

THE ELEPHANT IN THE DUTCH CLASSROOM

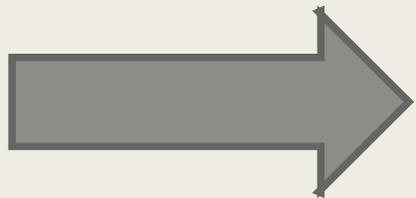
Educating language minoritized students in
the Netherlands

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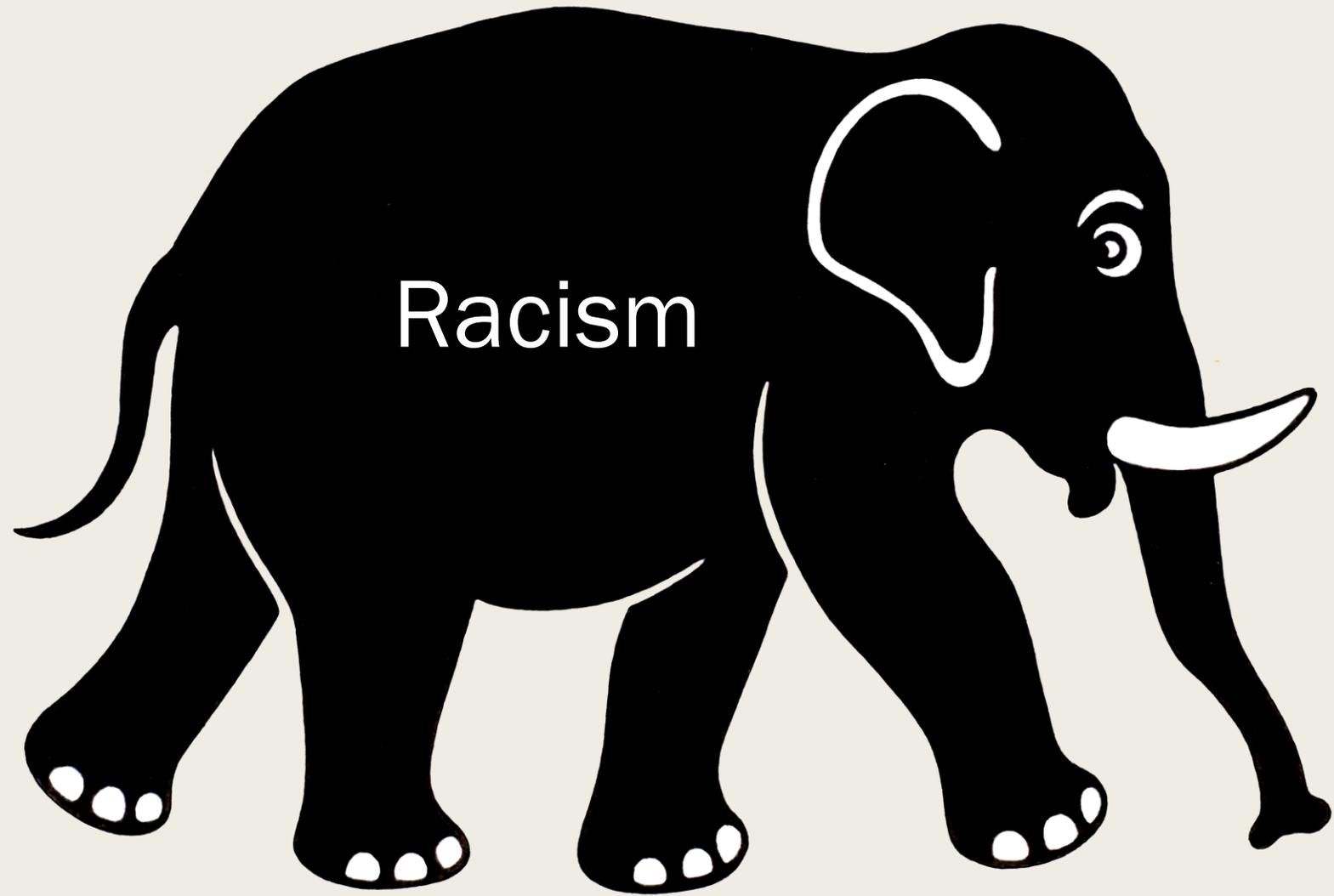
SLO Conference *Multilingual Learners: literacy, identity and learning*,
with Jim Cummins, Utrecht 24 April 2018

Three potential sources of educational disadvantage (Cummins 2018):

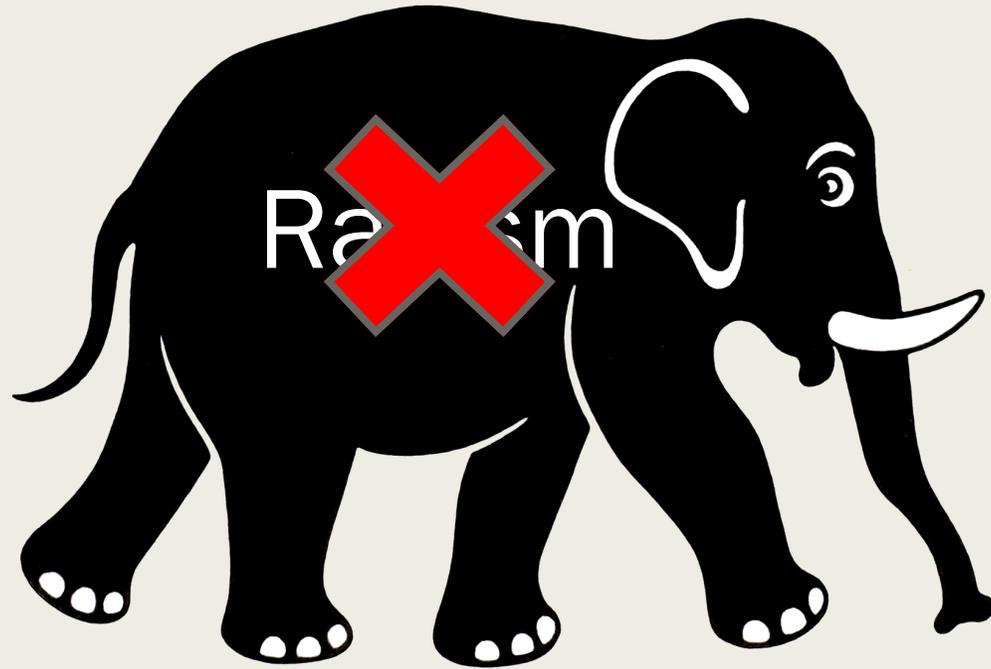
1. Home-school language switch
2. Low social economic status
3. Marginalized group status deriving from social discrimination and/or racism in the wider society



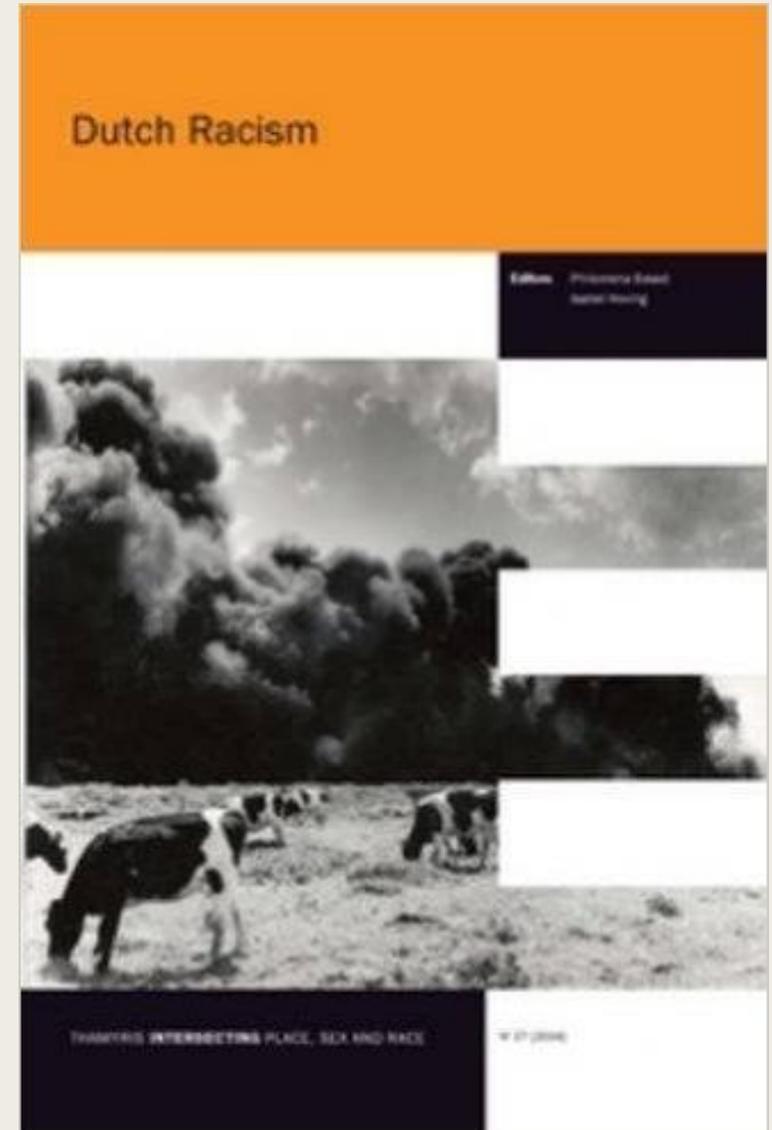
Achievement gap migrant children in the Netherlands (up to 3rd generation)



Racism

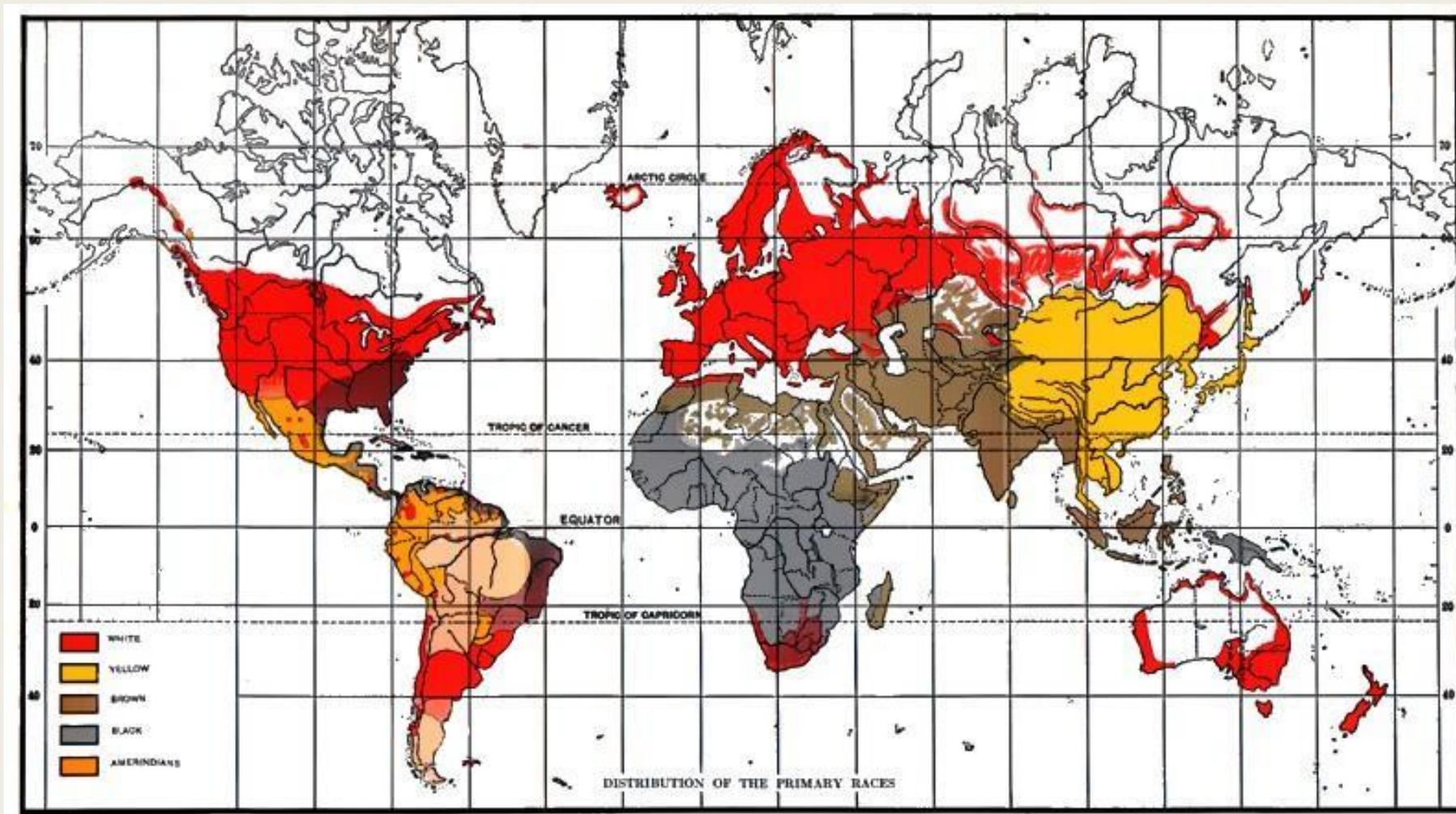


Philomena Essed &
Isabel Hoving, Dutch
Racism (2014)

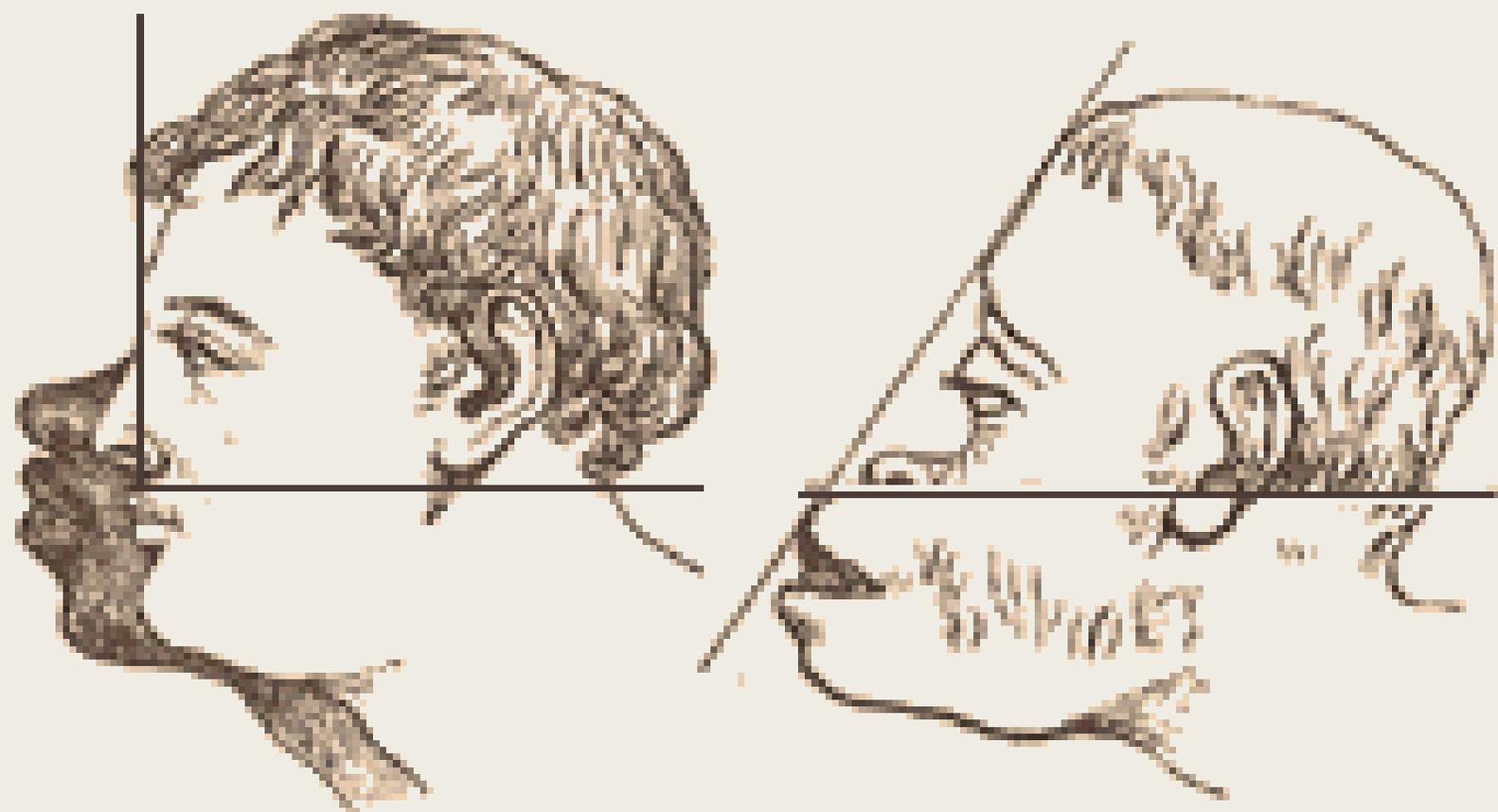


What is racism/racial discrimination?

Distribution of race: 'White', 'Yellow', 'Brown', 'Black', 'Amerindian'



Stoddard Race Map, 1920



[Profile of Negro, European, and Oran Outan.]



UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2015)

17. While the Committee understands that the tradition of Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet (Black Pete) is enjoyed by many persons in Dutch society, it notes with concern that the character of Black Pete is sometimes portrayed in a manner **that reflects negative stereotypes of people of African descent** and is experienced by many people of African descent as a vestige of slavery, which is **injurious to the dignity and self-esteem** of children and adults of African descent.

The Committee is concerned about the discriminatory effect of such portrayals, which may convey a conception at odds with the Convention.

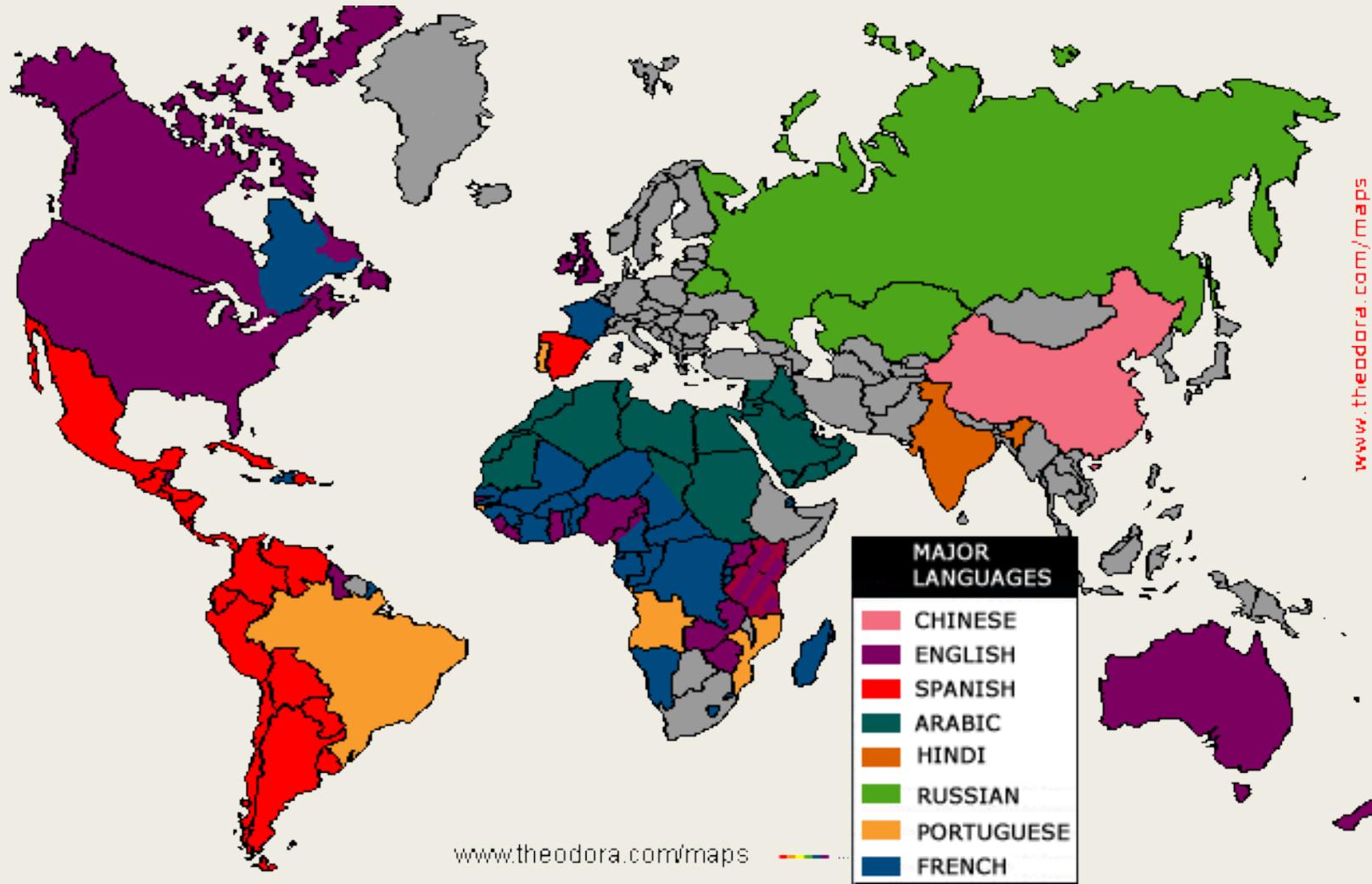
What is role of racism in the teaching of multilingual learners?

Named languages vs. Idiolects

- ‘languages’ as seen from the outside, from a cultural, social and political perspective.
- Not real from a linguistic point of view => social constructs
- Idiolect: a person’s own unique, personal language

Ricardo Otheguy, Ofelia García & Wallis Reid (2015), Clarifying translanguaging and deconstructing named languages: a perspective from linguistics.

Language map



The cost of exclusion

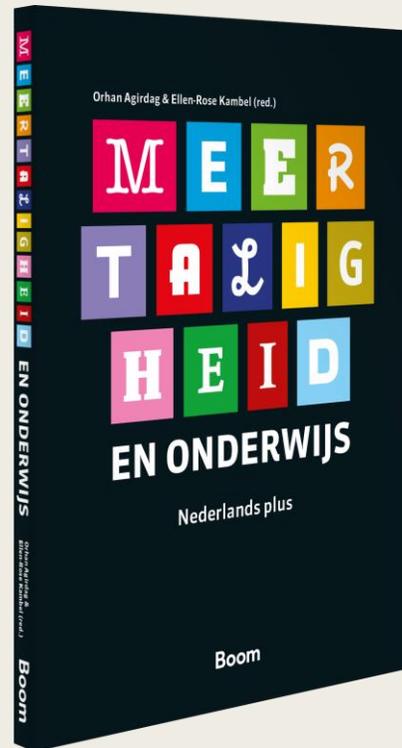
- Languages are social constructs, but engaging in ‘deviant’ linguistic practices has real social consequences: teasing, punishment, expulsion from school
- Forcing children to suppress a large part of their idiolect in monolingual programmes may result in repetition, drop-out, placement in lower tracks with significant costs for the individual and society.

Raciolinguistic ideologies

Nelson Flores & Jonathan Rosa (2015), Undoing Appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education:

- **Language-Minoritized students:** it is not their lack of proficiency in objective linguistic practices but their racial positioning in society affects how their linguistic practice is heard
- **Raciolinguistic ideologies:** produces racialized speaking subjects who are constructed as linguistically deviant even when engaging in linguistic practices positioned as normative or innovative when produced by privileged white subjects.

Dutch examples



- Compare stories of Suheyla and Jahkini in Orhan Agirdag & Ellen-Rose Kambel (ed), 2017. *Meertaligheid en Onderwijs. Nederlands Plus*. Amsterdam: Boom uitgevers.

WHAT CAN/SHOULD WE DO?



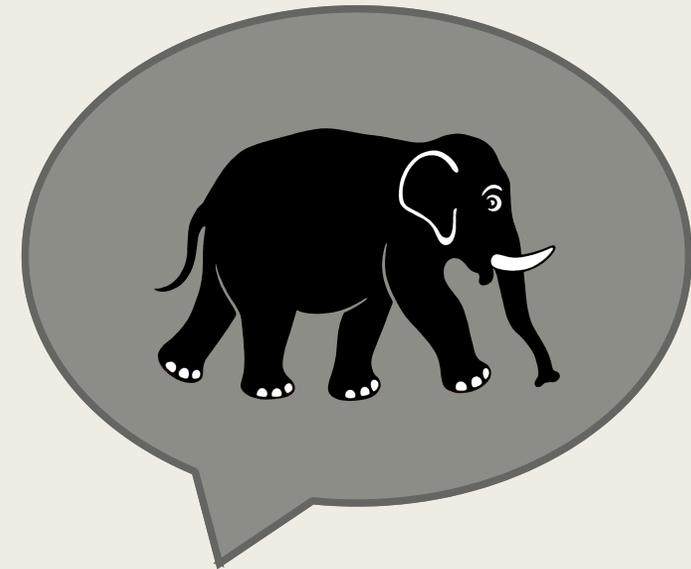
4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote life long learning



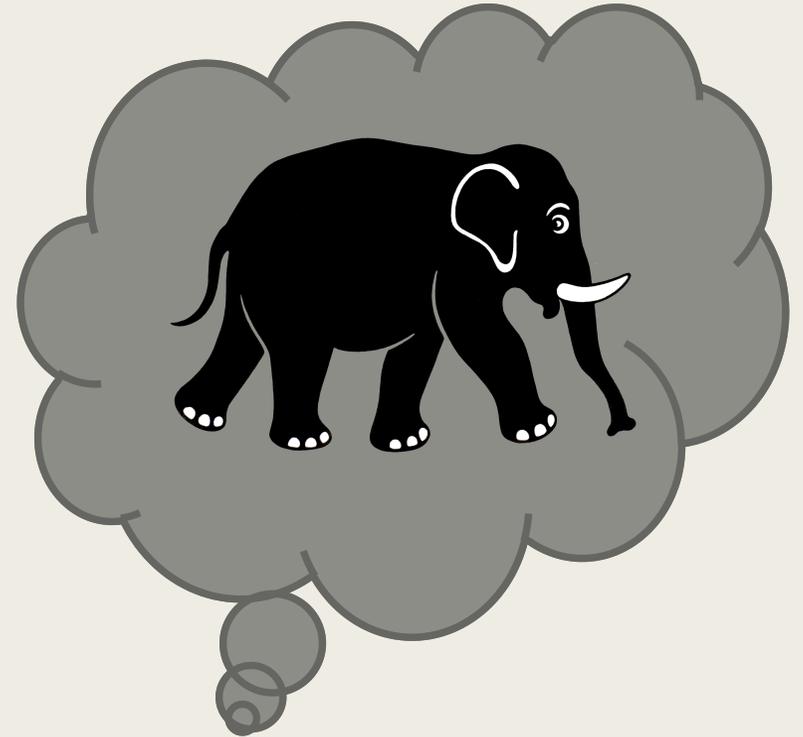
1. Listen to the speakers

- What can we learn from the experiences of minoritized students?
- How do they experience different forms of exclusion?
- What deeper understanding do we gain from their insights?



2. Reflect on own practice

- Think and talk about the elephant, as uncomfortable as it may be
- What language ideologies do we hold ourselves?
- How does that stigmatize the linguistic practices of minoritized students?
- What is role of listener (teacher) in producing minoritized speakers?



3. Empower the students

Encourage
translanguaging:
allow them to use
their full linguistic
repertoire

Raise their
awareness of the
role of power in
language, education
and social position.

Help them to
envisage
'alternative, more
inclusive realities'

References

- Agirdag, Orhan & Ellen-Rose Kambel (ed), 2017. *Meertaligheid en Onderwijs. Nederlands Plus*. Amsterdam: Boom uitgevers.
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- Flores, Nelson & Jonathan Rosa (2015), Undoing Appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education. In: *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 85 (2), pp. 149-171.
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- United Nations Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *Concluding Observations The Netherlands 2015*. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/216/36/PDF/G1521636.pdf?OpenElement>

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