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Author(s): Mäntylä, Katja; Kalaja, Paula

Title: 'The Class of My Dreams' as Envisioned by Student Teachers of English : What Is There to Teach about the Language?

Year: 2019

Version: Accepted version (Final draft)

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Please cite the original version:

Mäntylä, K., & Kalaja, P. (2019). 'The Class of My Dreams' as Envisioned by Student Teachers of English : What Is There to Teach about the Language?. In P. Kalaja, & S. Melo-Pfeifer (Eds.), Visualising Multilingual Lives : More Than Words (pp. 254-274). Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788922616-018

Chapter 14

'The Class of My Dreams' as Envisioned by Student Teachers of English: What Is There to Teach about the Language?

KATJA MÄNTYLÄ and PAULA KALAJA

As part of a bigger project on the motivation of future EFL teachers, this chapter sets out to find out what a group of student teachers (N = 67) in Finland thought teaching English would involve once they had graduated from an MA programme and entered the profession a few years later. They were asked to envision 'An English class of my dreams' as the final home assignment on one of their first professionally oriented courses. The envisioning was done visually so the students produced pictures (by a variety of means) and provided further details about the class in writing, on the reverse side of the task sheet. The pool of multimodal data collected was subjected to content analysis, and it revealed a total of five different aspects of the English language the participants wished to teach. In addition, the comparison of three case studies indicated that the amount of pedagogical studies and/or teaching experience made a difference in the quality of the visions: with more years on our MA programme, the principles and practices envisioned tended to become more complex/sophisticated.

Introduction

The motivation of second (L2) or foreign language learners has been studied extensively and from a variety of different starting points over the past few decades (for reviews, see e.g. Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015: 72–105). This chapter, however, is about L2 teachers and their motivation. It reports on a study conducted as part of a larger project that addresses L2 teacher motivation within quite a novel framework, that is, as a motivational self-system, and explores further the possibilities of imagining visually and verbally a future event of L2 teaching. To this end, we asked a group of student teachers to produce a visual representation of an ideal English class that they would like to give after they have entered the profession as novice teachers in a few years' time, and comment on it in writing. The student teachers were attending one of their first professionally oriented courses as part of their English studies at a Finnish university. The overall idea of the course was to make the students aware of their ideal L2 selves and compare and contrast their past experiences of L2

learning and teaching with their ideals, and see how close together these might be at this point in their studies. In this chapter we will focus on how the student teachers see language and what they would ideally like to teach about the English language in the future. How they envision their own teaching is closely related to how motivated they will feel about entering the profession after graduating from our MA programme.

We will first provide some background to our study by describing the context where it took place and by reviewing some relevant studies with comparable groups of student teachers who have already entered working life. After this, we will report the details of our own study: its aims, the data collection and analysis, and our findings. Finally, we will discuss the implications of our study.

Background to the study

Context of the study: Teaching and learning English in Finland

English is by far the most popular foreign language taught and learned in the Finnish educational system. Its study used to start in Year 3, i.e. at the age of nine, with well over 90% of school children choosing to study it as their first foreign language. In the 2010s, the aim has been to start English studies as early as in Years 1 and 2.

In Finland, the teaching of English or any other foreign language is regulated by a number of guidelines. *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001; for short CEFR) provides very general guidelines. The national core curriculums, on which towns or municipalities and schools base their own curriculums, are more specific and influential in practice.

The CEFR provides a shared understanding of what teaching, learning and assessing foreign languages involves in Europe – and these days also in other parts of the world. This is viewed in terms of language activities, domains and competences. Language activities are divided into four types: 1) reception (listening and reading), 2) production (spoken or written), 3) interaction (spoken and written) and 4) mediation (translation and interpreting). Domains describe in which contexts the language activities take place: personal, educational, public and/or occupational. Competences indicate to what extent a learner has developed in carrying out specific language activities in specific domains. For the purposes of planning teaching and assessing learning, the CEFR provides a six-point scale of proficiency levels, A1–C2. The CEFR takes a very functional view towards language, and its starting point is what learners can do in the language.

The Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (Years 1–9; Board of Education, 2014; for short NCC 2014) and *for Upper Secondary School* (Years 10–12; Board of Education,

2015; for short NCC 2015) have just been revised, as have the local curriculums that are based on the NCCs. These new guidelines have been effective since August 2016.

The NCCs 2014 and 2015 specify three main aims for the teaching of foreign languages in Finland. Basically these three aims are the same as they were before, but their order has been revised. Now the first aim is to raise students' awareness and appreciation of multilingualism and multiculturalism, and of languages in general. The second aim is to provide students with practice in learning-to-learn skills, and the third is to develop their proficiency in English in three abilities or skills: in the ability to interact, interpret and produce oral, written and multimodal texts. Importantly, it is now acknowledged that the status of English has changed from that of a foreign language to that of a lingua franca or global language, even though the language has no official status in Finland. However, young people in Finland learn and use English not only in formal school contexts but also, and increasingly, in a variety of informal contexts such as hobbies, spare time activities, travelling, and using modern IT with all its applications. The diversity of learning contexts is recognized in the revised curriculums. The curriculums also suggest that English could be used for looking for information, and for teaching content through English as a medium of instruction (CLIL). The CEFR proficiency scale is used as a reference point in teaching foreign languages in Finland. The aims are set higher for the teaching and learning of English in any language activity compared with the aims for other foreign languages, reflecting the prominent role English has in the life of any Finn these days.

The revisions in the NCCs over time reflect global changes in views on language skills and proficiency. A relatively new feature included in the most recent NCCs is language awareness. However, the NCCs do not define language awareness in any way, nor do they provide teachers or students with much advice as to how it could be fostered. More recent research has acknowledged the importance of language awareness to language learning (see e.g. Kerz *et al*., 2017), both implicit and explicit, and, for instance, The American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2015) has incorporated comparisons with other languages and cultures into their standards for language learning. The ACTFL standards cover communicating, interacting and using the foreign language. The connection between language and culture is very strong, as is recognizing and understanding other languages and their speakers/users. In this sense, the standards are similar to the NCCs in Finland.

However, recent research has added new dimensions to investigating foreign language learning that perhaps have not yet received so much attention in the Finnish school context: in SLA research the complexity of language has been explored by adding dimensions such as complexity, accuracy and fluency to the elements of language skills such as reading and speaking (Housen *et al*., 2012).

Similarly, various elements of language and language skills have been looked at from new angles that cannot easily be seen in Finnish schools or the curriculums: for example, the idea that grammar skills have been shown to involve more than just knowing the right forms and being able to use them (Larsen-Freeman, 2003), or that vocabulary skills can be seen to consist of different levels and dimensions (Mäntylä & Huhta, 2014).

To conclude, the teaching of English in Finland is now faced with new challenges not only in terms of its aims, with consequent changes needed in classroom practices, teaching materials, and the roles of teachers and learners, but also in terms of how language and language skills are understood (for details, see Kalaja *et al*., in press).

Learning and teaching English in Finland: Past experiences and visions

In a study by Leppänen and Kalaja (2002), students of English, half of whom were student teachers, were asked to recollect their past experiences of learning English and write an autobiography. The study was discursive, and it identified a total of five *thematic elements* in their writing: 1) Effortless acquisition, 2) Struggling, 3) Infatuation, 4) Suffering, and 5) Learning as by-product. Within these elements, the role of the students varied from hero, in which case they had learned English as a result of a special magical characteristic of their own, or because of the time and effort they had invested in learning the language, or just by pure luck, to victim and anti-hero. The role of others, that is, external factors, including teachers, classmates, textbooks and trips abroad, varied accordingly, from no role at all to that of assistants and adversaries. Furthermore, the language being learned played different roles: it could be an outcome of a student's talents, a reward for struggling, a beloved, a reason for suffering, or an instrument making possible the student's pursuit of something else than just learning the language.

As part of the project *From Novice to Expert*, a study by Kalaja *et al*. (2011) focused on university students' past experiences of learning English and Swedish before they entered an MA programme in Finland. The study compared the students' experiences across the two languages and across two contexts: in school and out-of-school. The students were asked to fill in a questionnaire which consisted of a set of open-ended questions. The experiences of the two groups of learning the languages in school were comparable: they felt that the main emphasis had been on formal aspects of learning, i.e. practising grammar and vocabulary. In out-of-school contexts, however, their experiences of learning, or rather using, the languages for real communication had been quite different. While the students of English had been active/agentive in looking for opportunities to use the language (e.g. travelling, with friends, in hobbies or other spare time activities) and had been

exposed to plenty of input in English, including print and electronic media, this was much less the case with the students of Swedish, despite the language being the second official language in the country.

The same group of university students of English was followed over a period of five years (Kalaja, 2016a). They were asked to do a set of sentence completion tasks concerning English as their L2 and Finnish their L1, twice: first, when they were first-year students, and secondly, when they had just graduated or were about to graduate from the MA programme. The study was discursive, and it identified a total of four *interpretative repertoires* that the students resorted to in comparing English with Finnish: 1) Affection, 2) Aesthetics, 3) Vitality and 4) Challenge. The students felt either close to or distant from the two languages; found them beautiful or ugly; global or local as languages; and finally, easy or difficult to learn. The students acknowledged that their identity had evolved over the years from learners of English as a foreign language into users of English as a lingua franca. However, they had a tough time regarding themselves as multilingual, on account of two assumptions that they made: they should have learned English from birth, and should have had full competence in their L2, too, being evidence for a monolingual bias (see e.g. Ortega, 2014). Furthermore, they indicated very little awareness of e.g. social or regional variation in either language.

In addition, the project *From Novice to Expert* marks the beginning of Kalaja and her colleagues' exploration of the possibilities of using narratives in visual form to look into aspects of learning and teaching English as a foreign language. The group of English majors and minors mentioned above were also asked to produce drawings of themselves as learners of English and comment briefly on these in writing (for a summary of the early experimentation, see Kalaja *et al*., 2013). The studying of English at school was depicted as a lonely business, as if no others had been involved in the process, and very much dependent on written materials, i.e. books.

In a follow-up study, Kalaja and her colleagues (Alanen *et al.*, 2013; Kalaja, 2016b) asked a comparable group of student teachers of English and other foreign languages to imagine 'My Language X class in a year's time after graduation'. They were asked to depict the class visually by producing a drawing by hand and to comment on it briefly in writing. The pools of data were subjected to content analysis. For the most part, their teaching in the near future would take place in a regular classroom with a board and desks. They would ensure their students plenty of opportunities to communicate and/or practise oral skills/speaking while they themselves took on the role of guide in the class. Instead of textbooks, they would make use of authentic materials and modern IT. They wanted to ensure a relaxed atmosphere and the joy of learning in their classes, smiling faces being evidence of this in their drawings.

To sum up this review of previous studies, the learning and/or teaching of English as subjectively experienced by specific groups of student teachers in Finland, and at times compared with another language, have been studied widely over the past few years. Methodologically, the studies have made use of a variety of data collection methods ranging from questionnaires and sentence completion tasks to narratives, initially written ones, more recently visual ones[i]. In the earlier studies, narratives were used for looking back in time to recollect past experiences, but more recently they have been used for looking forward to imagine future events. Importantly, all these studies illustrate that learning and teaching a foreign language involves more than mastery of the language as a system, as a tool for communication or as social interaction: it is a system of symbols, and thus the language and its learning and teaching can take on additional subjective meanings, arouse either positive or negative feelings in learners or teachers, and affect their identities, as has been pointed out even earlier by Kramsch (2009).

However, it is only after these studies that we became aware of further developments in research on motivation, and realized that *vision* or *envisioning* (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014) is in fact related to the *L2 teacher motivational self-system*[ii] (e.g. Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei *et al*., 2015). Like L2 learners, L2 teachers are assumed to have a variety of selves: a Present self and a Future or Possible self; the latter divided into an Ideal self, an Ought-to self and a Feared self. In other words, as professionals in the field, L2 teachers have ideas about what they would ideally like to be, and these are reflected in the principles and practices they apply in their classes: what they see as feasible for themselves; what they believe others expect of them; and what they themselves fear or would not wish to end up being/becoming. Of the L2 teacher selves, the Ideal self is related to how motivated teachers feel and how they manage to cope with the new challenges that they are bound to face in the course of their careers. In sum, motivation, envisioning and identity seem to go hand in hand.

Aims of the study

At the Finnish university where we work, teacher education is a joint undertaking of two departments: the Department of Teacher Education offers studies in Pedagogy, including practical teacher training in cooperation with local schools, while the Department of Language and Communication Studies organizes two introductory courses on learning and teaching any foreign language that are compulsory for all student teachers. The English Section of the department goes on from there to offer student teachers of English intermediate and advanced courses, including *Current Issues in Teaching English* (CITE, 5 ECTS credits).

Being involved in the education of future English teachers, we decided to set up a new project. The project is based on the recent developments in the field of L2 teacher motivation and previous research carried out in Finland reviewed above, but with further refinement in research methodology and with a more recent group of student teachers as participants. Overall, our goal here is to make this group aware, firstly, of their ideal L2 teacher selves, i.e. what they think they will expect of themselves once they enter working life as qualified novice teachers of English in a few years' time, and secondly, of their current teaching principles, practices and ideals. We also wanted to make them aware of the various aspects they need to consider: the roles of the teacher and learners, how people learn, and what there is to learn about English.

Our project seeks to find answers to the following research questions: what would an ideal class of English be like and, more specifically, where would the class take place, what would be taught there, and how? Some preliminary findings have already been reported as a pilot study (Kalaja & Mäntylä, 2018) with a smaller number of student teachers of English. In this chapter, we will focus on one of the key sub-questions listed above in greater detail, that is, what would be taught in the class of their dreams. Or to put it another way: how does this specific group of student teachers see what teaching language and, more specifically, teaching English, involves?

In order to answer the research question, we asked the student teachers to envision an English class of their dreams, but a class that it would still be feasible to give after graduating and entering the profession in a few years' time, and to describe it in two modes, visually and verbally.

Data collection and analysis procedures

Participants

The participants in the study were student teachers of English (N = 67) at a university in Finland. Most of the students were second- or third-year English majors, enrolled on a five-year MA programme. A dozen students wanted to become elementary school teachers, qualifying to teach young children English or in English, i.e. to offer CLIL courses. In addition, a couple of exchange students attended the course. All the participants had some pedagogical studies behind them, although second-year English majors had only very little. Some, especially those minoring in English, had also completed their practical teacher training, and/or worked as supply teachers. In sum, the participants formed quite a heterogeneous group in a number of respects; what they did have in common, however, was that they had all been studying English either as their major or minor subject.

As part of their English studies, the students attended CITE in the academic year 2015–2016 or 2016–2017. The course is compulsory for future teachers of English. The students had weekly

reading assignments from an introductory textbook by Hummel (2014), complemented with recent journal articles, and the topics were discussed in class. The course focused on the teaching of English in the context of Finland.

Recognizing that the field of language learning and teaching is full of controversies and inconclusive findings, it was interesting to us as teachers and teacher educators to see how the student teachers, having completed all the compulsory courses in our department, made sense of the pedagogical knowledge they had acquired so far during their studies, including the recently revised NCCs. Also, we wanted to see how they managed to turn this knowledge into a set of principles and practices that they could imagine applying in their future work as teachers of English.

Data collection and analysis

A task sheet was designed for the purposes of the research project of which this study is a part. It drew on ideas from a study by Hammerness (e.g. 2003), and was our attempt to explore further the possibilities of *visual narratives* for the purpose of envisioning (e.g. Kalaja, 2016b; Kalaja *et al*., 2013; Kalaja & Mäntylä, 2018). The task sheet consisted of Tasks 1 and 2.

Task 1 asked the participants to produce a picture with the title, 'An English class of my dreams', in which they showed a class that they could imagine giving after graduating from the five-year MA programme. The images could be drawn by hand or done on a computer, possibly making use of an image bank, or produced by compiling a collage out of magazine or newspaper clippings. In addition, the participants were asked to comment on the picture, writing a few sentences in response to the question, 'What would be taking place in your class', followed with a justification, 'Why?'

Task 2 on the reverse side of the task sheet asked the students to consider the envisioned English class in greater detail (and in a more systematic way than before, e.g. Kalaja, 2016b; Kalaja *et al*., 2013). This gave the students a chance to elaborate on the target group that they would like to teach, the roles of the teacher and the students, what they would teach and how, where their teaching would take place, and what equipment they would like to use (for further details, see Kalaja & Mäntylä, 2018).

The students completed the task sheet in Finnish as the last home assignment of CITE, the introductory course we offered. However, the few exchange students attending the course did this in English, and even some Finnish-speaking students chose to complete the task in English. The visions were shared and discussed in English during the very last session of the course – either in late November 2015 or 2016 or in April 2016 or 2017. The students were asked for their permission in writing to use the data anonymously for research purposes. Tasks 1 and 2 were given as homework in the hope that the students would have a week to reflect on the issues addressed on the

course before completing them. However, as often is the case with homework, some left it to the last minute. Of the alternative ways of producing the visual image, most of the students chose to draw a picture by hand and in black-and-white.

In the analysis of the multimodal data, we relied on *theory-driven thematic content analysis* (Dörnyei, 2007; Eskola & Suoranta, 2005). The content of the visual narratives, complemented with their verbal commentaries, was first roughly categorized on the basis of how the participants saw language. In other words, we tried to analyse their drawing of the class of their dreams to find clues to their understanding of language and language skills. After all, it could be assumed that when asked to depict a single class that they could design freely, participants would concentrate on matters close to their heart and on what they considered to be important. Indeed, in the commentaries on the visual images, nearly all the participants stressed the importance of what they had chosen to teach in the class of their dreams in order to improve their students' skills in English.

Our analysis produced a total of five different categories into which the content of teaching English fell:

1) Language for communication and interaction,
2) Language in connection with culture/authentic situations,
3) Metaknowledge about language/analysing language,
4) Language for learning about other school subjects and
5) Language as discrete elements to be learned.

As is often the case with categorizations, it was very difficult to draw clear boundaries between the categories and determine unequivocally into which one each picture fell. In fact, almost all the visual images and their commentaries contained elements from several categories.

Findings

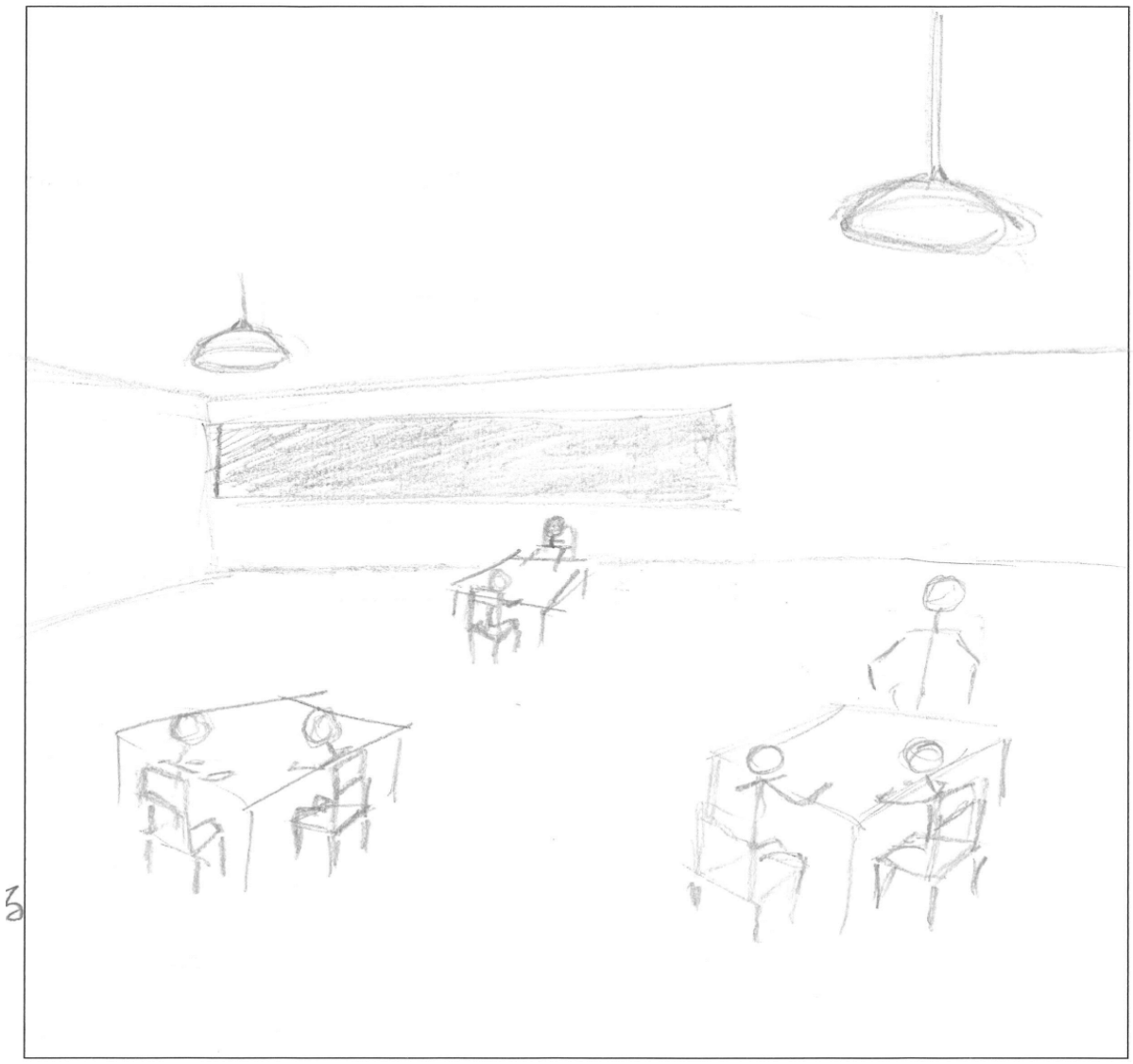
The findings will be reported in two stages. We will first discuss each of the five categories of what there would be to teach about English and provide some examples from the pool of multimodal data, and then describe three case studies to illustrate variation among the students.

Teaching language: The five content categories

The first thematic category, i.e. *communication and interaction* with other people, came as no surprise, as the previous NCCs that had been in effect when the participants themselves were still at school heavily emphasized communicative skills in learning and teaching foreign languages. This aim was realized as group work and classroom discussions. Communication and interaction was

mentioned in practically all the narratives, with only very few exceptions. Figure 1 shows how this was often also reflected in classroom organization, with students sitting in small groups.

Figure 1. Communication and interaction (Manu)

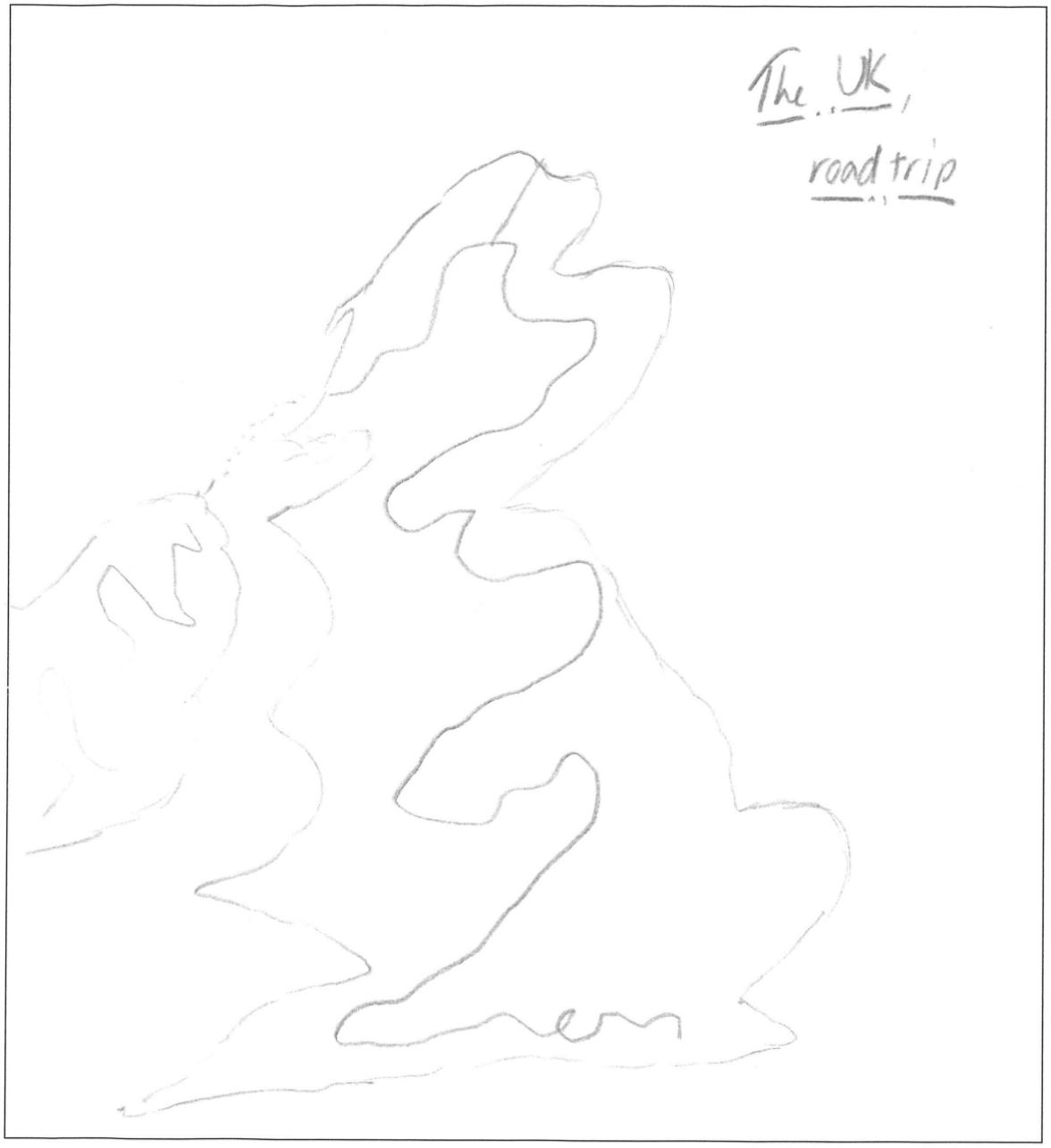


The picture was drawn by Manu. He said he wanted to encourage group work by not having individual desks but tables for bigger groups. He elaborated further that ‘students would be allowed to discuss various topics at their own pace’ and he would teach ‘conversational skills if necessary’. This optimism perhaps reflects the role of English in Finnish society: since opportunities for informal learning are many and students are used to using English in their everyday lives, Manu seems to think they already possess the skills they need and can talk freely in class. Manu himself had attended an international school, which has no doubt affected his views, as he had had

experience of talking in English at school. Even though the importance of spoken language is recognized, it is still not much practised in reality in Finnish schools. Kirsi, another participant, said that she would teach ‘discussion in English, courage to speak’, and this quite aptly sums up the visions that emphasized oral skills in English: these are not practised enough in schools, even though they are a vital aspect of learning and using the language.

The second thematic category, that was also the second most often mentioned, *language in connection with culture*, tended to go hand in hand with the first category or more specifically, speaking. Approximately a half of the participants mentioned their ideal lesson would contain culture. For instance, a discussion evolved around native-speaker visitors from different English-speaking countries. It was seen as important not only to bring authentic language but also cultural knowledge and, for instance, varieties of English into the classroom. Literature, music and films were also mentioned in the narratives; they were considered to be not only important ways of learning English but also something that learners ought to know about. Authenticity and culture were taken furthest in a picture drawn by Simo (Figure 2): he would organize a road trip around the UK. He explained that authentic situations and real language use are essential for language learners, and a road trip would give rise to all kinds of language use. He saw writing and creating language on and about the trip as an important goal for teaching.

Figure 2. Language in connection with culture/authentic situations (Simo)



Knowledge about culture is certainly an extension of the traditional view of language as something we either produce or receive. Similarly, knowing about language as a system, being able to analyse it and having metaknowledge about language, could be seen as further extensions of the traditional view. *Analysing language* was the third thematic category of the teaching content, and discussions and co-operation would be used for this purpose, as can be seen in Pinja´s drawing (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Metaknowledge about language/analysing language (Pinja)

The narratives included some albeit very few comments about language that concerned metaknowledge and awareness of how language is and can be used. For instance, some mention was made of social aspects of language use, such as gendered language, language and equality. In her written comments, Pinja said she wanted to teach about language and gender and about the language used in literature. One could, however, have expected there to be even more mentions of language awareness, given its prominent role in the new NCCs. Factors affecting language teaching and learning could also be seen in terms of metaknowledge about language. This would suggest that the students' ideals also touch upon the learning-to-learn skills that are mentioned in the NCCs.

The fourth category concentrated on *English as a medium for content*. Of course, those students (and their narratives) that attempted to incorporate aspects of culture into their teaching of English could be included in this category as well, but more specifically we considered here those who wanted to teach another school subject, such as history or art, using English as the medium of instruction. A picture by Noora (Figure 4) is a good example of this. On the other hand, she also

depicted quite a multilingual environment: not just English but several other languages, too, can be found in her picture, reflecting the aims of the new NCCs. In her comments, she wrote that she wanted to teach language, but also other contents such as history, and possibly integrate English with other school subjects. This would mean group projects, which were present in the lesson and in the pictures posted on the classroom walls: these were about the countries where the languages to be learned (including English) were spoken.

Figure 4. English as a medium for content (Noora) (translations*: älytaulu* ‘smart board’; *pädit* ‘iPads’; *kuvia kohdekielen maista* ‘pictures from the countries where the languages are spoken’; *oppilaiden töitä* ‘reports by students’; *pelejä* ‘games’)

In the new NCCs, phenomenon-based teaching plays a role, and CLIL can also be seen as a reflection of this. Some participants took content teaching even further: one student said he would teach ‘life’, while another considered educating his students to ‘be good people’ to be one of his

aims, as well as teaching conversational skills. Hence, teaching and learning a foreign language may include not only teaching and learning other school subjects in that language but also education in general.

The fifth category of content that we found in the data represented perhaps the most traditional view of learning a foreign language, i.e. English being viewed as *a set of discrete linguistic elements to be learned*. Heidi's picture (Figure 5) illustrates this.

Figure 5. Language as discrete elements to be learned (Heidi)

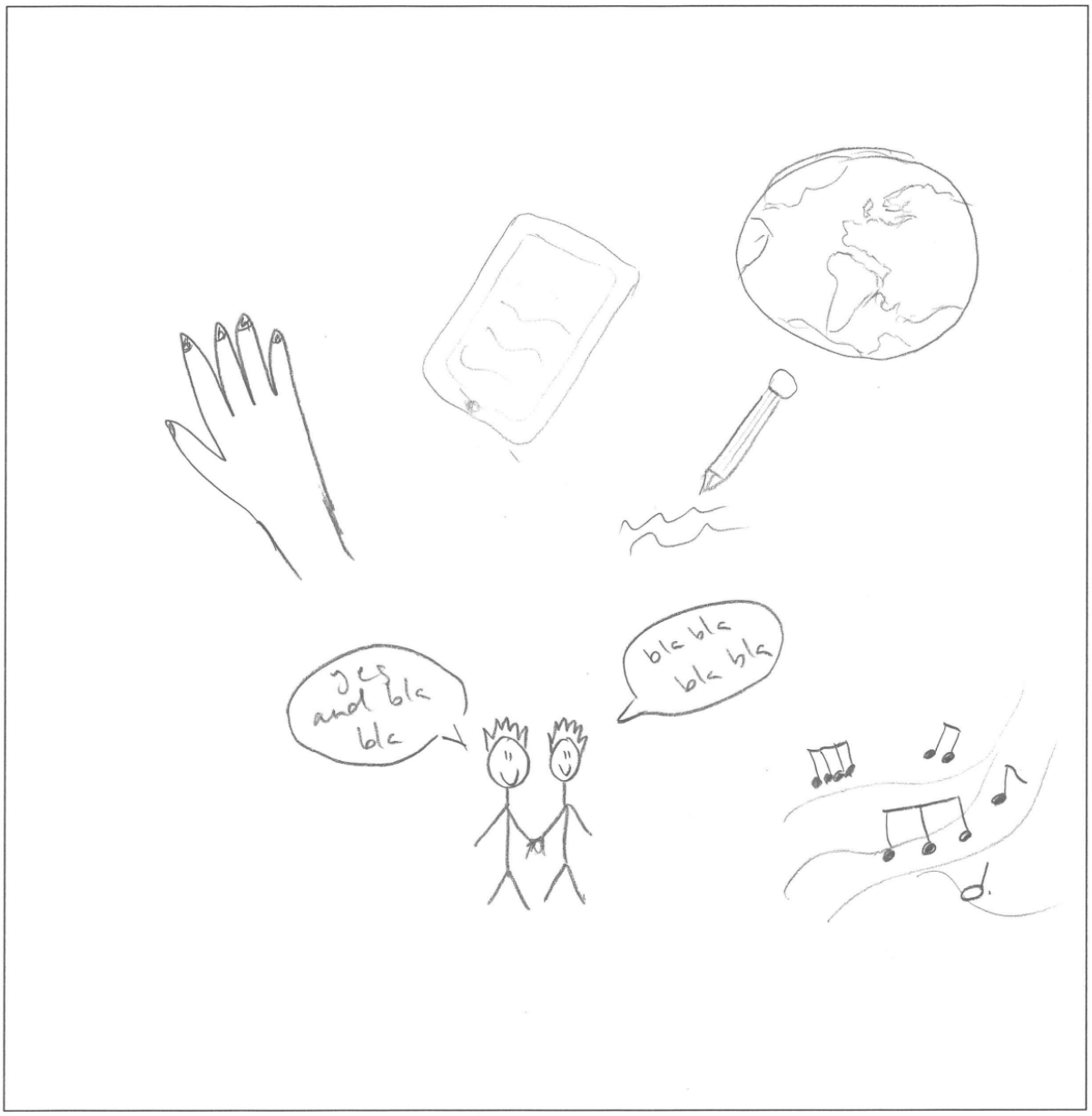
Since there has been a lot of discussion of the spoken language and pronunciation in Finland, pronunciation, phonetics, and accents got quite a few mentions when the participants were asked to specify the contents of the English class of their dreams. Various grammar items were mentioned, for instance, how to form questions or other sentence structures. Some respondents wanted to concentrate on vocabulary, and either mentioned topics they wanted to teach, e.g. months or colours, or parts of speech they would focus on, e.g. verbs. Considering the foci of the new and the previous NCC on communication, such a heavy emphasis on linguistic elements by not just one but almost a dozen participants was not expected. What was interesting was that these participants did not really consider language use or situations their students would encounter, or skills they would need, but a language element as such seemed to be a sufficient ingredient in the class of their dreams.

Three cases

Having looked into the five main categories of what there is to teach about English in a future class as envisioned by a group of student teachers, we will now turn to the three cases: Pirjo, Mikko and Aino. There is variation in the amount of pedagogical studies they had already completed and their teaching experience. We will be giving more background information about these three participants

Case 1. Pirjo was majoring in Education and had English as a minor subject, and she was already in her fifth year of English studies. In addition to having completed her pedagogical studies, she already had some experience of working as a teacher. We do not know whether or not she had spent time abroad. In her picture (Figure 6), ‘we would be learning about different cultures and how English is present in the lives of people around the world’. Interestingly, Pirjo did not talk about students learning, but used the pronoun *we*, implying that the teacher would be learning as well. The content of teaching would be speaking and culture, and Pirjo wanted to encourage her students to speak even if they were not yet fully competent, thus reflecting a communicative and functional view of language skills.

Figure 6. Pirjo: pedagogical studies completed, some teaching experience

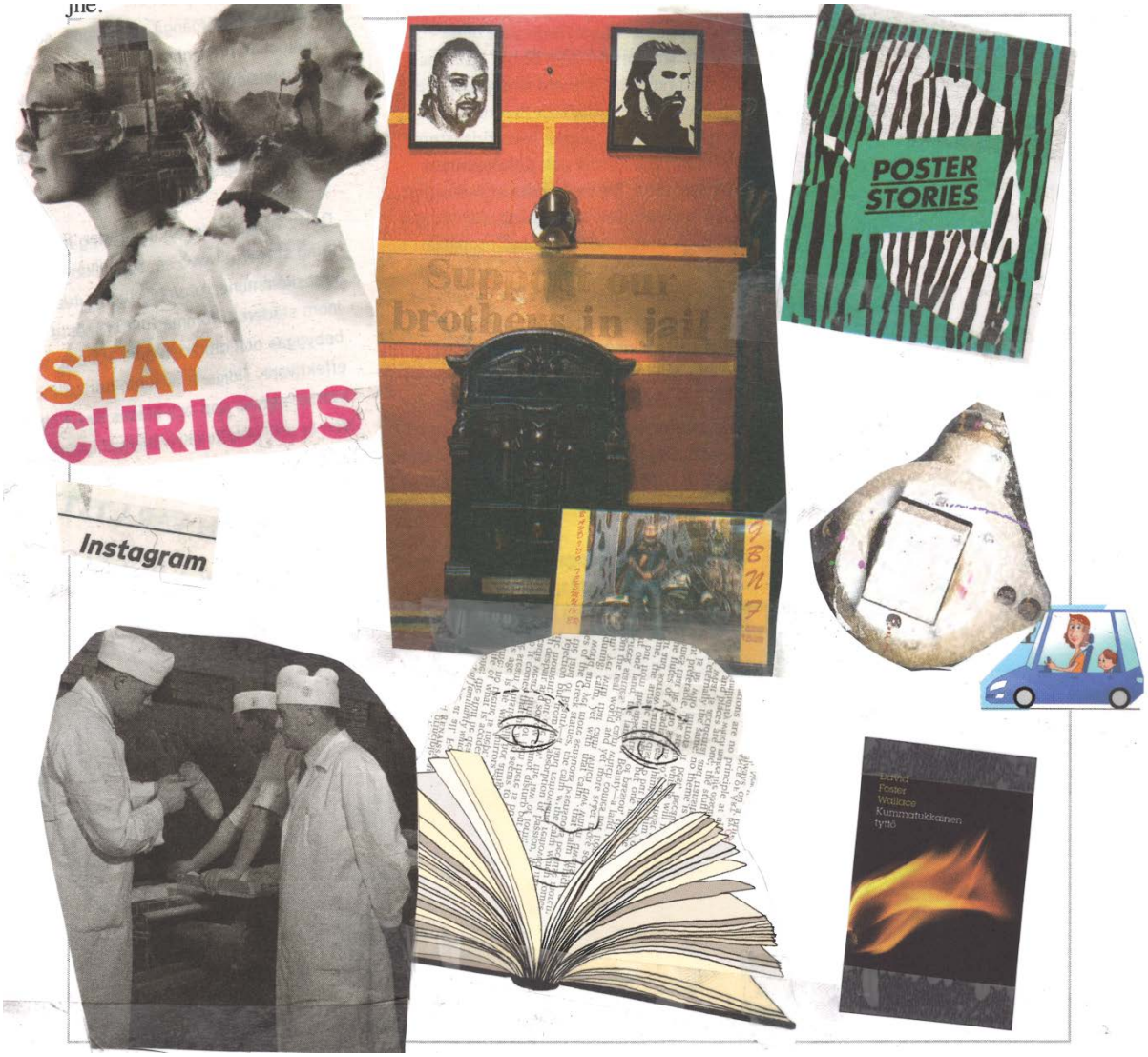


Pirjo emphasized the global role of English: she did not want to restrict her teaching to concern only English-speaking countries but rather, like the NCCs, wanted to include English as a lingua franca. Besides, Pirjo saw communication as more than speaking and oral communication as she also mentioned writing and singing, and did not forget today's technological devices. Pirjo wanted to

teach all this through projects and group work, which may also be a result of her having studied primary education, where great emphasis is placed on action-based collaborative learning. Perhaps this was also the reason for her drawing her class without any walls.

Case 2. Mikko was a fifth-year student majoring in Russian and thus an English minor. He had spent some considerable time in Russia as an exchange student. He had already completed his pedagogical studies but did not have any experience of working, e.g., as a supply teacher. He wanted to teach 'life' and his idea of language was strongly functional and situational, as can be seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Mikko: pedagogical studies completed, no teaching experience

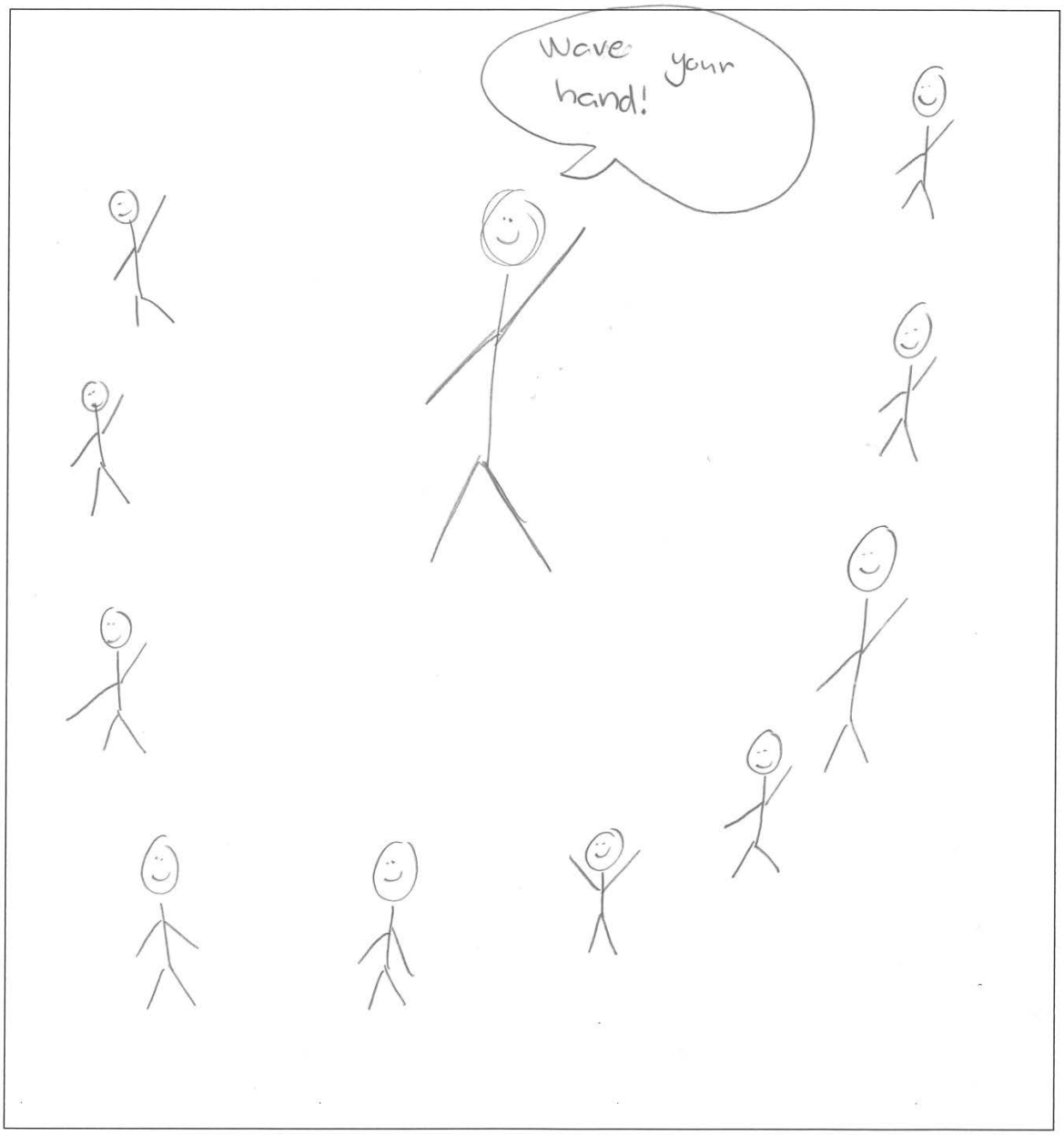


Mikko said he would incorporate literature, cooking, social media and travel into his English class(es), emphasizing learning-by-doing. He did not want to teach language as an object but rather

his approach was heavily action-based. Interestingly, Mikko was the only person who mentioned using the L1 in class, as he wanted to take into account also less proficient learners, offering content such as cultural history in Finnish to ensure that everyone would have an opportunity to learn something. Hence, in his concept, culture was very prominent and significant. The classroom as a setting did not appeal to Mikko as he envisioned his class(es) taking place anywhere, i.e. not just in a classroom within four walls at school. He also emphasized life-long learning.

Case 3. In contrast to Pirjo and Mikko, Aino was an English major, in her second year. She had just started her pedagogical studies and had no experience of teaching. She made no mention of having stayed abroad. Of all the teaching approaches reviewed on the CITE course, Aino chose one, Total Physical Response, to apply in her class (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. *Aino: few pedagogical studies, no teaching experience*



Aino expected young learners to like physical activity. In her opinion, activity would be a way for her pupils to learn different verb structures, because they could mimic her and repeat actions after her (standing in the middle). In addition, she said she would compile a pack of cards with pictures to help her pupils memorize vocabulary items. In her class, she would stick to the L2, i.e. not use Finnish, that for the majority would be L1. Her class would take place in a regular classroom or, as Aino put it, on second thoughts, possibly outdoors. Aino's class is an attempt to apply action-based learning, which is one of the core concepts in the new NCC but still with traces of teaching about the language as discrete linguistic units such as specific grammar items and words.

Discussion and concluding remarks

In the context of the guidelines for teaching foreign languages in Finland, the NCCs, the visions of future classes of English by the participants in this study clearly concentrated on the third aim, i.e. the ability to interact, interpret and produce texts in different modalities. The emphasis seemed, however, to be on promoting oral interaction or communication, that was mentioned in nearly all the narratives. This is possibly a reflection of the attention oral skills have received in the public discussion recently e.g. in the media. Multilingualism and multiculturalism, the first aim in the NCCs, was not much evident in the visions, but that may be because the students had been asked to produce their ideal English class, and any language in a Finnish school is still taught very much in isolation from other languages, as a separate subject (for the possibilities of translanguaging, see e.g. Garcia & Wei, 2013). Learning-to-learn skills, the second aim, were present at least implicitly, as the participants often mentioned projects, group work and out-of-school contexts, which partly fall under abilities to interact and produce texts, but are also about seizing opportunities to learn English.

On the other hand, the aims that were already visible in the previous NCCs, communicative skills and interaction, were very strongly present in the visions. This may be due to the fact that the NCCs in question were already effective when the students themselves attended school. Even though in informal discussions our university students often complain about the lack of opportunities to speak English at school, they seem to have already absorbed the idea of interaction and also the idea of language as functional and situational. English as a lingua franca or as present in Finnish society was reflected in the recurrent mentions of culture, and the different uses and varieties of English.

As for the role of pedagogical studies and teaching experience, for us as teacher educators it was quite encouraging to see that these seemed to matter. More advanced students and those with more pedagogical studies behind them approached the question of what there is to teach about the language, or the content of what they would try to teach in the future, differently, as is evident from the cases of Pirjo and Mikko, with their greater awareness of the complexity of issues including principles and practices involved in giving a single class of English, let alone in teaching and learning a foreign language in general. Their teaching experience did not necessarily show in what they would teach, but rather in how they would teach it. This was quite intriguing; it might well be a reflection of what is taught at school and, once again, of the role of English in the university students' everyday lives. Since the students are used to using English in different spheres of life and, for instance, do most of their studies at the university in English, functional and situational views might come naturally to them. However, one crucial issue left very much unaddressed by the participants was multilingualism as subjectively experienced, although it is an important aspect of

learning and teaching foreign languages as advocated by the current NCCs and as evident in the previous studies reviewed above.

Finally, the methodology used, i.e. visions produced visually and verbally, did provide fruitful material for the purposes of our research project. Visual images alone do not always tell very much, so participants' written comments can add depth to the data and contribute to its interpretation by researchers. In this study the collection of verbal data was more structured than before to ensure systematic comparisons of the visions in a number of respects. In future we could consider other ways of encouraging participants to elaborate on their ideas, to gain even deeper insights into their thinking and more detailed justifications for their choice of teaching principles and practices in their future classes, e.g. by conducting interviews.

As for pursuing further research on this topic, it would be worth gathering data from in-service teachers of English in order to compare their visions with those of pre-service teachers or teachers of other foreign languages with a different status in Finland. Furthermore, since we know that, for various reasons, people do not always act according to their ideals, it would be worth exploring how the ideals compare with what actually goes on in the classroom.

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[i] Drawings can be viewed as visual narratives (see e.g. Rose, 2016).
[ii] Initially the focus was on L2 learners; only more recently has it been on L2 teachers and their motivational self-system.