph putting into scene an interaction between a Finnish superior and his employee remains. So in a sense, the direct comparison disappears but an implicit comparison remains through the given example and the reader can draw himself conclusions (Holliday 2010).

Finally, the drawings that are inserted to illustrate the points made in the booklet differ slightly in the introduction in 2012. Two drawings were removed: on p. 2 in the 2011 version a drawing showing a Finnish man surrounded by veiled women appearing to be shocked and an Indian man surrounded by Finnish women with the same reaction and on p. 4 two female bosses (in Finland and China) telling one employee 'This is important. I need it done today' (which was used to illustrate the difference in work habits in Finland and 'Asia'). Two drawings were added, one to substitute the latter, where a Finnish employee is working on a computer and answering two remarks from his boss: 'This is important. I need it done today' and 'Did you get started on the report?' to which he replies: 'Yes. I'll do it' and 'YES I already did!'; the other drawing illustrates the section Finnish culture in a nutshell: a 'colored' person is talking on the telephone and reacts to the remark: 'Hello Sir we have found your wallet,' 'WOW! Really? That's great!' This is used to illustrate the idea that Finns are honest.

All in all, it seems that these changes in the introduction – which are based on discussions between the authors and colleagues and practitioners – 'lighten up' the tone and discourses and especially limit the comparative and judgmental trend of the previous version that we have analyzed. Our next step will consist in interviewing the authors of the booklet to examine how they have conceptualized the booklets, why they made some changes, and their views on how the booklet is perceived by both students and staff in Finnish universities and beyond.

7. Conclusion

Our article has examined a document produced for helping international/exchange students to become 'intercultural' and to behave like Finns in Finnish higher education institutions. We have demonstrated that the culturalist, ethnocentric, and rather negative discourses on the other represent some kind of 'defeat of hospitality' or hostility (Derrida 2000) in Finnish education. In many of the discourses identified in the booklet, the authors want to avoid 'confused, ambivalent sentiments' (Bauman 1993, 164) before the Other, represented here by students from abroad, by asking them to become like them. It is all about the students' duties to turn into Finns but nothing about their own rights to negotiate and construct ways of being and behaving in this environment. By presenting a solid approach to Finns and Finnish culture, the authors fail to take into account the unstable and

constructionist aspect of these elements and to ask the foreign students not to negotiate them with the institution but to adopt their solid representations.

Interculturality and intercultural competences in ‘OH BEHAVE!’ seem to mean that the students should adjust to specific Finnish manners. As mentioned in the introduction of this article, the latest strategy for Internationalization of Higher Education in Finland states that institutions of higher education should contribute to make Finland a better place to live for foreigners. But who should adapt to what/ who in order to internationalize? Should foreigners be presented with uncritical, ethnocentric, judgmental, and potentially negative facts about themselves and Finns in general? Billig (1995) asserts that nationalist ideologies represent systematic resistance to learning from the others. From our analysis of the first version of the document it appears that we have some signs. The 2012 version of the document, and especially the introduction, contains positive changes in this sense and would thus deserve a full analysis.

The danger of the booklet that we examined is that it tells the students that unless they become like (imaginary) Finns, in order to enjoy full hospitality, they will not survive in Finnish universities and in Finnish society at large. On the other hand, the image of Finns and Finland that is transmitted is that of people who are completely incapable of any flexibility and understanding towards international/exchange students. This image, and the *us versus them* dichotomy that goes with it, might not seduce some students from abroad. According to the anthropologist Levi-Strauss (1955), two types of attitudes to otherness can be identified in most societies: on the one hand, anthropoemic strategies ‘deal with strangers and deviants by swallowing them up, by making them (their) own and by gaining strength from them,’ while on the other, anthropophagic strategies ‘vomit out the deviant, keeping them outside of society or enclosing them in special institutions within their perimeters.’ The ‘defeat of hospitality’ and interculturality described in this article would point to a tendency towards anthropoemic attitudes in the document under scrutiny. By presenting newcomers with a guide on how to behave, the ideal of genuine hospitality as proposed by Derrida (2000) is already impossible. The host remains the ruler and the guest the ‘hostage.’

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