

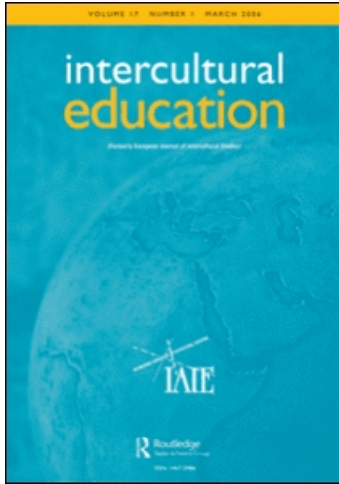
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## Multicultural awareness through English: a potential contribution of TESOL in Greek schools

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The cultural diversity now evident in Greek society creates educational challenges and opportunities. Space to address these is provided by the multicultural awareness aspects of the discourse of the Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework (CTCF). For English language classes, multicultural direction is provided through the disciplinary discussion of new teaching paradigm possibilities. In particular, these discussions encourage us to explore the repositioning of English teaching in Greek state schooling from a foreign language orientation towards a multicultural one. In this article, having set the context, we present the Multicultural Awareness Through English (MATE) paradigm. We conclude by illustrating the MATE paradigm in action.

Ο πολυπολιτισμός που χαρακτηρίζει την ελληνική κοινωνία αποτελεί πρόκληση, ιδιαίτερα αισθητή στο χώρο της υποχρεωτικής εκπαίδευσης. Ο ρόλος της πολυπολιτισμικής επίγνωσης όπως αυτός σκιαγραφείται στο Διαθεματικό Εννιαίο Πλαίσιο Σπουδών αποτελεί μια απάντηση σ' αυτή την πρόκληση. Στο χώρο της διδασκαλίας των αγγλικών, διαπιστώνουμε ότι η πολυπολιτισμική επίγνωση έχει κυρίαρχη θέση σε συζητήσεις για νέες παιδαγωγικές προσεγγίσεις. Πέρνοντας ως εφιαλτήριο αυτές τις συζητήσεις προτείνουμε τον απαναπροσδιορισμό της διδασκαλίας των αγγλικών με έμφαση την πολυπολιτισμική διάσταση. Στο άρθρο που ακολουθεί παραθέτουμε την προτασή μας για την ανάπτυξη της Πολυπολιτισμικής Επίγνωσης Μέσω των Αγγλικών. Τέλος, συζητούμε πως η πρότασή μας μπορεί να υλοποιηθεί.

**Keywords:** Greece; multicultural awareness through English; teaching English as a foreign language; teaching English to speakers of other languages

### The multicultural challenge/opportunity for Greek education

Cultural 'homogeneity' has been an integral part of Greek national identity ideology for many years despite the evident cultural heterogeneity within Greek society. However, over the last 20 years, the number of immigrants has increased five-fold (Baldwin-Edwards 2004, 3), with some 10% of the population now being 'foreign' (Damanakis 2005, 79). These demographic changes are especially noticeable in compulsory schooling and lead to concerns, for example, about the psychosocial adaptation of immigrant children (e.g. Giavrimis, Konstantinou, and Hatzichristou 2003; Palaiologou 2007) and the attitudes towards them of majority group teachers and pupils (e.g. Dimakos and Tasiopoulou 2003). If teachers are to confidently respond to their changing classroom realities, they themselves need to be multiculturally aware (Issari

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2006). However, despite calls to increase the multicultural awareness of teachers and pupils (Magos 2007; Psalti 2007; Spinthourakis and Katsillis 2003), there have been few attempts to do so (Dimakos and Tasiopoulou 2003, 310).

In this context, we welcome the multicultural awareness rationale embedded in the recent curriculum reforms as articulated through the abbreviated version of the Greek curricula for compulsory education, i.e. the Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework (CTCF; Pedagogical Institute n.d.-a, b). With the introduction of this multicultural rationale, the range of cultural objectives informing curriculum specifications has increased. For example, the new compulsory curriculum includes the principle of *Reinforcing cultural and linguistic identity within a multicultural society*. This principle links the following seemingly contradictory cultural objectives:

- *national identity* – it seeks the ‘preservation of national and cultural identity through developing cultural, linguistic and religious awareness’;
- *the European dimension* – it promotes ‘mutual understanding and cooperation with other European countries so as to promote development in all fields of social activity’;
- *interculturalism* – it promotes ‘understanding and appreciation of individuals belonging to social, ethnic and cultural groups other than their own so that we can all live in peace and harmony in a society of cultural, ethnic and linguistic pluralism’; and
- *multiculturalism* – it seeks the ‘enrichment of Greek society and other European societies with individuals of diverse linguistic, ethnic and cultural background so as to support and promote cultural diversity’ (Damanakis 2005, 83; Pedagogical Institute n.d.-b, 13–14).

In the curriculum area of direct concern in this article, i.e. foreign language education (FLE), the range of cultural objectives is made more complex with the addition of: (1) the discourse of the target culture/society with which the foreign language is linked; and (2) the discourse of experiencing cultures from around the world as accessed through the foreign language. Behind such FLE discourse lies the influential work of the Council of Europe (2001, for example) and the associated discourse of pluriculturalism/plurilingualism.<sup>1</sup>

Against this background, we examine the space created by the CTCF for multicultural awareness development across the curriculum. As practitioners with insider and privileged-outsider professional experiences of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)<sup>2</sup> in Greece, we note how the CTCF focus on pupils’ multicultural awareness resonates with current debates within TESOL professional thinking. To this end, we outline how the purpose of state-sector TESOL provision can be repositioned from the foreign language paradigm which typically underpins TESOL practice in Greek state schools towards what we term *Multicultural Awareness Through English* (MATE). Once the conceptual basis for the MATE paradigm has been outlined, we conclude with an example of how some existing materials might be repositioned using this paradigm.

### **The multicultural dimension in the Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework (CTCF)**

The CTCF is an outcome of the recent reform of the national curriculum (Alahiotis and Karatzia-Stavlioti 2006). As demonstrated by the quotations below (taken from

Pedagogical Institute n.d.-a, b), its positioning of such reform echoes the earlier national, European, intercultural and multicultural objectives:

Educational change in Greece at the present time *should*<sup>3</sup> focus on the preservation of our national identity and cultural heritage on the one hand, and the development of European citizenship awareness, on the other.

It *should* ... promote and safeguard equal opportunities for people of both sexes, for groups of people with special needs and for minority groups with their own ethnic, cultural and language characteristics.

*It is necessary* for individuals to develop greater understanding and appreciation of different cultures and for the State to discard the possibility of imposing a one-dimensional model, thus reinforcing xenophobia and racism;

In order to achieve the smooth integration and co-existence of individuals in society, each individual *should* learn how to live with others, respecting their language and culture.

The CTCF links understandings of citizenship to the objective of developing pupils' skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong growth: '... pupils can form their own perception of the world, ... their own opinions about the world they should get to know, love, and live in' (Pedagogical Institute n.d.-b, 17). Thus, on the one hand, each pupil needs to be a good citizen ('embracing democratic and humanitarian attitudes, free from religious or cultural prejudice' [Pedagogical Institute n.d.-b, 10]) and, on the other, live out their own cultural identity in a spirit of mutual respect for that of others within Greek society (i.e. multicultural awareness) and more widely (i.e. intercultural awareness).

#### **The CTCF and foreign language education<sup>4</sup>**

The CTCF specifies the same learning aims for English, French and German language learning, namely the development of pupils' foreign language literacy, multilingualism and multiculturalism (Pedagogical Institute n.d.-c, 145–8; Pedagogical Institute n.d.-d, 354). Regarding multiculturalism, pupils should develop:

- (1) an awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity/pluralism;
- (2) an understanding and appreciation of people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds through an awareness of the linguistic and cultural diversity;
- (3) multicultural awareness in order to be able to communicate effectively in multilingual and multicultural settings; and
- (4) the ability to recognise cultural attitudes as expressed in language (spoken or written) and learn the use of social conventions, e.g. forms of address.

English seems to be awarded the broadest multicultural remit: '... multiculturalism comes out naturally and spontaneously because the English language, as a language for communication with native speakers but also individuals from other nationalities, will bring Greek students in contact with the culture of English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries' (Pedagogical Institute n.d.-d, 354). It is further argued that English language learning can aid pupils' development of a multicultural mentality and their awareness of the 'similarities and differences of the values which shape the national identity' (354). Thus, the TESOL classroom is viewed as a space for both

cross-cultural, national-level comparisons and raising multicultural awareness vis-à-vis Greek society.

The above review of the CTCF specifications has highlighted the curricular space and framing discourse through which TESOL can contribute to the development of multicultural awareness. We now turn to the space similarly provided within TESOL disciplinary debates.

### TESOL paradigm possibilities

The CTCF provides one source of encouragement for a repositioning of existing TESOL practices, and its specifications already suggest a ‘natural and spontaneous’ link between English and multicultural experiences. Further repositioning encouragement can be found within TESOL debates focusing on the particularity of each educational and social context, on the differing functions of TESOL and on the associated paradigm possibilities. Kachru’s (1985) three-circle model for mapping the global English phenomenon distinguishes:

- Inner Circle countries (e.g. the UK), where English is the official language and is used by the majority of the population as their native language;
- Outer Circle countries (e.g. India), where English has official (e.g. in education, law, civil service, etc.) and intranational functions and is used as a second language (ESL);
- Expanding Circle countries (e.g. Greece), where English has no official function and is used as a foreign language (EFL).

These distinctions are often accompanied by discussion of possible teaching paradigm(s). Thus, the Outer Circle can be linked to the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) paradigm,<sup>5</sup> and the Expanding Circle to the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) paradigm. In Greece – as an Expanding Circle country – one would expect the TEFL paradigm to predominate. In our experience, this is how Greek TESOL practitioners tend to understand their practice. Key aspects of this paradigm are presented in Table 1.

However, Graddol (2006, 86) argues that English’s global roles may mean the end of EFL as such and as a result various paradigm possibilities are now being promoted. To accommodate the new possibilities, Goethals (n.d.) adds a fourth circle to Kachru’s model, i.e. the norm-reducing *International Forum*. Here, English is being used as an international lingua franca and can be linked, for example, to the Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL) paradigm. Recent thinking about Greek TESOL similarly explores a repositioning away from TEFL towards TEIL (e.g. Papaefthymiou-Lytra 2004; Sifakis 2004, 2007; Sifakis and Sougari 2003, 2005).

Such discussions tend to focus on linguistic issues (e.g. the source of the linguistic norms to be learned, the need for maximal mutual intelligibility between all speakers

Table 1. The traditional paradigm in the Greek TESOL context.

TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language)	The teaching of a particular Inner Circle variety of English (e.g. British English) to be used as a foreign language by Greek speakers for whom English has no immediate function within Greek society; this paradigm tends to make <i>crosscultural</i> comparisons between linguistic and cultural phenomena in the learner’s home society and those in the target society.
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of EIL) than on what might be termed the ‘cultural’ ones. Given the ‘international’ focus of the TEIL paradigm, when the ‘cultural’ is foregrounded, it makes sense for this to be linked to cultural diversity primarily experienced at the international level, e.g. cultural differences between speakers of English in Greece and in Japan. In contrast, the MATE paradigm with which we are concerned focuses more on the intranational or intrasocietal experience of cultural diversity in multicultural contexts such as contemporary Greece (Table 2).

But we see the TEIL and MATE paradigms as complementary since they are underpinned by many shared understandings which distinguish them from the traditional TEFL paradigm. Thus, the TEFL paradigm tends to make the culture-specific assumption that English-medium intercultural interactions typically involve an English-native-speaker interacting with a non-native speaker of English, and that the experience of cultural difference is essentially an encounter with the foreign, with something external to the pupils’ home society experience. In contrast, the TEIL and MATE paradigms are concerned with a more general cultural awareness and communicative competence as required in *all* English-rich encounters involving individuals whose cultural identities and backgrounds differ in some ways from those of the learner. Such encounters may take place internationally (i.e. a TEIL focus) or intranationally (i.e. a MATE focus). As discussed earlier, the increasingly multicultural profile evident in Greek state schools provides an opportunity for such intrasocietal, English-medium experience of cultural difference (Lytra 2007).

The CTCF provides space for internationally focused, intercultural awareness raising objectives (i.e. TEIL) and for intranational, multicultural awareness raising objectives (i.e. MATE). As discussion of what is involved in the TEIL paradigm is extensive, we now want to initiate a comparable conceptualisation of the MATE paradigm and explore how it might be operationalised using the kind of textbook material currently used by many TESOL practitioners in state primary schools.

## The MATE paradigm

### *The experience of cultural difference through TESOL*

Our MATE paradigm thinking is informed by the context of TESOL within Greek state education but, when alternatively contextualised, it may also have application for private sector TESOL in Greece and for TESOL sectors elsewhere. At its core, the

Table 2. New paradigm possibilities in the Greek TESOL context.

TEIL (Teaching English as an International Language)	MATE (Multicultural Awareness Through English)
The teaching of English – with characteristics drawn from its lingua franca usage – to pupils in Greece for whom English-medium international interactions are seen as valued possibilities; this paradigm tends to focus on English-medium communication between members of different societies (i.e. an <i>intersocietal/international</i> focus).	The teaching of English – with characteristics based on a particular Inner Circle variety such as British English, and/or drawn from its lingua franca usage, and/or based on locally emerging characteristics – to pupils in Greece whose school and societal experiences can be characterised as increasingly multicultural; this paradigm tends to focus on English-medium communication between members of the same culturally diverse society (i.e. an <i>intrasocietal/multicultural</i> focus).



MATE paradigm is concerned with the contribution that (the repositioned practices and materials of) TESOL might make primarily towards the intranationally rather than internationally focused CTCF multicultural awareness objectives. Can the TESOL classroom help each pupil frame their understanding and experience of cultural difference? Can it become a safe space in which, in a spirit of mutual respect, pupils reflect on and prepare themselves for their encounters with cultural difference in their immediate context (i.e. in their homes, classrooms, schoolyard and neighbourhood)? If so, its existing 'foreign' methodological anchors may need to be repositioned so that instead teachers explore cultural difference recognising the diversity present in the home society.

### ***The complexity of individual and of national identity***

When culture – as opposed to personality and/or human nature – is understood to refer to the shared values, patterns of behaviour, etc., of a particular group at a given point in time, the identity of the individual can become reduced to the characteristics of the (national, ethnic, religious) label applied to them: 'he is Greek', 'she is Turkish', 'they are Muslim' and so on. They can also be reduced to membership of just one such group. Similarly, cultural complexity at a national level can also be essentialised: thus, Greece might become a location for Greekness only. TEFL materials tend to present individuals and countries in such essentialised terms. For example, the characters that pupils encounter in the textbooks become representatives simply of particular nations, and performers only of particular national-level cultural identities. Cultural diversity is lost in such essentialised treatment of the individuals and the countries in which they reside.

We can avoid such essentialism by instead viewing the individual as culturally complex and culturally unique (e.g. Singer 1998), and adopting an inclusive understanding of identity (Lestinen, Petrucijová, and Spinthourakis 2004). Although we accept that, in a particular societal context, some identity ascriptions may be less open to negotiation or personal interpretation than others, the MATE paradigm – and this applies also to the TEIL paradigm – assumes that identities tend to be fluid and, in a process of lifelong cultural learning, continue to evolve throughout the individual's life. Their fluidity is also evident in the particular aspects of their complex identity repertoires which are foregrounded in a specific encounter. One implication of viewing the individual as culturally complex is that it would be illogical to view the nation in monocultural terms. The MATE paradigm not only moves away from the essentialised understanding of the nations concerned but it also challenges the linkage between the individual and a singular, national-level cultural identity (Hall 2000).

### ***Identity and languacultural resources***

We further argue that the complexity of individual identity can, and should, be linked to each individual's unique, developing set of linguistic and cultural resources which, in an extension of Agar's (1994) term, we term *languacultural resources*. Instead of the essentialising logic of 'he is from Greece, he is Greek, he speaks Greek', the MATE paradigm recognises the emergent and unique languacultural resources that each child will bring into school life and into their lifelong cultural development. To formulate this in another way, following Bauman (2000, 1), we see identity as a process in which individuals select certain elements of their languacultural resources

and identity repertoires for each communicational situation (Lytra 2007). From these chosen elements, they craft identity claims for presentation to others. This view emphasises the inherent link between their identity construction and their languacultural resources – a linkage of particular interest, we believe, for language teachers. In sum, these individualised languacultural resources need to be both valued and activated as part of the MATE paradigm's contribution to pupils' developing multicultural awareness.

Further, the MATE logic – of recognising the complexity of national identity and the complexity of the collective languacultural resources of all of the countries that the pupils encounter through their studies – could also contribute to an understanding of the TEIL paradigm which avoids the national essentialism referred to above.

### *Opening up intercultural spaces*

The MATE paradigm assumes that each culturally unique and complex pupil will bring their own developing languacultural resources to their interactions with others as they make use of, and develop, their repertoire of identities within their home societal context (and by extension, we can say that the TEIL paradigm assumes the same for learners' international interactions). These interactions can be usefully viewed in terms of Bhabha's (1994) *third spaces*, Holliday's (1999) *small, emergent cultures* and Kramsch's (1993) *third culture*, or what we term *intercultural space*, in which the pupils (and teachers also) are negotiating their emerging sense of identity. It is in this space that pupils' negotiate 'their own perception of the world, [...] their own opinions about the world they should get to know, love, and live in' (Pedagogical Institute n.d.-b, 17).

In the MATE paradigm, we need to understand the interactions in which the pupils are invited to take part – with their peers and teachers as well as those they vicariously experience through the materials – as spaces for emergent meaning-making and knowledge-building. Whereas TEFL materials may present norm-providing, exemplar interactions between, for example, EFL learners and English native-speakers or with other foreigners, for a MATE repositioning, the pupils could be provided with examples of meaning being explicitly negotiated, shared and co-constructed by individuals from the home context. It might be that the textbook materials present examples of such meaning negotiation taking place in an international frame (i.e. a TEIL perspective) but, as we demonstrate later, the MATE paradigm would seek to add activities which provide a home context frame for it.

### **Operationalising the MATE paradigm**

Although some new textbooks are currently being developed by the Pedagogical Institute, at this time, many English teachers in state schools in Greece still base their lessons on textbooks produced before the CTCF's multicultural agenda was fully articulated. Therefore, to illustrate the MATE paradigm in action, we have chosen to reposition – rather than evaluate using multicultural criteria for which it was not designed – Unit 2 from *Funway, English 2* (Triantafyllou et al. 1993/2003), used with 11-year-old pupils in the fifth grade of primary schools. In what follows below, we are assuming that the teachers in question are intrigued enough by the MATE paradigm to want to explore it but, we accept that, by so doing, we are jumping over the important step of persuading them that this effort is a worthwhile one.



*Funway English 2, Unit 2*

As detailed in the teacher's notes, the unit is based on a scenario involving a group of exchange students from many different countries, visiting Glendale school, an English-medium school seemingly located in an English-speaking country. It is interesting that the pupils studying these materials are invited to engage with three different sorts of societal context. Explicitly, they are involved with the Glendale, English-medium school context as well as with the set of foreign countries from which the exchange students come. Implicitly, the pupils' study also relates to their Greek societal context.

The teachers' notes suggest that 'the main purpose of this kind of exchange is to promote cultural understanding between children of different countries'. This rationale focuses more on developing the pupils' intercultural awareness (i.e. although it may be experienced occasionally at home – through an exchange, for example – cultural difference is located internationally) rather than on what we would term their multi-cultural awareness (i.e. cultural diversity experienced within their local context). Further, the foreign contexts, as we will see below, are presented in largely stereotypical terms as linked to a perception of their majority culture.

The unit opens with *Walk together, talk together* (see the Appendix). This shows the visiting exchange students arriving and being welcomed by the Glendale students. By exploiting stereotypes about cultural difference available in a Greek societal perspective, the arriving pupils, unlike the Glendale pupils, are represented as evidently 'foreign' (i.e. culturally different from the welcoming context, and, by implication, culturally different from the Greek context of the pupils studying the materials). This identity positioning is made salient visually: thus, the arriving pupils, unlike their local counterparts, wear what would generally be considered to be 'foreign' clothes such as the hijab (Islamic clothing) or saree (Indian dress), and they are different also in their racial phenotype (e.g. at least one of them is black). Thus, the underlying assumption is that of an apparently homogeneous group of local students (i.e. the Glendale students, but also, by extension, the local pupils in Greece) welcoming a culturally mixed group of newcomers who are explicitly 'different' in appearance.

In *Be my guest* (see the Appendix), two Glendale students are speaking about one of the visiting pupils. One says: 'That's Fernando. He's from Spain. He lives in Madrid. He likes playing the drums.' The other then welcomes Fernando: 'Hi Fernando, I'm Mary' to which he replies 'Hola' (Spanish for 'Hi').

*Children of the world* (see the Appendix) presents a writing activity in which the pupils use the description provided earlier in the unit as a model for their own writing. The model consists of a description of a visiting pupil (e.g. Oscar from Peru) accompanied by supportive photographs. The writing task prompt – 'Have you got a friend from another country? Use pictures and write about him/her' – explicitly links difference to the foreign, and the model provided tends to articulate such difference in largely stereotypical terms about the foreign country concerned.

We argue that this treatment of cultural difference through English certainly explores more than just target English-speaking societies (e.g. the UK, the USA). However, it does so in terms of visiting characters from abroad who, although they have individualised interests (e.g. playing the drums), nonetheless seem representative of the unitary national culture associated with their country; thus, for instance, their names 'match' their assumed origins with Chang from China and Paloma from Spain, and they engage in culture-specific practices with Oscar from Peru eating tortillas with chillies and peppers. This provides little or no space for Chang being an ethnic

Table 3. MATE paradigm – prompts for textbook materials repositioning.

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[A]	<p><i>De-essentialising the individual and their languacultural resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the textbook material assume that both the pupils themselves and the characters they encounter through the material are culturally simple as linked to the perceived majority culture of each of the societies involved (i.e. home society and foreign societies) and therefore will possess a simple languacultural resource linked to the perceived cultural majority in each of the societies concerned?</li> <li>• If so can the material be reworked so as to enable to pupils to explore:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A1. cultural identities which are non-essentialised?</li> <li>A2. the full range of their own languacultural resources, those of their peers, and those of the textbook characters as drawn from other societies?</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
[B]	<p><i>De-essentialising societies and the languacultural resources in them:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the textbook material assume that both the pupils' home society (i.e. Greece) and the societies of the characters they encounter through the materials are culturally simple as linked to the perceived majority culture of each of the societies involved (i.e. home society and foreign societies) and therefore are associated only with the assumed languacultural resource of the perceived cultural majority in each of the societies concerned?</li> <li>• If so, can the material be reworked so as to enable to pupils to explore:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B1. each of these societies in a non-essentialised manner?</li> <li>B2. the full range of languacultural resources to be found in their own society and those of the other societies presented in the textbook material?</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

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Chinese from Malaysia rather than China, or for Paloma being from anywhere apart from Spain.

In sum, Unit 2 materials do tend to present what we would regard as essentialised and stereotypical views of the individuals and the societies concerned, as well as essentially singular languacultural resources for both individuals and societies. Modelled on the way in which the Glendale and foreign country contexts are presented (i.e. as homogeneous societies based on the cultural characteristics of the perceived majority group/national culture), it is likely that the pupils will conceive of their Greek context in similar culturally homogeneous, national-culture terms. Thus, the MATE challenge for teachers is to consider how the same material can be extended to provide a more multiculturally oriented, de-essentialised perspective on Greek society, on the culturally diverse individuals within it and on the languacultural resources associated with both Greek society and the individuals within it. This challenge would be made significantly easier if the materials, in keeping with a TEIL perspective, already presented an intercultural oriented, de-essentialised perspective on other societies, on the culturally diverse individuals within them and on the languacultural resources associated with those societies and the individuals. As things stand, teachers have to work that much harder at the above challenge because the materials were informed by a TEFL perspective rather than a TEIL one. To focus our illustrative MATE repositioning of this Unit 2 material, we have developed sample materials repositioning prompts (Table 3).

### ***Repositioning 'Walk together, talk together'***

With the welcoming group of pupils, the teacher might invite the class to produce their own class portrait to replace that of the Glendale students in the book. Their attention

could be drawn to the need to include all the pupils in the class, and this could bring out any cultural diversity in that class. Attention could also be paid to the words offered in welcome, with the pupils brainstorming what other words and phrases – apart from those in English and Greek – could be used from their collective languacultural resource bank. These possibilities would aim to raise awareness of the possible cultural diversity in the class and value their diverse languacultural resources. If the class, despite the rising levels of diversity in Greek society, were still relatively homogeneous in cultural terms, the pupils might be invited to think of localising the welcoming portrait for their village, town or city, or indeed for the whole of Greece. In this way, they might consider the cultural diversity present in Greek society overall even if that diversity were not so present in their particular class.

### ***Repositioning ‘Be my guest’***

It might be that within the class itself some of the pupils can suggest which other languages are significantly used in Spain, i.e. how else might Fernando greet his Glendale peers? This exploration of possibilities would help raise the pupils’ awareness of the broader languacultural resources that might be at play in the foreign society being presented. Alternatively, or additionally, the teacher could add to the textbook coverage of characters from Spain (or another societal context with which the Spanish language is associated) by introducing some extra characters whose names and choice of language of welcome demonstrate the languacultural diversity within that society. Depending on the technological and other resources available, the pupils could be asked to find out which other languages are used in the countries mentioned in the unit as well as list the languages spoken by their classmates, and/or list the languages used in contemporary Greek society. The basic purpose of all of these activities would be to sow the seed that languacultural diversity is the norm rather than the singular perspective suggested by the existing material.

### ***Repositioning ‘Children of the world’***

The teacher, having given the activity a purpose by creating an audience for the pupils’ writing, might reposition it by inviting them to think about a friend, neighbour or media personality within Greece who is culturally different from them and to write a description of them. Interestingly, this might result in a pupil whose family has recently migrated to Greece writing a descriptive portrait of a ‘Greek’ friend. The teacher could also make further use of the new characters introduced earlier – i.e. the ones demonstrating non-stereotypical languacultural resources vis-à-vis the country with which they were associated – by inviting the pupils to write a description of these characters.

### **Concluding remarks**

The repositional activities suggested above are not particularly innovative in themselves, nor do they involve the teacher in major new materials production. They do provide, however, simple examples of how existing materials with a foreign cultural awareness orientation can be given a new ‘twist’ to better enable the development of multicultural awareness. When supported by a belief in the valuable contribution of

education to the multicultural challenges faced by societies such as Greece, such repositioning could become an established part of teachers' planning and practice. Once this happens, we believe that an enriching MATE orientation can be introduced, where not already present, into more or less any TESOL material. In this way, the English language classroom could fully contribute to the multicultural awareness objectives articulated in the CTCF. It could also play its part in the educational response to the rapidly changing demographics of contemporary Greek society by better preparing pupils for multicultural realities of Greece and more widely. Based on the MATE conceptualising work of this article, future work could explore, for example, through an extended action research project, the value of MATE within TESOL practitioners' professional agendas in Greece and elsewhere. Further future work could investigate how learners themselves, including those who have a language other than Greek as their home language, respond to the MATE orientation introduced in the TESOL material.

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### Notes

1. In this article, we do not follow the Council of Europe distinction between multicultural (a description of a society) and pluricultural (a description of person's ability to function in a multicultural society).
2. TESOL, the abbreviation for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, is the umbrella term we use for the various contexts of English language teaching worldwide traditionally subdivided primarily into Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and as a Second Language (TESL).
3. The emphasis in these quotes has been added by the authors to highlight the ideological force of the CTCF text.
4. Some of the quotations in this section are our translations of the original Greek documents.
5. The term TESL is often used to refer to the teaching of English to speakers of other languages in the USA, i.e. to TESOL provision in an Inner Circle context, provision less confusingly termed Teaching English as an Additional Language (TEAL).

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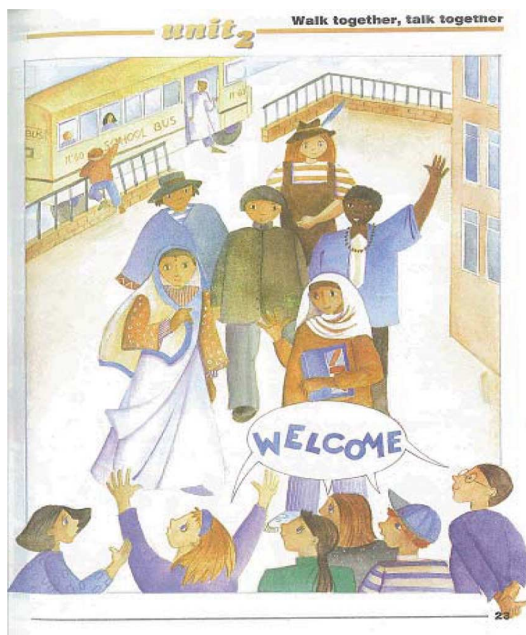


## Appendix

*Walk together, talk together*

Source: Triantafyllou et al. (1993, 23, 'Funway 2').

Reproduced with kind permission from the Pedagogical Institute.



*Be my guest*

Source: Triantafyllou et al. (1993, 24, 'Funway 2').

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*Children of the world*

Source: Triantafyllou et al. (1993, 32, 'Funway 2').

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UNIT 2      **Lesson 3**      Children of the world

Oscar lives in the Andes mountains of Peru. His father has got a farm and Oscar helps him with the sheep. There is no water on their farm, so his mother washes their clothes in the river. She also makes tortillas with potatoes, hot peppers and lemon, and they all eat dinner together. On Sunday mornings the whole family goes to church.

Pauline is from Malaysia. Her family lives in a very small house and Pauline sleeps with her sisters and brothers in the same room. In the morning she goes to school and then she helps her mother in the kitchen. She loves swimming in the river near their village. Her father goes fishing there, too.

*Project...*

Have you got a friend from another country? Use pictures and write about him/her.

32