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### *Chapter 3*

## *'The English Class of My Dreams': Envisioning Teaching a Foreign Language*

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The psychology of the second (or foreign) language learner has been extensively researched since the mid-1950s. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the psychology of the teacher. Of the psychological make-up of the learner, motivation has been found to be one of the key issues affecting not only the outcome but also the process of learning second (or foreign) languages. Much less is known of the motivation of the teachers involved in these efforts.

The teaching of English as a foreign language is faced with new challenges because of the rapid spread of the language in different parts of the world, including Finland. Here, this has meant reconsidering the status of the language, with consequent revisions in the curricula of both schools and teacher education. In this chapter, our concern is with university students of English and how they keep up their motivation as future teachers. More specifically, our concern is the development of their pedagogical knowledge in teaching the language before they start their careers as qualified teachers in Finland and their ability to turn this knowledge into principles and practices that they could imagine applying in their future classes of English. Related to their motivation and identities as future professionals, it is their ability to envision, or the *visions* of these students, which the study will look into. For this purpose, a group of pre-service teachers were asked to visualise and draw an image of their ideal class of English to be given in the not-so-distant future and elaborate on the picture in writing: where would the class take place, what would be taught and how?

This chapter is organised as follows. First, some background is provided for the present study by reviewing such key issues as teacher motivation, envisioning and narratives, and by summarising some related studies. After this, the study that was carried out is reported in more detail, including its aims, data collection and analysis, and findings. Finally, the implications of the study are discussed.

### **Background to the study**

#### **Teacher motivation and envisioning**

The motivation of learners of foreign languages has been studied extensively and from a number of different theoretical starting points in the past few decades (for a review, see e.g. Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010). Recently, it has been suggested that learner motivation be viewed

in terms of a *motivational self-system* (e.g. Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), consisting of learners' possible selves, including Ideal self and Ought-to self, and related to their past experiences of learning a foreign language. This system taps into two major aspects of learning a foreign language: firstly, the learners' own aspirations, fears and ideals (in comparison to their actual self or -selves); and, secondly, the expectations of, or social pressure from, others around them (e.g. teachers, parents, friends, school and society at large), each playing a role in, and having an effect on, the process and outcomes of learning a foreign language.

Even more recently, it has been suggested that the motivational self-system could be applied to teachers of foreign languages, too (e.g. Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014): to both pre-service teachers and in-service teachers. Teacher motivation – in all its current complexity – is thus a crucial issue to address in teacher education: in the course of their studies, student teachers acquire pedagogical knowledge of the various aspects involved in learning and teaching foreign languages, while at the same time improving their proficiency in the language they will be teaching. In addition, their identities and Ideal or Ought-to selves are bound to develop. It is important for student teachers to compare the current reality in schools with their ideals: how do they see themselves and their practices now and in the future, and how far or how close are these from each other? The ability to envision their teaching in the years to come is thus related to their motivation. However, as pointed out by Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014: 125, emphasis original), the purpose

is not to identify some kind of idealised fantasy image of a language classroom that may never exist, but, rather, to develop a personally meaningful *possible* vision that is integral to who the teacher is and that is sensitive to the context in which his/her work is located.

The point is to make student teachers aware of their beliefs about their professional future, and to reaffirm or reconsider these, which will possibly have consequences for the principles and practices that they will apply in their teaching once they enter working life as qualified teachers.

### **Visual narratives looking forward in time**

In teacher education, narratives have been acknowledged to be a means for pre- and in-service teachers to make sense of themselves and their profession (e.g. Johnson & Golombek, 2011, 2013); more specifically, in constructing their identities and reflecting on their experiences of teaching English or other foreign languages.

One way of describing *narratives* is to say that they consist of a series of events:

Briefly, in everyday oral storytelling, a speaker connects events into a sequence that is consequential for later action and for the meanings that the speaker wants listeners to take away from the story. Events perceived by the speaker as important are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience ... (Riessman, 2008: 3)

Another way is to define them by function. Narratives can be used not only in looking back but also in looking forward: '[Stories] assist humans to make life experiences meaningful. Stories preserve our memories, prompt our reflections, connect us with our past and present, and assist us to envision our future' (Kramp, 2004: 107, as quoted in Barkhuizen, 2013: 4). Furthermore, narratives can be recounted in more than one mode: they can be verbal (oral or written), visual, or multimodal, e.g. text complemented with pictures, tables, figures, etc. or sound and video clips. Depending on the mode, narratives have different possibilities and limitations (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 46): what can be described verbally may not be possible to do visually, and vice versa. The present study is an attempt to explore further the possibilities of visual narratives (e.g. Kalaja *et al.*, 2013; Kalaja, 2016), this time in looking forward in time and addressing visions of future teachers of English.

### **Review of related studies**

A small number of studies have been carried out that have focused on visions of teachers or future teachers or made use of narratives. In her studies, Hammerness (e.g. 2003, 2006) asked novice teachers in the United States to imagine their ideal classroom. Data were collected by administering a survey (N = 80) and conducting interviews with some of the teachers (N = 16) involved in which they were asked to imagine taking the interviewer round their ideal classroom and to give details in response to a set of questions. Basically, they were asked what they would teach, how and why. The teachers' visions (reported verbally) were analysed along three dimensions: focus, range and distance. In other words, the images or visions of future classrooms were viewed in terms of either being clear or vague in focus; broad or narrow in range; or close to or distant from the teachers' current practices or daily experiences. Although these two studies are interesting in their research topic, design and methodology, they do not focus on language teachers or their ideal visions.

In contrast, a follow-up study to a longitudinal project entitled *From Novice to Expert* (e.g. Kalaja *et al.*, 2013; Kalaja, 2016) asked student teachers of foreign languages, including English (N = 61), who were just about to graduate from an MA degree programme in Finland, to envision a future class. This was done not only verbally but also visually by having the

participants draw a picture and comment on it briefly in writing. This study made use of visual narratives to look forward in time and asked the teachers to imagine what would be involved in the teaching of foreign languages in the future.

In another two studies (Borg *et al.*, 2014; Clarke, 2008), student teachers were asked to recollect some positive examples of what it was like to teach English to small children in two very different contexts: in Spain and the United Arab Emirates. In the first study, the students were expected to describe events like this visually in two different ways: first of all, by drawing a picture before and after a teaching methodology course, and then orally, in an interview. In other words, visual narratives were used to look back in time in order to recollect what had happened before, when teaching English. In the second study, data were collected by asking students to submit postings to an internet discussion forum.

The findings of the three studies with student teachers of English or other foreign languages are in fact quite comparable, despite their different foci, type of data or contexts. In all the studies, two discourses could be identified: one was based on the participants' past experiences of learning English; this was in contrast to the other discourse, which was based on their current understanding of what the teaching of English involves. In the latter, such principles and practices were recycled as student-centredness, the Teacher as Guide, a focus on meanings or oral/real communication, the use of modern IT, and authentic materials. These were complemented with comments on how their classrooms would be organised and what their classrooms would be equipped with. The principles and practices seem to stand in sharp contrast to their past experiences as learners of English, when they were still at school.

## **The present study**

The present study is a continuation of previous research carried out in Finland, but with a more recent group of student teachers and some refinements in research methodology.

Overall, this is an attempt by us to make this group aware, firstly, of their ideal teacher selves (i.e. what they would expect of themselves once they enter working life as professionals in a few years' time), and secondly, of their current teaching practices and ideals, and how close or far apart these are at this point in their studies. These issues are closely related to how motivated they feel about entering the profession in the next few years. While the students in the previous study reviewed above (Kalaja *et al.*, 2013; Kalaja, 2016) were about to complete their teacher education, the students in the present study were only half-way through. We used visual narratives to look forward in time, and carried out their collection in a more focused and structured way than in the previous study by using a set of prompt questions.

The study seeks to answer the following research question: 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? In order to answer the questions, the pre-service teachers were asked to envision a future class of English, but a class that it would still be feasible to give after their graduation, and to describe it in two modes, visually and verbally. Findings of the analysis will be reported in the form of case studies to illustrate the overall variation in the classes of English envisioned.

### **Context of the study**

English is the most popular foreign language studied and taught in the Finnish educational system. Until now, its study started in Year (or Grade) 3, i.e. from the age of nine years, but following the latest revisions to the national curricula, it can be offered even earlier in Years 1 and 2.

The teaching of English or any other foreign language is regulated to varying degrees by a number of guidelines. Some of these are European (*The Common European Frame of Reference for Languages*, Council of Europe, 2001), some national and others local (e.g. a town, a local authority or a school might have curricula of its own). The Finnish National Core Curricula for compulsory education (Years 1-9) and for post-secondary education (Years 10-12, or Sixth Form), where students take the matriculation examination, a nationally administered high-stakes test, before graduating, have just been revised, and so have the local curricula, all effective as of August 2016.

The previous curricula were drawn up in the early 2000s. In the new curricula, the order of importance of the three main aims for the teaching of foreign languages has been reversed and their emphasis and scope have been revised. Now the first aim is to raise learners' 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 skills, namely, 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 to Lingua Franca or global language, even though the language does not as yet have an 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, using modern IT with all its applications, including the Internet, and later on in working life as well. The teaching of English in Finland is thus faced with new challenges in terms of its aims, classroom practices,

teaching materials, roles of teachers and learners and assessment (for details, see Kalaja *et al.*, in press a).

### **Participants**

Teacher education is a joint effort of two departments on the campus where this study was conducted in Finland. The Department of Teacher Education offers studies in Pedagogy, including teaching practicum in cooperation with local schools. Completing a Bachelor's degree in Pedagogy qualifies a student for any teaching post in the Finnish educational system. In contrast, the Department of Language and Communication Studies is responsible for providing all pre-service teachers with two compulsory introductory courses on learning and teaching any foreign language (or Finnish). The English Section of the department continues from there by offering a third course called *Current Issues in Teaching English* (CITE) and some other more advanced courses.

The participants in the study were a group of pre-service teachers of English (N = 35), mainly second- or third-year university students. The majority, whether majoring or minoring in English, were studying to become foreign language teachers at the secondary or post-secondary level. However, a few students wanted to become elementary school teachers, getting a qualification to teach in English or offer courses in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). In addition, there were a couple of exchange students taking the course. All the participants had some pedagogical studies behind them. Some had also completed their practical teacher training, and/or worked as supply teachers. The participants formed a heterogeneous group in that the amount of studies they had already completed varied, as did their teaching experience.

The students attended CITE, which is a compulsory course for future teachers of English, in the academic year 2015–2016. The data for this study were collected at the end of the course. The course is a five-credit (ECTS) course and part of the BA programme, that is, second- or third-year studies, in English. The students had weekly reading assignments from an introductory textbook by Hummel (2014), and the topics were discussed in class. The course focused on the teaching of English in the context of Finland, and the topics addressed included a review of key issues in research on second language acquisition over the past few decades, contexts of learning, the development of learner language, individual learner differences, teaching methodology, syllabus design, assessment and bi- or multilingualism. Considering that the field is full of controversies, it was interesting to see how this group of student teachers made sense of the pedagogical knowledge they had acquired so far during

their studies and how they managed to turn it into a set of principles and practices that they could imagine applying in their teaching of English after entering the profession.

### **The data and their processing**

For the purposes of the study, a task sheet was designed. It drew on ideas from the studies by Hammerness (2003, 2006), and was our attempt to explore further the possibilities of visual narratives for the purpose of envisioning (e.g. Kalaja *et al.*, 2013; Kalaja, 2016). There were two tasks (for details, see Appendix A).

Task 1 asked the participants to produce a picture entitled ‘An English class of my dreams’, in which they depicted 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, or produced by compiling a collage out of magazine 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 – and why?’.

Task 2 (on the reverse side of the task sheet) asked the participants to consider the envisioned English class in greater detail (and in a more systematic way than before, e.g. Kalaja *et al.*, 2013; Kalaja, 2016). This gave the students a chance to elaborate on the target group that they would like to teach, the roles of those involved (i.e. the teacher and students), what they would teach and how, where their teaching would take place and what equipment would be available to them.

The students completed the task sheet in Finnish (with the exception of the few exchange students attending the course) as the last home assignment of the introductory course. The pictures were compared and contrasted in discussions (first in small groups and then as a whole group) in English during the very last session of the course – either in late November 2015 or in April 2016. The pictures as such were not assessed, and they did not count towards the overall grade for the course. Permission was requested from the students (in writing) to use the pictures and descriptions anonymously for research purposes.

The contents of the visual narratives, complemented by their verbal commentaries, were first examined to get an overall idea of what the pool of data contained. In addition, the written explanations and elaborations of the pictures were analysed to gain a more thorough and accurate understanding of their visual narratives. In the written texts, the participants gave, for instance, explanations for their choices or clarified their drawings and their contents. After this, the focus was narrowed down for the purposes of this study, and the visualisations of ‘The English class of my dreams’ were grouped according to: 1) what the physical

environment for the class would be, 2) what roles the future teacher and his or her students would adopt, and 3) what would be taught and how in the future English class. The cases are presented below using pseudonyms to guarantee the anonymity of the participants.

## **Findings**

A total of six contextualised case studies (as defined by Duff, 2007) will be reported below to illustrate the overall variation in the pictures, or in the ways the pre-service teachers envisioned giving a class of English in the years to come. Two cases from each of the three groups, physical environment, the roles of the teachers and the students, and the contents and means of teaching were selected. The cases per group illustrate the range of visions in the data.

### **Environment (1): Omnipresent language**

In Mikko's picture, the idea was of a language learning environment that was omnipresent (Figure 3.1), and this placed the focus on the learner. There was no classroom and there were no walls, but language could be learnt everywhere. There were books, and the learner's curiosity was emphasised, as was the variety of language learning contexts and, to an extent, also interaction with others.

Mikko was quite advanced in his studies and had completed his pedagogical studies and teacher training. In his commentary, he explained that the lessons were designed to meet the interests of the students. The idea of integrating languages with other subjects was strongly present. This mirrors the ideas of the new National Core Curricula, which emphasise language awareness and the integration of school subjects. Also, Mikko would like to teach in ways that the students themselves want and need, taking different learners into account. This reflects the ideals of teacher education in Finland in recent years: future teachers have been made aware of the variety of learning styles. He thought it was important, however, that whatever the students learn should be written down, whether the equipment is a blackboard or a tablet computer. This urge to write down is perhaps in slight contradiction to his willingness to take teaching to a new level, steering away from the classroom and textbooks and emphasising real language use and communication. Mikko said he was teaching life.

*Figure 3.1. Mikko – teacher training and pedagogical studies completed*

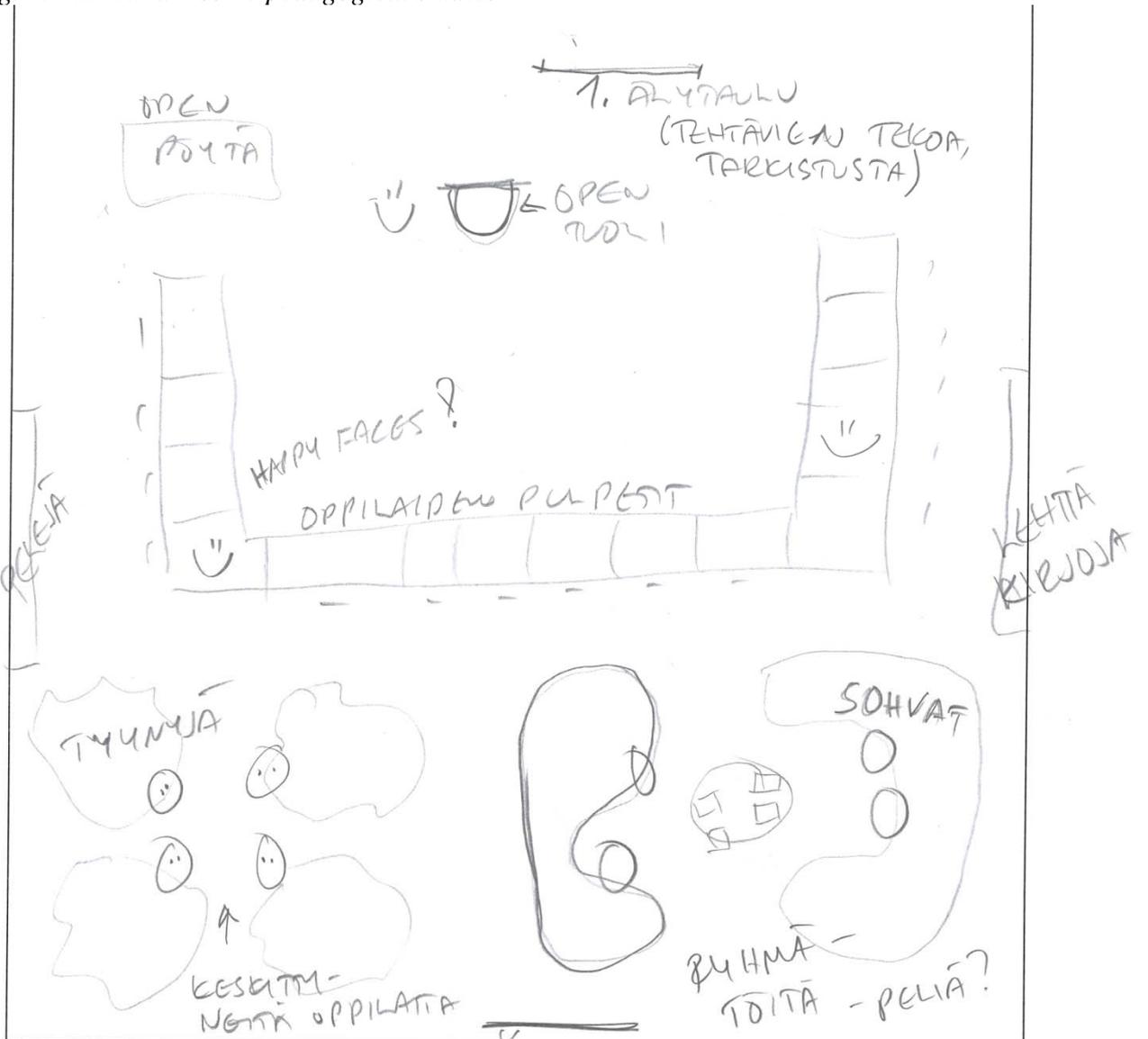


### Environment (2): A classroom with sofas

Tiina's picture offered a more traditional view of language learning and its environment (Figure 3.2). There was a classroom with desks for the students and a chair for the teacher at the front of the classroom. The teacher's desk had been placed to the side. There was also a smartboard for doing and checking exercises. What made the setting different from a traditional classroom was that the desks were in a horseshoe arrangement, and there were cushions, sofas, games, books and magazines. Tiina had done some pedagogical studies but not the practical training, and she did not have any teaching experience at that time. Her views are therefore likely to have reflected quite heavily how she herself had been taught languages at school.

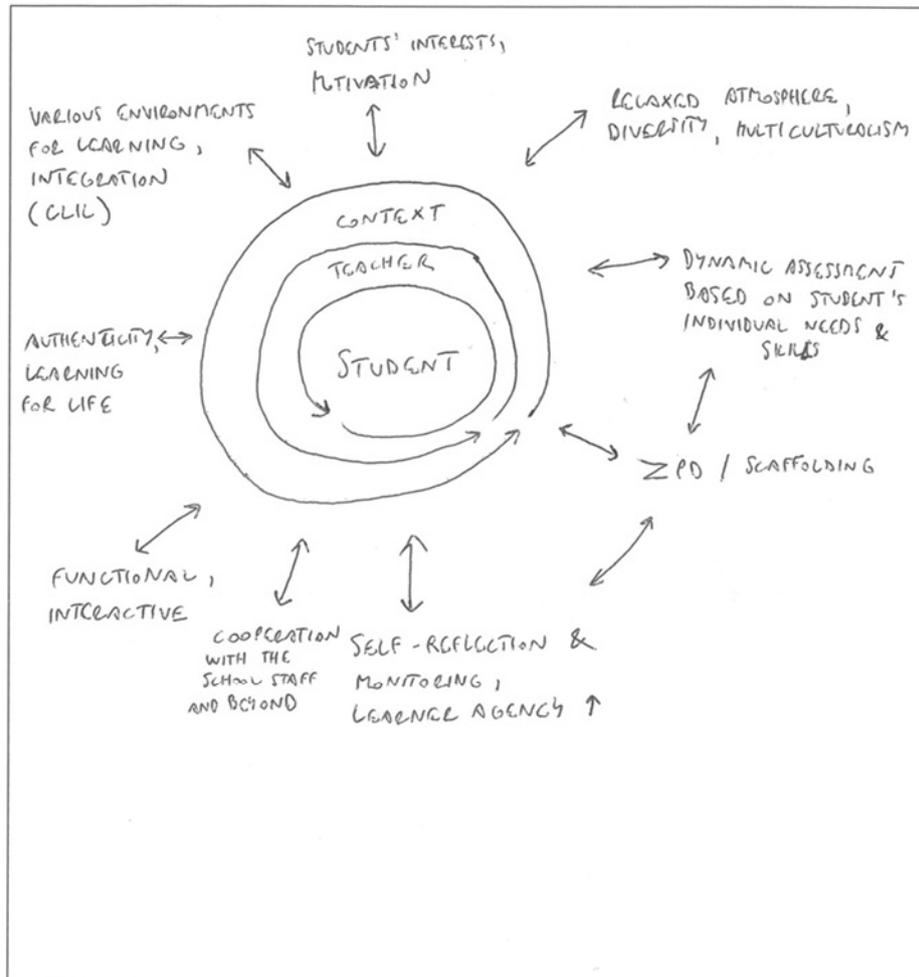
What was done in this rather traditional classroom was interesting. Unlike in Mikko's picture, where the focus had been on language usage, culture and interaction, in Tiina's description, the emphasis was on practising vocabulary and going through texts, and taking advantage of mnemonics when learning grammar. Tiina regarded games, mnemonics and the like as innovative methods that motivate students to learn. Thus, her view of language is traditional, as to a large extent are also the ways of teaching it. Furthermore, in her commentary, Tiina talked about *going through issues*, implying that the teacher has a list of curricular content points to cover and this is then done using games and other activities, employing different learning and teaching strategies.

Figure 3.2. Tiina – some pedagogical studies



## Roles of the teacher and students (1): Student in the centre

Figure 3.3. Sanna – training for elementary school teachers completed



Sanna attempted to present a fairly comprehensive and complex picture of language learning (Figure 3.3), with many different roles for the teacher and student. The students were in the centre, surrounded by the teacher and the context. Different factors affecting language learning and teaching were mentioned, such as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), atmosphere, and authenticity. Sanna also mentioned quite a few teacher tasks, from scaffolding and motivating students to dynamic assessment, thus expanding the role of the teacher. Sanna was a second-year student of English but she was about to graduate as an elementary school teacher. She had not done pedagogical studies targeted specifically at language teachers. However, her previous pedagogical studies and work experience as an elementary school teacher showed in the concepts she used. These concepts, such as life-long learning, learner agency, ZPD, and dynamic assessment are at the very core of current thinking in teacher education in Finland. Also, authenticity has been a frequently discussed theme in language teaching in Finland for the past few years. In her verbal commentary,

Sanna, too, emphasised the central role of the learner as an active participant in learning; the teacher's role was to support learning. On the other hand, the teacher was also claimed to be a transmitter of information, which is a more traditional view and conflicts with the picture and its buzzwords. As for the methods, Sanna mentioned a wide range of options, from the use of a smartboard and the Internet to games and using drama. However, in her explanation, she made no reference to the pedagogical opportunities offered by these different methods; they were rather seen as a necessary variation to keep students interested. All in all, interaction and communication were once again highlighted.

### Roles of the teacher and students (2): Modern roles

Figure 3.4. Päivi – no pedagogical studies or teaching experience



Päivi expressed a similar idea to Sanna's in her picture (Figure 3.4), but worded it more simply, or rather, in layman's terms. This probably reflects the fact that Päivi was at the beginning of her pedagogical studies and as yet had no teaching experience. She mentioned that the classroom could be a traditional one, organised in a traditional way, and that books, games and other traditional means would be useful as equipment. However, her ideas of the

roles of the teacher and the learner were following more recent ideas of teaching and learning: the teacher's role is to listen, while students are expected to listen and also speak. The setting, then, was irrelevant: what was more important was what happened in the lesson and the classroom and what kind of roles the teacher and students took. Päivi's picture includes a list of qualities such as being motivated, curious, and self-confident, but it is not quite clear whether these apply to the teacher, students, or both. Authenticity, equality, visibility, practice, many-sidedness, and enthusiasm were also mentioned. In her verbal commentary, Päivi also stressed a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom.

### Ways of teaching and learning (1): Project work in groups

Figure 3.5. Noora – pedagogical studies completed



Instead of a traditional classroom, or even the more modern one of the local teacher training school that the students were familiar with, Noora opted for something different (Figure 3.5).

In her picture, the lesson was taking place in a grand house, offering ample opportunities for group work, which formed the core of her teaching. Interestingly, the teacher was the only one standing, and she seemed to be keeping an eye on things and being available when needed. The students were shown as working in small groups, using English and working on their projects, related to culture. Also activities outside the classroom were mentioned. The teacher was seen as a facilitator and guide, and the focus was on the learners. Even though the setting was an old-fashioned mansion, modern technology, including tablet computers, was present. Noora also talked about projects and the integration of different school subjects, for instance, biology and languages. This is very much in accordance with the National Core Curricula, which highlight language awareness and reaching over subject boundaries at school. Noora had completed her pedagogical studies, and as part of her studies, she had also acted as a supervisor in a language camp for children, which had relied heavily on action-based learning.

### **Ways of teaching and learning (2): Each item in the classroom has a purpose**

Finally, let's consider Iris's picture (Figure 3.6). Iris was an exchange student, and she had completed some pedagogical studies and teacher training in her home country. Her lesson could have taken place anywhere, but the classroom was organised so that each area in it and each object had a specific function. In Iris's picture, it was irrelevant whether there were chairs or cushions, but the classroom had various items that each served a specific language usage function. A carpet was there to share experiences on, a window was a window to the imagination, etc. The blackboard or smartboard was not used to check the correct answers to exercises but, for instance, to share ideas about what the students wanted to learn. In her commentary, Iris explained that the teacher would give out the theme of the week, and the students could then decide what they wanted to learn about the theme and carry out a small-scale project to that end. The students shared information among themselves, and the teacher was a facilitator in the students' construction of their own knowledge. Hence, the ways of learning were varied but always student-centred.

Figure 3.6. Iris – pedagogical studies and teaching practice abroad



### Comparison of cases

As far as the environments of learning are concerned, the cases reviewed above illustrate the student teachers' underlying beliefs that more novel ways of learning are possible even in classroom settings that have been found in schools for centuries, that is, teacher's desk facing neatly arranged rows of student desks. On the other hand, when given a free rein to depict language learning and teaching settings, the participants were willing to visualise life outside the school building and classroom walls. Languages are not learnt in a vacuum, and not from textbooks. The absence of textbooks was indeed interesting, as a fairly recent survey shows that language teachers in Finland in fact rely heavily on textbooks in their teaching (Luukka *et al.*, 2008). In all the pictures, there was at least an attempt at student-centred learning. The idea of professional selves shows not only in the terminology used by, for instance, Sanna, but also in the ideals in the pictures: students are at the centre of what is going on, the methods of teaching and learning are varied and encourage co-operation and interaction, and authenticity and integrating languages with other school subjects were seen as significant. This seems to be a reflection of what has been highlighted in pedagogical studies, but also in the guidelines of the National Core Curricula.

One common trait in all the pictures and their commentaries was the highlighting of a relaxed, friendly atmosphere in the classroom. Finnish schools have often been criticised for their atmosphere, and even though the learning results may be good internationally speaking, children do not feel comfortable at school (Harinen & Halme, 2012). This is something that has been discussed a lot in Finnish society, and this discussion was also reflected in the pictures: the students were presented as being given a say in what and how they learn, in a positive and relaxed atmosphere.

## **Discussion**

This study set out to discover how a specific group of pre-service teachers would envision future classes of English. Their visions turned out to vary in a number of respects.

Firstly, there was variation in the environments where the teaching and/or learning of English would take place. More specifically, the English class would take place either in a regular classroom, with some further variation in how the classroom would be furnished or equipped, or outside the classroom. In other words, it is assumed either that the teaching and learning of English is confined within the walls of a traditional classroom, or alternatively, that these activities can take place anywhere, not only in formal but also in informal contexts (for an even more complex account of contexts, see Benson & Reinders, 2011). Some pictures described the classroom in minute detail, indicating that where the teaching or learning of English would take place was important, while others paid little attention to this aspect, even claiming that the environment was of little or no relevance at all.

Secondly, there was variation in the activities and therefore also in the roles of those involved. Some of the visions highlighted some aspects of teaching by a teacher as the main activity in a future class of English; others the learning by learners; and yet others teaching and learning as a joint activity, involving negotiation between two parties, that is, the teacher and students. The role(s) of the teacher varied accordingly: from that of a transmitter of information, in control of what takes place in the classroom, to that of a guide, ensuring learning opportunities for everyone, and as one partner in negotiating what would take place in the class and how. The role(s) of learners varied, too: from passive recipients of information to active seizers of learning opportunities and an equal partner in the negotiations. In other words, there was variation in how teacher- or student-centred the visions were. Similarly, there was variation in the responsibilities the teacher would have in the classroom: not only teaching, but also motivating students, assessing learning outcomes, fostering life-long learning and ensuring a positive atmosphere.

Thirdly, there was further variation in the focus of teaching and learning of English. On the one hand, the focus could be on the actual teaching *of* English. There was then variation in the aspects addressed in a future English class: was English to be addressed in terms of an abstract system, including vocabulary and grammar, or in terms of its uses in specific contexts, or as a means of communication? On the other hand, the focus could be on teaching *in* English. In other words, English would be used as a medium of instruction in teaching other school subjects (or in CLIL).

The pictures and their explanations reflected both the Ideal – and Ought-to selves of the pre-service teachers. While the participants, for instance, wanted to teach life and saw language and opportunities for its learning to be everywhere, they at the same time, regarded it necessary to write down important things in the class. Hence, their ideals went hand-in-hand with what they were used to in their own school days and maybe considered to be something expected of them.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, this study made use of visual narratives and their commentaries, or *multimodal* data, in looking forward in time, that is, asking pre-service teachers to envision an ideal class of English to be given in the years to come after they have graduated from their MA programme. Envisioning, in turn, is an aspect of feeling motivated in the profession in the years to come. In addition, the study was an attempt by us to refine our research methodology, that is, making use of visual data but collecting data also in another mode (written commentaries) to ensure a more systematic comparison of the cases than before (e.g. Kalaja, 2016).

The findings are basically comparable to those of the previous studies reviewed above, despite the partly different contexts and student bodies. There is, however, a clear difference in that in this study there seems to be much greater variation in the pools of data, and so the group of pre-service teachers is much more heterogeneous in their visions of giving a future English class: some classes are envisioned as being not very different from the classes the students themselves attended when they were at school, while other classes have been inspired by more recent developments in the fields of Applied Linguistics (or Foreign/Second Language Learning and Teaching) or Foreign Language Education. In addition, they seem to be well informed about the innovations in the new National Core Curricula (effective from August 2016). The awareness of all this is already reflected in some of the principles or practices the students wish to apply in their future teaching, albeit to varying degrees and with

some contradictions (of which they themselves appeared to be unaware). It seems that this variation is at least partly dependent on the stage on the MA degree programme the students found themselves in, and perhaps even more importantly, on their experience of teaching English. As was explained earlier, the group was heterogeneous in this regard, as some students had taught under the supervision of teacher trainers as part of their pedagogical studies, and others had worked as supply teachers at some point in their studies – for a shorter or longer period of time. The more advanced the students were in their studies and/or the more teaching experience they had had, the more sophisticated or complex their visions of an ideal English class tended to be.

The exercises or tasks that we have described here were an attempt to make the students on our course aware of their beliefs about teaching and learning English, to compare and contrast their own beliefs with those of their classmates, and reflect on possible discrepancies between their current understanding of the issues involved and their ideals. Becoming aware is, however, only the first stage in possible changes in thinking or behaviour, or in the professional development of pre- or in-service teachers of foreign languages (e.g. Kalaja *et al.*, in press b; Kubanyiova, 2012). For us as teacher educators, the study is an indication of how long and complex for students the process is of acquiring new pedagogical knowledge and turning it into a systematic and justified set of principles and practices to be applied in future English classes. We must still wait some time before we can see whether the students in this present study manage to keep up their motivation and hold onto their ideals or visions, especially if these were very different from their past school experiences, once they start their careers as teachers of English in the Finnish educational system (for a few longitudinal studies on the fate of previous groups of novice teachers of foreign languages in Finland, see e.g. Kalaja, 2017; Nyman, 2009; or Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2011, 2016a, 2016b).

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