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Dialogic tensions in pre-service subject teachers' identity negotiations

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Abstract

This study explores how five pre-service subject teachers from different disciplines made sense of and characterized their teacher identity after completing their yearlong pedagogical studies. Leaning on the Bakhtinian dialogical approach and socio-culturally oriented discourse analysis, we examine how the students negotiated multiple voices in their narratives (interviews) and how they positioned themselves in relation to these voices. In the students' identity negotiation, the Discourse based on participatory pedagogy and education responsibility contradicted with the Discourse of traditional pedagogy that the students had as a cultural resource from their own youth. These different Discourses collided with each other and were tested and reflected in an internal dialogue. Through this process, the students negotiated their prospective subject teacher identity.

Keywords: dialogical approach, positioning, pre-service teacher identity, teacher education, voice

Introduction

In the context of teacher education, the tradition of focusing merely on pre-service teachers' acquisition of "occupational assets", and assessing their development in terms of predefined professional standards, has turned out to be too narrow a perspective when it comes to researching and supporting teachers' professional development (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Instead, the focus has shifted to pre-service teachers' personal perspectives and to how they make sense of their own teacher identity. In research, this has meant exploring discursive and narrative constructions of teacher identity (e.g. Arvaja, 2016; Uitto, Kaunisto, Syrjälä & Estola, 2015).

In Finnish society, which is the context of this study, the teaching profession and teacher education are largely based on professional identity work supported by dialogue and reflection (e.g. Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2014; Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2011; Tiainen, Korkeamäki & Dreher, 2018). Generally, this refers to independent self-constructs whereby (prospective) teachers are encouraged to prioritize reflecting on and analyzing their own experiences, perceptions and actions (e.g. Tiainen et al., 2018). Taking a more personal perspective emphasizes the relevance of knowing oneself for the development and construction of your teacher identity (Meijer, Korthagen & Vasalos, 2009). In addition to knowing oneself, an educational process should also help the students to become aware of different voices (Bakhtin, 1981) and, hence, of the dynamics (and tensions) of the social, cultural and institutional structures surrounding teacher work (Ligorio, 2010; Sarja & Arvaja, manuscript). This enhances the capacity to assess the contextual nature and relatedness of personal actions, and to develop as an agentic teacher who can transform both their own thinking and practice in a complex, changing world of work (Uitto et al., 2015).

Accordingly, teacher identity is not fixed or predefined, but rather involves an ongoing process in which teachers are active agents (Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2011). It is connected to the teacher's personal narrative and experiences in social and cultural contexts, and evolves in a continuous negotiation between these (e.g. Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Lee & Schallert, 2016; Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2011). Through both teacher education and their own experiences, pre-service teachers begin to refine their initial concepts of teaching and learning, and develop a teacher identity for themselves (Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite, 2010). Therefore, both personal and contextual factors shape professional identity negotiations and influence how pre-service teachers perceive themselves as future

professionals (Flores & Day, 2006; Meijer et al., 2009). In research on pre-service teacher identity, this means studying more the interrelationship between the (teacher) self and the socio-cultural context (Hermans, 2003).

Our study explores how five prospective subject teachers from different disciplines make sense of and characterize their teacher identities after completing yearlong pedagogical studies based on dialogicality and reflection. Leaning on the Bakhtinian dialogical approach, we study how the pre-service teachers negotiate multiple voices in their narratives (interviews), how they position (Wortham, 2001) themselves in relation to diverse voices and, as a consequence of this internal dialogue, how they develop their own voice as a teacher.

Through personal reflection towards professional learning

As a teacher works essentially through his/her personality, teaching is a profession where there is a close alignment of personal and professional identities (Arvaja, 2016; Korthagen, 2004). According to Akkerman and Meijer (2011), everything that a teacher considers relevant or tries to achieve in his/her work is also part of the personal self. Likewise, personal histories, past events and other people – especially significant others – are a factor in the professional self. As each pre-service teacher has a unique personal narrative and history due to his/her life course, identity work always involves a biographical perspective (Linell, 2009). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge how teacher identity is shaped through teachers' "living curricula" across all places and times in their lives (Kissling, 2014). Past experiences are used as a reflective mirror for evaluating new understanding, and thus also shape the future self (Lee & Schallert, 2016) and create possible (teacher) selves (Markus & Nurius, 1987). The narrative or discursive construction of self involves space-time transitions connecting here-and-now and previous and anticipated events (Grossen & Salazar Orvig, 2011; Ritella & Ligorio, 2016). Therefore, we should not regard teacher identity as a definite professional construct of "where a teacher begins and where the teacher ends" (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 317).

In terms of a teacher's identity trajectory, we can view professional learning as an ongoing process of personal sensemaking, analyzing and reflecting on practices, beliefs, possibilities, conceptions and knowledge relative to teaching and learning. In educational contexts, this reflective identity (Cohen, 2010) and identity recognition (Gee, 2010) work can be enhanced through personalization by subjecting one's own experiences to reflection and analysis. This

provides possibilities for the (re-)negotiation of one's "being, thinking and acting" as a teacher (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Gee, 2010). It also means that it is important to support the pre-service teachers' personal growth and focus more extensively on their personal values and qualities as a teacher, rather than merely focusing on the trainable professional skills and competencies (Korthagen, 2004).

In addition to personal and individual aspects of identity, social and cultural aspects must also be addressed (Uitto et al., 2015). According to Flores and Day (2006), during pre-service teacher education the students hold a pre-professional identity that consists of images of teachers, initial beliefs and concepts of a good teacher, and implicit theories of teaching and learning. Students lean, for example, on different collective stories (Uitto et al., 2015) and cultural categorizations (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) of teachers and teaching. However, if during teacher education this pre-professional identity is exposed to alternative discourses (e.g. an internally persuasive discourse) stemming from different perspectives, this leads, at best, to critical dialogue (Arvaja, 2016; Matusov, 2007). In this process, pre-service teachers become conscious of the implicit assumptions behind learning and teaching, and develop a clearer understanding of the cultural and structural aspects of the school institution (Gorli, Nicolini & Scaratti, 2015; Sarja & Arvaja, manuscript). This supports their development towards becoming a reflective practitioner, enabling them to critically reflect on their own thinking and activities in relation to the context, and make changes when necessary (Tiainen et al., 2018). Therefore, pre-service teachers' identity work can be supported by focusing on their ideals and professional calling (Korthagen, 2004), while also considering the tensions they see between their own teacher identity and the cultural contexts of schools and teacher education (Flores & Day, 2006; Ligorio, 2010).

A framework for studying pre-service teacher identity

This study takes a dialogical approach to exploring prospective subject teachers' identity. In the Bakhtinian framework, dialogical approaches refer both to the dialogism of discourse and to the dialogicality of the mind (Grossen & Salazar Orvig, 2011). Bakhtin's dialogical approach highlights the intrinsic relatedness of the self and others (Holquist, 1990). Bakhtin (1981, p. 293) points out that the words used to describe personal experience and self, then, are inevitably second-hand, half one's own, half somebody else's, and therefore echoes of other people's words. This means that the words of other people, groups and communities

enter a person's internal dialogues and create an inner society of voices, with its oppositions, agreements, disagreements, negotiations and integrations (Hermans, 2003).

Building on Bakhtin's writings, the concept of voice – and in particular multivoicedness (polyphony) – provides a tool for exploring how different voices or perspectives are embedded in a person's internal and external dialogues. As Bakhtin (1981, p. 293) puts it, “all words have the ‘taste’ of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour”. Hence, according to Akkerman and colleagues (2012), when an utterance is spoken and intoned with a certain taste, it is produced by a certain “voice”. Wortham (2001, p. 38) stresses the social origin of voice: “speaking with a certain voice means using words that index some social position(s) because these words are characteristically used by members of certain group(s)”.

In this study, the focus is on how the pre-service teachers negotiate between different voices in their internal dialogue. The internal dialogue between voices of the self and others enables the narrative about identity (Ligorio, 2010). In terms of dialogicality, the “other” is not reducible to interpersonal relationships and external dialogue; rather, it takes the form of various third parties (Grossen & Salazar Orvig, 2011; Linell, 2009). Dialogue “in absentia” refers to the discourse of absent third parties that can be real or virtual others, generalized others (Mead, 1934) or generic discourse such as law, stereotypes and so on (Grossen & Salazar Orvig, 2011). These others mediate the voice(s) of traditions, institutions, social categories, communities, colleagues and friends (Markova, 2006). Thus, a person's discourse is interdependent on the voices of other individuals or groups in the socio-cultural environment (Linell, 2009). Consequently, one does not speak or think from a single “monolithic identity” (Linell, 2009), but rather through various intertwined voices.

According to Ritella and Ligorio (2016, pp. 221–222), “the ‘voice’ is a heuristic concept that allows the tracking of multiple perspectives [...] which can embody either participants' personal perspectives or a socially constructed, generalized perspective”. Therefore, the narrative sensemaking of one's self is a result of interrelations of multiple voices negotiating, opposing, identifying and evaluating one another (Ritella & Ligorio, 2016; Wortham, 2001). Similarly, according to Sfard and Prusak (2005), identities are products of discursive diffusion, recycled things said by others, and, therefore, any narrative also reflects the stories of others.

In this paper, we analyze pre-service subject teachers' interviews mainly in terms of how the students negotiate and make sense of the polyphony of voices and the ideas and interests represented (Larson & Phillips, 2005). The focus is on the real others (such as significant others), but also on the role of institutions (e.g. schools, teacher education) in the construction of personal teacher identities. We explore how the students take up and respond to different voices (situated in different times and places) in their narratives, how they position themselves in relation to multiple voices and, through this dialogue, create their own identity as pre-service teachers (Wortham, 2001).

Methods

Context and the participants

The study was conducted during the yearlong pedagogical studies of pre-service subject teachers. The selected target group comprised five students (three males and two females) from the disciplines of biology, languages, mathematics and history. At a University in Finland, prospective subject teachers from different disciplines embark on yearlong pedagogical studies at the Teacher Education Department in addition to their master-level subject studies in their respective departments. The combination of a three-year bachelor's degree (180 ECTS) and a two-year master's degree (120 ECTS) in appropriate subjects, with teachers' pedagogical studies (60 ECTS), qualifies the graduates to work as subject teachers at various levels of education.

The pedagogical studies consist of a number of courses in education and in-school practice based on dialogical and reflective learning approaches. The studies comprise basic studies in educational sciences and studies in subject-specific pedagogy and research, together with supervised teaching practice, usually in a teacher-training school. The aim is to educate pedagogically thinking teachers capable of critically reflecting on teaching and learning and able to make improvements in practice when necessary. This research-based practice is manifested in the form of inquiry- and phenomenon-based learning. For example, in the course module titled "Social interaction and cooperation", instead of attending traditional lectures the student teachers work in multidisciplinary groups (like our target group) on different theoretically and practically oriented themes. One purpose of using this setting is to lower the boundaries between different subject areas and study the phenomenon interactively through discussions and activities. The focus of learning is on the skills and knowledge of social interaction, and on the group process itself. The addressed themes include, for

example, encountering as a key sense of belonging, facing challenging situations, group processes and emotional work in groups (e.g. Tynjälä et al., 2016).

Data collection

The main data comprised interviews with five prospective subject teachers from different disciplines (i.e. the target group). The pedagogical studies teacher selected this volunteer multidisciplinary group; the researchers (two authors) did not act as pedagogical studies teachers. The semi-structured interviews on themes like own school history, teacher education and teachership were conducted shortly after the pedagogical studies had ended. All the interviews (lasting from 1 hour 14 minutes to 1 hour 35 minutes) were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. The interviews were more conversational than strictly structured; the researchers positioned themselves and the students as having a sympathetic conversation rather than a data-gathering session (cf. Wortham, 2001). Therefore, the interviewers also shared their own experiences (e.g. past school experiences) and posed interpretive questions (e.g. “do you feel that those experiences are relevant for you as a teacher?”) to gain a deeper insight into the students’ “thinking, feelings and value considerations” regarding them as becoming teachers (Gee, 2010). Wortham (2001) emphasizes that the power of narratives (such as interviews) lies in their ability to include possibilities to express and cope with fragmented and partly conflicting selves and experiences, and further, to create multiple possibilities for the (teacher) self.

The complementary data consisted of interviews with the supervisors of different subject areas (in pedagogical studies) and recordings of the student group’s work in selected courses, such as “Social interaction and co-operation”. This data was used as an ethnographical background to gain a better understanding of the pedagogical studies and to interpret the students’ perspectives and thoughts on these.

The students were informed about the aims and purpose of this study and consequent reporting. They gave their permission to use the data collected, and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the students’ real names or other data enabling personal identification are not reported.

Data analysis

In the analysis, Bakhtin’s notion of voice was aligned with Gee’s (2010) notion of Discourse. The negotiation of identities can be seen as the negotiation of Discourses embodying

different voices. According to Gee (2010), often it is not persons that are talking, but rather the Discourses that we enact and represent, and for which we are carriers. These Discourses (with a capital “D”) are enacted through certain behavioral patterns; using language, thinking, acting, interacting, valuing, feeling and believing in certain ways as a member of a particular social group (Gee, 2010, p. 34). As people learn the characteristics associated with the identities available to them, they can adopt the language and speech patterns connected to these in order to position themselves as a certain type of person (Bakhtin, 1981).

For analyzing specific Discourses from the student teacher narratives, socio-culturally grounded discourse analysis, which provides useful tools for exploring teacher identities in terms of “saying, doing and being in language”, was used (Gee, 2010, p. 3). Discourse analysis is based on the recognition of the socio-cultural nature of narratives, social practices and learning (Gee, 1999, 2010). Gee (1999, p. 52) states that the mind is “social (cultural) in the sense that socio-cultural practices and settings guide and norm the patterns in terms of which the learner thinks, acts, talks, values, and interacts”. This allows for studying social meanings embedded in discourse and for examining the social and discourse practices that the participants draw on in making sense of new situations. For example, cultural models are means of tracing the Discourses the students lean on in identity negotiation (for more, see Gee, 2010).

The first author conducted the analysis. However, discussions with the second author helped refine the analysis and interpretations of the data. In the first step of the analysis, the transcribed interviews were read multiple times. While reading the transcripts, the researcher made notes pertaining to each student and then thematically grouped all the notes within a single data set. Three larger themes repeatedly emerged in the students’ narratives: change in the form of seeing learning and teaching, teacher (and student) characteristics and the interactive relationship between teachers and pupils. In the second step of the analysis, the thematically grouped data was analyzed further through discourse analysis by using the notion of Discourses (Gee, 2010) as an analytical tool. Based on the analysis, it was possible to identify two Discourses that provided the students with a framework or basis on which to negotiate their teacher identities. These *Discourses on learning and teaching* were named the *Discourse of traditional pedagogy* and the *Discourse of participatory pedagogy*. The two Discourses represent different values, ideologies, philosophies and conceptions on learning and teaching, and also the different material organization and discursive negotiation of space

and time, such as differences in the material spaces and student-teacher relationships (Ritella, Ligorio & Hakkarainen, 2016).

In the third step of the analysis, within these Discourses the negotiation of identity was analyzed in terms of how through discourse the students made sense of themselves as prospective teachers in relation to (or by referencing) institutional voices, cultural models (Gee, 2010) and the language of authorities, and how they negotiated the polyphony of voices representing different interests and ideologies (Aveling, Gillespie & Kornish, 2015; Larson & Phillips, 2005). These voices are situated in different places and times, both in the here-and-now discourse and sensemaking and in the tradition of historically developing cultures (Grossen & Salazar Orvig, 2011; Ritella & Ligorio, 2016). Therefore, the analysis also brought out how the past, present and future were intertwined in the students' (narrative) sensemaking.

In analyzing voicing within the Discourses, the focus was on the negotiation between alternative voices and students' positioning regarding these. According to Wortham (2001), the self is constructed narratively through positioning different voices in the social world in relation to each other, and by positioning oneself with respect to these voices. Positioning oneself with reference to particular voices and their characterizations is often reinforced through evaluation. Therefore, evaluations related to the voicing of different others and the narrated self were analyzed in the student narratives. Through evaluation, students can distance or differentiate themselves from, move closer to or identify themselves with the voices in the narrative. This is revealed, for example, in negative or positive evaluations expressed through linguistic means, such as the selection of verbs or adjectives, or using certain evaluative, contextually loaded terms (e.g. "pouring knowledge into a pupil's head") (Wortham, 2001). It can be said that through evaluation the students position themselves with respect to the voices of others and, thus, build their own teacher identities.

To ensure higher reliability and credibility (Guba, 1981), the interpretation of the data was discussed on several occasions with the pedagogical studies teacher during the analysis process. Moreover, we provide a large set of translated data examples (Hammer & Berland, 2014) to allow the readers to evaluate and judge the interpretations.

Findings

Here, different Discourses and the polyphony of voices characterizing students' identity negotiation are described and interpreted using the student narratives (interviews), mainly in light of the commonalities found in the data. However, in presenting the narratives, the focus is on those aspects that characterize each student. Hence, individual students are attributed with such aspects that reoccur in their narrative.

Discourses of traditional and participatory pedagogy as resources for identity negotiation

The students' thinking and action as prospective subject teachers is characterized by a negotiation between the Discourses of *traditional* and *participatory pedagogy*. This is manifested in the polyphony of voices (Bakhtin, 1981) representing different ideologies and views on learning and teaching. In anticipating future selves and negotiating possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1987) as prospective teachers, the different Discourses and embodied voices are resources for the students to draw upon.

In our data, the student *language teachers* Elisa and Aino stress the utility value of language learning. In positioning herself as a teacher, Elisa distances herself (Wortham, 2001) from the practice of passive writing and (mere) textbook knowledge, and prefers discussion and the active use of language:

The fact is that in languages you have to discuss terribly much. [...] I try to avoid [the situation where] they would be just writing. Textbook knowledge is of no use if you can't use it in [practical] situations. The purpose of studying it is that one can use it.

Aino emphasizes pupils' own efforts in learning languages, and contrasts the Discourse of traditional pedagogy, which she relates to her own experiences as a pupil, with a new participatory and phenomenon-based pedagogy aiming at active use and interaction:

I can still remember what kind of teaching there was when I was still [at school] myself, mainly from the language teaching point of view. It's fairly much like grammar and then there's some vocabulary and the chapters, and we proceed by the textbook. On the other hand, now this phenomenon-based [pedagogy] has set out another type of oral proficiency and so on. It's not as much bound to the textbook. I am for this talking and things like that, and I would have wished [for] more of it at school myself. [...] Well, I've noticed that I do quite a lot of such group or pair work in training. [...] The kind of interactive work, because I consider that language is expressly a tool for interaction. What I find important to be altered is that the pupils themselves would do things, be it about grammar or anything else. It's the most important thing [...].

In her narrative, Aino states that her role as a teacher is to change the traditional pedagogy of textbook-driven activity into more pupil-centered activities, particularly by increasing the amount of speaking and discussion in the classroom. Aino would like to see pupils as active learners rather than passive receivers of knowledge, and both Elisa and Aino see language as interaction. On the other hand, while Elisa points out that teaching should be connected to the pupils' own life, she also acknowledges the value and role of textbooks as representatives of the voice of the curriculum:

In general, textbooks are good in the sense that they are constructed according to the curriculum. They have the same themes as the curriculum. You can take a chapter and there's a particular grammar issue and then a theme is given. I actually like that we have the textbooks. Then, of course, if the theme is say, for instance, recycling, you naturally pick up some news or anything from elsewhere, so that it's not the textbook only; [I mean], it must be connected to the real world as well.

In Elisa's narrative, there are two different groundings related to the material and pedagogic organization of learning: a textbook-driven activity representing the institutional voice of the school, and the pupils' "real world", as Elisa calls it. Thus, the space-time context of learning in terms of the teaching materials is expanded to include the outside (material) world, thereby creating a hybrid space. Both student teachers also identify with (Wortham, 2001) the idea of functional learning (learning by doing), as emphasized in their language pedagogy studies (Interview with their language supervisor). Aino says:

I am also interested in the functional teaching of grammar and things like that. I have tried it and it has worked all right, and in fact it works with high-school students as well.

Thus, Aino feels that the idea presented in teacher education is worth implementing. Accordingly, she appropriates and populates the idea (voice) with her own intention (Bakhtin, 1981), based on having tested it in practice.

In his internal dialogue, Aapo builds the voice of a student *history teacher* through contrasting the traditional and an emergent Discourse of schooling:

The content is in a way playing such a diminishing role, as nowadays we all have a computer in our pocket anyway. It makes no sense to memorize some historical dates, as they can be readily found [using] just a couple of clicks. Rather, it is about thinking skills, in particular.

The reference to “memorizing some historical dates” can be considered a cultural model through which the learning of history is commonly characterized, implying also the cultural model of the transmission of knowledge (Gee, 2010). In contrast, Aapo relates the context of pupils’ daily lives (“computers in pockets”) to their learning contexts. This implies a pedagogical change in terms of space and material arrangements (Ritella et al., 2016) where knowledge is accessible everywhere (and to everyone), not only in school settings. To the question “what is the most important role of a teacher?” Aapo answers:

It’s specifically, you know, teaching of thinking skills and in a way teaching open-minded or broad-based thinking. I like to emphasize this idea that one should have a perspective on issues, in a way to avoid this kind of monolithic or narrow thinking; so, at least in my opinion, in some way rooting this out is my prime responsibility as a teacher.

Distancing himself from what he calls monolithic and narrow thinking (one voice, one truth), Aapo positions himself as a teacher enhancing pupils’ dialogic (rather than one-sided) thinking and agency. Nevertheless, Aapo considers this a challenging task: “Although, in a funny way, the pupils are still expecting the kind of lecturing and knowledge transmission and emphasis on content.” Accordingly, even though Aapo positions the pupils as active agents and independent thinkers, the pupils in the practice schools position themselves more passively.

Like Aino, Aapo also appropriates the voice of teacher education and adopts the views:

As I’ve been talking about, my views have changed so strongly on this teacher identity thing. It is totally owing to these studies. I have developed so strong a view on what a history teacher’s mission is, and what good teaching is like. So it all does derive just from these studies.

Hence, Aapo constructs his teacher identity in relation to the Discourse of participatory pedagogy advocated by the teacher education program. Like Aino above, Aapo explicitly stresses how the ideas of teacher education have become his own voice (Bakhtin, 1981) through his practice school experiences:

You do sense it yourself from the way the lesson is progressing and how your teaching methods are resonating with the students, as to how those are then reflected back to the teacher, so there I have found out that the learner-centered approach is really the better way. Specifically, the kind of inquiry learning and production [...] it is then based just on my own experiences during the high-school course [Aapo’s practice school experience]. It is not that

they [teacher educators] would have demanded this from us, but there were genuinely like eureka moments.

Aapo tells that the ideas on broadmindedness, learner-centeredness and learner agency, which are emphasized in history pedagogy, are not taken as given but become adopted through personal processes of professional learning. In Bakhtinian terms, this voice “becomes one’s own only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention” (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 293–294).

For Olli, a student *biology teacher*, promoting pupils’ own thinking is the most important mission:

I have indeed thought about how you could do it so that you would then avoid sort of copying and instead reach more widely the zone of personal insight. [...] In my opinion, the most important mission of a teacher is to get the pupils thinking by [using] their own thinking equipment, most often the brain. [...] Even though [I am] teaching biology and geography, even there I still do not consider the subject matter as important as the skill of using one’s own wits.

By using the phrase “even though [I am] teaching biology and geography”, Olli implicitly refers to the nature of these subjects as taught “traditionally” by the transmission (and copying) of content knowledge. For Olli and Aapo alike, the change in pedagogical thinking (between different Discourses) implies a change in the role of pupils, increasing their agency. Pupils are seen as active learners and authors rather than followers and copyists (Brown & Renshaw, 2006). Olli clarifies his view by stressing the activity of pupils:

Of course it is good to master the subject matter as well and to know as much as possible, but even there I put perhaps more emphasis on the ability to search for information than on the ability to memorize the information, so that one knows where to start searching when there is a problem. That might be the most important thing.

Lauri, a student *mathematics teacher*, discusses mathematics teaching from the viewpoints of constructivism and behaviorism, hybridizing the voices of current and traditional educational sciences:

I have been thinking this, as mathematics is anyway quite largely about problem solving. It has been the main line, the constructivist view: to get the foundation there in order and then

to start building upon it for more solid knowledge about the topic. In mathematics, there tends to be some behavioristic trends as well, so that one can do plenty of those drills and it comes a bit automatically, too. It belongs to the nature of the subject to some extent. And for my own part, I have always sought to arrange some time for working on math tasks in every lesson. In math, you learn by doing.

There is another voice that Lauri feels is worth implementing. Like Elisa above, he would like to apply the idea of using the pupils' own world of experience as a resource for learning. He finds that this could be applied in physics, which is his minor subject:

I now have the minor subject practice in physics. It was such an awesome experience as there you can link things to the pupils' daily life. We watched all kinds of relevant videos and looked at how solar power plants work, and someone said that they had a kind of solar power plant at home, and we looked [at] how it worked and we were thinking about; it is much more enthusiastic when you have some real connection to the issue.

These ideas are adopted from the voice of a significant other, Lauri's physics supervisor:

I got some really broad-ranging feedback from there; I had a really inspiring and good supervisor. I got advice as to how to get pupils' daily life linked in there [...] and I got many good hints about it, how you can get the pupils inspired. So you should try to use a lot of functionality [...] and to reflect on the matters in small groups.

A recurring dilemma for Lauri, however, is how to utilize these ideas in mathematics, which is his major subject, and especially how to make the teaching more interactive:

That it wouldn't be so, that the class is first sitting silently and staring at the teacher and blackboard for 30 minutes and then struggling with the stuff by themselves for a quarter before being dismissed [...] could get some interaction to the classroom so that it wouldn't be [me] talking for half an hour there and then nobody says anything and they are just working on the math problems. [...] I do enjoy the occasions when the pupils ask [things], even something I can't answer. They ask something and it brings about some discussion and life to the class. I appreciate those occasions so much more than when there is silence.

The above excerpt offers a good description of the traditional cultural model (Gee, 2010) of a mathematics lesson in Lauri's sensemaking: pupils sitting, passively listening and staring at the teacher lecturing at the front of the classroom according to a fixed schedule. Institutions like schools generate these patterns of space-time relations functioning as material crystallizations of institutional values and power relations (Ritella & Ligorio, 2016). In his

narrative, Lauri expresses a strong wish to change this traditional pedagogic grounding, and hence also the power and interactional relationship between the teacher and the pupils in a more dialogic direction.

In sum, there are two Discourses evident in our data that embody the different voices and views on learning and teaching that the students test and use as resources in negotiating their identity as a subject teacher. This negotiation is manifested in the process of positioning (Wortham, 2001), where the students are mostly differentiating themselves from the Discourse of traditional pedagogy and identifying with the Discourse of participatory pedagogy. Within participatory pedagogy, the students see knowledge as personally meaningful, and pupils as active agents engaged in dialogic learning manifested in multiple perspectives and the sharing of ideas (Brown & Renshaw, 2006). In contrast, within the Discourse of traditional pedagogy, knowledge is seen as unchangeable and immutable, distributed by authority (e.g. textbooks and the teacher), and pupils seen as passive receivers and copiers of knowledge. In this negotiation, the students use their own school experiences as a reflective mirror for evaluating new understanding stemming from the pedagogical studies, thus also shaping their possible future selves as teachers (Lee & Schallert, 2016; Markus & Nurius, 1987). This shows how the narrative construction of self is moving in space-time frames connecting here-and-now and previous and anticipated events and the meanings therein (Grossen & Salazar Orvig, 2011; Ritella & Ligorio, 2016).

Changes in the pedagogical views – turning points between different Discourses

The students' narratives display a constant interplay between emergent and established Discourses, where the Discourse of participatory pedagogy is challenging the traditional pedagogy. This, in turn, results in changes in the student teachers' pedagogic views and thinking, as Aapo describes:

This way, in hindsight, it is somehow interesting to think that the original picture on the basis of which I sought to become a teacher was fairly different from the reality. I can't say that there was any negative, like, shocks, but it has changed a lot. My view of teachership was perhaps shaped more along these experiences of my own; I mean, what kind of teachers I had. It was more like a picture of a storyteller or lecturer, which might be somewhat different from what I have encountered here in the teacher studies. The view has become much deeper. [...] Well, absolutely the stronger role of learners [...] it is so much stronger or at least favored nowadays, and of course people have ended up with this more student-centered [approach]

based on learning-related research knowledge. [...] Then of course [is] the fact that I did not have perhaps such a strong and clear view on the educational responsibility related to the teacher's role. Then I used to think a bit narrowly, that it is just this teaching and transmission of knowledge. These are perhaps the most relevant points.

The above description shows the polyphony of voices in Aapo's narrative. He opposes the voice of his own history teacher (storyteller or lecturer) and adopts the voice of teacher education (e.g. learning-related research) (Wortham, 2001). In evaluating the new insights arising from his teacher studies, Aapo draws on his own (school) experiences of teachers (Lee & Schallert, 2015). By switching from one voice to another, Aapo moves across multiple experiences that provide resources for his sensemaking as a teacher (Ritella & Ligorio, 2016). Besides changes in pedagogic approaches, Aapo also talks about a change in terms of becoming aware of "educational responsibility", referring to a more holistic view of the teacher's mission. Lauri describes a similar change:

When I was starting mathematics in the first year, I had actually no insight about [the] teacher's work. I thought that it was more like just pouring the subject contents into the pupil's head. I have now indeed learnt to see that there's really everything else as well. [I have] learnt to appreciate that there would be some interaction and that one could reveal pupils' potential more broadly. More [to] education, you know, not prioritizing the subject matter so much, but there are also other things at school. [I have] learnt to think that you sometimes have a lesson where you fail to go through some content you had planned to deal with because the time was spent on some other educational matters, so it's quite all right. [I have] learnt to consider the issue more from this point of view.

Lauri's narrative takes up a cultural model of "transmission of knowledge" and, more generally, traditional pedagogy that is challenged during his pedagogical studies. Now, he also sees the teacher as an educator rather than merely someone to deliver the subject matter.

Seeing a teacher as an educator is also an apparent change in Elisa's thinking:

Now I consider a teacher more as an educator and an inspirer of one's own learning. [...] Providing instruction for all skills in learning, and then again for other life skills as well, just how to be with other people in a way. [...] And the point of schooling is not only to have certain historical dates and prepositions memorized. At school they do actually teach such broader skills that you will really need later.

In our data, all students position themselves as educators in their narratives within the Discourse of participatory pedagogy. They distinguish between teachers and educators in their discourse, and the difference appears to involve traditional and participatory perspectives, respectively. In the above examples, Aapo, Lauri and Elisa all refer to teachers as educators. For the students, the term “educator” seems to be attributed with a holistic pedagogic approach where pupils are viewed not only as agentive learners but also as persons with social relationships. Hence, learning is aimed at preparing them for life, not only for school. According to this line of thinking (within the participatory Discourse), pupils are also linked in space-time beyond school, and it is therefore essential to foster their general competencies for coping in the world and with other people (and in future settings), rather than focusing narrowly on their academic, subject-specific success within the spatiotemporal school setting (Leander, 2001). This is evident in Olli’s narrative:

The pupil would become, after the school career, a sort of independent, autonomously thinking, well-behaved person who is considerate of others, as a member of society or whatever, but an individual. [Someone] who is not dependent on anything in particular so that [they] can cope alone, but are capable of working in a group as well.

Accordingly, there are also different identities associated with different space-time zones (Brown & Renshaw, 2006). The grounding of Olli’s emergent pedagogic thinking emphasizes the pupil’s growth to authorship; they are becoming an “independent, autonomously thinking person”. The educator positioning is resonating a voice the student teachers have appropriated from their pedagogical studies. Aapo explicitly describes how “the education aspect” is one of the leading ideas in the teacher studies:

Specifically the education side. At the point when I came here to the university and set out for these direct selection interviews [for teacher studies], at that point I still held this view of lecturing. The education aspect came up so strongly in the interview. I don’t know if the interviewers saw some potential in me, as they were actually milking those answers related to educational responsibility from me. There, during the interview, the image began to take shape so that yes, right, I should give more thought to this type of matter. It was a sort of an awakening.

In the above example, Aapo describes the change in his views of teacher identity and depicts an initial turning point as an awakening of sorts. He describes how the selection group was “milking” answers and how he thought that he should be thinking accordingly. The example shows that when he began his studies the ideas of teacher education were not yet an integral

part of Aapo's own thinking (or "word"), but as we have seen in previous examples, he will eventually, through the pedagogical studies, appropriate and make this voice his own. As Bakhtin (1981, pp. 293–294) says: "Prior to the moment of appropriation, the word [...] exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own."

Discussion and conclusions

This study explored how five prospective subject teachers made sense of their teacher identity after completing their yearlong pedagogical studies. The approach taken during these studies provided the students with opportunities to collaborate in exploring different perspectives of various phenomena related to learning and teaching. Our analysis of the interviews revealed two Discourses (Gee, 2010) that emerged and interacted in the students' narrative constructions of their identities as teachers. These alternative Discourses invoked dialogic tensions between diverse voices in the students' internal dialogue. The Discourse based on participatory pedagogy and education responsibility contradicted with the Discourse of traditional pedagogy that the students possessed as a cultural resource from their own youth. Hence, the students' own experience of school seemed to contribute to their pedagogic perceptions and played a pivotal role in negotiating their prospective teacher identities (Flores & Day, 2006; Meijer et al., 2009).

After the studies, the students have positioned themselves as agentic teachers and educators who do not merely deliver the subject matter but strive to enhance their own and their pupils' capabilities for agentive learning (Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2011). Seemingly, the different Discourses have different implications for pupil and teacher identities, what counts as knowledge and learning and what it means to be a human being. The findings indicate a broader change in the view of learning and teaching where the goal is not "knowing" in itself, but rather enabling and promoting a good life for the pupils. This can be seen as a transition from an epistemological emphasis (knowing) towards a more ontological one (being and becoming) (Heikkinen et al., 2018).

Our study highlighted the embeddedness of the (teacher) self in its socio-cultural and historical context (Bakhtin, 1981). Previous cultural models (Gee, 2010) and the collective stories (Uitto et al., 2015) of teachers and teaching were negotiated in relation to new insights stemming from the teacher education, leading to an internally persuasive discourse (Matusov,

2007). In this process, the students became critically aware of the partly conflicting ideologies guiding their thinking and acting as student teachers and the material, institutional and social frames surrounding teacher work (Ritella et al., 2016). Pedagogical studies and the ideas presented therein challenged previous conceptions and led to new meanings and understandings that transformed students' thinking about learning and teaching (Tiainen et al., 2018). By becoming aware of the socially and culturally constructed institutional reality, the students became authors rather than followers of the authoritative word (Bakhtin, 1981). Consequently, engaging pre-service teachers in critical dialogue – which involves revealing the implicit assumptions underlying teaching and learning, questioning routinized practices and rethinking the meaning and dominant modes of sensemaking – helps them to avoid static categorizations of “the teacher” and to become transformative agents of their own work (Gorli et al., 2015). This implies a wider dialogic practice and respecting the polyphony of voices (Ligorio, 2010).

Even though in our study we have been able to show the pre-service teachers' conceptualizations of teaching and themselves as teachers, our data analysis could not demonstrate how the students negotiated the prevailing Discourses *in* their pedagogical studies. This would have required, for example, systematic data gathering and the exploration of group work throughout the yearlong program. The interview data used here consists of retrospective accounts rather than records of actual learning points and moments of appropriation in the teacher education program. However, despite its limitations, the interview is a useful tool in capturing identity negotiation as an interplay of the self and “others” as they appear within the utterances of the multivoiced self (Aveling et al., 2015; Wortham, 2001). As developmental processes often involve struggles between different voices, interviews allow us to open a window to students' self-dialogues in terms of the struggles and challenges they face during education (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). In general, focusing on discursive tensions not only helps researchers but also prospective teachers in revealing and understanding the various possibilities and obstacles in “being a teacher”. However, in order to capture the full complexity of prospective teacher identity, future studies could look more closely at how the professional sense of self is negotiated both in the dialogical relationships in the students' learning activities and in the students' self-narrative embedded in the socio-cultural conditions.

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